

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up. She has her right hand pressed against her face, covering her eyes and nose, suggesting distress or anxiety. The background is a light gray wall covered in a complex, hand-drawn mind map or flowchart with various nodes, arrows, and symbols like a lightbulb and a question mark. The overall image has a soft, slightly desaturated aesthetic.

# **Anxiety workshop**

# We will try to cover:

- ★ What is anxiety?
- ★ The different ways anxiety is displayed
- ★ How to spot signs of anxiety in your child/teenager
- ★ How to help your anxious child/teenager



# What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear that is experienced as a combination of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings.

It's a normal part of growing up. Exams, first day of school....

It starts to become a problem when a young person feels stuck in it or when it feels overwhelming, distressing or unmanageable. This is draining and can leave a person feeling exhausted.



# What makes our young people feel anxious?

- Experiencing lots of change in a short space of time, such as moving house or school.
- Having responsibilities that are beyond their age and development, for example caring for other people in their family.
- Being around someone who is very anxious, such as a parent.
- Struggling at school, including feeling overwhelmed by work, exams or peer groups.
- Experiencing family stress around things like housing, money and debt.
- Going through distressing or traumatic experiences in which they do not feel safe, such as being bullied or witnessing or experiencing abuse.



# School anxiety

Young people told Young Minds that their worries about school can include:

- finding the work difficult, or problems with concentration
- finding school exhausting, especially if dealing with mental or physical health issues
- feeling pressure to get good results
- friendship difficulties
- experiencing or witnessing bullying
- feeling like they don't 'fit in', aren't accepted, supported or seen
- not getting on with teachers
- feeling pressured to learn in a particular way
- additional needs such as dyslexia or ADHD not being recognised
- feeling average or no good among high-achieving peers



# School anxiety

School can be a source of support and community as well as learning.

It is however completely normal for children to feel worried about aspects of school life occasionally. This is usually short-lived, but for some children school can feel challenging, stressful or distressing for a longer period.

‘School refusal’, though many object to the implication that it’s a choice. It is also known as emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA) or anxiety-related absence.

We should all try to act as soon as possible to identify any triggers and talk about potential support.



# **The different ways anxiety is displayed** (school specific)



# The different ways anxiety is displayed (school specific)

- not wanting to get up and get ready
- being reluctant or refusing to go to school
- worrying excessively about small issues, such as having the right equipment for a lesson
- feeling sick or having stomach or headaches
- not doing schoolwork, or grades dropping
- being angry or upset, or acting out – at school or home
- withdrawing – seeming low, quiet or depressed
- reluctance to return after a period of illness
- not going to school without you knowing



# What about outside of school?

- **Physical symptoms:**

- panic attacks, which can include having a racing heart, breathing very quickly, sweating or shaking
- shallow or quick breathing, or feeling unable to breathe
- feeling sick
- dry mouth
- sweating more than usual
- tense muscles
- wobbly legs
- irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), diarrhoea or needing to pee more than usual
- getting very hot

- **Thoughts and feelings:**

- preoccupied by upsetting, scary or negative thoughts
- nervous, on edge, panicky or frightened
- overwhelmed or out of control
- full of dread or an impending sense of doom
- alert to noises, smells or sights
- worrying about being unable to cope with daily things like school, friendships and being in groups or social situations
- worrying so much that it is difficult to concentrate and/or sleep



# How to help your anxious child/teenager

Talk them in a calmer moment and help them to identify what is causing them anxiety. Is it something they can control?

Help your child to understand themselves and find out what works for them.

**Help them create a plan and don't move everything out of their way.**





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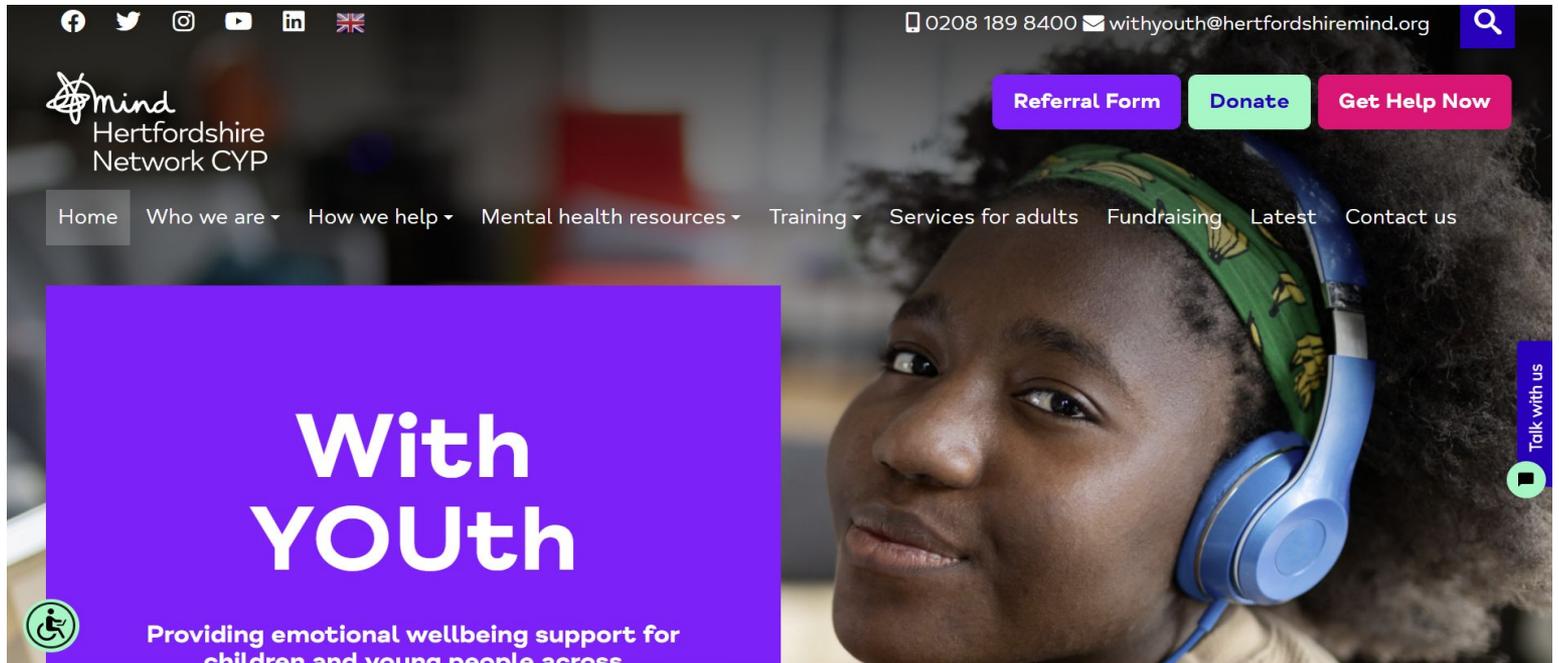


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# Brand new this month

<https://www.withyouth.org/>



<https://learn.beaumont.school/support>

# References

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/anxiety/>

