

# Heads Up for Wellbeing- Anxiety

It's really common to develop anxiety at some point. Find out here what causes it and what you can do to feel better.



## What is anxiety?

• Anxiety is a normal, human feeling of fear or panic. When we face stressful situations, it can set off our brain's in-built alarm bell system, which tells us something isn't right and that we need to deal with it. Our brain wants the difficult situation to go away, so it makes us feel more alert, stops us thinking about other things, and even pumps more blood to our legs to help us run away. Most of us worry sometimes – about things like friendships or money – and feel anxious when we're under stress, like at exam time. But afterwards we usually calm down and feel better. But when you're not in a stressful situation, and you still feel worried or panicky, that's when anxiety can become a problem.

## The symptoms of anxiety

- You might start out just feeling generally anxious, but if your symptoms get worse or last longer than they should, it could be time to get some support. Symptoms include:
- feeling nervous, on edge, or panicky all the time
- feeling overwhelmed or full of dread
- feeling out of control
- having trouble sleeping
- low appetite
- finding it difficult to concentrate
- feeling tired and grumpy
- heart beating really fast or thinking you're having a heart attack
- having a dry mouth
- trembling
- feeling faint
- stomach cramps and/or diarrhoea/needing to pee more than usual
- sweating more than usual
- wobbly legs
- getting very hot
- If you experience any of the symptoms above, it doesn't mean you definitely have an anxiety problem. But if any of them are affecting your everyday life, it's a good idea to tell someone you trust about how you're feeling.

There are quite a few things you can do yourself to help manage your anxiety. Read below to see how these young people manage their anxiety.

## Treating Anxiety – self help

- "Finding a physical way to get your worries into the open can really help. I've found that imagining my anxious thoughts physically leaving my brain and floating off into the sky really helps me."  
- Georgie
- "(If you find seeing family and friends difficult), try to remind yourself that there's no danger with your family or friends, and that you are safe with them."  
- Luke
- "If you're not ready to speak to someone yet, write a letter to yourself explaining how you're feeling and why. Be as open and truthful with yourself as you can be. Then, a few days later, you could read it back to yourself and imagine that someone else wrote it and think about how you would help them."  
- Molly
- "Sometimes all you need to do is stop and focus on your breathing. I have learned many techniques over my time in counselling, and finding one that works for you is important. If you look up 'calming breathing techniques' you'll be able to find many of your own. I breathe in for seven seconds and out for 11 seconds, which just helps me to stop and focus."

There are quite a few things you can do yourself to help manage your anxiety. Read below to see some more about how these young people manage their anxiety.



## Treating Anxiety – self help

- "The best advice I can offer is to ask for help. Anxiety is a very isolating experience, but you really are not alone. And as stressful and anxiety-inducing as seeking help can be in itself, talking to someone and receiving support is the only way to overcome it."  
- Jasmine
- "Doing something that you enjoy is a good way of taking your mind off of things. I get anxiety over things that may not even happen, and so having things in my life that I enjoy doing reduces the amount I worry."  
- Georgie
- **Talking therapy**  
Talk to your GP. He / She may recommend talking therapy that can help you get to the root of what is causing your anxiety. You also learn practical techniques to help you relax and cope better in everyday life.

## Anxiety – useful contacts – where to get help

### Young Minds Crisis Messenger

- provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis - just text YM to 85258
- all texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors
- texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus

### [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

- if you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email or chat online about any problem big or small
- freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111
- [sign up for a childline account](#) on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address
- chat 1:1 with an [online advisor](#)

### [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

- if you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.
- freephone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm - 11pm daily)