

## Managing Anxiety at Home

### Worry Box

A worry box is a special box where they can write down worries and post them away. It can be opened weeks later and worry examined- was it worth worrying about, did it happen, can I tear it up now?

It gives the children more understanding of their anxiety, can they see patterns in it? It gives them ownership and control – I've got a worry and this is what I'm going to do. It offers children the 3 F's

- Face it
- Fix it
- Forget it



Once they have put the worry in their box children can continue with their day calmer and happier.

Children may enjoy making and decorating their worry box – making it their own and meaningful for them. They can also spend this time with a parent discussing how and why they will use the worry box. It may help to have a practice, for the parent to have a go and show it is ok, it is safe. It may be that the child would prefer it to be a box for all the family, and so long as it is anonymous, they will then participate too.

It may be helpful to put directions for use or a mantra (such as the 3 F's) inside the box as a visual reminder of the purpose of the worry box.

### Items needed –

Box, glue, glitter, stickers, paper, tape, markers etc – anything to decorate and personalise!

## **Worry Time**

If they prefer to talk, then set aside an allotted amount of time an evening or a week when worries can be discussed with person of choice. Try labelling and sorting worries – are they big or small? Are they somebody else's worries? Are they something that's happening now, may happen a long time off or has actually already happened and finished?

## **Relaxation techniques**

### **Breathing techniques – deep breathing**

Chose a favourite object, such as a balloon, and imagine blowing it up and deflating as you breathe in and out slowly. For a younger child, visuals may aid this, 5 balloons they stick onto a board for each breath.

This helps to slow down their thoughts and focus them on the activity rather than what was causing their anxiety.

### **Deep pressure massage**

Choose a body part they are comfortable with massaging. Do they wish to massage themselves or have someone else do it? It is important to find a safe place where they feel comfortable for the massage to happen; otherwise the environment may become to big a distraction.

This deep contact helps to stretch and relax the muscles, helping to slow down the brain and helping them to relax. It may help to play relaxing music if you are at home.

### **Squidgy toys**

There are many stress relieving toys available on the market. Find one that is suitable for them. This can help focus them on a particular motion and away from the feelings buzzing around their head.