



Helping children manage and overcome anxiety

(Evening 2)

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Managing Anxiety Problems in Children and Teenagers

Evening 1

- 1. Appreciate your children's strengths**
- 2. Pause in the face of anxiety/ Make a plan**
- 3. Managing your own and your children's feelings of anxiety**
4. Problem Solve 1 – Addressing the situation that makes the child anxious
5. Problem Solve 2 – Investigating the anxiety itself
6. Tackling problems step by step

www.solutiontalk.ie/anxiety-three-night-course

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GOALS FOR COURSE

- Worrying about death, something will happen at home
- 9 year old, fear of animals – swimming lots of things
- 6yo real worrier, worries being rejected ‘ if they laugh at me, if the don’t like the present
- 11yo girl can’t settle at night, thinks she might die at night – some facial tics
- 5yo girl worries about social occasions – avoiding
- 14 yo girl autism – social anxiety, when something does not go to plan
- 10 yo boy – trying to help him identify his anxiety – sore tummy, body symptoms...’ boy who cried wolf
- 14 yo girl, fear of failure ... avoidance
- 6 yo boy does not like large groups and new situation – help him join in
- 8 yo boy, going to school.... Paired back to a few hours... trying to build it up again
- 9yo twin anxious not as good as twin, thinks twin is more popular
- 8 yo girl, pains in tummy in case gets in trouble – how do we manage her ‘not being good’ she gets devastated if gets in trouble...
- 7yo twin – seek to identify better when anxious VS behaviour ‘bold’
- 6 yo fear you are going to die, does not want to leave te
- 4 yo bas nightmares, fear of water over head , general fears
- 5 yo obsessive habits, blowing nose for 20 mins.... Not clean
- 9 yo bad kidney infections, now fears having an accident – does not want people to know
- 10 year old, tummy pains, fear getting sick in front of friends – ‘



Pause and Plan

1. **PAUSE** – Take a moment to reflect about your child's anxiety and how you are currently responding to it
2. **TUNE IN** – What is going on for your child?
3. **RESPOND** – what is best way to respond step by step when your child is anxious?
4. **PREVENT** – How can you prevent problems from happening again?

Principle 4

‘Problem Solve – Addressing the situation that causes the worry’



Problem Solving with Older Child

1. Pick a **good time and place** to talk
2. **Listen** to your child first
 - What is happening for you?
 - What are you feeling?
3. Help your child **think up solutions**
 - What would you like to happen?
 - What would make things better?
 - What can you do?
4. Agree a **Plan** – What would you like to try?

1. Pick a good time and place to talk

2 different types of children:

Child who talks to you too much about their worries and anxieties

- Set up 'worry time' / special problem solving time

Child who wont tell you what is on their mind

- Work hard at helping child open up and talk

2. Listen to your child when they talk

- When they talk repeat what they say
- Wait and use lots of silence
- Don't rush in with advice
- Focus on feelings – 'you must feel sad about that'
- When you think you have listened enough, listen longer
- When you have listened longer, then listen even more!

3. Help your child think up solutions

- Ask your child for their ideas on a solution, before you give your own advice.
- Ask your child good questions to generate solutions.
 - What would you like to happen?
 - What would make things better?
 - What can you do?



Moving from Problem to Solution Thinking



Focusing on Solutions

– Asking good questions



Focus on what might go well

- *We have talked about the worst thing that can happen – but what is the best thing that can happen?*
- *How can you make sure the best thing can happen?*

Focus on what has worked before

- *When have things gone well before? What happened then?*
- *You have managed well before? What did you do then?*

Coping

- *What will you do if a problem happens?*
- *What can you do to cope?/ Who can you get to support you?*

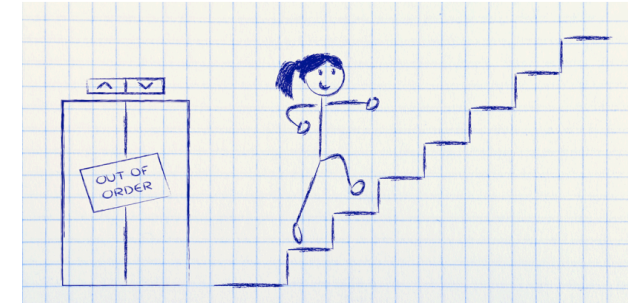
4. Agree a plan

- Agree a plan for what your child will do and what you will do to help going forward.
- Make sure to talk again and review.

Tackling anxious situations in small steps



Exposure - Tackling anxious situations in small steps



What is the first small step?

1. **Preschool child** refusing a bath or screaming if you try to wash her hair.
2. **Primary school age** child afraid of dogs and avoiding going out as a result.
3. **Older child** who is socially and avoiding going on sleepover/school trip.

Tackling separation anxiety in small steps

Example: Child/ teen afraid of being by themselves/ needing constant reassurance

1. Child stays in room with parent right beside them
2. Child stays in room with parent at door
3. Child stays in room with parent downstairs for five minutes before parent comes back
4. Extend period to ten minutes
5. Extend period to twenty minutes

Tackling social anxiety in small steps

Child/ young teen anxious about going to school



What is the first small step?

1. Meet staff member at the gate
2. Go to counsellor/ year head's office
3. Go in an hour late
4. Go in for half day
5. Start back on day when favourite subject is on
6. Parent waits near by in car
7. Go down with parent half way

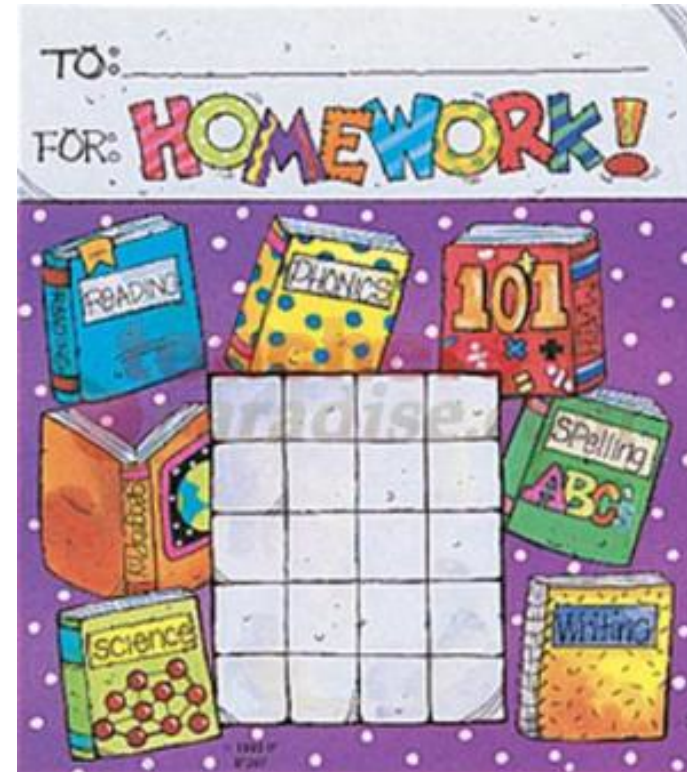
Tackling social anxiety in small steps

Example:
Child/young teen
anxious about
going to school

STEPS	FEAR FACTOR
Ask classmate what they did at the weekend	1
Suggest a game to a class mate for the yard	2
Ask a classmate about homework	3
Ask classmate to eat lunch together	4
Join classmate in game in the yard	5
Invite classmate after school	6
Call classmate and invite to a movie	7
Arrange to meet classmate at the weekend	8
Go to classmates birthday party	9
Invite classmate over for a sleepover	10
Go to sleepover at classmates house	11

Praise and Reward each step

Acknowledge bravery
Praise and reward each step





Pause and Reflect

1. TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

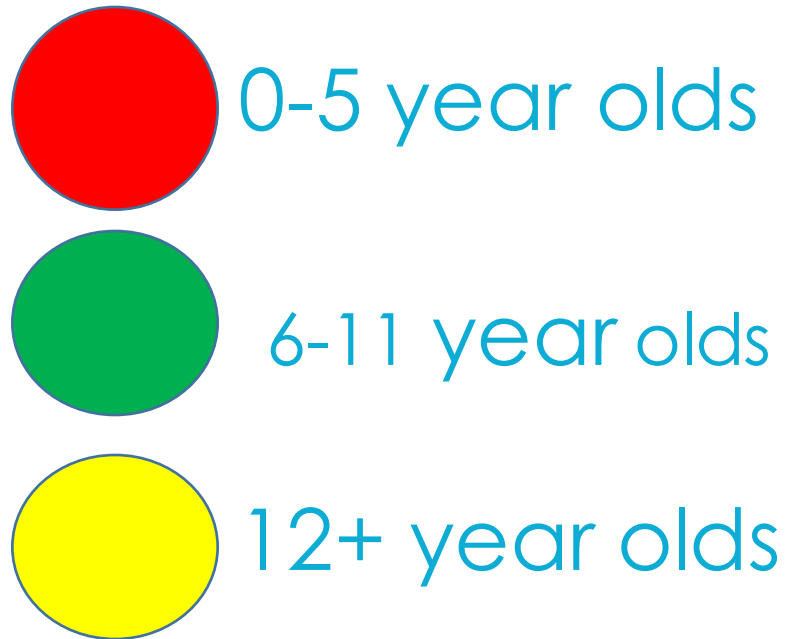
Plan how you might set up a time to problem solve and talk to your child

- How will you help them open up?
- How will you help them think of solutions?

2. BREAKDOWN THE PROBLEM INTO SMALL STEPS

- What is the smallest step to tackle?
- How can you tackle it?

Small Groups of 5



Principle 3

‘Managing your own and your children’s feelings of anxiety’

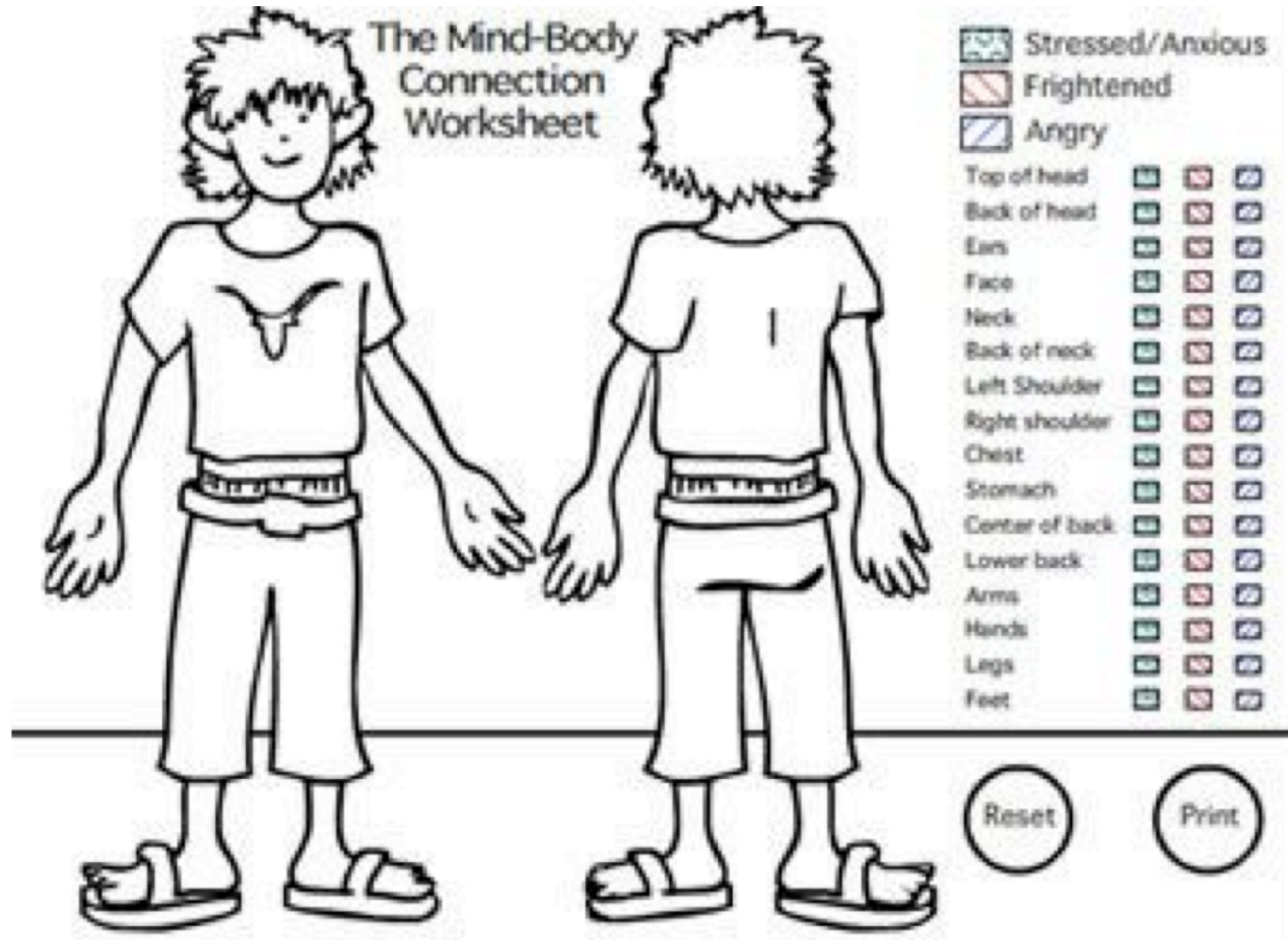


Managing your own and your children's feelings of anxiety

- Body awareness
- Breathing and Relaxation
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Physical exercise
- Body Relaxation (e.g. yoga, progressive muscular relaxation)



Encouraging Body Awareness



Breathing and Relaxation

The simplest way to relax is to become aware of your breath.....



Meditation and Mindfulness



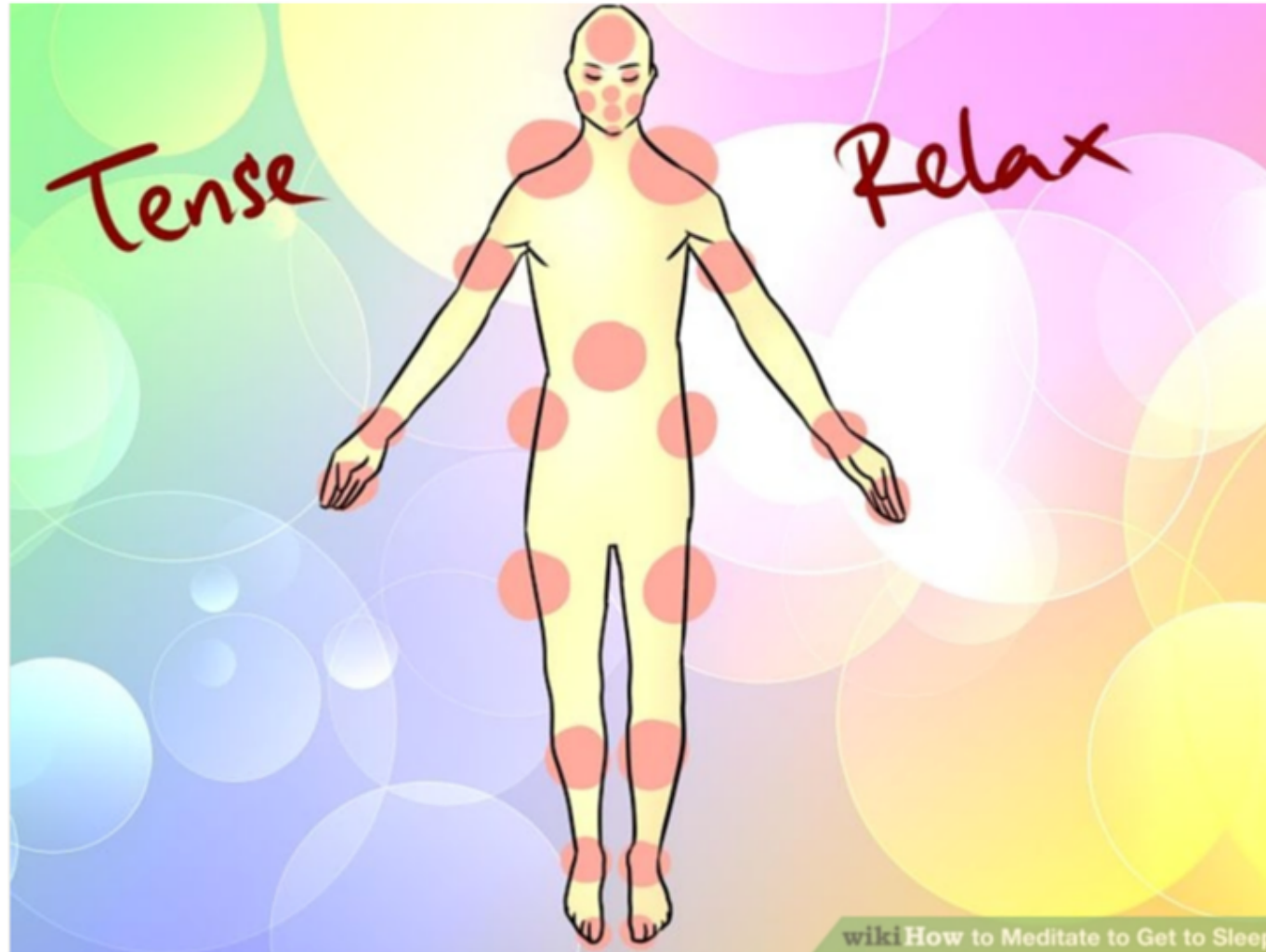
Physical Exercise

In tackling anxiety, relaxation period **after** exercise is key.



Body Relaxation

e.g. Yoga, Progressive Muscular Relaxation



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Plan for next week



1. Make a plan in your notebook about what ideas you want to put into action this week?
2. Complete the feedback form – let me know if there is a particular issue you want covered next week - Next week we will look at a few case examples

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