

Safe and happy childhood



Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

Build Sound Minds Derby & Derbyshire

Waiting Well



Work in progress

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01332 679379 / 01246 277422

BuildSoundMindsDD@actionforchildren.org.uk

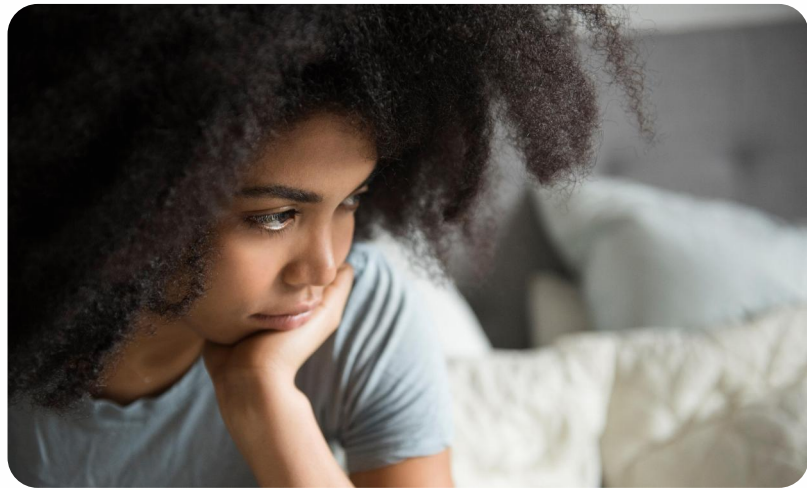
<https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/derbyshire>

Waiting Well with Anxious Thoughts

Advice, ideas and sources of support whilst waiting for targeted support.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of fear or worry and children, just like adults, feel worried or anxious at times. If their anxious thoughts begin to impact on their wellbeing or daily activities, then they may need some help. Things which might make a child or young person feel anxious include lots of changes at home or school, being around someone who is highly anxious, struggling with things at school, family stress or traumatic experiences.



Symptoms of Anxiety

Anxious thoughts often result in physical symptoms. For example, a raised heart beat, stomach ache, shaky hands, sweaty palms or dry mouth can all be caused by the changes that take place in the body when we are anxious.

The human body is set up to look out for danger and keep us safe, even if that danger isn't real. Imagine it a bit like a smoke alarm going off when you burn the toast: the alarm senses the smoke and jumps to the conclusion that there is a fire. The human brain gets ready to face the danger and sends more blood to the muscles (which is why the heart beats more quickly) and shuts down other parts of the body like the digestive system (which explains the stomach ache).

Fight, Flight & Freeze

These changes are often called the Fight/Flight response or Fight, Flight, Freeze.

Imagine being faced with a tiger. Your brain wants to keep you safe and will decide if you should try to fight the tiger, run away from it (flight), or hide and stand really still. The human brain doesn't always know the difference between facing a tiger and facing a crowded place and so the response is the same. That's when we get those physical symptoms. In children fight, flight and freeze might look like kicking, clenched fists, shouting & screaming, becoming restless or shutting down.

How to help

Children and young people are not always able to regulate their feelings by themselves -they may well need adults to model how to calm anxious feeling and responses. Feelings are catching so an anxious adult will increase a child's anxiety.

Breathing exercises- there are lots of different activities to help calm the breathing. For example, practise together breathing in for a count of 4, holding it for 4, breathing out for 4 and holding it for 4 again. Try this when the child or young person is not anxious so that it is easier to do when they are worried.

Using the senses - Try naming 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste. Or, name things beginning with 's' or that are the colour 'yellow'. You can be as creative as you like!

Other Sources of Help and Advice

Our website has links to lots of really helpful information.
<https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/derbyshire>

Build Sound Minds is not a crisis service. If you are worried about a child or young person please contact your GP, call 111 or attend the emergency department (A&E).

We know it is hard to wait for our services. Please be assured we are doing our best to progress you on our waiting list.