

Psychological Services

Applying Psychology, Making a Difference

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Strategies for Managing Anxiety – Young People

Making a Calm Down Kit – At home it is possible to work with your young person to identify a calm area or space. A place where he or she can feel safe and secure and take time to regulate their emotions. When out of the home, in school or the community, it may be helpful to make a Calm Down Kit which is transportable. The goal of the kit is to transform the young person's inner emotional state to one of calm. It can be especially helpful to consider a range of sensory needs that invoke a calming state. Items can be put into a special bag or box. Only one item may be needed or a selection of a few. Ideas for the kit include: -

A Calming Bottle or Jar



Your young person could make a bottle using a range of fillings such as water, glitter, beads, dried pasta or food colourings. If the bottle is shaken, it represents the anxiety and unhelpful thoughts which may be shaken up inside his/her head. As your young person begins to breathe and calm down, the items in the bottle settle too.

An Elastic Band



This can be twisted or bent in many directions. The tactile experience of pulling or stretching the band can help provide an outlet for anxious feelings. A piece of blu tac can also provide something for the fingers to do when the body and mind is feeling anxious.

Fidget Toys



Spinners or fidget cubes can help occupy the mind and the fingers by giving a young person something to focus on.

Scented Oil or Cream



Having a scented cream to rub into the hands or scented oil on a tissue or handkerchief can support the body and mind to calm. Considering breathing whilst experiencing a calming scent can aid relaxation.

Music, Sounds of Nature or White Sound



Having calming music or sounds of nature on a phone or electronic device can reduce anxiety. Being prepared with headphones and taking time out from noisy surroundings can be relaxing. Having a short recording of a mindfulness script or breathing exercises may be beneficial.

Pictures or Cards

Accessing pictures of people, animals or objects that invoke happy or calm thoughts may be helpful. Taking time to look at one picture or to sort and arrange a number of cards is likely to refocus the mind bring the anxiety down.

