

Understanding and Supporting young people with Anxiety

What is anxiety?

When is anxiety a problem?

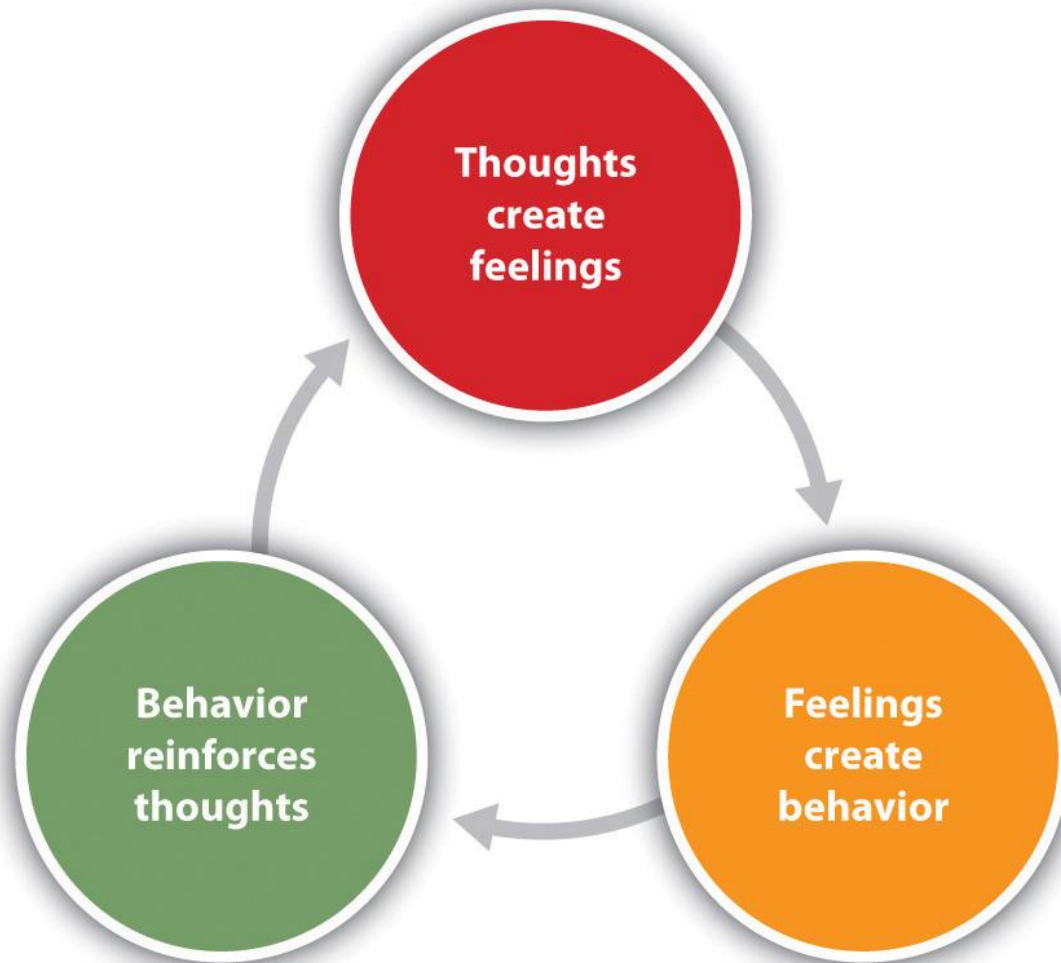
Spotting the signs

Supporting your child

What is Mental Health?



Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour



What is Anxiety

- There are 4 parts:
- Physical
- Emotional
- Thoughts
- Behaviour



When is Anxiety a Problem?

- Anxiety is normal – when is it problematic?
- Is it developmentally normal, eg. separation anxiety?
- What are the triggers?

Establish the scale of the anxiety

- Look at a simple scale from 1 to 10 to enable your teenager to rate their worries
- Encourage them to keep a thought diary
- Remember – anxiety is a continuum – anxious feelings will pass
- Make sure that your child can talk to you and/or another trusted appropriate adult (network hand)
- Anxiety mapping

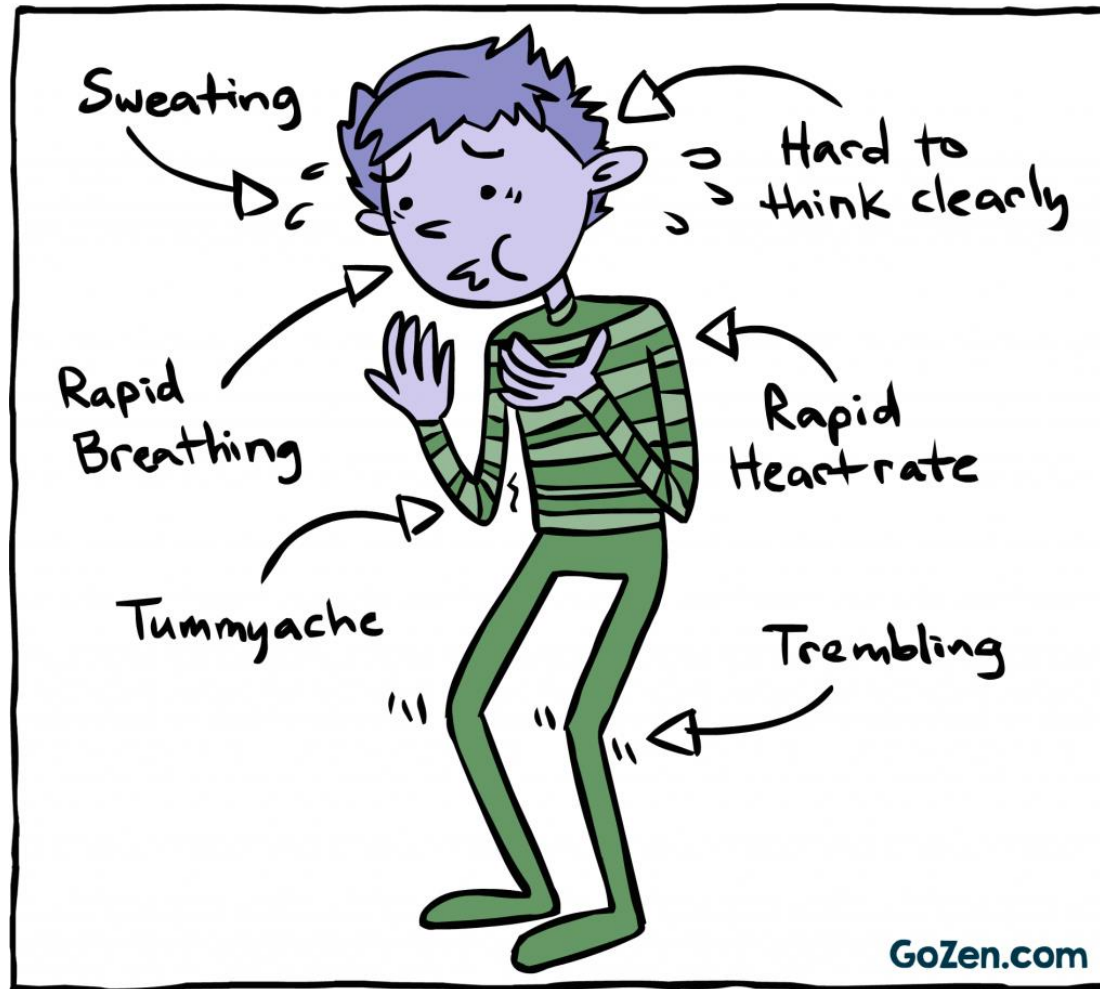
Anxiety Scale

CHECK IN		
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

Risk Factors

- Environment – parental anxiety / environmental factors, eg. school, separation, moving house, friendships, poor family relationships
- Genetic factors
- Temperament and personality

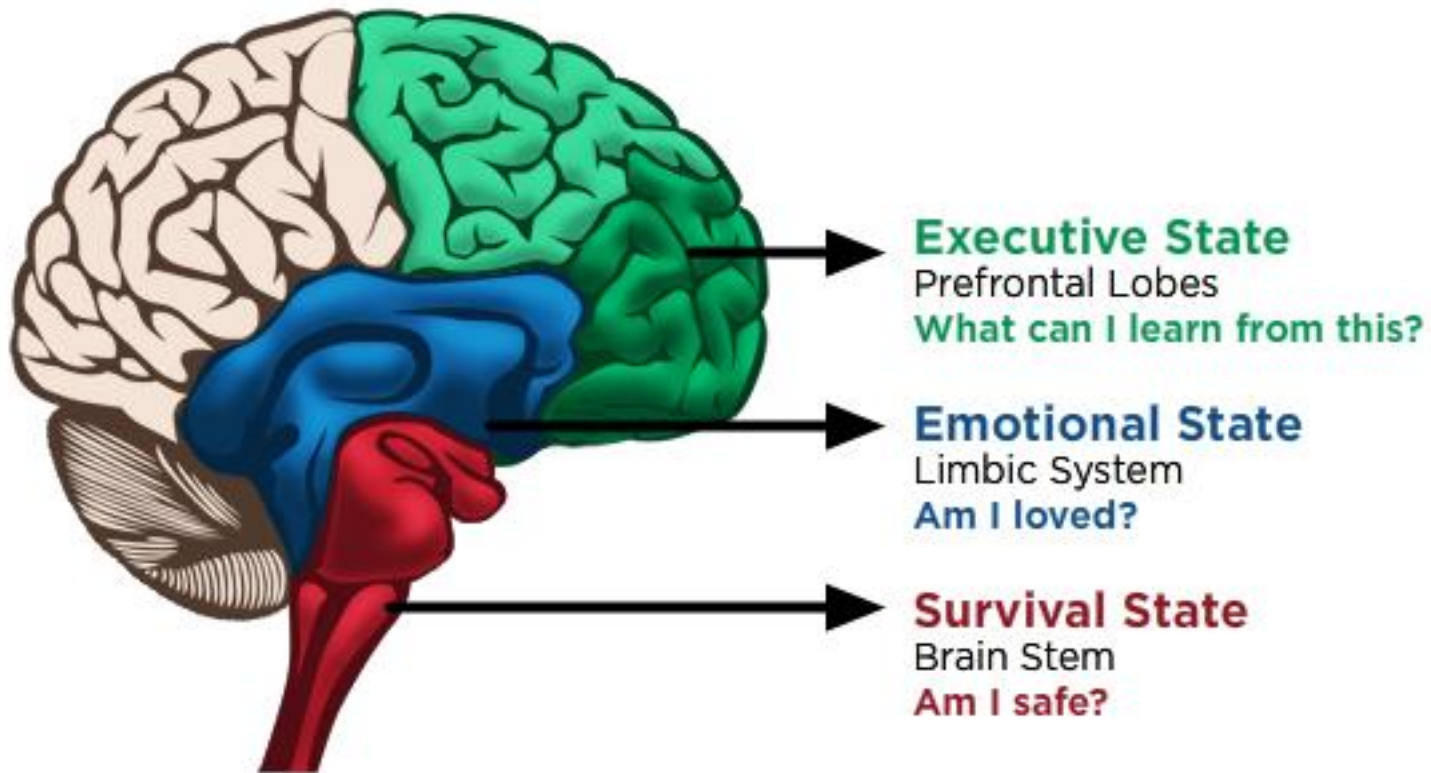
What does Anxiety Look Like?



Feeling Safe

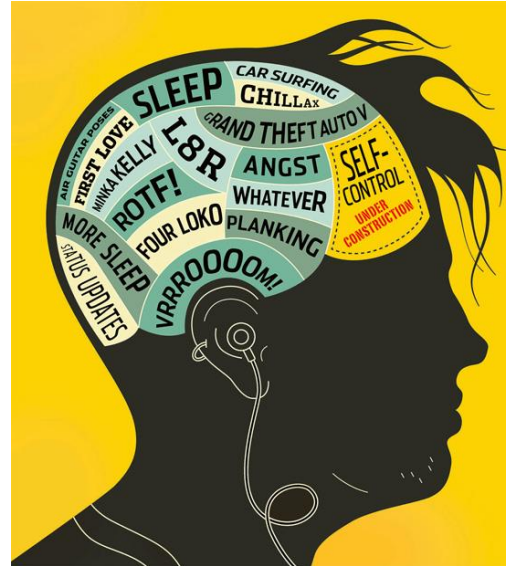


Understanding the Physiology



The Teen Brain

- A period of rapid growth and change
- Emotional State versus Executive State
- Impulsive and risky behavior
- Sleep!
- Boundaries



How to Spot the Signs in young people

- Unexplained physical symptoms, eg. tummy ache, headaches, sweating, nausea
- Excessively clingy or withdrawn
- Fidgeting, picking, nail biting
- A change in eating habits
- Reluctant to try new or existing social situations and/or to engage with friends
- Constantly checking social media and making comparisons with other peoples' lives
- Asking questions about things that have or might have happened – catastrophising – negative or faulty thinking
- Low self esteem / low self confidence
- Anger, restlessness, irritability, intolerance
- Tearfulness
- Difficulty in sleeping / waking
- Overly Perfectionist
- A gradual or sudden deterioration in school work
- Mood swings



Faulty Thinking

- Challenge thoughts
- What are the facts? What is it that is actually worrying you?
- Do you have any evidence to support these feelings?
- What can you change? What can't you change?
- Is this reaction proportional?
- Is it really as important as it seems?
- Is there another way of looking at this situation? An alternative perspective?
- Who can help me?
- Children who are anxious often need support to challenge unhelpful thinking.
- What advice would your child give to somebody else who was having the same problem?
- Promote positive thinking – instead of “I can't”, “I can't yet”
- A positive diary, things that go well
- Think about what you can do – break it down into small steps
- The exposure ladder

Exam Stress

- It's normal
- Faulty Thinking
- Where is it coming from?
- Whose exams are they?
- Self-esteem
- Preparation
- Practical steps



Supporting your teenager

- Starts with you!
- Listen actively
- Get the basics right (diet, exercise, sleep)
- Initiate “no technology” times
- Support your teenager to manage social media
- Connect
- Normalise – it’s ok to be anxious
- Small steps
- The Four P’s
- Rehearse and prepare
- Be calm
- Be aware of your own anxiety and how you respond to stress
- Encourage calming strategies: yoga, mindfulness, breathing exercises, guided meditations, apps.

Support Network

- Where to go for help
- School – form teacher / head of year
- School mental health lead or pastoral team
- GP
- School Nurse (self-referral)
- Counselling / Mentoring
- Online resources
- Apps



Wellbeing



Resources

- www.Kooth.com
- www.minded.org.uk
- www.hpft.nhs.uk/wellbeing-service
- www.healthforteens.co.uk
- www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk
- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk
- Sam-app.org.uk
- Calm.com
- Smilingmind.com
- www.headspace.com
- Mind shift
- Mood tracker
- Mood panda
- Breathewithme.co.uk
- “Starving my Anxiety Gremlin” for secondary school aged children



FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Partnership Development Manager/Director of Vista St Albans CIC – Jo Maher

Tel: 07939 111152 Office: 01727 855134

Email: vistastalbans@gmail.com

www.vistastalbans.org.uk