

Helping Children to Cope with Stress and Anxiety

**Christ Church Primary School
Parent /Carer Workshop
3rd December 2020
10.00-11.00am**



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Today we will think about...

- To recognise the signs, symptoms and causes of stress and anxiety
- To take away strategies for helping your child to cope better with everyday stress and anxiety
- To understand how to support your child if they experience panic attacks

Ground Rules

- Confidentiality
- No pressure to share anything personal
- Being open-minded and non-judgemental
- Be kind to yourself

Stress:

a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances

“She's obviously under a lot of stress”



Anxiety:

a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.

“He felt a surge of anxiety”

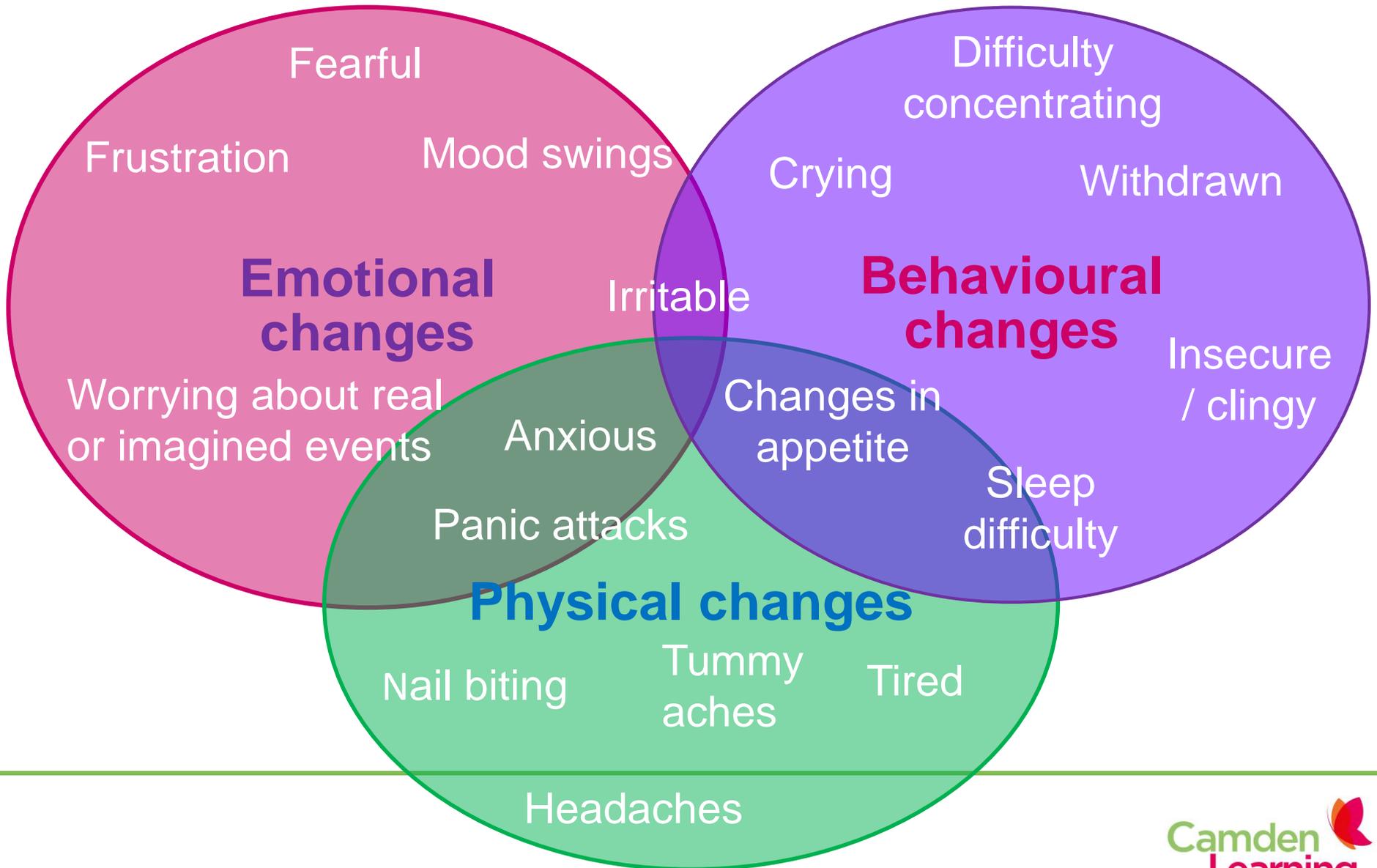




Can you think of examples of when your child has shown that they feel stressed or anxious?



Signs / Symptoms



The Spectrum of Stress and Anxiety

Healthy levels

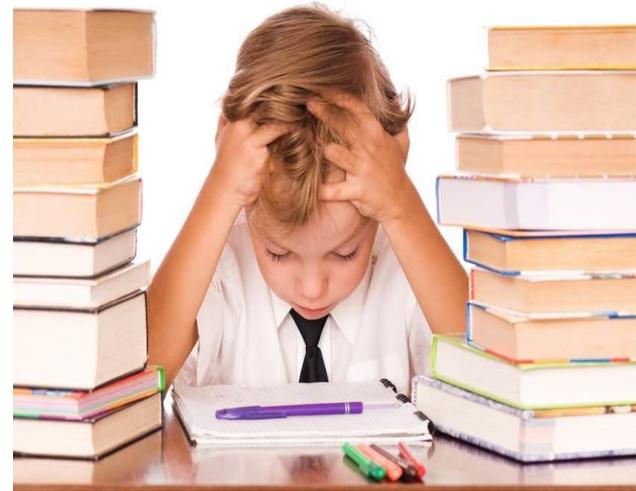


- Can use adrenaline to help us perform
- Develop motivation to achieve well
- Enables us to become good at specific things

70%

70% increase in rates of anxiety in teens over past 25 years.

Unhealthy levels



- Unable to function in daily life
- Stress hormone (cortisol) affects physical health too
- Inability to concentrate and problem-solve
- Sleep, diet, motivation can all be affected

If the stress/anxiety affects daily living

- Excessive anxiety and worry most days about many things for at least **six months**
- Difficulty controlling the worry
- Appearance of **three** of the following six symptoms: restlessness, fatigue, irritability, muscle tension, sleep disturbance, and difficulty concentrating
- Symptoms not being caused by current stressors from the environment, e.g. exams, lockdown, bereavement

Scenario

Your child has been home schooled for 3 months and is experiencing severe stress about their 11+ exams. They are showing these signs through tummy aches and skin rashes.

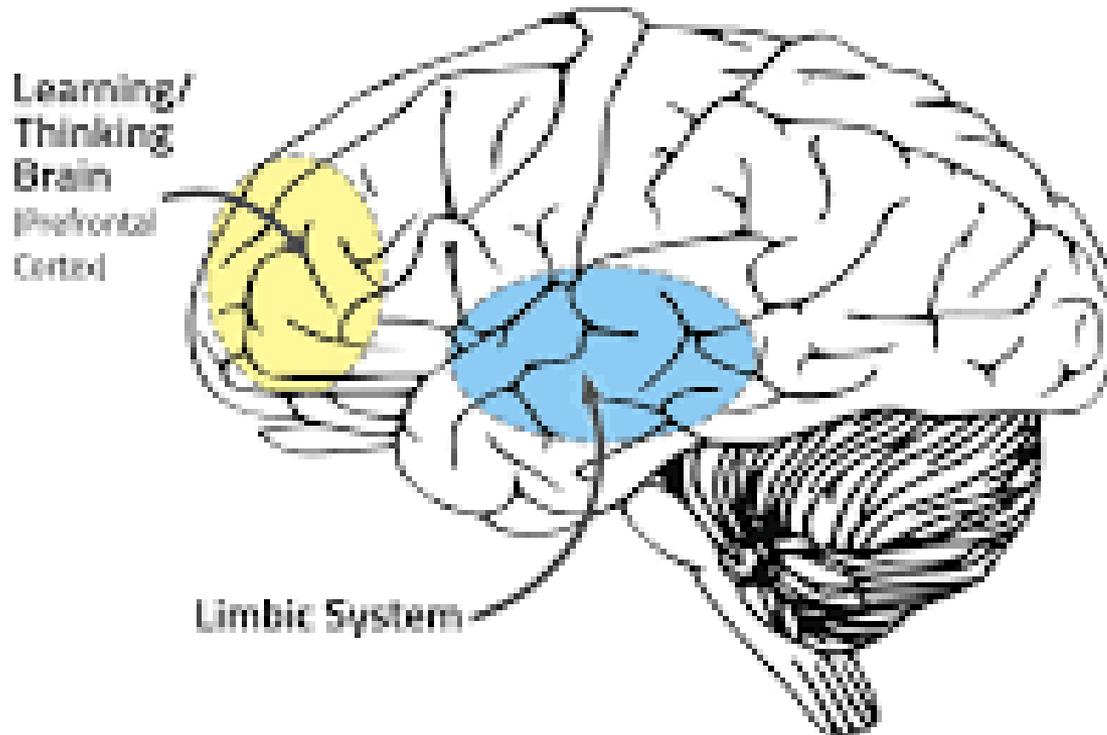
How would you deal with this situation?

Understanding the Stress/Anxiety Response

Survival Mode: Flight/Fight/Freeze

[Kids Want to Know](#)

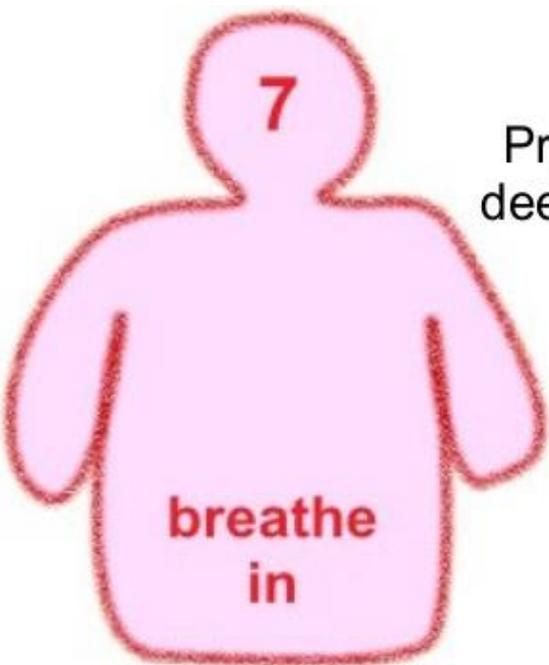
Frontal lobe (Prefrontal cortex) goes offline
Limbic system / mind and lower brain functions take over



Teaching Self-Regulation

In through the
nose

Out through the
mouth



Practice long
deep breathing



Count 1 to 7

Count 1 to 11

First, count from one to seven
on each "in" breath . . .

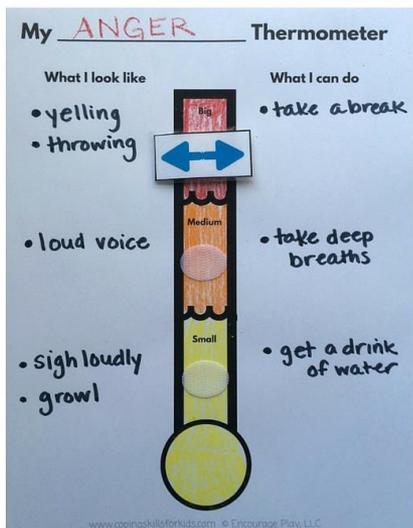
. . . then, counting at the same
rate, count from one to eleven
on each "out" breath

Self-regulation = calming ourselves down

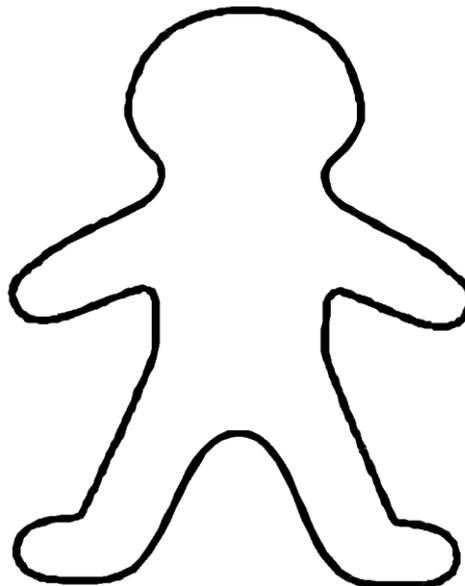
1. Recognise when we are starting to feel stressed
2. Name those feelings
3. Employ coping strategies

- Ginger-bread activity – write down how you feel when stressed
- Point to face picture that represents how you feel

Making a Feelings Thermometer



rd



5 ★ 4 ★ 3 ★ 2 ★ 1

SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN

FIRST OFF – TAKE 3 SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS!

5 List 5 things you can SEE 

4 List 4 things you can FEEL 

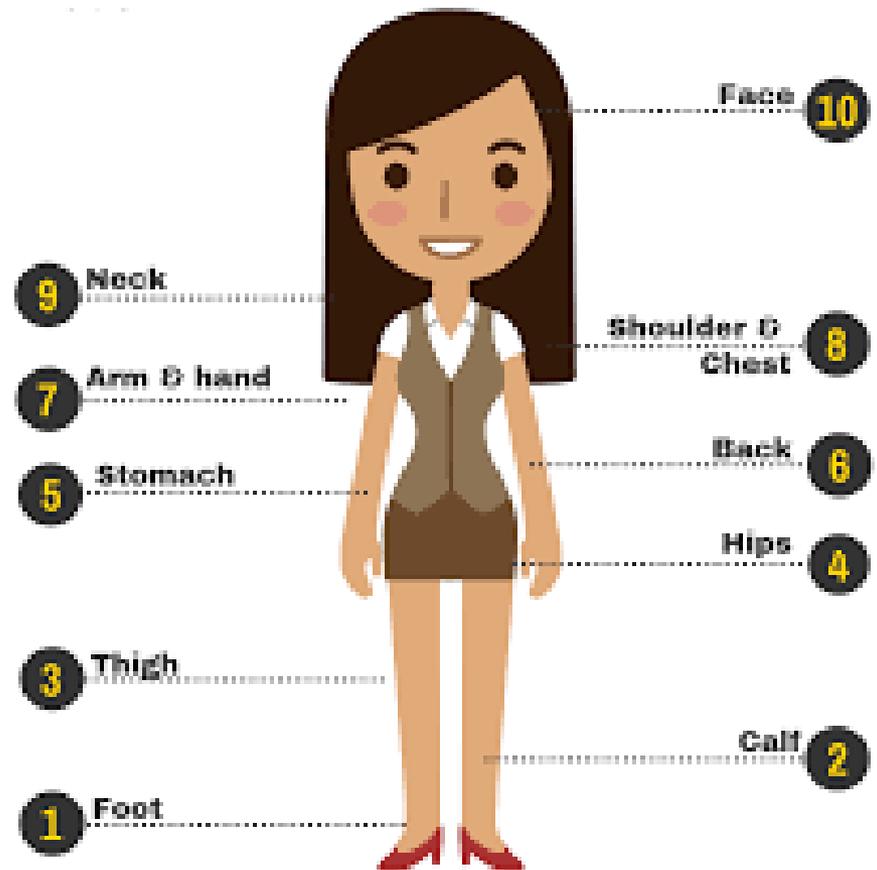
3 List 3 things you can HEAR 

2 List 2 things you can SMELL 

1 List something positive about yourself 😊

MAKE
today
COUNT

FINISHED? NOW – TAKE 3 MORE SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS ☺



WORKfit

[Headspace Video](https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness)

<https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness>

<https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids/>

THE STRESS BUCKET



Supportive Conversations

- **How to start a conversation with your child:**

- “Let’s share some things that went well today and some things that were hard, I’ll go first...”
- “Did anything make you smile today?”
- “I noticed you didn’t want to play with x, is anything on your mind?”

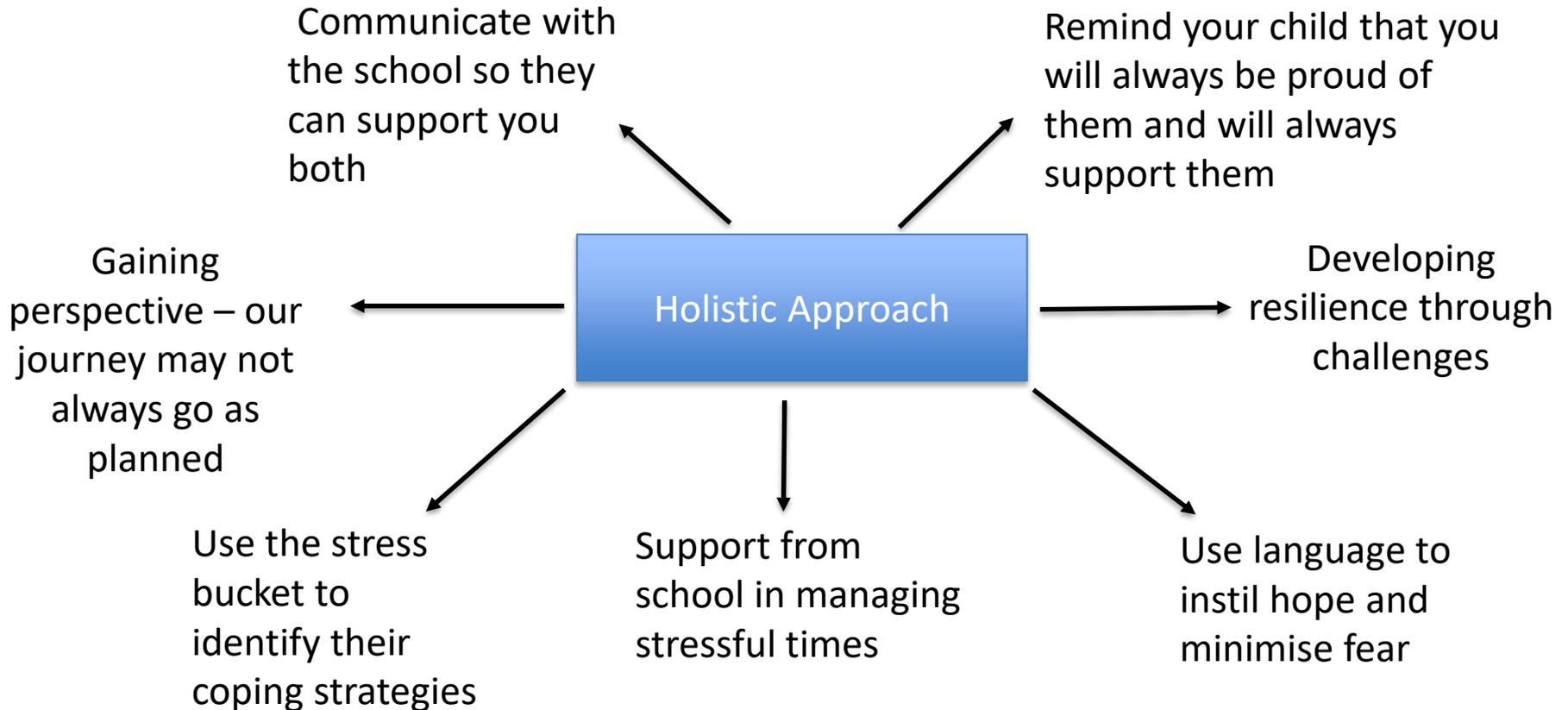
- **Some examples of what to say during a conversation with your child:**

- “Thank you for telling me, you are being really brave”
- “I’m here for you, we can work through this together”
- “These feelings won’t last forever, we can take it one day at a time ”

BASICS	BELONGING	LEARNING	COPING	CORE SELF
We have somewhere safe and clean to live	We feel that we have a place where we belong	We try our best to achieve as much as possible when completing obligations (work/ school/ volunteering etc)	We have rules for in and outside of the home and keep to them	We understand how other people feel
We have enough money for our family to live	We all have good friends that support us when needed		We are brave when we need to be	We understand how we work as a family
We can keep ourselves safe in our home and outside	We all have friendships that have lasted a long time		We can recognise problems and deal with them before they get worse	We understand each other
We can use transport to get to different places	We can speak to each other and friends when we need to		We solve problems as a family without blame	We know each other's interests and talents
We are free from prejudice and discrimination	We all help each other	We know what we want to do in our lives	We focus on good things in a bad situation	We each know our responsibilities within the family
We have a healthy diet	We meet up with friends and family that we can rely on	We have a plan as a family for our future	We start and continue activities that we enjoy doing	We create opportunities to do things that we enjoy
We get enough exercise and fresh air	We all have our own responsibilities	We are organised as a family	We calm ourselves down and relax when we need to	
We get enough sleep/ have a good 'bed time'	We focus on and remember good times and places together	We highlight each other's achievements as a family	We look on the 'bright side' and remember that 'tomorrow is another day'	We know there are services around us that can help and support us
We spend time together as a family	We all know our family history and where we come from		We are open to learning new things	We give each other support when needed
We keep ourselves clean and tidy	We all think positively about a new situation or person	We teach each other new skills	We give others support as a family	We use specialist support when needed
	We make friends with people and mix/ go out with them		We all have a laugh together	
	We belong to a group			

Managing this scenario

Your child has been home schooled for 3 months and is experiencing severe stress about their 11+ exams. They are showing these signs through tummy aches and skin rashes.



Panic Attacks

Supporting someone during a panic attack

- Breathe slowly and deeply together
- Sit with them and offer calm physical reassurance
- Reassure them that the anxiety will pass and that they will be okay
- Ask them to think of a safe and relaxing place
- Try using all five senses together

Helping someone understand what panic attacks are

- Panic attacks are the body's "flight-freeze-fight" response kicking in.
- Panic attacks are harmless, although they can feel very uncomfortable or scary.
- Panic attacks are brief (typically lasting only 10 to 15 minutes)

Feedback Forms

[Parent Workshop Feedback Form](#)

Where to get Advice and Support

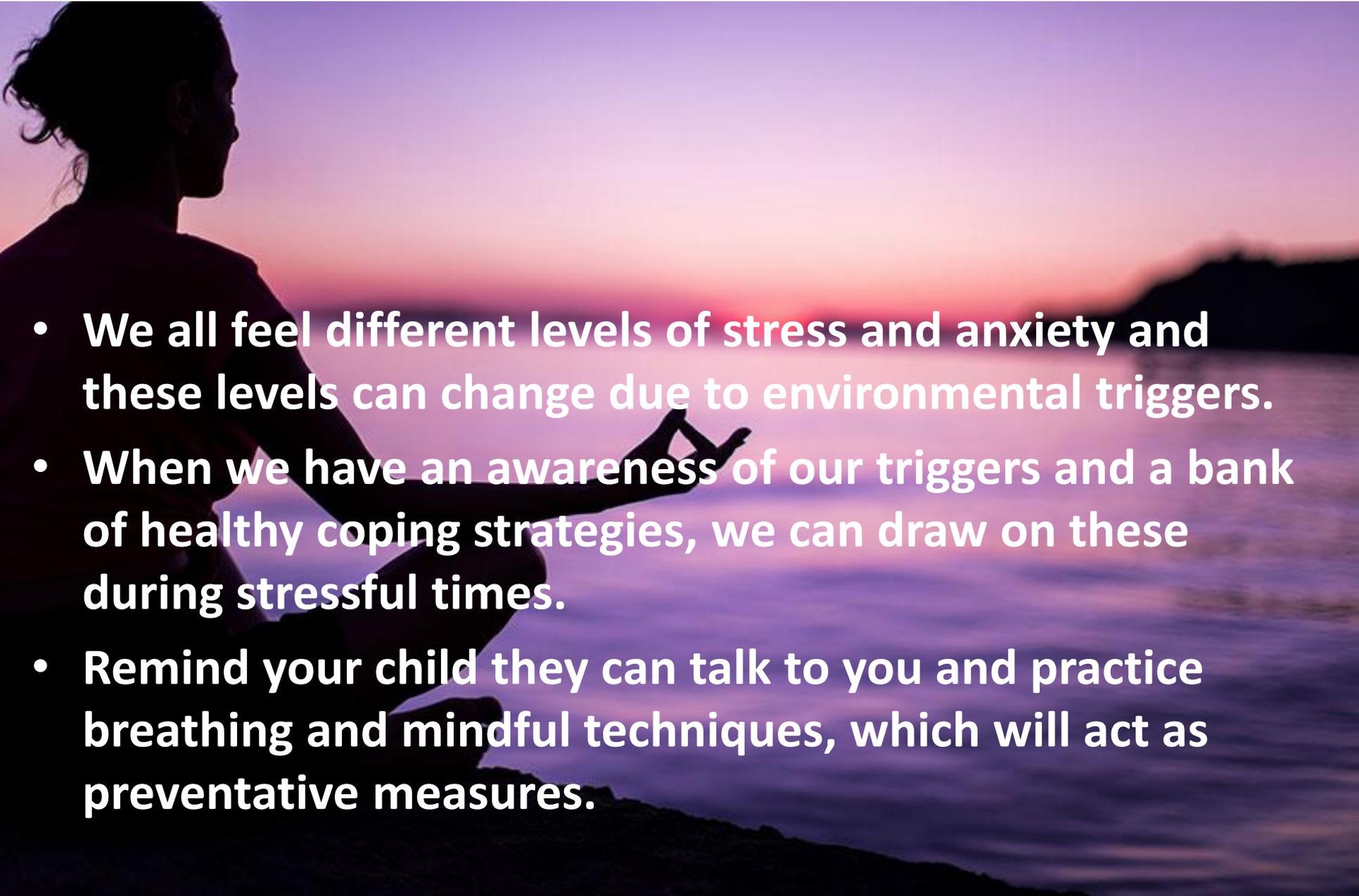
- Family / Friends
- School
- GP



Websites:

- [Resilient Stories](#)
- [MindED - For Families](#)
- [Action for Children - Parent Support](#)
- [Anna Freud - Support for Parents](#)

Summary

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- A silhouette of a person sitting in a meditative pose (lotus or similar) against a background of a sunset or sunrise over water. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and orange, and the water below is dark with some light reflections. The person's hands are in a mudra (gesture), with fingers interlaced.
- **We all feel different levels of stress and anxiety and these levels can change due to environmental triggers.**
 - **When we have an awareness of our triggers and a bank of healthy coping strategies, we can draw on these during stressful times.**
 - **Remind your child they can talk to you and practice breathing and mindful techniques, which will act as preventative measures.**