

Q&A

How can I help my child with anxiety?

Anxiety and worrying aren't all bad. For our children to be completely free of worries and anxiety, then they will be living life in the comfort/safe zone, and life is all about stretching ourselves and learning. Now if you're a parent who has a child who is anxious or, you struggle with anxiety yourself, then you may find that hard and yet anxiety on the lower end of the scale can keep us safe, and motivate us to get things done.

Strong anxiety can be both physical and emotional and can rule your life.

The first thing is to allow your child to express how they feel because that is what it is, it is a feeling that is taking control of them.

When you hear your child saying how they feel make sure they are saying I FEEL worried, angry, sad etc. rather than I AM worried, angry, sad etc

If they say I AM worried, sad etc. then reflect back So, you're FEELING worried, sad etc

Once they realise it is a feeling it is a lot easier to change how they feel. Also, by reflecting back like this, you are communicating from the same side of the brain as they are and they will feel understood. If you communicate logically while they are feeling strong emotions, then it will be a lot harder for them to feel calmer and there is less chance of them feeling understood.

Once they feel calmer, you can talk to them about what they could do to help them feel better.

You can help them to look at the problem or what they are feeling anxious about without telling them what to do. If you tell your child how to handle a situation quite often, it is how you would handle it, and you are not your child, and they could feel even more inadequate or worried if they don't want to do it your way. It's about empowering them, so they feel confident in the situation.

Remain in the now.

It is so easy for you to get triggered by what your child is going through or how they are feeling. Your child will be looking for you to feel safe and secure; if you

fuel it with your emotions and reactions, then the situation may get worse. So, remain calm, present and listen to their story.

Tools

Mindfulness and relaxation breathing techniques are great to help your child reduce stress and anxiety. You can do this together whether you're a teacher in the classroom environment or at home. You can make this as part of your routine, and it will help you as well.

For more tools and information go to Mindfulness, anxiety, confidence/ self-esteem.

Emoji Chart, Affirmation cards Free resources

• How do I stop my child's tantrums?

Quite often we feel more awkward about our children's tantrums than they do.

Let me help you to understand how their brain works in a very simple way.

The left brain is logical; right brain is emotional. When your child is having a tantrum, they have been flooded with emotions, and it can be hard for them to get out of it. When this happens, it is important to communicate from the same side of the brain. If your child is on the emotional side of the brain and you start to tell your child to calm down or be quiet etc., your child's behaviour or emotional meltdown may get worse.

When your child is at that moment reflect back what you see, "I see your feeling really angry." "It doesn't seem fair I know." or, "So you're feeling sad that"..... by doing this they will feel safe expressing themselves and will calm down, then you can start to have a conversation but let them talk and express.

The Emoji Chart is a great way to help your child to express how they feel (Link)

• My child doesn't like wearing certain items of clothing like socks, tights, anything with collars, what can I do?

This is a very common problem that parents come to me for so you are not alone. It can feel so frustrating when this happens especially if you're running late.

Firstly, the not wanting to wear certain items of clothing isn't the underlying issue here, it just presents itself to be.

There may be something else going on with low confidence and self-esteem, or worries and your child doesn't know how to express them.

Find the time to have a gentle conversation with your child. If you go straight in with questioning like "what's wrong?" "Why are you like this?" "Is there something happening at school?" then they are more likely to say no, and they may not even know why.

Ask how their day has been and listened for clues. Have a word with their teacher to see how everything is going at school or nursery.

You could try saying, "I can see you feel your socks/tights/tops are uncomfortable, and that's okay. It's important that you wearso, what can you do so they feel more comfortable?" Or, "I hear you, so wear them for now, and we can talk about it when you get back home later."

Bribing may work, but you're not getting to the bottom of the issue.

[Link to anxiety/mindfulness, Emojichart](#)

- **My child can't sleep at night.**

Sleep is a common problem, and it affects us all when your child can't sleep because if your child isn't sleeping well, then I can imagine you're not either.

Again, there could be something on your child's mind that is worrying them, so try and find out if there is anything troubling them. When a child comes downstairs after they have gone to bed and said 's they just couldn't sleep, there is quite often a reason behind it.

A good bedtime routine and Confident Parenting. I always say, if you're not sure that the way you're handling a situation is the right way, then it won't work. Decide on a plan and stick to it.

A lot of parents use reward/punishment; I use Unconditional parenting, I love you with boundaries and no punishment/reward.

Spend time with your child and be present. Your child may see you physically there with them, but they will know if your mind isn't. They want you to listen and

understand and evenings are a lovely time to do this, whether it's reading a bedtime story or discussing your day.

A great conversation to have is "What's been your favourite part of the day today?"

If there hasn't been or your child is worried, then you can listen and help your child.

See anxiety above

Meditations, visualisations [Emoji Chart \(link\)](#)

- How do we stop the arguments?

Well, it's quite simple, don't argue with your child.

Children are great at pushing our buttons, but the thing to remember is that you are arguing with a child and it is your stuff that is being triggered.

I know it can feel hard when your child is displaying behaviour that goes against your values, or you're exhausted or feeling stressed, but if you think that they are deliberately behaving like this, then you will feel more wound up so let that belief go. Try counting to 10 quietly to yourself, or using mindful breathing before you tackle.

See them for who they really are. They are little/young people trying to find their way in this world. Quite often all they don't realise the impact their behaviour is having as all they know is that they have all of these big feelings swirling around their body and don't know what to do.

There are resources on here that can help them, ([Link The emoji Chart mindfulness](#))

I always look under the surface when children behave a certain way as there is always a reason. So, let's look at why they may be deliberately behaving a certain way, they may have learnt that pushing your buttons is the only way they can get what they want or get your attention even though it is negative attention.

Ensure that you take the time to give your attention to positive behaviours.

([Link positive phrases](#))

- How can I help my child/children to become more confident?

It doesn't matter how many times you tell your child that they are amazing, if they don't feel it themselves, then they won't believe it. This can feel frustrating I know especially as you just want them to be happy and confident.

Confidence is split into two parts. Your child can be confident but have low-self-esteem or have good self-esteem but have low confidence.

Confidence = doing something

Self-esteem = how you feel about yourself

This is why many teachers or parents say, "they are so confident in some ways but then not in other ways."

Building confidence and self-esteem can take time and is a big topic, I could write a book on this one.

First of all, hide your doubts and concerns as they will pick up on this. It is okay for your child to be quieter than you were or than other children.

Show you can see how they feel and that you understand them, so they don't feel alone. When they lack confidence, they can feel that they are the only one feeling like this. Encourage them without pushing them.

"I can see that you're worried that you won't be able to.....I feel confident that you can when you're ready."

Use role play. If they are worried about something, then you can make a fun game and role play so they can run through the experience.

Explain that everyone has doubts and feels unsure at times and that's okay. You could maybe give some examples of when you felt unsure about doing something, and it turned out okay.

Avoid dismissing how they feel.

If you say "don't be silly, you'll be fine", or "Your sister or brother isn't like this" then they will feel that their feelings aren't important and they may push them down instead of expressing how they feel. That then cause problems later on.

Don't label them as shy, nervous or that they don't have confidence as this will then become their identity.

There are resources on this website to help your child grow their confidence and self-esteem.

Affirmations, Emoji Chart, etc
Workshops

- My child is being bullied.

First of all, it's important to find out all of the facts before you label it bullying. If your child is displaying a change in behaviour, it could be something else that is causing that. Is there a change in the home, any stress in the home or at school. A change in friendships that is unsettling your child.

Some children find it hard to talk about bullying and may not respond well to direct questioning. They may feel ashamed or embarrassed that they are a victim and that they feel they should be able to stand up for themselves especially if they are a boy. You may not want to ask them straight away if they are being bullied, but rather ask questions about their day, see if their behaviour has changed, how they're feeling and give them time and opportunities to talk to you about it. Talk to the school and their teacher as the teacher may be able to give you more of an insight into what's happening and will be able to keep an eye on things and support your child while in school. If your child has difficulties in explaining what is happening to them, you may need to use different ways to communicate with them. (link Emoji Chart)

It's about helping your child to come up with strategies. Try not to tell your child what to do or say. We understandably go into protection mode, but your child may not feel comfortable handling it the way you would so work with them, give them options. Help them to understand what must be going on for that child to bully them. It doesn't make it right, but they may understand that the child displaying that behaviour doesn't feel good about themselves.

- My child is bullying others.

Okay, for someone to display bullying behaviour, there will be something going on in their life where they don't feel happy, and they may feel, upset, frustrated, or angry. They don't feel good about themselves and therefore take it out on someone else. If your child is bullying then it is important that you don't judge them, you help them. They will no doubt be thinking that no one will help them, it may be a way of getting attention so make sure you give them the right attention and the message you give is "We are here for you".

If this is happening in a class that you are teaching, it may be worth taking a lesson on team building, kindness and compassion week, things that will bring them together rather than singling people out as that could make it worse.

Talk about feelings and emotions, the circle of qualities ([link](#)) is a good exercise.

The Emoji Kids programme covers bullying, kindness and compassion.

- **Divorce/separation**

The key message here is We love you and will always be your parents no matter what happens.

It is so easy to bring children into this situation and very WRONG to do so. Keep the children out of your serious conversations or arguments etc. The key is that your children still feel safe and secure with whatever is going to happen. Calmly keep them in the loop with what is going to happen.

If you argue with each other, then explain that you are disagreeing, but that is "our stuff and not for you to worry as it can be normal to disagree."

DO NOT put each other down or talk about the other negatively to your child/children as that is not fair! Children are not your counsellors; they are not here to take sides and do not need to hear any negativity about their parents no matter what you feel the other person has done.

Keep reassuring them that they are loved, and it's okay to feel sad, angry or any other emotion. Keep the lines of communication open for them to express how they feel. If they show any signs of worries, anxiety, anger, then use the free resources which can help.

Seek some help and support for yourself as you are important!

You may feel guilty that you are separating and the family unit is splitting, and that is understandable especially if you see your child/children upset. You have a right to feel happy in life and if handled responsibly then your children will adapt to the situation healthily and can be happy, and you can be too.

If you have a question that I haven't answered on here then you can ask me a question by emailing me or phoning me.

There are free resources on this website for you to use with the children. If you still feel concerned after using these resources then your child may need expert help. Please do contact me so we can arrange a chat over the phone to see how I can help you and your child/children. I work privately on a one to one. I also have family packages available.