

Helping your child's anxiety

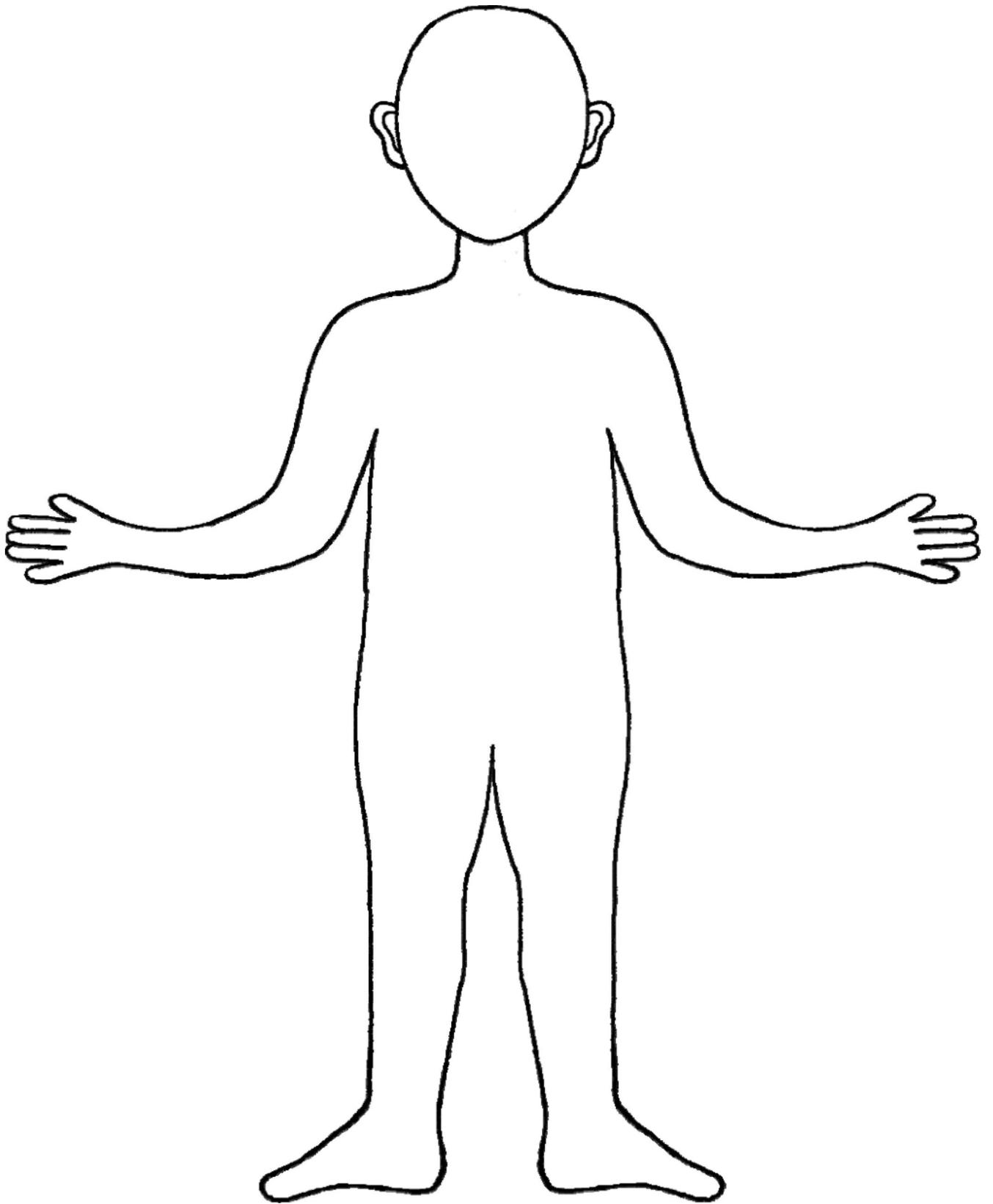
How to make a difference:

- Chat about their anxiety. Can they annotate a blank body to show what is happening in their body? Many children do not know what is happening when they are experiencing anxiety, and can feel very overwhelmed. (Blank body in resources). This will help them to recognise they are feeling anxious and can begin to use strategies to help them self regulate.
- Ask your child to try to identify what is making them anxious. Can they scale the intensity of different anxieties? Some find it useful to keep a 'worry book'.
- Confirm that it will get better. The anxiety will stop.
- Breathing – ask them to pretend they have a glass of their favourite drink. They need to breathe in through their nose for 3, and then blow down the invisible straw.
- Distract with grounding (senses cue in resources)
- Physical contact - Give them a cuddle or hold their hand if they will let you - touch can be soothing.
- Thinking of a 'happy' place – where do they feel safe and relaxed? Try to encourage them to think of this place when 'worries' come into their head. Holding onto a memento can help.
- If your child is feeling the need to check things or repeat certain actions, suggest they count up to 10 before they start checking as a delaying tactic.
- Positive-thinking – what is their worst case scenarios and think through together how to sort out the situation if it happens, e.g. 'I'm worried that....' 'What do you think we could do if that happens?' 'We can....'.
- Healthy lifestyles - Regular exercise, promote good sleeping habits, limited screen/computer time

Speedy strategies

Sometimes anxiety creeps up on us quickly and you'll need a way to calm down without your tool kit. Maybe it's when you're out at the shops or stuck in traffic. These tips will come in handy at those times:

- Imagine your favourite place – the beach...a river bank...your sofa with hot chocolate
- Think of your favourite things
- Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, cow, dog, etc...)
- Squeeze Something (play dough, clay, silly putty, your fists, a stress ball)
- Grab a drink of water
- 54321 Grounding - go through each of your 5 senses



Free

Coping Strategies Check List

Calming	Distraction
Deep breathing with 'milkshake breathing'	Draw a picture
Deep breathing with bubbles	Draw a doodle
Go for a walk	Kick a ball
Counting	Do some vacuuming
Say the alphabet forward/backwards	Do a wordsearch/crossword
Take a shower/bath	Read
Positive self talk	Play with a pet
Wash your hands	Screen time
Grab your stress ball	Chat to a family member or a friend
Squeeze you fist, then release it	Baking
Yoga	Tidy your bedroom
Chew some gum	Write your diary
Listen to music	

Making a toolbox

Having all your coping strategies in one pot makes life a whole lot easier when anxiety hits. This can be a tupperware to a beautifully decorated box.

You need to work out what helps all the time, sometimes and not at all. Use the check list to help you do this (find check list in resources).

What should I put in there?

You should choose 3-4 strategies or items that you find helpful with calming down.

- Visual calming cards – try www.andnextcomesL.com for printable prompt card
- Bubbles
- Breathing prompts
- Grounding cue card
- Play dough, stress ball (you can make a homemade one from a balloon filled with flour)
- Chew toys or chewing gum
- Essential oils
- Weighted blanket
- Yoga cards
- Notebook for drawing or writing

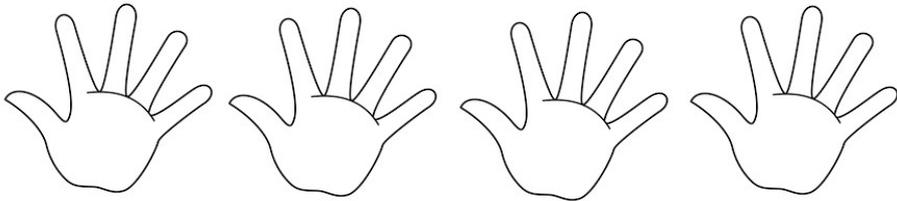
Create a calm space and catch it early.

Grounding Exercise

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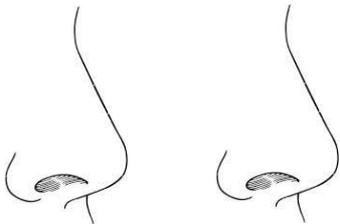
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Additional Resources you may find helpful

Paste the addresses below into your browser if you experience problem with these links

Childline - Calm Zone:-

<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>

Anna Freud - Look after mental health:-

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>