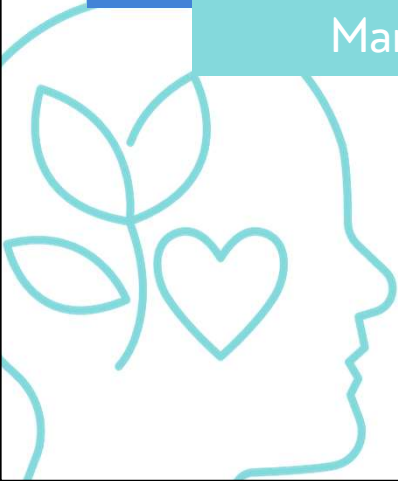



Portishead Wellbeing Workshops

Managing exam stress in children and young



1

Claire Taylor, Equine Reflections




Equine Reflections
EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

I'm Claire Taylor, a qualified and experienced equine assisted learning (EAL) therapist.

Using my Thrive training and experience working in schools with children experiencing social, emotional, and mental health difficulties, I use tried and tested activities with carefully chosen horses, to help children and young people with:

Confidence | Emotions | Behaviour | Trust
Self Esteem | Communication | Listening | Social Skills
Stress | Anxiety | Relationships and more...

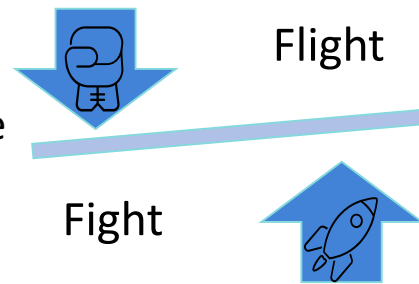
I observe and interact with the children as they work with the horse, identifying behaviour patterns and helping the children to process their thoughts and emotions.




2

The Science of Stress

- Stress causes the release of hormones
– e.g., adrenalin
- This is called the fight or flight response
- It can take a few minutes to many hours for the hormones to return to normal

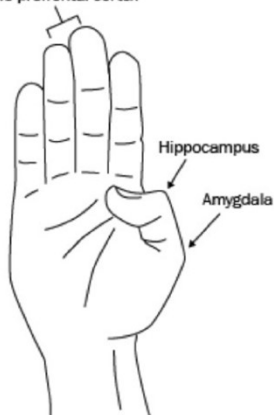


3

Hand Model of The Brain

The science of flipping your lid

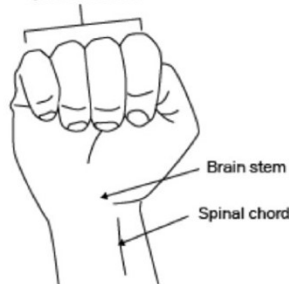
Middle prefrontal cortex



Hippocampus

Amygdala

Cerebral cortex



Brain stem

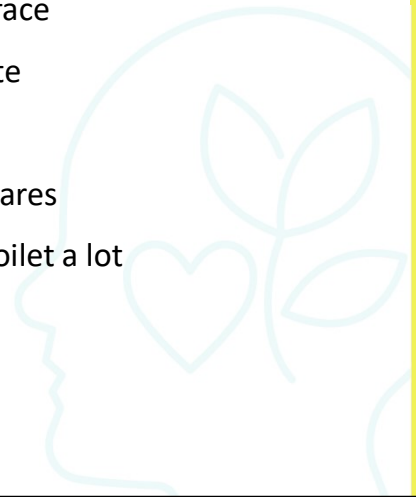
Spinal chord

Hand model courtesy of Dan Siegel

4

Physical Signs of Anxiety

- Heart beats faster
- Headache
- Shaking
- Knot in the stomach / feeling sick
- Hot and sweaty
- Stomachache
- Rapid breathing
- Cold
- Red / blotchy face
- Loss of appetite
- Tears
- Tired / nightmares
- Going to the toilet a lot



5

And Breathe...

Taking 3 mindful breaths reduces the physical effects

1. Plant your feet shoulder width apart on the floor and ground – feel calm, reassured and in control
2. Breathe in deeply through your nose for 3 seconds
3. Breathe out completely through your mouth for 5 seconds

Keep going until your breathing feels steady, your heart slows down and you start to relax. . .



6

The Anxious Child

Behaviours you may notice...

- Avoiding people, places or situations
- A desire to stay home
- The need for a comfort item
- Staying close to parents
- Saying certain words / asking certain things repetitively
- Washing, checking, organising, collecting things (*compulsive behaviour*)
- Hiding (*in room, within clothing, behind hair etc*)
- Becoming self-conscious
- Acting in angry ways (*dysregulation*)
- Demand avoidance
- Controlling food and eating
- Self-harming

7

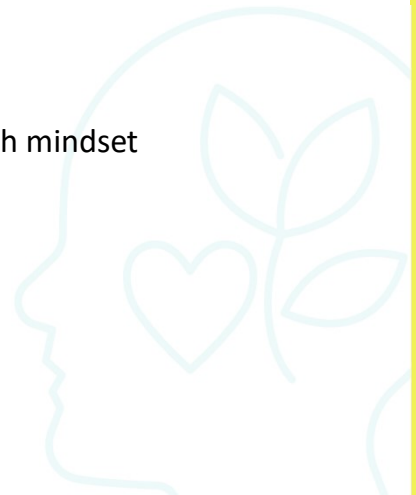
Anxiety Triggers

- Personal threshold – how we, as an individual think about a thing or situation
- Change
- Social media
- Our world today
- Social economic status
- Tests
- Media
- The impact of others – parents, friends

8

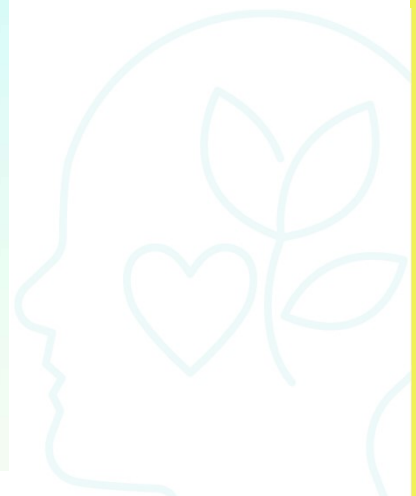
How Can We Help?

- Validation / affirmation of feelings
- Co-regulation - being calm, being consistent
- Trust
- Time
- Use of language (label the behaviour not the child)
- Think differently – raise self-esteem, encourage a growth mindset
- Talk openly and without judgement
- Worry time using a worry box / worry diary
- Regular exercise
- Relaxation, visualisation, meditation
- Distraction
- Sleep hygiene practices



9

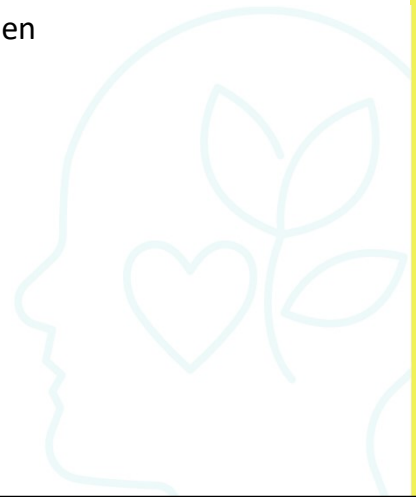
The PACE Model



10

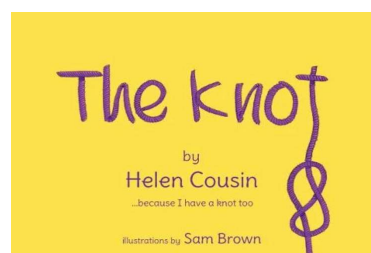
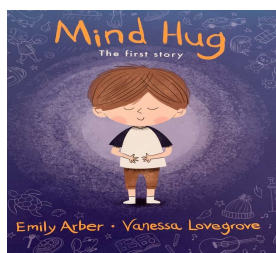
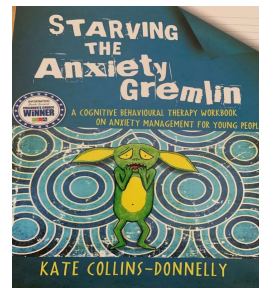
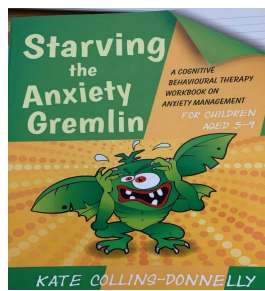
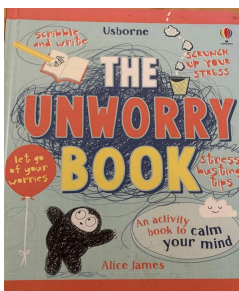
Recommendations

- Ask the school if it can make reasonable adjustments
- Work with the school to keep lines of communication open
- Seek alternative support from professional services
- Ask for a school nurse referral
- Speak to your GP



11

Resources



12

School Nursing Team

Charlotte Tucker



13

Why Do Exams Cause Stress?

Stress is the body's natural response to pressure, and this can be exacerbated during the exam period.

FIGHT

- Yelling, Screaming, Using Mean Words
- Hitting, Kicking, Biting, Throwing, Punching
- Blaming, Deflecting Responsibility, Defensive
- Demanding, Controlling
- "Oppositional", "Defiant", "Noncompliant"
- Moving Towards What Feels Threatening
- Irritable, Angry, Furious, Offended, Aggressive

FLIGHT

- Wanting to Escape, Running Away
- Unfocused, Hard to Pay Attention
- Fidgeting, Restlessness, Hyperactive
- Preoccupied, Busy with Everything But the Thing
- Procrastinating, Avoidant, Ignores the Situation
- Moving Away From What Feel Threatening
- Anxious, Panicked, Scared, Worried, Overwhelmed

FREEZE

- Shutting Down, Mind Goes Blank
- Urge to Hide, Isolates Self
- Verbally Unresponsive, Says, "I don't know" a lot
- Difficulty with Completing Tasks
- Zoned Out, Daydreaming
- Unable to Move, Feeling Stuck
- Depressed, Numb, Bored/Apathetic, Helpless



WholeHearted School Counseling

14

Potential Exam Stress Affects

Feeling
anxious or low
in mood

Sleeping
difficulties

Changes in
eating habits

Loss of
interest in
hobbies

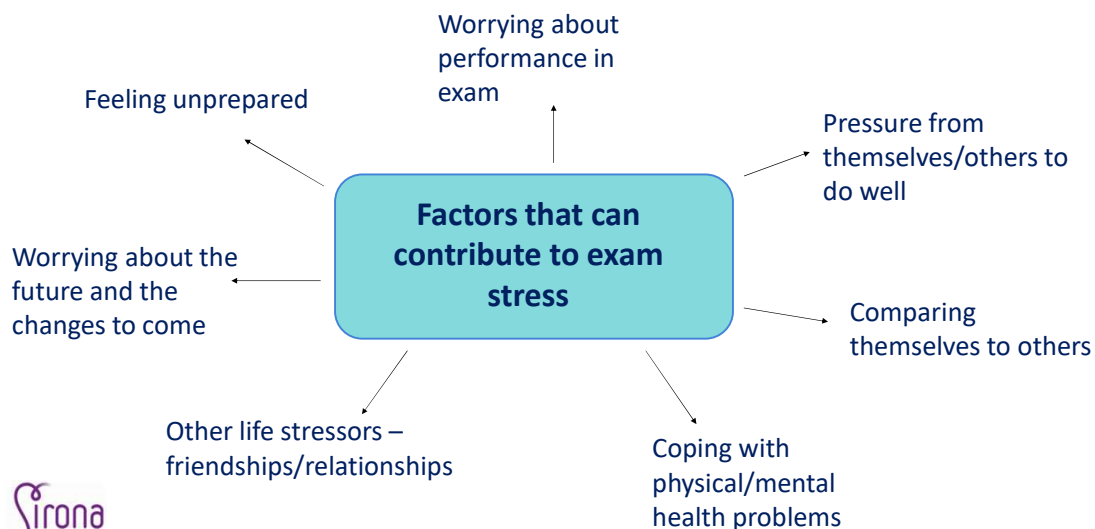
Difficulties
with
concentration

Physical
symptoms:
headache/nausea



15

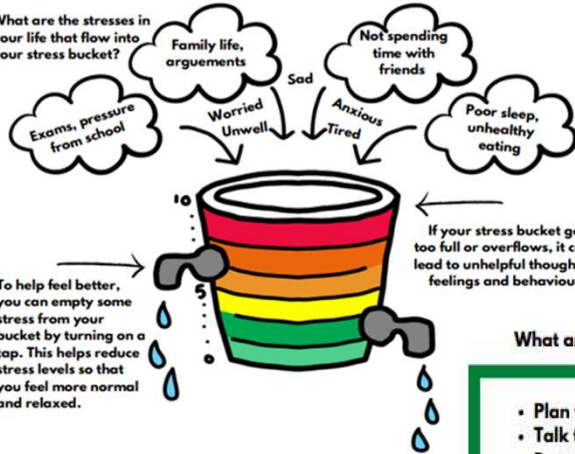
Contributory Factors



16

The Stress Bucket

What are the stresses in your life that flow into your stress bucket?



Source: <https://weheartcbt.com/stress>

To help feel better, you can empty some stress from your bucket by turning on a tap. This helps reduce stress levels so that you feel more normal and relaxed.

What are some of the ways you can turn on your taps to reduce your stress?

- Plan time for things I enjoy
- Talk to friends/family
- Download a mindfulness app
- Do a yoga class
- Use a diary to manage my time better
- Have a bubble bath
- Get a good night's sleep
- Watch a movie I enjoy
- Go for a walk or do some exercise
- Make some healthy snacks



Tips For Young People

During Exam Period	On Exam Day	After Exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a revision timetable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare items the night before 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't compare answers with others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt revision to own learning style – cue cards, songs, pictures etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the day with something positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward yourself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to things you enjoy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice mindfulness/grounding techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to others about how you are feeling 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have some relaxation time before revising for the next exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care of physical health 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get enough sleep 		



How Parents/Carers Can Help

Validate their feelings

Reward effort over results

Help them seek out extra support

Help them to create a timetable

Avoid putting on pressure

Encourage days off revision

Encourage positive self-thoughts



19

Self-Talk

When we are feeling stressed, we tend to have negative thoughts about ourselves and our ability, which then leads to more stress.

Negative Automatic Thoughts	Positive Self Thoughts
• I can't do this	• I can do this
• I'm going to fail	• I've worked hard
• Everyone is better than me	• No one can be the best at everything
• I won't remember all this revision	• I've done this before so I can do it again
• I'm not going to get into college/university	• It's ok to feel this way, it is a normal reaction, and it won't last forever



20

School Nursing Service

Who are we

- Registered Nurses who work for the **NHS** and NOT a School
- We wear everyday clothes, but have a lanyard with our ID
- Some may have an extra university qualification in Specialist Public Health Nursing
- We promote Public Health to help to keep Children and Young People healthy and safe
- We are not based in School. We are different to the school staff who provide first aid or send Children or Young People home from School when they are unwell.



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School Nursing Service

What we can support with



22

School Nursing Service

How to contact us

- Drop-in Clinics
- School or Parent / Carer may refer to our service for an appointment – referral form on our website
- You can call us 0300 1256798 if you would like to talk to a School Nurse on the phone (between 9am and 4pm Monday – Friday)
- ChatHealth



Community Children's Health Partnership NHS

11-19 YEARS OLD?
We help young people with all kinds of things like ...

Message us for confidential advice and support and to chat with a School Nurse.

ChatHealth

Send a message to:
07312 263093

The service is open on Monday to Friday from 9am-5pm.

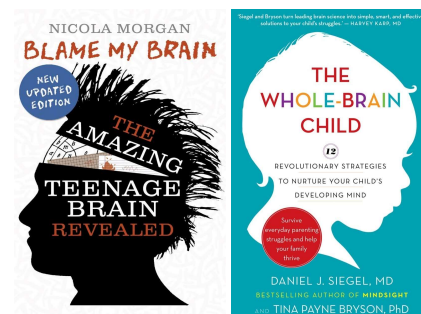
We do not usually inform your parents, teachers or anyone else if you contact the ChatHealth service. We will inform your parents if we are concerned about your safety. We will not share your contact details with anyone else. Your messages are stored and we may be asked to provide evidence in court. We will also have to provide evidence in court if we are asked to do so by the police or other authorities. We will not be held responsible for any damage to your computer or other equipment. We will not be held responsible for any loss of data or other equipment. We will not be held responsible for any loss of data or other equipment. We will not be held responsible for any loss of data or other equipment. We will not be held responsible for any loss of data or other equipment.

Service provided by Sirona

23

Resources

- Sirona School Nursing Services – www.sirona-cic.org.uk/children-services/services/school-nursing-service/
- Young Minds - www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/
- Mind - www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/feelings-and-experiences/exam-stress/
- Coping with exam pressure - a guide for students - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- BBC Bitesize - www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/learn



24

Harbourside Family Practice

Dr Natasha Ward



Harbourside
Family Practice



25

What is Stress/Anxiety?

- Feeling worried / can't cope
- Fear of failure
- Irritable
- Fidgety
- Lack of motivation
- Cannot make decisions
- Losing touch with family or friends
- Doubting yourself
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Teeth grinding
- Cannot sleep
- Fast heartbeat
- Abdominal pain
- Feeling sick / nausea
- Racing mind



26

What Does it Happen?

- Feeling not ready or prepared
- Worrying about performance
- Pressure from others
- Pressure from yourself!
- Comparing self to others
- Worrying about the future
- Coping with life changes / difficult relationships
- Having existing mental health issues
- Having other caring responsibilities



27

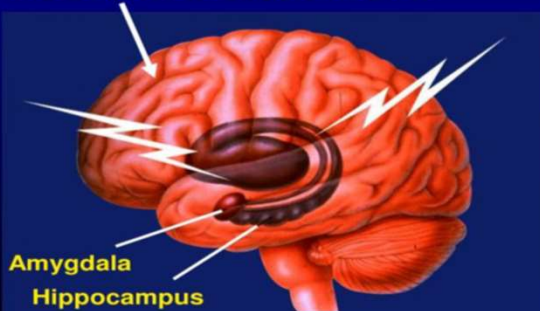
The Human Brain Under Stress

Three key brain areas under investigation

Prefrontal cortex

Decision making, working memory, self regulatory behaviors: mood, impulses

Helps shut off the stress response



Amygdala
Hippocampus

Hippocampus

Memory of daily events; spatial memory; mood regulation

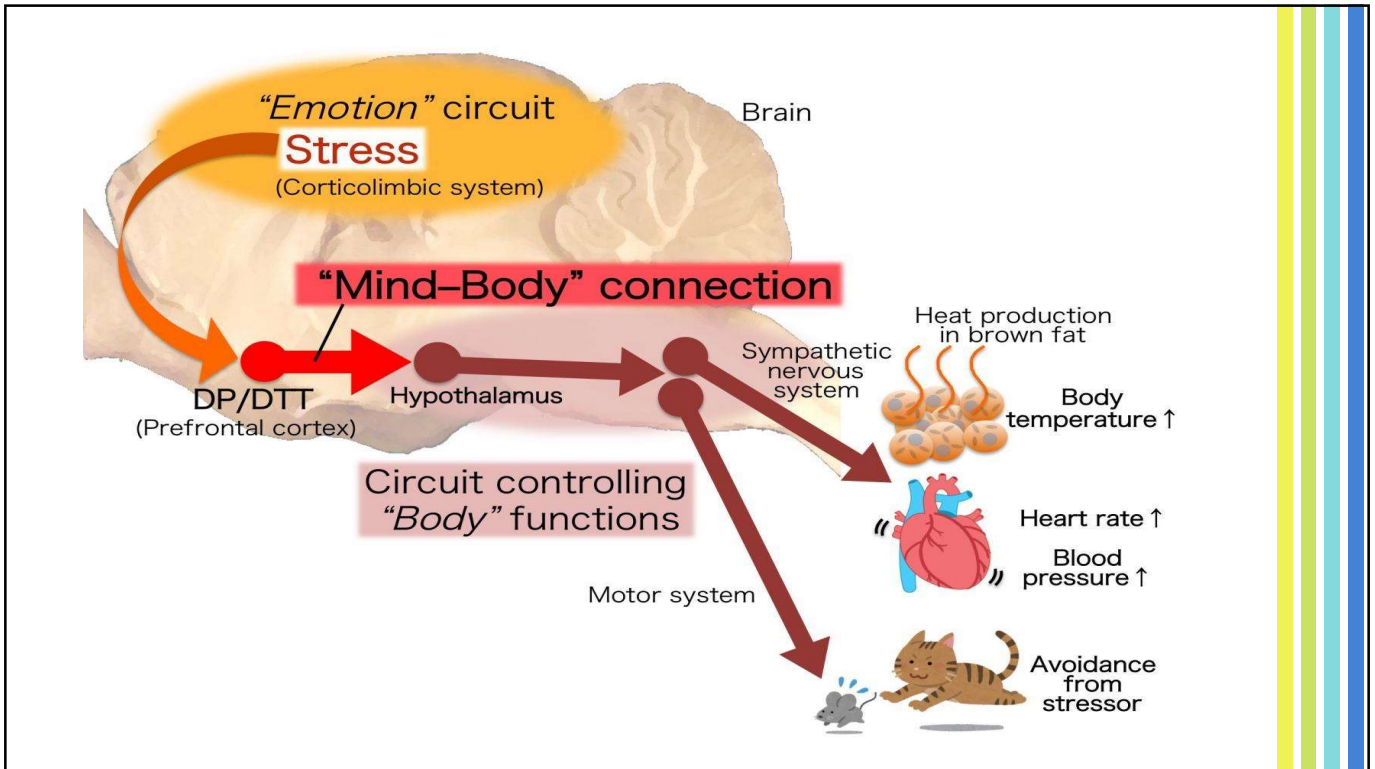
Helps shut off stress response

Amygdala

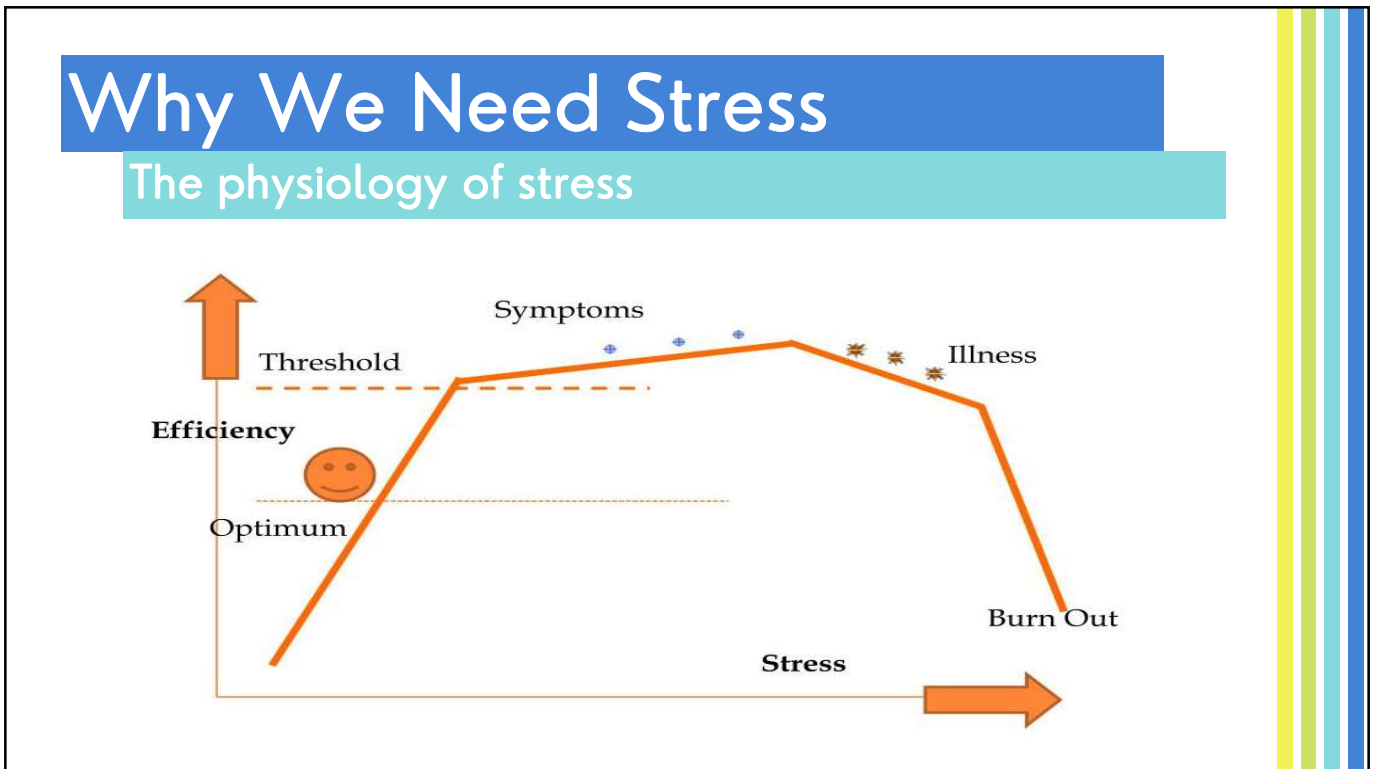
Anxiety, fear; aggression

Turns on stress hormones and increases heart rate

28



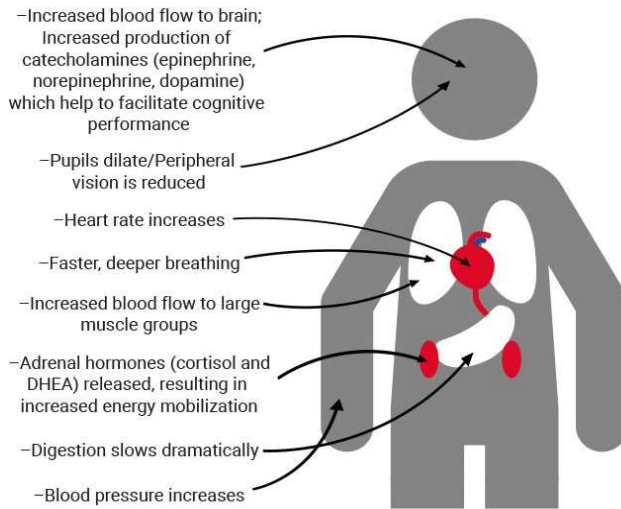
29



30

Fight or Flight

Acute stress response



REACTIONS

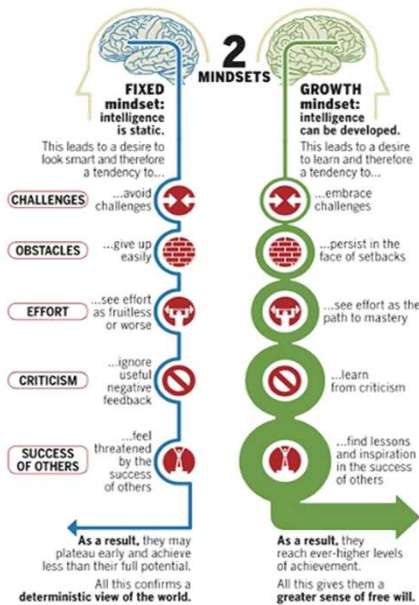
- Increased alertness
- Increased short term strength
- Increased ability to handle stress
- Heightened ability to focus
- Increased oxygen to the brain
- Faster, deeper breathing
- Heightened sense of smell
- Body and mind are hyper-alert

OTHER RESPONSES

- Perspiration increases to cool body
- Muscle tension increases to prepare for "fight or flight"
- Saliva production decreases
- Metabolism speeds up considerably
- Inflammation increases
- Blood flow from skin surface is diverted to larger muscle groups & brain
- Body extremities can change temperature
- Blood pressure increases

31

Overcoming Stress



When you change your mind about stress....
You can change your body's response to stress.



32

9 Ways to Prolong Memory



33

Tips for Coping with Exam Stress

During the exam period	Preparing & on day of the exam	After the exam
Make time for things you enjoy	Find a study group	Don't compare to others
Talk to others about how you feel	Have a revision timetable	Reward yourself
Balance with regular breaks	Work in the best way for you	Focus on next steps
Take care of physical health	Revise in the best place for you	Relax before next exam
Focus on yourself	Start your day well	
	Ground yourself with breathing exercises	
	Take your time	

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Questions to Ask Yourself

- Where is the pressure coming from?
- What can others do to help?
- Am I comparing myself?



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How Parents/Carers Can Help

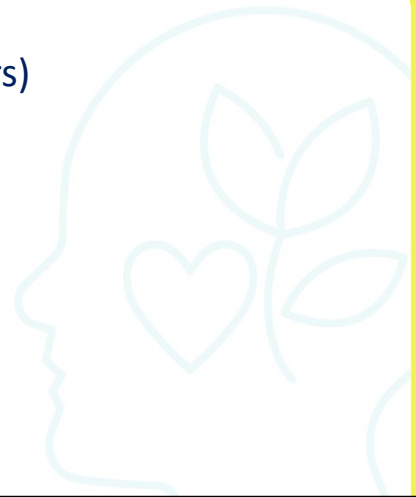
- Listen to concerns
- Help to promote confidence
- Create a sense of perspective – share positive stories
- Don't add to the pressure with expectations – children learn their reactions and coping strategies from you.
- Encourage healthy routines
- Help with exam prep practicalities
- Be positive and plan a reward



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Resources

- Mind.org.uk
- Off the record North Somerset
- NHS Talking Therapies - CBT (for over 16 years)
- Wellspring Counselling
- Happy maps website (anxiety)
- Clear Fear app
- Headspace app



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Wellspring Counselling

Emma Howarth



SERVING THE COMMUNITY
OF NORTH SOMERSET
SINCE 1994

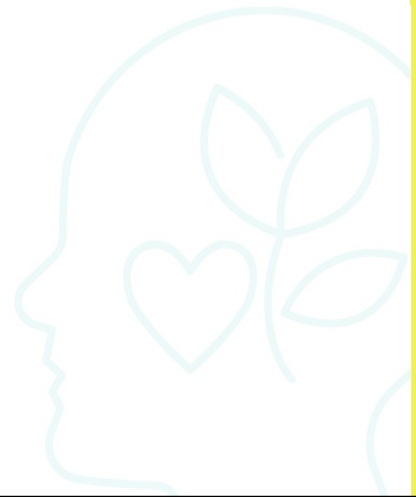


38

Anxiety in Teenagers

Anxiety is a common mental health issue in teenagers.
It can affect:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Academic performance
- Social relationships



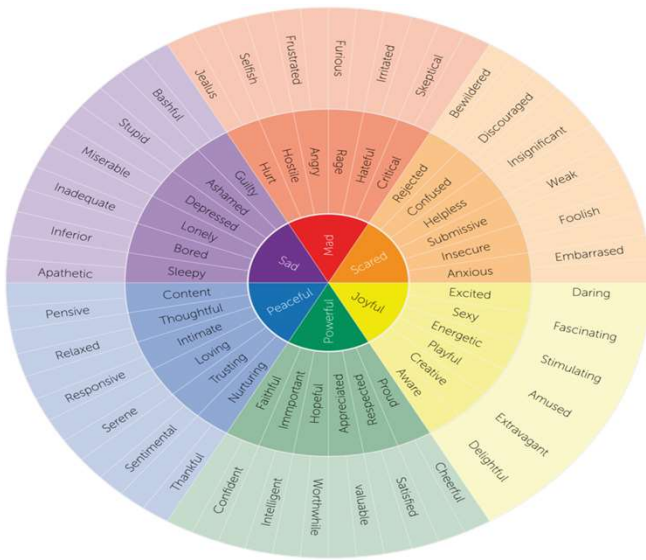
39

Causes of Anxiety in Teenagers

- Genetics
- Brain chemistry
- Environmental factors
- Peer pressure
- Self-esteem
- Academic pressure
- General life pressure
- Physical health
- Gender and identity issues
- Bullying

40

Emotions



The feelings wheel

41

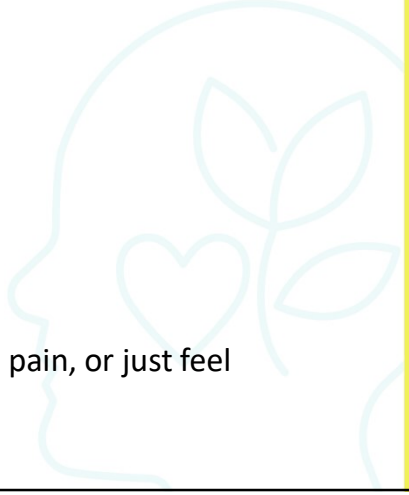
The Emotions Beneath Anger



42

Self-Harm

What is it?

- It is intentionally hurting oneself physically
 - Common methods used may include:
 - Cutting
 - Burning
 - Scratching
 - Hitting
 - It is a coping mechanism
 - It is a method of managing emotional pain & stress
 - It is the need to regain some control, release emotional pain, or just feel
 - It is often a secretive form of behaviour
- 

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The Myths

- Self-harm is attention seeking
- Self-harm is a teenage girl thing
- Self-harm is a suicide attempt
- Clever people don't self-harm
- People who self-harm obviously like pain
- People who self-harm are a danger to others
- Talking about self-harm encourages people to pick it up

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The Reality

- Nobody would be using self-harm if it did not work!
- Self-harm offers temporary relief
- It **is** damaging
- It is **not** a healthy coping mechanism

It gives relief to people who are struggling with over whelming life circumstances, emotions, and feelings

45

How Can You Help

- Listen & try to understand their motivations and reasons
- Be compassionate
- Show acceptance & communicate that you understand

IT IS GOING TO BE HARD!

46

The 'Not Now, Later' Technique

- Suggest they delay hurting themselves for 5 minutes
- Use a pre-determined list of distractions
- If they are managing, suggest they add another 5 minutes
- Sometimes the urges ease
- Remain with them if they want you to

There is a psychological reason behind self-harm

The behaviour is a symptom of distress

The goal is to deal with the root of the problem

47

Do...

- Listen
- Build trust
- Be open, ask questions
- Support them to identify triggers
- Use 'not now, later'
- Offer to talk and suggest counselling
- Be prepared for slip-ups
- Agree on a code word they can use
- Use a mood gauge or traffic light system
- Encourage safe self-harm
- Help them accept their scars
- Remember it may take time
- Be proud they feel they can talk to you

48

Don't...

- Don't show disgust
- Don't overreact
- Don't make assumptions
- Don't jump to conclusions
- Don't ask them to stop – It's not that simple and may increase the behaviour
- Don't threaten them – this may push the behaviour underground
- Don't remove tools / objects (unless there is suicidal ideation)
- Don't add guilt
- Don't use words like "cutter" - self-harm is not who they are it is what they do
- Don't make them self-conscious of their scars

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Indicators

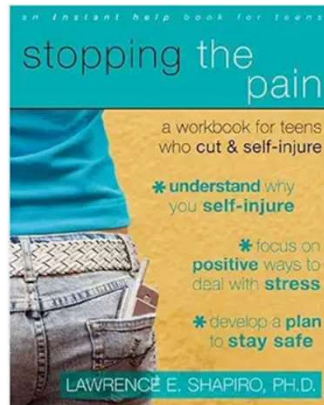
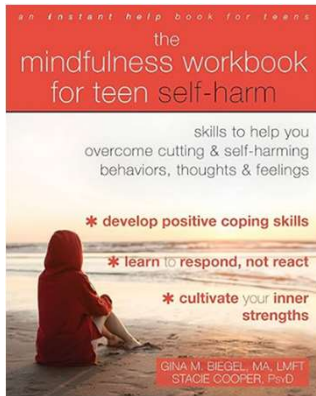
The following may be indicators that someone has self-harm urges. Ask them gently if they're struggling:

- Panic attack symptoms
- Difficulty paying attention
- Mood dropping
- Retreating inside
- Needing to be alone
- Manic behaviour
- Being severely agitated



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Resources



- www.battle-scars-self-harm.org.uk
- www.mind.org.uk
- www.youngminds.org.uk

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NSPCWT



Contact Us :

Claire Bullock: claire@nspcwt.org
 Engagement & Participation Lead/Director
 Main NSPCWT Email: admin@nspcwt.org
 Main Tel: 01934 440844

Social Media:
<https://www.facebook.com/nspcwt>
<https://twitter.com/nspcwt>
<https://www.instagram.com/nspcwt>
 Web: www.nspcwt.org

Address:
 The Firs, Parent Carer Resource Hub
 87a Drove Rd
 Weston-super-Mare
 North Somerset
 BS23 3NX



UPCOMING TRAINING

Date	Topic	Time	Facilitator	Location
30.04.2024	Emotional Based School Avoidance	10-12pm	Catrina	Jubilee Lounge, Clevedon Community Center, 2 Princes Rd, Clevedon BS21 7SZ
01.05.2024	ADHD	7-9.30pm	Dan and Bev	Zoom
08.05.2024	Understanding Behaviour	7-9.30pm	Catrina	Zoom
13.05.2024	ADHD	10.30-12.30pm	Dan and Bev	Nailsea Baptist Church, 79 Silver St, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 2DS
16.05.2024	How to DLA	7-8.30pm	Dan	Zoom
22.05.2024	Pathological Demand Avoidance	10-12pm	Catrina	Bleadon Village Hall, 5 Coronation Rd, Bleadon, Weston-super-Mare BS24 0PG
22.05.2024	Understanding Communication	7-9.30pm	Catrina	Zoom
04.06.2024	Managing the Red Zone - parental guide to Anger, Meltdown and Shutdown in your ND teen	9.30-11.30am	Catrina	Zoom
05.06.2024	Understanding Anxiety	7-9.30pm	Catrina	Zoom
12.06.2024	Masking Autism and eating disorders.	7-9pm	Loren Snow	In process of organising this with Corrina. June time. Zoom

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KNIFE ANGEL
Weston-super-Mare

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

SATURDAY 4TH MAY 2024
9:00 – 12:00
Portishead Football Club




Find out more about Knife Angel and month of awareness!

Join us to find out more about Knife Angel's visit in North Somerset and speak to:

Violence Reduction Partnership
Portishead Police Beat Team
Portishead Youth Centre + Police Bike Marking 

Talk Club

For information on knife crime, including surrender bins, scan here 

The Knife Angel is in Italian Gardens, Weston 1 - 30 May 2024

FREE!

WEBINAR SESSION

COUNTY LINES

for Parents/Carers in North Somerset as part of Knife Angel


Wednesday 8th May
5:30pm-7:00pm

Our gang and county lines parents' session consists of speakers with lived experience within the criminal justice system to unpack and explore the realities and consequences of county lines, gang involvement, and serious youth violence.

Perspectives from previous perpetrators and runners/transporters, combined with relevant case studies, aid audiences in gaining an authentic and credible understanding of this complex and cross cutting issue.

The session will help parents and carers to identify the signs and triggers that a child or young person might be involved in county lines and gain an understanding of how to appropriately respond to such indicators.

Register below:

Scan the QR code or click here! 

Meeting will be held on Zoom.

For more information: binky.kennard@stgilestrust.org.uk

St Giles
Turning a past into a future

St Giles is a registered charity No 801355. St Giles Head Office, 64-68 Camberwell Church St, London, SE5 8JB. www.stgilestrust.org.uk © St Giles Trust 2023

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PORTISHEAD

COMMUNITY PRIDE EVENT

FAMILY FUN • ARTISAN STALLS • ENTERTAINMENT
ACTIVITIES • LGBT+ MERCH • LOCAL CHARITIES



SUNDAY 23RD JUNE 2024

12pm - 6pm at Portishead Youth Centre, Harbour Road, BS20 7DD

FREE ENTRY • ALL WELCOME

PORTISHEAD YOUTH CENTRE 

Wellbeing Workshops 

For Residents of Portishead

The Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR

24 Apr	19:00 - 21:00 - Managing exam stress in children and young people
22 May	19:00 - 21:00 - Disordered eating
13 June	15:00 - 17:00 - Living with chronic pain
17 July	19:00 - 21:00 - Managing menopause
19 Sept	15:00 - 17:00 - Dementia and falls prevention
17 Oct	15:00 - 17:00 - End of life conversations
21 Nov	15:00 - 17:00 - Preventing and managing type 2 diabetes

To book your place visit - www.ticketsource.co.uk/portishead-town-council

Scan Me! 

- There will be an opportunity for questions at the end of each session
- Refreshments will be provided
- The venue is fully accessible and parking is available

To keep up to date with future events organised by Portishead Town Council, visit:

Website - www.portishead.gov.uk
Facebook - www.facebook.com/portisheadtc
Instagram - @portishead_town_council
Email - wellbeing@portishead.gov.uk
Call - 01275 847 078



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Smartphone Free Childhood

www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk

- 97% of 12-year-olds in Britain have a smartphone.
- When children started getting them, there was no research about their impact. Now there is, and it's overwhelming.
- Smartphones expose children to harmful content, raise the likelihood of developing a mental illness and are highly addictive.
- Either we give our children access to something that opens the door to porn, bullying, grooming and the anxiety machine that is social media, or we risk alienating them from their peers.
- Regulation hasn't caught up with the technology, so it's parents and children that lose out.
- Smartphone Free Childhood was started to give power back to parents, and to kickstart the change society needs.
- We've learned over time to restrict alcohol and smoking to certain age groups. Smartphones have been with us for barely 15 years, and now we know their effect, we need to act.



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Q and A's

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