

The Healthy Minds Team

Anxiety training for school staff

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Aims of this training:

Following the completion of this training you should know:

- What anxiety is, including sub types of anxiety
- What anxiety looks like in CYP
- How prevalent anxiety is in young people
- What habituation is and how we can use this to support CYP with anxiety
- How to support young people in school who are struggling with anxiety



What is anxiety?

There are various types of anxiety/mood related difficulties including:

- Separation Anxiety
- Generalised Anxiety
- Social Phobia / Anxiety
- Panic disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorders

Anxiety is the feeling we get when our body responds to fear or threat. The purpose of the physical symptoms of anxiety is to prepare the body to cope with threat or danger.

Anxiety can be caused by stressful events, having lots of worries, stresses and pressures of life, or as a learnt behaviour in response to threat (real or perceived).

Equally some people are just more predisposed to anxiety.

What does anxiety feel like in CYP?

Dry mouth.



Muscles feel tense/stiff.



Need the toilet more.



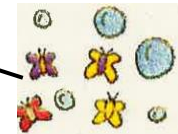
Dizzy, get a headache.



Heart beats faster, breathe quicker.



Sweaty hands.



Butterflies in stomach.



Wobbly legs, shaking body.

What does anxiety look like in CYP?

FIGHT

Yelling, Screaming,
Using Mean Words

Hitting, Kicking, Biting,
Throwing, Punching

Blaming, Deflecting
Responsibility, Defensive

Demanding,
Controlling

"Oppositional",
"Defiant", "Noncompliant"

Moving Towards What
Feels Threatening

Irritable, Angry,
Furious, Offended
Aggressive

FLIGHT

Wanting to Escape,
Running Away

Unfocused, Hard
to Pay Attention

Fidgeting, Restlessness,
Hyperactive

Preoccupied, Busy with
Everything But the Thing

Procrastinating, Avoidant,
Ignores the Situation

Moving Away From What
Feels Threatening

Anxious, Panicked
Scared, Worried,
Overwhelmed

FREEZE

Shutting Down,
Mind Goes Blank

Urge to Hide,
Isolates Self

Verbally Unresponsive,
Says, "I don't know" a lot

Difficulty with
Completing Tasks

Zoned Out,
Daydreaming

Unable to Move,
Feeling Stuck

Depressed, Numb,
Bored/Apathetic,
Helpless

How prevalent is anxiety in CYP?

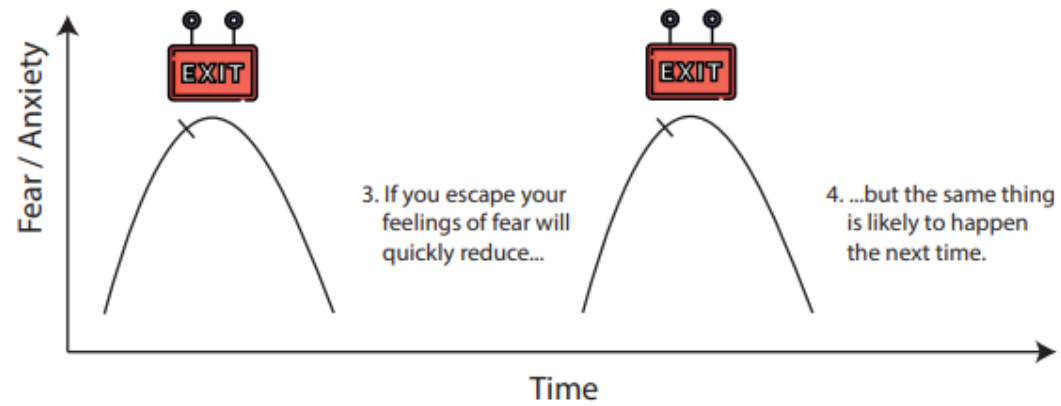
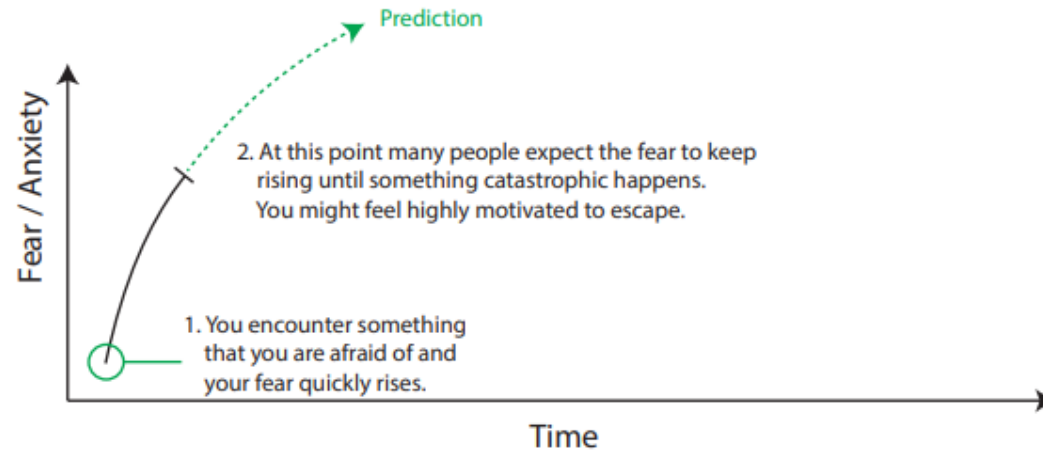
1 in 6

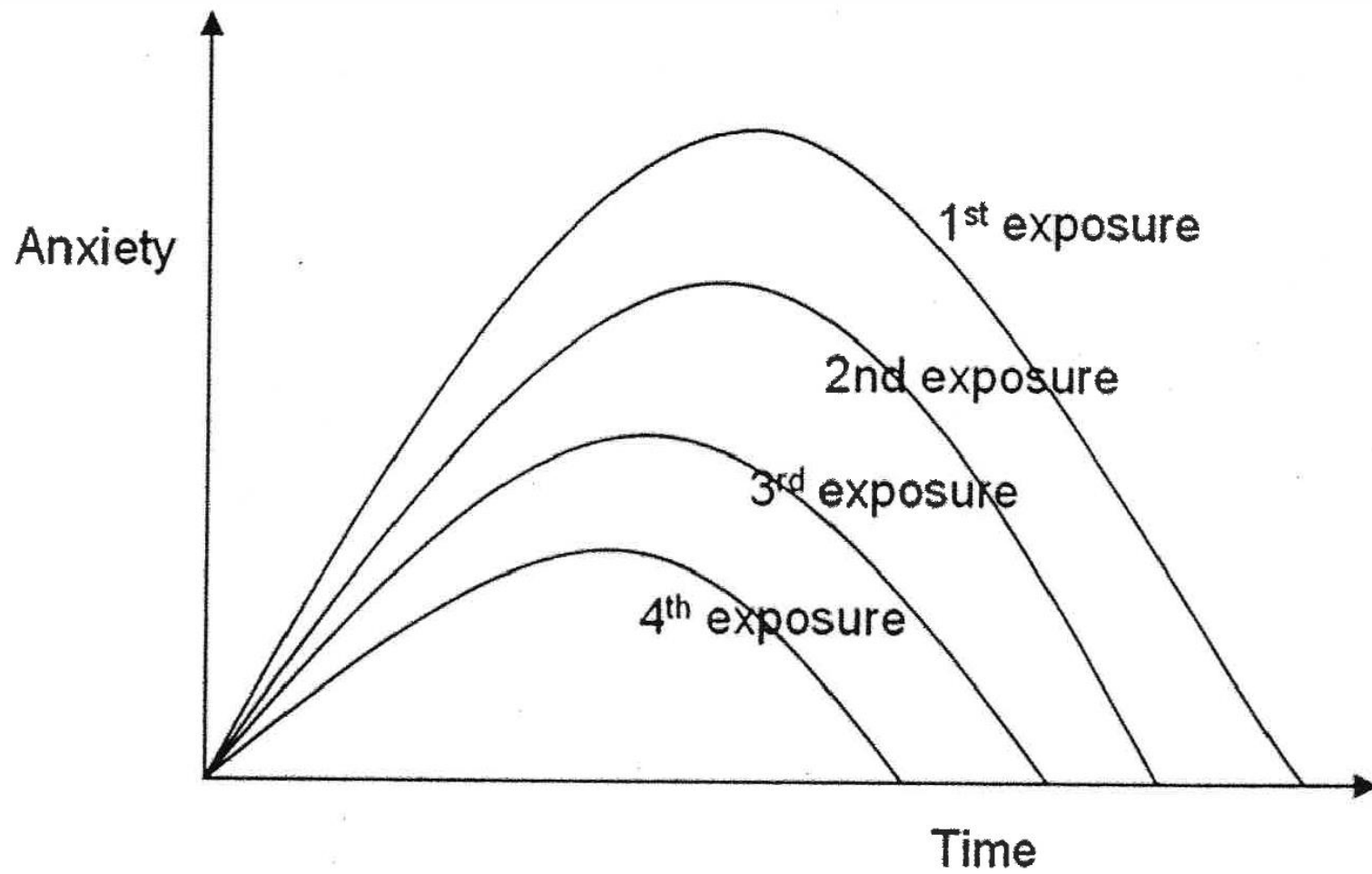
children
in England

had a probable mental disorder in 2021

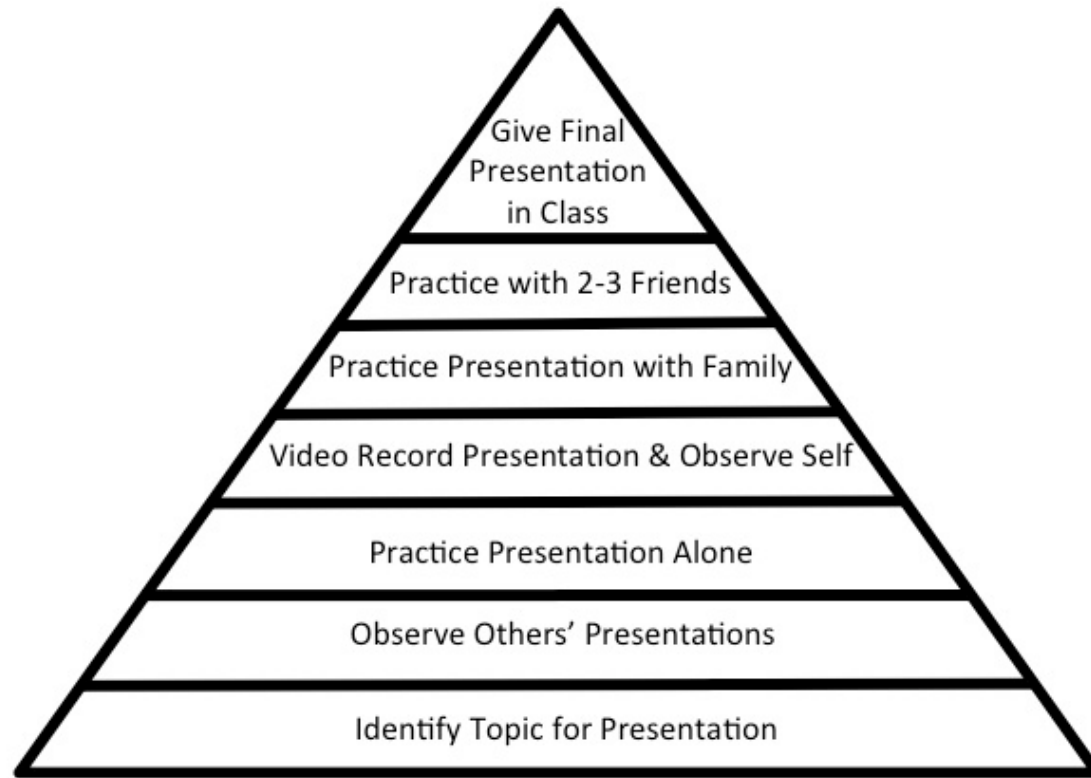
the same as in 2020 but an **increase** from 1 in 9 in 2017

Habituation





Example hierarchy



Most anxiety provoking

Least anxiety provoking

How to support CYP with anxiety - general

Normalising anxiety and helping the child talk about their worries can be enough for some.

Exposing fears through talking about them can help the child by reducing the internalised distress – low level interventions at school or at CAMHs (Friends Resilience).

Addressing any factors within the family or environment which are contributing to fears and worries

For moderate to severe cases therapy should be considered (Counselling, CBT, Parent Led CBT, Family Therapy)

How to support CYP with anxiety - specific

Ask questions rather than offering reassurance

Creating hierarchies with the child to support them to face their fears

Noticing and rewarding / praising

‘brave’ behaviour

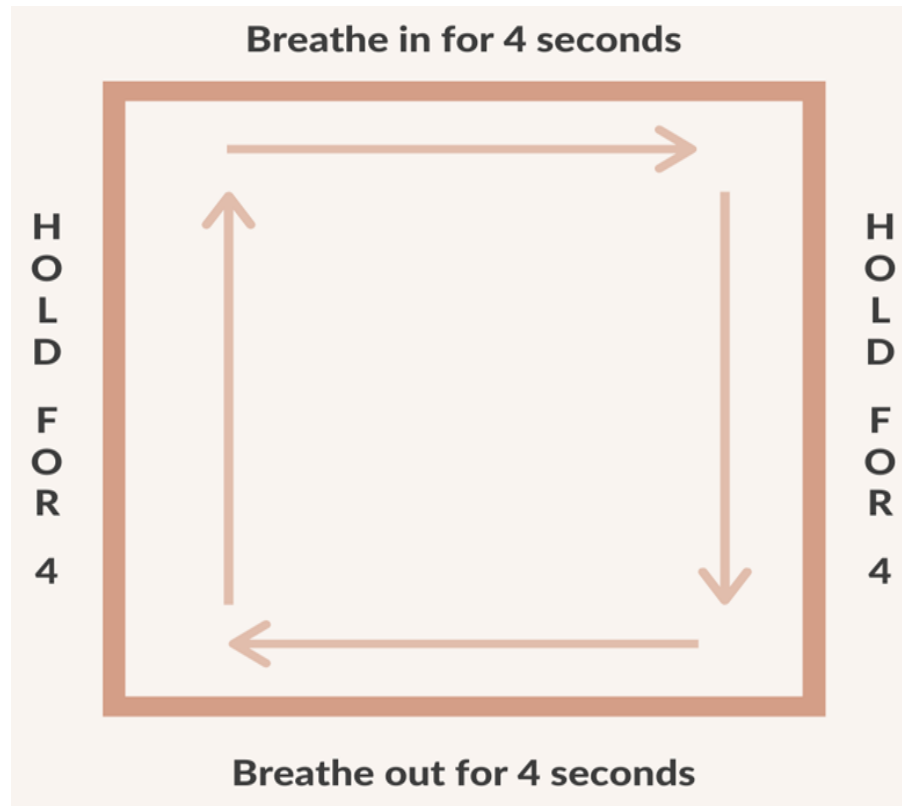
Breathing exercises to help calm the child

Guide the child to problem solve and try not to give them the answer

Do not appear to be shocked, anxious or express outrage at what they say

Try not to ask ‘why’ questions

Breathing exercises



THINGS THAT HELP ANXIETY

BY @twentysevenLKLD



PHONE A
FRIEND



DEEP
BREATHING



HOLD ON
TO SOMEONE



GO FOR A
WALK



SHOWERS &
BATHS WITH
OILS



ENGAGE ALL 5
SENSES



DISTRACTIONS
(TV, PAINT NAILS,
WALK DOG)



CALMING
MUSIC



DO SOMETHING
WITH YOUR
HANDS



WRITE IT
OUT



DRINK COLD
WATER



CUDDLE A
WEIGHTED
BLANKET

Other sources of support




**Your online mental
wellbeing community**

Free, safe and anonymous support



Headspace | Mini meditation |
Breathe

17M views • 4 years ago



Jenny doesn't know how to do their homework and is too worried to put her hand up,
Jenny shares that she has been very worried at home after school.

Unhelpful reaction

Tell them that they should ask you at break time or lunch time when everyone is out of the class to make it easier

Helpful reaction

Ask what they think will happen if they put their hand up and ask for help. Normalise their worry. If they are unsure what they are worried about, give suggestions as to what you assume they might be worried will happen i.e. 'Some young people have told me that they are worried they will get told off if they ask for help as it might mean they haven't been listening to me, is this what you think?' Support them by praising them if they show brave behaviour such as asking questions / give answers in class.




Ben is very worried about standing up in front of the class to do a presentation

Unhelpful reaction

Tell him to just give it a go and it will be fine, if they get too worried say it doesn't matter and that they don't have to do it.

Helpful reaction

Problem solve with them and help them create a step plan to think of how they can practise in front of the mirror then with their family at home before they have to do the performance / presentation, & have a practice run before they do so in school if possible. Encourage them to do breathing exercises beforehand.




Tom is nervous about an upcoming test and complains that he is feeling sick

Unhelpful reaction

Tell them that they have to do the test and that everyone else is doing it

Helpful reaction

Ask what it is about the test that they are worried about. Normalise the worry. Support them to problem solve with who they could practice with at home or resources they could use to revise before the test.



Erin states she feels sick and struggles to separate from her parent when arriving at school on a morning.

Unhelpful reaction

Reassure them that it will all be okay and that they will have a good time once they are in.

Helpful reaction

Ask questions to gauge why it is that they struggle to separate from their parent. Normalise the worry and address any family factors which may be playing into this. Create a step plan to support them to attend school i.e. supporting them with a buddy until they feel more comfortable. Check in with them when they are in school where possible and praise them for attending

Thank you

Any questions?

