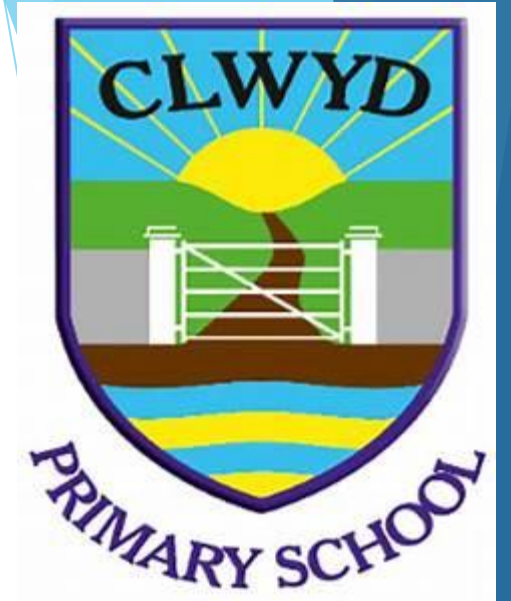


# Promoting Positive Behaviour for parents



Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020



# Challenging behaviours and approaches



## Behaviour Levels

1. Anxiety
2. Defensive
3. Risk Behaviours
4. Tension Reduction

Ready, Respectful, Safe

## Attitudes/Approaches

1. Supportive
2. Directive
3. Physical Intervention
4. Therapeutic Rapport

Consistent, Calm Adult Approach

# Behaviour Levels

## Anxiety

**Definition:** Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe.

Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. For example, you may feel worried and anxious about sitting an exam, or having a medical test or job interview.

During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal.

But some children find it hard to control their worries. Their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily lives.

Anxiety is the main symptom of several conditions, including: [panic disorder](#), [phobias](#), such as [agoraphobia](#) or [claustrophobia](#), [post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\)](#), [social anxiety disorder \(social phobia\)](#)

## Examples

Not wanting to go to school, over thinking, worrying about family members being ill, worrying about lining up, worrying about falling out with friends, change of routine, head banging, flapping, scratching, screaming, running, hiding.

# Approaches

Support - to endure bravely or quietly.

- ✓ **Talk** to your child about anxiety, [what is happening in their body](#) and why it happens. Many children don't know what they are feeling when they are anxious and it can be very frightening and overwhelming. They might even think they are very ill or that they are having a heart attack.
- ✓ Help them to [recognise anxious feelings](#) so they can tell when they are becoming anxious and can ask for help.
- ✓ Tell your child it will be okay and the [anxiety will pass](#). It can be helpful to describe the anxiety as a wave to ride or surf that gets smaller after it peaks.
- ✓ Get your child to [breathe deeply and slowly](#), in through their nose for three counts and out through their mouth for three counts.
- ✓ **Distract** them by focusing on something else. Something positive that interests them.
- ✓ Give them a cuddle or hold their hand if they will let you - [touch can be soothing](#).
- ✓ It can help to talk to your child about finding a [safe place in their mind](#) - somewhere that they feel relaxed and happy. It may be a grandparent's or a holiday beside the sea which they can picture when 'sad thoughts' come into their head or they are feeling anxious. Sometimes holding a memento, like a seashell or pebble, can help.

# Approaches

- ✓ If your child is feeling the need to check things or repeat certain actions, suggest they [count up to 10](#) before they start checking as a delaying tactic.
- ✓ Encourage your child to notice [what makes them anxious](#). Talking it through can help but your child could also try keeping a diary or a '[worry book](#)'.
- ✓ Make a '[worry box](#)'. Your child can write each worry down and post it in the box out of sight. Small children will enjoy decorating the box too. They can leave the worries in there for, say, a week to see if they were worth worrying about (if not they can be torn up).
- ✓ Specific 'worry time' for around 10 or 20 minutes, (but not too close to bedtime), so worries can be saved up for that time. This gives the message that we are in control of their worries and not vice versa.
- ✓ Work on positive-thinking. Name their worst case scenarios and think through together how to sort out the situation if it happens, e.g. 'I'm worried that we'll miss the bus.' 'What do you think we could do if that happens?' 'We could get the next bus'.
- ✓ Help them maintain a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise to reduce the levels of stress hormones, good sleeping habits, calm bedtime routines, limited screen or computer time in the evening, and a healthy diet.

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/anxiety-information/young-people-and-anxiety/resources/>

# Helpful Websites, charities and books

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

[YoungMinds Parents Helpline](#)

Call us for free 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri 9:30 - 16:00).

[Anxiety UK](#)

Text Service: 07537 416 905

Infoline: 03444 775 774 - Mon-Fri 9:30am - 5.30pm

# Behaviour Levels

Defensive : Defensive behaviour occurs when an individual reacts to a perceived threat and begins using self-protective measures.

## Examples

Defensive behaviours come in a variety of forms, but typically the child becomes agitated, louder and more animated. The child may refuse to follow instructions, make threats that they're going to hurt someone or throw/smash something.

# Approaches

## Directive - To decelerate an escalating behaviour

- ✓ Ensure you stay calm, with a quiet voice and appear unfazed by the behaviour. (On the inside you maybe stressed, but try your best to keep your cool).
- ✓ Body language is important, give the child space, come down to their level in a non threatening way.
- ✓ Pick your battles - somethings it's best to ignore this behaviour, walk away and discuss what you didn't like/consequences when they are calm again. When a child's behaviour is starting to escalate you don't want to make it worse.
- ✓ Have a 'calm box' where children can go to regulate their emotions. At this stage children are on the verge of 'fight or flight' so may need distraction to calm them down. This may include colourings, fidget toys, slime, blue tac, toy cars.

# Behaviour level

Risk behaviour - Presents an imminent or immediate risk to self or others.

## Examples

Swears, kicks, bites, pulls hair, self harm, running across roads, throws things, breaks things, screaming and shouting uncontrollably. In 'fight or 'flight' mode. Very hard to reason with. Child 'sees red' and lose control.

# Approaches

Physical intervention - emergency response aimed at minimising risks and keeping everyone safe.

- ✓ Moving away from the situation - non threatening
- ✓ Moving away weapons
- ✓ Moving siblings away
- ✓ Ensuring there is a quiet, safe place for your child to go to calm
- ✓ Continued calm talk/body language
- ✓ Calm box

# Behaviour level

Tension Reduction - Decrease in physical and emotional energy

## Examples

Calmer breathing, tired, red faced, more aware of surroundings, quiet, want their own space, embarrassed, upset, cry.

# Approaches

Therapeutic rapport - restorative approaches to re-establish rational communication, relationships and routines.

- ✓ Safe place
- ✓ Reassurance - you still love them and think they are a good person. You didn't like the behaviour but it's not 'them' that you don't like
- ✓ Hug, play with hair
- ✓ Distraction
- ✓ Talk through what happened, why it happened and what we could do next time
- ✓ You're a 'team' and you're in it together

# Non Verbal Communication - only 7% of communication is talking!

- ▶ **Position** - Where you are?
- ▶ **Posture** - How you hold your body?
- ▶ **Proximity** - Distance between people

# Paraverbal Communication

The vocal part of speech ( excluding the actual words)

- ▶ **Tone** - quality and pitch, using a supportive voice and not sarcasm
- ▶ **Volume** - loudness and intensity (Quiet teacher = quiet class)
- ▶ **Cadence** - rhythm - fast/slow - 'Mothers ease'

# Verbal Interventions

## Verbal intervention tips

- ▶ Remain flexible - if we are ridged there's no room for development.
- ▶ Be clear and reasonable - try not to use too many words and remember how old they are.
- ▶ Talk privately - huge benefits, less exposed, an audience can make things worse and can be embarrassing.
- ▶ Allow time and space - children cannot change their behaviour instantly. Give choices and walk away...leave it with them.
- ▶ Avoid powerplay - Don't have a stand off as much as they 'should' do what you ask.
- ▶ Listen with empathy - be supportive and empathetic (even if you've got a list to do, your child will really appreciate it.)
- ▶ Scripted responses - whether you're only adult in the home or you have a partner, grandparent, older sibling everyone needs to be consistent.

*“Not attention seeking behaviour but ‘connection’ seeking behaviour.”*

## Empathetic Listening

1. Give undivided attention - eye contact
2. Be non-judgemental - stay neutral and listen
3. Focus on feelings (not just the facts) - listen carefully for the real message
4. Allow silence for reflection - count to 3 before responding
5. Use restatement to clarify messages - Use your own words to repeat what your child has said to ensure you understand what they have said.

# Some helpful scripts

*Rather than, “why haven’t you made your bed!!”*

*You could try*

*I’ve noticed that .....you haven’t made your bed yet, I’d really appreciate it if you would, you’re so good at tidying up.*

*“but I don’t want to make my beeeeeed!!”*

*Rather than, “I don’t care, I told you to make your bed!”*

*You could try*

*I hear what you’re saying .....but once you make your bed we can go to the park. Thank you for listening/following instructions.*

*“I don’t want to go to school.”*

*Rather than, “Tough you’re going!”*

*I can see you are upset ..... But you will be fine when you get there and see your friends.*

*Repetition and consistency is important*

First....then....

If ....then

First brush your teeth, then we can read a book

First do your homework, then we can watch a film

If you eat all your dinner then you can have dessert

If you get ready for school then you can have my phone for 10 minutes.

# Setting limits - Rules and consequences

- ❖ As a family you may want to sit down and set some house rules, ask your child to come up with the rules with you and decide the consequences if the rules are broken and rewards if the rules are followed.
- ❖ Get everyone to sign the family contract.
- ❖ Children then have ownership over what happens in their house.

# Never too late....

Children are like sponges and can re-learn how to behave a certain way. Start with 1 strategy you have learnt today and add a new one each week or month that you're going to try.

# Most importantly....

You need to look after yourself.