

bb I never realised that there could be help for anxiety. I have been anxious for most of my life and I just thought that was the way I was. qq

bb It was mind blowing for me to realise that my son, who is always angry, might actually be expressing his anxiety. It's made me see his behaviour in a completely different light. qq

bb Some very useful ideas for the classroom since this is such a common problem we, as teachers, face. qq

Useful contacts

Anxiety UK

Provide support and help if you've been diagnosed with, or suspect you may have, an anxiety condition.

Text Service: **07537 416 905**

Infoline: **08444 775 774** (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5.30pm)

Website: **www.anxietyuk.org.uk**

No Panic

Provide information for sufferers and carers of people with Panic, Anxiety, Phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD).

Helpline: **0844 967 4848** (Every day, 10am-10pm)

Youthline: **0330 606 1174** (For 13 to 20 year-olds, Mon-Fri, 3pm-6pm; Thurs, 6pm-8pm; Sat, 6pm-8pm)

Website: **www.nopanic.org.uk**

OCD Action

Offer support and information to anybody affected by OCD.

Helpline: **0845 390 6232** (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm)

Website: **www.ocdaction.org.uk**

stem4

The Old Town Hall
4 Queens Road
Wimbledon
London SW19 8YA

e: **info@stem4.org.uk**

stem4.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1144506

Anxiety



Anxiety

Key Facts:

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition people experience and is characterised by a range of anxious thoughts and behaviours.

Anxious thinking is almost always fear-based and anxious behaviour is often carried out to make the person feel less fearful. This behaviour is not generally positive. So, for example, someone who is anxious of flying may not get on a plane.

Anxiety can show itself in many forms, which include:

- **Generalised anxiety** – anxiety is there most of the time, with times of excessive, uncontrollable and often irrational worry and increased apprehension
- **Panic attacks** – a sudden surge of overwhelming anxiety and fear which brings about a strong physical reaction
- **Constant worry** – frequent, negative thoughts that a person goes over and over
- **Phobias** – very strong, irrational fears
- **Social anxiety** – a fear of social situations and interactions that often leads to avoidance

How do I know if I'm anxious?

- Are you feeling **worried** and **agitated**?
- Are you feeling **fearful** about things that others are generally not fearful about?
- Do you **constantly worry**?
- Do you always **predict a dramatic and negative outcome**?
- Do you **overthink** and **over-check** things always with a negative prediction?
- Do you have a range of physical symptoms that are consistent with a fear response such as your **heart racing, increased breathing** and **muscle tension**?

People who are anxious are more likely to say 'yes' to most of the above questions.

Why deal with anxiety?

Anxiety can be very unpleasant to experience and it can limit the things you want to do. Left untreated, anxiety can last a long time and may lead from one anxiety condition to another. So someone who has generalised anxiety might develop panic attacks. Anxiety can also have significant physical impact. Some people may drink too much or misuse recreational drugs to deal with anxiety, which in turn will lead to further problems.

What can I try to do?

- **Face it!**
If you are putting off either thinking something or doing something because it makes you feel anxious, try and support yourself to face it – bit by bit
- **Do less**
If your anxiety makes you think too much (e.g. going over something again and again in your mind) or do too much (e.g. frequent hand washing) try and reduce the behaviour – one step at a time
- **Accept it**
The thoughts and behaviours you experience are symptoms of anxiety. See if you can calm your breathing and just let go of your fears by accepting them for what they are
- **Relax**
Have regular breaks, learn to relax, be mindful. Art, exercise, writing, acting, yoga, massage and listening to music help
- **Monitor**
Keep a diary to work out triggers and patterns
- **Seek help**
Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. You can always take your diary with you in order to help this process. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment

