

## SOLUTION.

# COPING WITH ANXIETY

Anxiety is a normal part of life and can be experienced in childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Symptoms of anxiety can become problematic when a child does not yet have the coping strategies to manage and regulate symptoms.

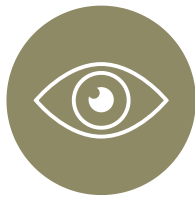
Here are some coping strategies you may like to encourage your child to use at home.

## 54321 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

The 5,4,3,2,1 technique is a simple, yet powerful grounding technique, bringing quick relief by forcing you to be mindful of the environment around you.

Just like with any mindfulness technique, begin by concentrating on your breath.

**Then identify:**



5 things that you  
**SEE**



4 things that you  
**FEEL**



3 things that you  
**HEAR**



2 things that you  
**SMELL**



1 thing that you  
**TASTE**

**Here is a script that you might like to use with your child:**

- Notice every inhale and exhale. Focus on trying to take deep belly breaths, with long inhales and forceful exhales.
- Now, identify five things that you see. This does not have to be large objects. The smaller and more specific you can be the better.
- Found them? Great! Now identify four things that you can touch. Once again, be as detailed as you can. Identify the texture of this object, the temperature, whether it's wet or dry.
- Starting to feel slightly more grounded? Let's keep going! Now, we would like you to identify three things that you can hear. This can be external sounds like birds chirping or cars driving by. Or, this can be internal sounds, like your stomach rumbling or the sound of your breath.
- Almost there! Time to identify two things that you can smell. Don't be afraid to get up and find something around you. Flowers perhaps, or maybe you can smell someone's lunch?
- Alright, last one. Identify one thing you can taste. What was the last thing you ate or drank? Can you taste it? Be specific.

# WORRY JAR

A Worry Jar is a place for your child to put their worries so that they do not need to keep thinking about them. It is like storing them or putting them away for safe keeping. Just knowing that their worries are contained in the jar can free your child from having to replay them in their minds.

If you don't have access to a jar, there are worksheets that can be completed in its place:

- <https://www.andnextcomesl.com/2019/03/free-printable-worry-jars.html>
- <https://pjsandpaint.com/printables/free-printable-worry-jar-anxiety-relief-worksheet/>



# BOXED BREATHING

Boxed breathing has many different names including 4-square breathing or squared breathing.

It's a technique used to regulate our breathing and internal states. It involves exhaling to a count of four, holding your lungs empty for a count of four, inhaling at the same pace, and holding air in your lungs for a count of four before exhaling and beginning the pattern anew.

## SIT OR LIE DOWN

somewhere comfortable

## BREATHE IN THROUGH YOUR NOSE

for 4 counts

## HOLD YOUR BREATH

for 4 counts

## BREATHE OUT THROUGH YOUR NOSE

for 4 counts

## REPEAT



Your child also use your hands to help keep track:

## JOURNALING



Journaling is the act of keeping a record of your personal thoughts, feelings, insights, and more.

It can be written, drawn, or typed. It can be on paper or on your computer.

Sometimes children need some direction about what to write about in their journals. It's important to get them to reflect and write about the helpful and unhelpful thoughts, interactions and memories.

You might consider offering the following prompts to kick start their journaling:

- Write about five things that you are grateful for today. This will provide you with a visual representation of some of the good things in your life, and can help reduce the impact of negative thoughts.
- Describe the moment in which you began to feel anxious. What were you doing? Where were you going? What did you eat that day? Analysing this situation can help you identify triggers.
- If someone, in particular, is causing you fear or anxiety, use your journal to write them a letter that you never intend to send. It can be therapeutic to get your thoughts out.
- List the top five emotions that you are feeling today.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

### Applications suitable for children and adolescents:

- **Colorfy** - mindfulness electronic colouring sheets
- **Calm** - mindfulness and meditation app that includes a 'Calm Kids' feature
- **Smiling Minds** - a meditation app for young people designed by psychologists & educators
- **Headspace** - includes mindfulness and guided meditations for all ages
- **Stop, Breathe, Think** - a mindfulness and meditation app intended to help users cope with stress, anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

### Mindfulness Activities:

<https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids/>

<https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness/activities-for-kids>

### Guided Imagery/Visualisation Exercise:

<https://www.themindfulword.org/2012/guided-imagery-scripts-children-anxiety-stress/>

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation Activities

<https://www.thebehaviorhub.com/blog/2020/6/8/progressive-muscle-relaxation-for-kids>