

Supporting children with anxiety who are at home during school closure.

Many people – both adults and children – are likely to be experiencing increased levels of anxiety at the moment, and that is entirely normal. If a child was already susceptible to high levels of anxiety, then they may be finding this time particularly challenging. If you are checking in with a parent –carer who is at home with a child experiencing anxiety, the following may be useful:

- **Help your child to feel safe**

This might include reminding them that you are doing everything you can to keep them, yourself and other family members safe and well – just like you normally do. Remind them that this time will pass.

- **Limit access to the news**

The news can be particularly anxiety-provoking at the moment. Children and young people just need to know some basic facts, including how to stay safe, so discourage constant access to the news. Myths and misinformation could add to your child's anxiety so talk to them about getting their news from a reputable source.

- **Help your child to focus on the things they continue to have choices about**

It is normal to feel a bit out of control at the moment. However, there are some things your child can still have control over and make choices about. It may be helpful to list these things and/or draw some pictures about them and stick this up somewhere, to make reference to. This could include making lists of things they CAN still do such as:

things that make me feel good (e.g. listen to favourite music, read)

things that I can still achieve (e.g. school work, learn new skills)

ways I can still be connected with others (e.g. gaming, face-timing)

- **Allow as much physical activity as possible, within the space you may have.**

If you are inside, encourage your child to learn a new dance routine or work out- they can then perform this for you and other family members. If you have any outside space use this for skipping, football, swingball etc.

- **Engage in soothing, comforting activities**

This might include making a warm drink or eating a favourite snack. If you have any essential oils you could use these. Wrap up in duvets and blankets to watch favourite TV. Take warm

baths. Play soothing music. Your child may respond well to extra cuddles or being rocked gently.

- **Help your child to regulate their breathing**

Anxiety shows up in our bodies as well as our minds and regulating our breathing can help reduce the feelings of anxiety and panic. Free Apps such as Stop, Breathe and Think could help.

- **For further advice, activities and ideas, the following resource may be useful:**

https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-gb.pdf