

Supporting anxiety and worry linked to the Coronavirus



A guide for parents,
carers and
secondary school
pupils



Doncaster
Council

Doncaster Educational
Psychology Service

A suggested model to talk to
children and young people
around anxiety and worry
linked to coronavirus

Invite a discussion

- For younger children: If the child is unlikely to have heard about coronavirus, just remind them about good hygiene
- For older children/young people: Invite discussion using open ended questions (e.g. 'What have you heard about coronavirus?')
- Be led by the child/young person, and avoid introducing information that could trigger further anxiety.



Describe what is happening

- Use facts at an appropriate level
- Describe what has happened and what is happening now
- You could use videos or other props (e.g. [Newsround clips](#), websites such as the [Government webpage](#)).



Encourage questions/discussion

- Talk about what the news made them think and feel, and how other people appear to be feeling
- If talking to young people, discuss the media portrayal of the event.



Offer reassurance and containment

- Explain that coronavirus cases are still very rare, and that measures are in place to keep people as safe as possible
- Talk about how media coverage/social media can make coronavirus feel more of a threat than it is.



Can create uncertainty if the information is not factual or evidence based around the viral outbreak

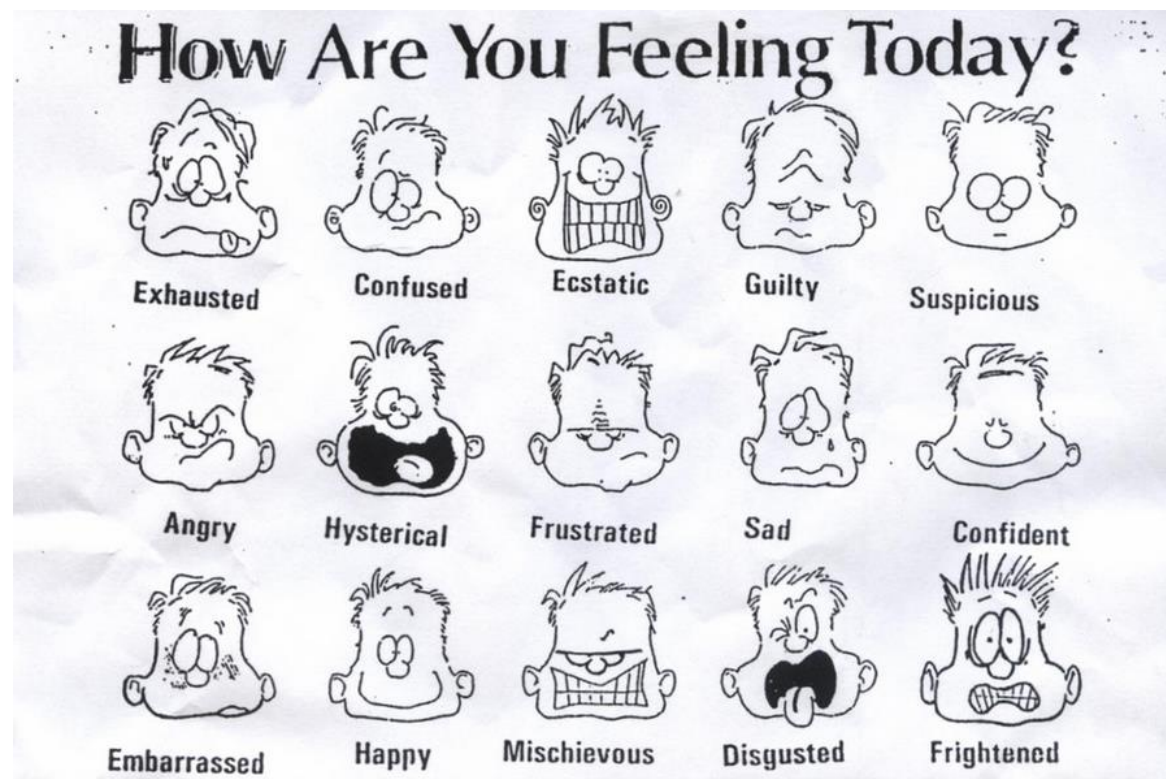
Reduce speculation (where age appropriate)

- Explain what speculation is and why it is unhelpful
- Give examples of speculation and fact
- Explain (where appropriate) how speculation can be heavily circulated via social media
- Point out when children/young people speculate and highlight what is known
- Encourage children/young people not to speculate.



Following up

- Remind children/young people who they can talk to if they feel worried
- Monitor children/young people who may be at particular risk of developing high anxiety
- Address marginalisation of ethnic minority groups according to school/setting policy.



Key questions that you may want answering...

Why are my friends not in school?

Some people are having to self isolate. This means that they are having to stay safe indoors with families. They will be safe with their families.

Where are my friends?

They are at home with their families and they are stopping from the virus being spread. By not being with other people we can stop the virus from being spread.

Am I likely to get the coronavirus?

All individuals including children are able to get the coronavirus. However, a lot more adults than children are getting the virus and children that have received the virus are ok.

What will happen with teachers?

Teachers will also be self isolating with there families. They are trying to keep safe just like you and stop the virus from being spread.

Key questions that you may be asked and how to respond...

When will I go back to school?

We do not know right now when you will go back to school but the teachers will tell me when the schools will re open and I will tell you.

What can I do to help?

As long as you keep washing your hands that will help stop you from getting the virus and that will be helpful.

Are people dying?

Some people are dying but this is more very older people and people that are struggling with other health issues.

What will happen with my grades and education?

This is not something we can answer right now but when we do know you will be informed. The Government will be the people that will have this information in the future.

Practical strategies for managing
anxiety and worries around the viral
outbreak

30 SELF-CARE TIPS

WWW.KINDNESSMATTERS.CO.UK

1. Read a book
2. Eat well
3. Exercise
4. Meditate
5. Journal
6. Affirmations
7. Walk-in nature
8. Eat a healthy meal
9. Take a long bath
10. Light candles
11. Retail therapy
12. Practice gratitude
13. Have a digital detox
14. Drink lots of water
15. Compliment yourself
16. Get enough sleep
17. Put your needs first
18. Volunteer
19. Have a duvet day
20. Listen to upbeat music
21. Read inspirational quotes
22. Watch funny videos
23. Treat yourself to comfort food
24. Try something new
25. Take up a new hobby
26. Ask for a hug
27. Select friends that lift you up
28. Spend time with your best friend
29. Buy fresh flowers
30. Take a class



KINDNESSMATTERS

When I'm anxious, I can



pick a fidget toy

When I'm anxious, I can



do some yoga

When I'm anxious, I can



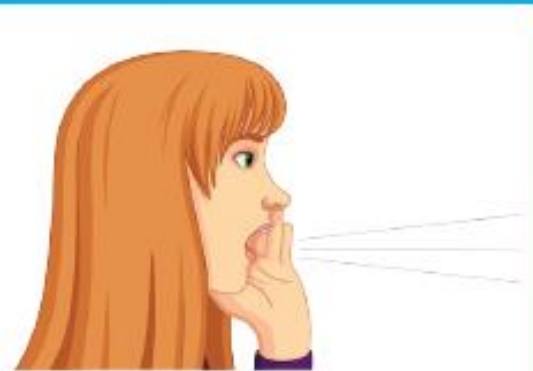
go for a run

When I'm anxious, I can



make a plan

When I'm anxious, I can



scream outside

When I'm anxious, I can



talk to a friend

When I'm anxious, I can



drink water

twinkl.com

When I'm anxious, I can



do some deep breathing

twinkl.com

When I'm anxious, I can



draw

twinkl.com

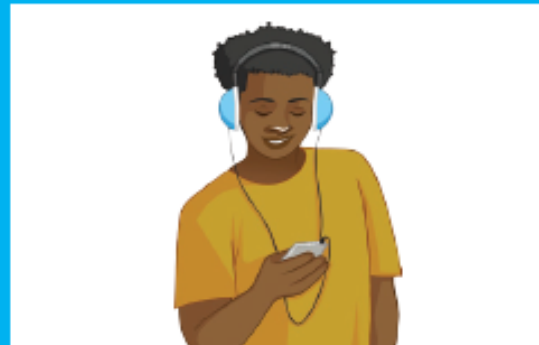
When I'm anxious, I can



go to the gym

twinkl.com

When I'm anxious, I can



listen to music

twinkl.com

When I'm anxious, I can



do some colouring

twinkl.com

When I'm anxious, I can



go for a walk

When I'm anxious, I can



go somewhere quiet

When I'm anxious, I can



talk to an adult

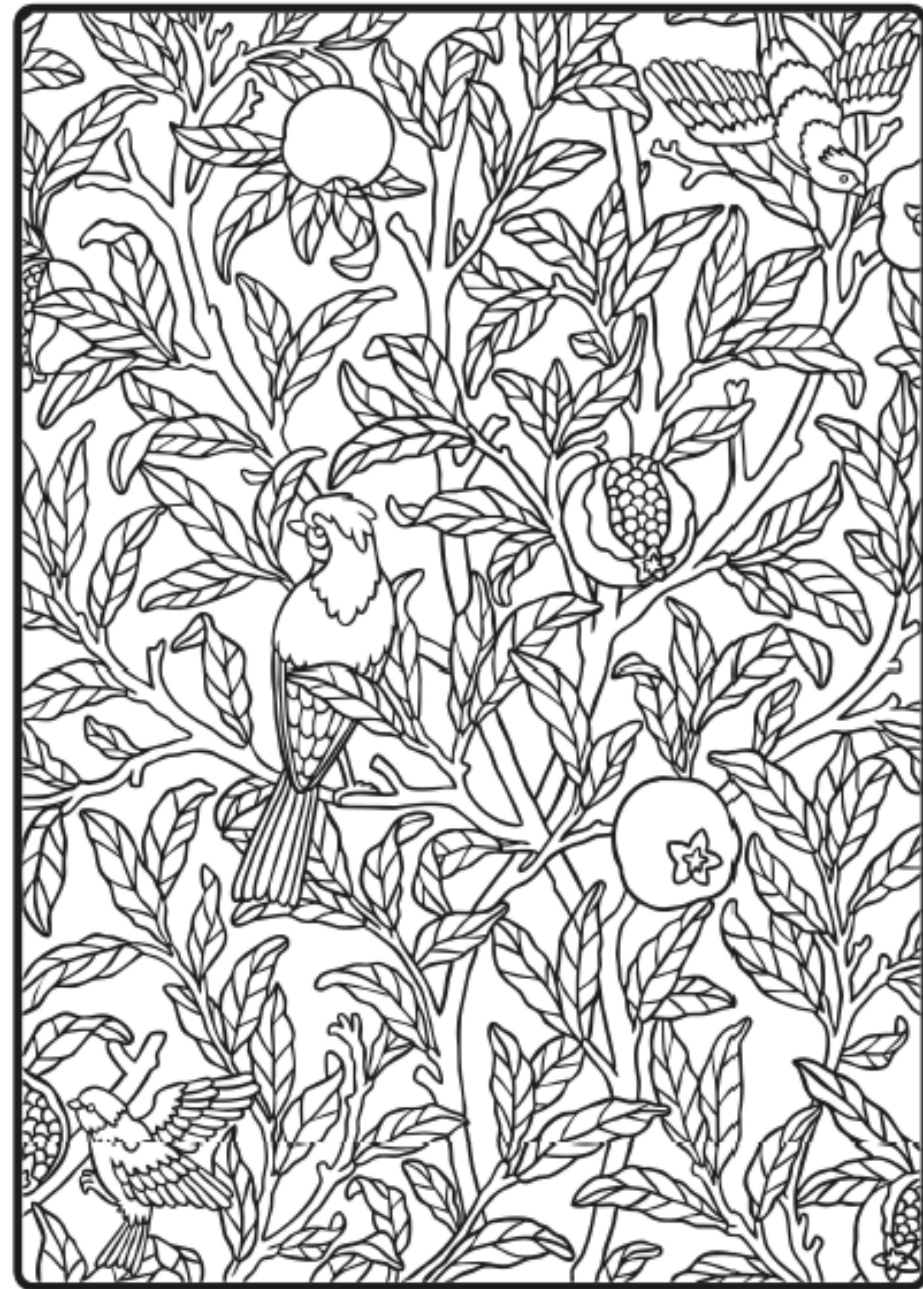
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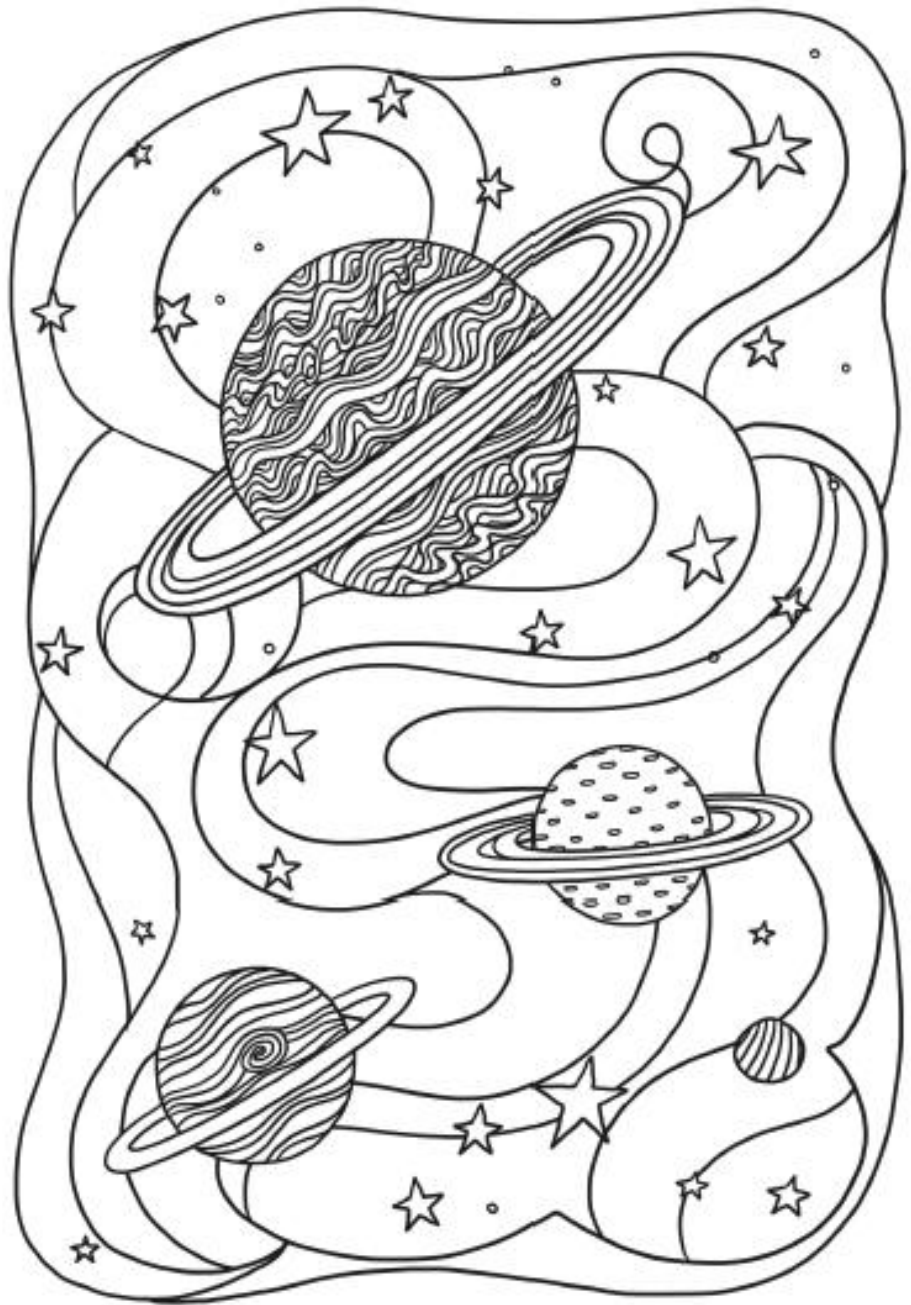
When I'm anxious, I can



Mindfulness
colouring
templates







Mindfulness

Focus Breathing is a quick and easy mindfulness technique.

It can help you calm your mind, relax and focus your attention to whatever it is you're doing right now... and enjoy the moment!

This is a great technique to build into your everyday life to connect with your breathing, your mind and your body... and you'll feel great afterwards!



Focus Breathing

Make sure you are comfortable either sitting or standing in a quiet place if possible.

Close your eyes and take some slow deep breaths through your nose.

Concentrate on your breath flowing in and out of your body.

Notice how it is cooler when you breathe in and warmer when you breathe out.

Continue until you feel calm and relaxed.

Apps including headspace and calm can help with this too



Negative thoughts

I have been stuck at home for ages, I might not see my friends again.

I am going to get ill.

What is going to happen with my education. I might not be able to go the university I want to.

Positive thoughts

My friends are safe with their families and I can message them, or FaceTime them if I want.

There is no evidence to say that I am going to get ill, I have no symptoms. Me and my family are healthy right now.

I cannot control that outcome right now, but I can control how I respond to it. The government will provide me with that information when they can.

Negative thoughts

Positive thoughts

Further support for parents and students

- <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-highlights-importance-talking-children-about-coronavirus>
- <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus>
- <https://www.aep.org.uk/coronavirus-guidance-resources/>
- <https://edpsy.org.uk/blog/2020/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-children-families-and-professionals/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=WhVad8ToCiU&feature=emb_logo
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>



Doncaster
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We are all in this
together!

