

A young person's guide to

# Stress & Anxiety



Oxfordshire

# Stress & Anxiety

We all feel stressed or anxious from time to time. They are feelings we get when we are worried about something.

Often stress or anxious thoughts can occur from situations in our daily life for example;

- if things are difficult at home
- if you are joining a new class or school
- ongoing changes that disrupt our routine
- if you have fallen out with friends
- if someone (or a pet) you care about has died
- difficulties with relationships
- sometimes, people worry about their appearance or other aspects of who they are

We all feel stressed, anxious, or worried over different things. When you are stressed or anxious, you might feel panicky, you might get hot and sweaty, and you might find it hard to get to sleep. These feelings are all perfectly normal if they happen from time to time.

But if you feel stressed or anxious a lot of the time, then it can be a problem because it can interfere in your enjoyment of life. It can also make the things that you are worried about feel worse than they really are. If that happens, then it is very useful to learn ways of coping with the feelings.



# Why does it happen?

Just like all creatures, we humans react to danger and our bodies react to it. If we feel we are in danger often our heart rate increases, oxygen is pumped to our muscles and we are chemically set to react.



Our bodies release a hormone called adrenaline, it makes us ready to respond to the danger and gives us a good chance of getting away. This process has been happening for centuries, when you think back to our ancestors and even today when we think of situations that are stressful. Our bodies still release adrenaline, and we get those feelings of a pounding heart and tense muscles.



These feelings can still be helpful. Think about when you've had to deliver a presentation in front of your class or prepare for an exam, sometimes feeling a little anxious can help you focus and be at your best.



But if you have the feelings a lot and they are making you unhappy, then it is time to do something about it. Feeling constantly stressed and if our bodies are reacting this way a lot of the time, this can affect us both mentally and physically.



In some people, anxiety can lead to panic attacks when the feelings of stress can be overwhelming. Panic attacks can last for between 5 and 20 minutes and can be very frightening. Developing techniques to cope with stress and anxiety can reduce the chance of panic attacks happening.

# How to recognise feelings of anxiety and stress

Can you list some of the emotional feelings and also the physical feelings people could experience when feeling anxious or stressed, use the pictures below or the bullet points:

## Emotional Feelings



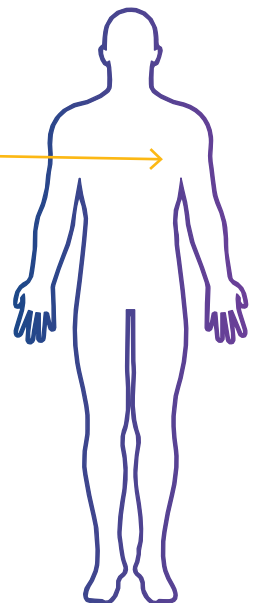
• Difficulty sleeping

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

## Physical Feelings

• Faster heartbeat

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 



Once we identify our bodies signals of reacting to stressful or anxious situations when can think of ways to look after ourselves and reduce these feelings or the chances of a panic attack later on.

# Managing stress and anxiety

There are some things you can do to help you to control feelings of stress and anxiety. Here are some examples:

## 7/11 breathing to help you relax

When we feel stressed or anxious, it affects our breathing. We tend to take short, fast breaths from high up in our body, in our chest. Breathing too quickly can mean you take in too much oxygen, which can make you feel light headed. That can make you feel panicky. If you notice that you are breathing quickly, or that you are starting to feel light-headed, then 7/11 breathing can help you to feel more calm.

1. Breathe in and count to seven as you do so
2. Hold for two seconds
3. Now breathe out and count to eleven at the same pace
4. Keep doing this until you feel more relaxed

## Exercise

Stress and anxious feelings are linked to our bodies releasing adrenaline so that we can run and escape from danger, the amazing thing is that running reduces the feelings of stress and anxiety.

This is because exercise, any exercise, not just running, releases another hormone called endorphin which helps you to feel better and even helps you sleep more easily. Exercising when you feel stressed or anxious can help. Doing regular exercise, including playing sports, walking, cycling, can all help you to manage stress and anxiety.

- Try to complete 3 sets of 30mins exercise routine for at least 3x a week, see what exercise works best for you.

# Managing stress and anxiety

## Talk to someone or write down how you feel

Talking to someone you trust about the way you are feeling can be very helpful. This could be a family member, a friend or even professionals.

Writing things down can also be very helpful. It can help you to understand the way you are feeling and also to think through some things that can help. The template below might be useful to try out.

I feel stressed and anxious when...	In this situation my body feels...	I feel better if I...
I have exams	I get sweaty, I start to feel dizzy and sick	I can give myself breaks, go for a run to clear my head

# Services that can help

It's important to seek help if you are constantly feeling stressed or anxious, like we said earlier talking to someone is the first big step, also it might be worth talking to:

- Doctor
- School or college
- CAMHS/AMHT
- Oxfordshire Mind
- Other charities/organisations

The Mix

## THE MIX

[www.themix.org.uk/](http://www.themix.org.uk/)

Young Minds

## YOUNGMINDS

[www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/panic-attacks/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/panic-attacks/)

Mind



[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/understanding-my-feelings/](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/understanding-my-feelings/)

We're Mind, the mental health charity.  
We're here to make sure anyone with a  
mental health problem has somewhere  
to turn for advice and support.



Oxfordshire

☎ 01865 247788  
✉ [info@oxfordshiremind.org.uk](mailto:info@oxfordshiremind.org.uk)  
🌐 [www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk)  
💬 85258

© Oxfordshire Mind. Registered Charity Number: 251476.  
Company Limited by Guarantee Number: 4343625.  
Registered in England at registered office: 2 Kings Meadow, Oxford OX2 0DP, UK.