



Anxiety Advice Bag

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Anxiety thermometer

For child or young person

Using a feelings thermometer is a great tool to help us recognise what feelings we might be experiencing in any given moment.

Here is an Anxiety Thermometer.

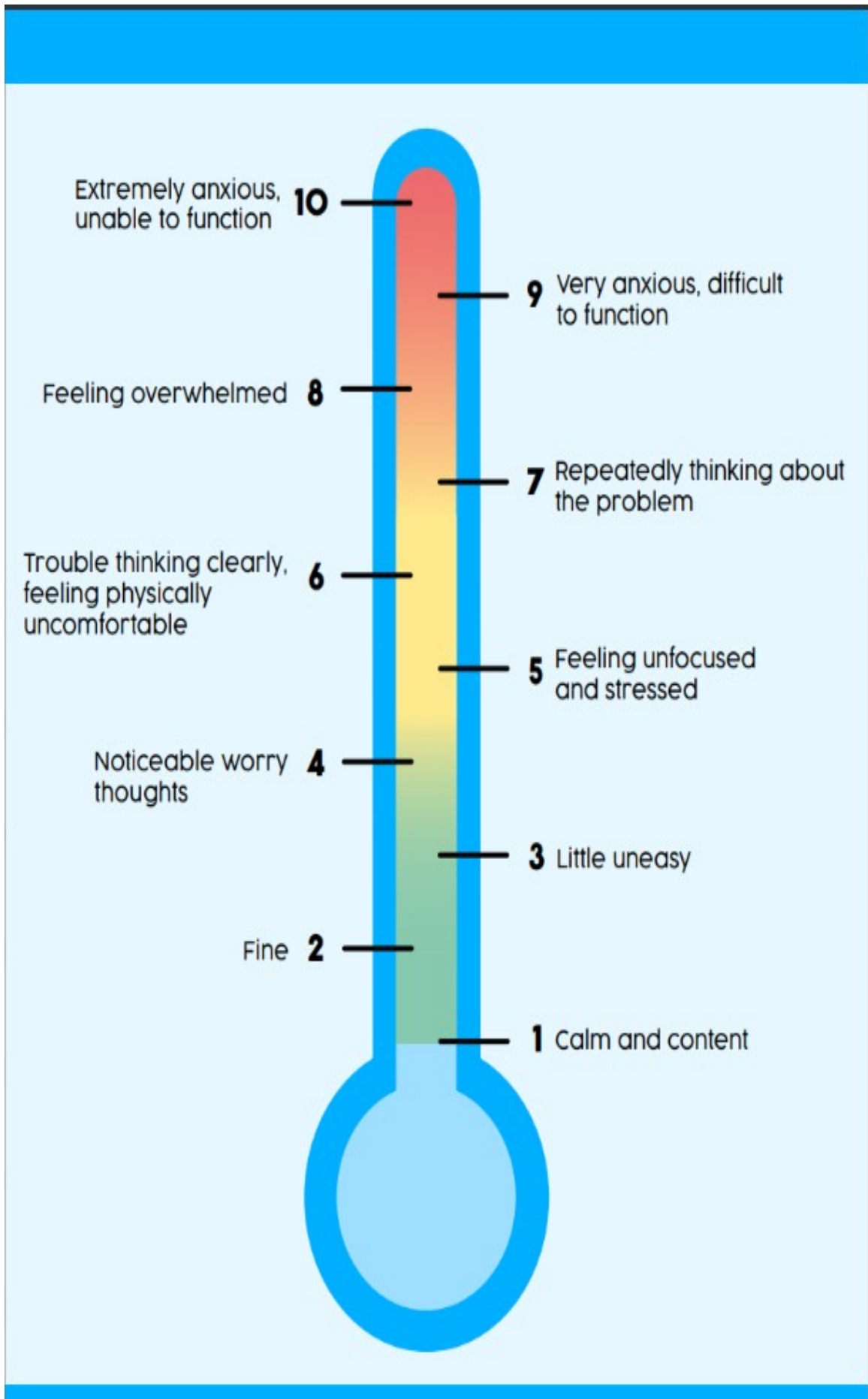
We can experience anxiety at different levels and intensities, and at times it can feel really uncomfortable and scary. A helpful strategy is becoming aware of what level our anxiety is at. If we can develop an understanding of our anxiety or worries, then this is the first step in learning strategies to manage or cope better.

Anxiety may be triggered by different situations, and so using this tool can also help us recognise what situations make us feel more anxious or worried than others.

For adults

It can be helpful to plan in advance with the pupil what strategy will be helpful for them, if they were to move up the thermometer. So for example, if they rate their anxiety as 3, 4 or 5, it may be that practicing some breathing techniques is a helpful strategy. However if they are further up the scale, they may require more support. This may need some further planning and so it is important to use this Anxiety Thermometer tool in conjunction with other resources and supports.

Prior to using this resource with a child, please read through our pages on anxiety and guidance for delivering short activities to ensure you have a good understanding of how to use the resources safely.



ANXIETY TOOLS for parents

The coronavirus lockdown has meant that children have spent a significantly increased amount of time with their families. Some may be feeling anxious about returning to school each day.

We have created some tools to help you support your child with any anxiety they might be feeling, including top tips, an example action plan and some activities to support you and your child.

There is a blank action plan for you to fill in. You can work through this with your child so they feel informed about the return to school. For support with delivering the activities please see our [guidance document for parents](#).

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Spotting the signs of anxiety

visit [Mentally Healthy Schools](#) for more resources

If your child is feeling anxious, they may display some of the following physical and emotional symptoms:

- headaches and stomach aches or just feeling unwell
- dizziness/faintness/palpitations/breathlessness/sweating
- not sleeping
- not eating properly
- being clingy/feeling panicky/tearful
- seeming to be worried or anxious and needing lots of reassurance
- feeling down or depressed
- having difficulty concentrating
- wanting things to be perfect and getting frustrated if they're not
- lashing out at others
- hyper-alertness and difficulty keeping still



Identifying how they are feeling

The levels of anxiety may ebb and flow for your child during the first few weeks of term. It may be difficult for your child to explain how they are feeling, so it could be useful for you and your child to become familiar with our [anxiety thermometer tool](#), which helps them gauge their level of anxiety and can help you respond appropriately to how they are feeling.



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Top tips

1. Explore ways to help your child cope with their anxieties and worries. Try working together to test out fears gradually - setting small, specific goals (for example, walking to the classroom door with their teacher, then with a friend instead). The action plan [below](#) will help with this.
2. Stay calm, supportive and practical. Try not to get drawn into your child's emotions. Praise and reward small (and big) successes when a child faces their fears. It can help them if you remain positive and encouraging, without forcing them into anything.
3. Focus on what helps. Instead of trying to reassure a child that nothing bad will happen, focus on what helped them cope when they faced a similar situation. Help a child think through what they have learned about their fears and about themselves. Did their worry come true? Did they cope?



Coping strategies

If your child describes their anxiety levels as mild to moderate, there may be a number of simple coping strategies they could use to focus on getting through the period of anxiety. You might want to try a variety of techniques out to see which ones work best for your child.

- Mindfulness is one technique that helps children relax physically and emotionally. You can find a number of mindfulness techniques from our clinicians in our [mindfulness calendar](#).
- Sometimes concentrating on self-care can help children to re-focus. We have produced a [self-care pack](#) of activities for your child to complete at home. It also features some support helplines for when they need someone outside the home to talk to.

- Meditation or relaxation activities can support your child to unwind. There are a number of apps you might want to explore or you can find six different relaxations to test out [here](#).

You can find some more ideas for in our [tools for managing emotions pack](#).



Action Plan

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

It may be useful to work through your child's worry with the below action plan. You may want to model this first with a worry of your own to demonstrate.

How I am feeling? (use anxiety thermometer to support)



Try to describe or draw what you are thinking about...



Who could help me with this worry?

What would be an appropriate solution?

What small step could I take towards the solution?



What else could I do?

What could my school do to help with this?

What could my parent or carer do to support this?

What coping strategies could I use to re-focus or relax?



TAKE 5 AWARENESS

1

Name something you can see



2

Name something you can feel.



3

Name something you can hear.



4

Name something you can smell.



5

Name something you can taste.



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Hot Chocolate Breathing



Pretend you are holding a warm mug of hot chocolate. Take in a **slow, deep breath** through your nose to smell the treat. Then **breathe out** through your mouth to cool it off. **Repeat this five times.** Deep breathing is a great tool to calm your mind and your body!



NursingMoms.com 2011

BUBBLE BREATH

A fun way to teach kids how to do calm breathing is the "bubble blowing" technique.

1

Using a toy soap bubble container and wand (available at any toy store), practice blowing bubbles.



2

Take a slow, deep breath in, hold for a second, and slowly blow some bubbles. Be sure to blow the bubble really slowly, so it doesn't pop!

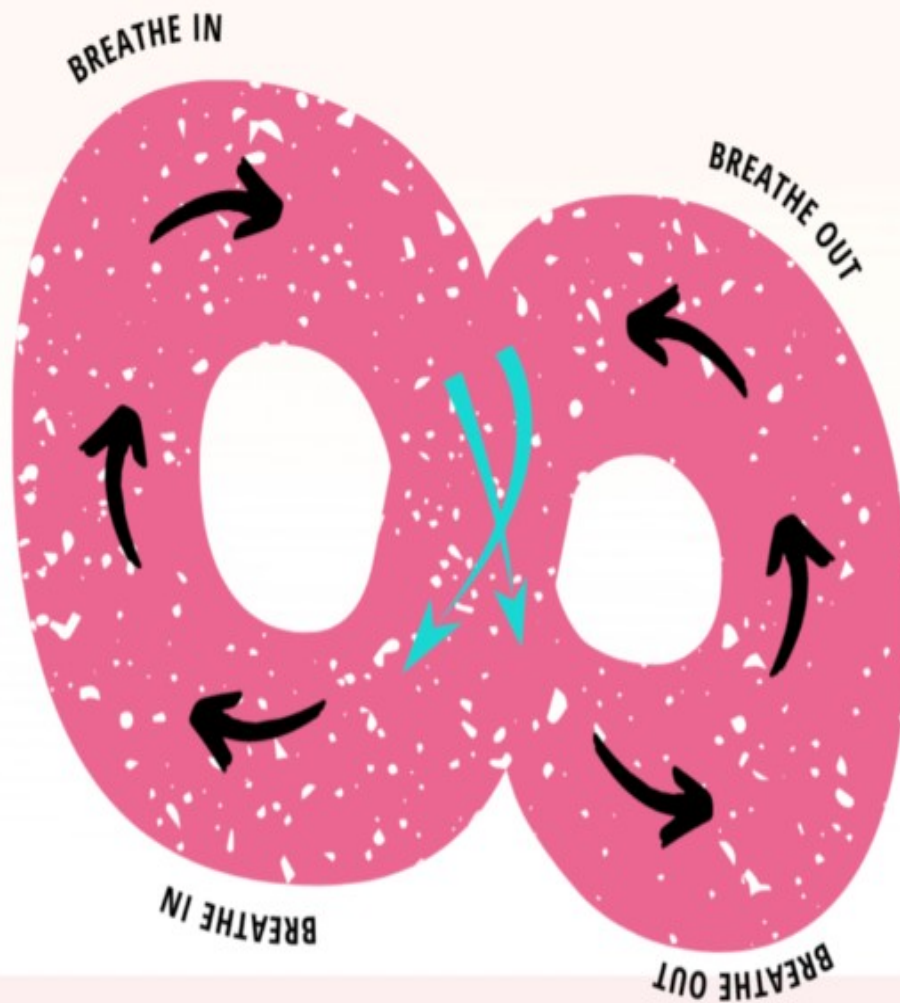


3

Pause a few moments before blowing another bubble. You can also practice "blowing bubbles" without a bubble wand.



LAZY 8 BREATHING



HOW TO

Slowly trace the lazy 8 above while breathing in and out deeply.

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