

# Young Person's Guide to Coping with Anxiety

Anxiety can be described as a feeling of fear, worry or being unsure. We all experience anxiety from time to time and this is normal. Anxiety can be a mental illness when it goes on for a long time and stops us from doing things we want and need to do.



## Statistics:

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental illnesses and are thought to occur in 10-11% of children and young people (NHS Education Scotland).

## 10 TOP TIPS for supporting a friend with anxiety:

- 1 Anxiety is common.** Anxiety is a normal reaction to something we find difficult and we all experience it from time to time.
- 2 Recognise anxiety.** Anxiety affects the way we think, feel and behave. Learn to identify anxious thoughts, emotions, bodily responses and behaviours in yourself and in others.
- 3 Talk to someone you trust.** Someone listening to how you feel can be very helpful. They don't need to know the answers - you can explore what might help together.
- 4 Focus on one step at a time.** When you are overwhelmed you can feel stuck. Break problems into small, achievable parts and focus on one thing at a time.
- 5 Consider general wellbeing.** A healthy diet, sleeping well, exercise, relaxation and spending quality time with others can reduce anxiety.
- 6 Identify triggers.** Explore where and when you experience anxiety. If you are struggling it might help to keep a diary.
- 7 Challenge automatic thoughts.** Consider negative and self-critical thoughts in more helpful ways. It might help to think what you would say to a friend.
- 8 Help reduce avoidance.** Avoiding situations stops us learning we can cope. Try to face your fears by tackling an easier situation to start with.
- 9 Build on strengths and explore what helps.** Explore what you enjoy, ways to relax and/or distraction activities. We are all different so find out what works for you.
- 10 Look after yourself.** If you are concerned seek additional help, try to talk to your family, GP and/or school.

## Self-help links:

- [www.anxietyuk.org.uk/](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/)
- [www.youth.anxietycanada.com/](http://www.youth.anxietycanada.com/) - also see Mindshift app
- [www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/mildmoderate/Anxiety.asp](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/mildmoderate/Anxiety.asp)
- [www.moodcafe.co.uk/](http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/)
- [www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/)
- [www.stressandanxietyinteenagers.com/](http://www.stressandanxietyinteenagers.com/)
- [www.ocdyouth.org/](http://www.ocdyouth.org/)

