Thrive 365

Dragonfly: Impact Education



Did you know?

Anxiety is a normal feeling and not something negative in itself. It even has its uses because it can help us to anticipate problems and sharpen our focus. However, when someone becomes 'stuck' in an anxious state it becomes a problem and can be overwhelming and distressing. Anxiety is a 'combination of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings' [1] and can therefore have a detrimental impact on many areas of a person's life if it is left unchecked.

[1] https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/anxiety/

1 Know it passes

The physical sensations that come with anxiety can be quite frightening: breathlessness, dizziness, rapid heart rate and aches and pains are just a few! Knowing that this is a natural response can help.

It can be useful to compare a situation that causes anxiety to jumping into a cold swimming pool. At first it takes your breath away and you want to jump straight back out - that's the anxiety. However, if you get get through that initial discomfort, you get used to the temperature of the pool - which reflects the idea that anxiety comes and goes.

2 Recognise signs

Learning where you feel anxiety in your body (your stomach/chest/head) can be the first step in recognising your anxiety.

Those who become 'stuck' in anxious feelings, or find them distressing might develop coping behaviours. These could include isolating themselves, withdrawing from things they used to enjoy, engaging in repetitive behaviours or self-harming. Recognising these behaviours as coping strategies for anxiety can help you to replace them with more healthy coping strategies, such as talking to a friend or family member, engaging in mindful activity or exercise.

3 Have a plan

If you know a certain situation always triggers feelings of anxiety, rehearse that scenario with a safe person, in a safe place. Plan out how you will stand, what you will say and what you will do. Repeat this until you notice the feelings of anxiety begin to lessen.

It can also be a good idea to have an action plan of what you will do if you feel 'hi-jacked' by feelings of anxiety or begin to feel panicked. Where will you go? Who will you go to? What activities do you know will soothe you or calm you? In the moment, it can be hard to think rationally so having these things prepared and even written down can help.

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