



## **Inclusion and Engagement Support Team GEMs- Good Engagement Methods**

GEMs have been put together to demonstrate good engagement methods to support CYP with SEND.

As Inclusion teachers, we wanted to produce a package to address and support some of the core challenges that professionals will encounter within their classrooms with CYP with children with SEND.

Within this package, you will find activities which have been designed to approach some of the most sensitive subject areas that arise, such as self-esteem, anxiety, anger, and bereavement.

This package is versatile and offers activities to primary and secondary settings to suit your school's needs. Activities can be used to support individual children or may be suitable in a small group or within a whole class setting.

We have signposted a lot of resources within this package from the following:

- Twinkl website - <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>
- ELSA website - <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>
- Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families- [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#)
- The incredible 5 Point Scale by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
- [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)
- [Therapy worksheets, tools, and handouts | Therapist Aid](#)
- Relaxation script taken from:  
<http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/treehouserelaxation-script/>
- A Therapeutic Treasure Deck of Grounding, Soothing and Regulating Cards by Dr. Karen Treisman  
Lancashire Emotional Health in Schools  
[www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/917682/lehsc-transition-model-flyer](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/917682/lehsc-transition-model-flyer)  
Believe in children- Barnardo's [Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

## Anxiety

What is anxiety?

**Anxiety** is an **emotion**. When people talk about anxiety, they may use words like:

Panic

Dread

Worry

Fear

Tension

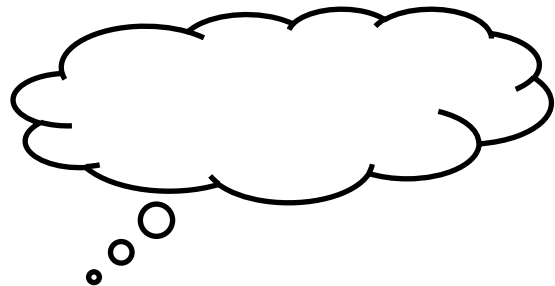
Nervousness

When we feel anxious, many processes begin to happen, and this is our bodies way of preparing us for the FIGHT, FLIGHT or FREEZE response.

There may be changes in:

**Adrenalin**  
**Heart rate and pulse**  
**Blood pressure**  
**Breathing rate**  
**Glucose energy release**  
**Pupil dilation**  
**Muscle tension**  
**Body temperature**  
**Digestive activity**  
**Re-direction of blood to key muscles and the brain**

Let's imagine that you are walking through a forest and suddenly a huge bear comes running towards to you. Write in the bubble what you would do! This highlights the danger you feel and the reaction you may have.



The flight, fight or freeze response is a wonderful and necessary reaction, but after the danger has passed, our body needs to calm down so that we can continue with our daily life. For many children this can lead to daily anxiety, feeling on high alert and always ready for a response to danger or challenge.

**Getting to understand the anxiety.**

Ask the children how they feel physically when they become anxious? Ask them to highlight or colour in any that apply to them.

Headaches

Dizzy

Dry mouth

Cold

Shaking or  
tremors

Heart racing

Chest  
tightness

Tummy ache

Grinding teeth

Lack of  
appetite

Fainting

Butterflies in  
stomach

Muscle pain

Feeling sick

Tingling in  
limbs

Frequent  
urination

Sweating

Jelly legs



It is important that CYP recognize that these feelings are normal and that if ignored can begin to have negative effects on many aspects of their lives including:

- Physical health
- Mental health and emotional well being
- Family relationships
- Friendships
- Performance at school/college/leisure activities and work
- Motivation to do things

Feeling anxious can spiral out of control and it is important that it is managed and dealt with correctly. Once you understand your anxiety, you can begin to manage it!  
TRY THESE!

- ✓ Talk to a trusted adult or friend about your anxiety
- ✓ Write a short story about your anxiety
- ✓ Write a poem about your anxiety
- ✓ Draw a picture of what your anxiety is like
- ✓ Draw/write down ideas for a dance/drama piece about your anxiety
- ✓ Draw symbols which reflect how your anxiety makes you feel

### **Creating a themed area.**

Create an area where children can express their anxieties and worries using books, worry monsters, worry boxes etc.

*With special thanks to Lea Community Primary school, Preston for sharing their themed areas.*



## Safe spaces

Safe spaces are places where children can go to calm down, be alone and recharge so they are ready to learn.

Safe spaces can be helpful for children with high levels of stress or trauma, for children who may come to school feeling anxious, sad, scared or angry. They are a self-regulation area for those children who feel overwhelmed by their emotions.

Safe spaces don't need to be fancy, just a safe, cosy area in the classroom. Ask the CYP for their input into what could go into the area, you will need comfortable seating such as bean bags or cushions, sensory resources, soft toys, and maybe pictures of family/friends. You can add posters of calming techniques, problem solving and how they can take care of themselves.

CYP should choose when they enter the safe space as a transition from upset/anger to calm. Some CYP may be invited to the safe space if this is helpful but should not be used as a command/time out.

The safe space should be introduced gradually, and staff should talk to the CYP about the purpose of the safe space. Strategies and tools should be discussed as well as any visuals which show the children what to do.

You may want to add soothing music and lights to the safe space. This should all be decided in discussion with the CYP and what they feel would support them to feel regulated and safe.

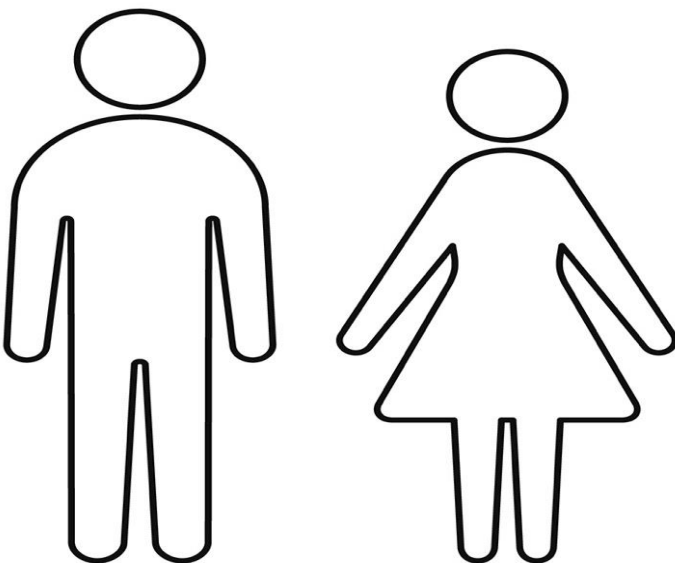
*With special thanks to St John's CE Primary School, Kearsley for sharing some of their safe spaces.*



**Safe Spaces**



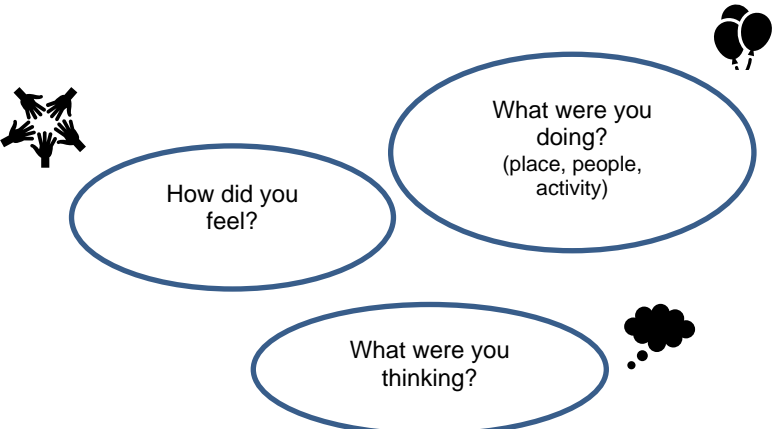
Activities	Resources
<p><b>How does anxiety make your body feel?</b> When you are anxious or worried your body can react in strange ways. For example, your body may feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tired</li> <li>• heavy and hard to get moving</li> <li>• sick and not hungry</li> </ul> <p>Think about the last time you felt worried about something and try to remember how your body felt. Make a list. 1,2,3,4 etc</p> <p><b>Sharing our worries</b> Sharing our worries can help to relieve some of the anxiety we feel. A worry doll is a great way of helping you manage your worries and sharing your feelings.</p> <p><b>Worry Doll</b> The idea is that you share one worry with the worry doll, and you put it under your pillow at night. In the morning, your worry will be reduced, and you will be ready for the day ahead.</p> <p><b>Worry Bag</b> You can make your own or use a ready-made template. Put all your worries in the bag and then discard all the negative things when you feel ready to let go.</p>	<p>When a CYP feels anxious or worried you can give them options on how they can remain calm.</p> <p>You can download anxiety and worry flashcards from: <a href="https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t2-p-325-anxiety-or-worry-ks2-flashcards">https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t2-p-325-anxiety-or-worry-ks2-flashcards</a></p> <p>You can print them out and create a pocket-sized pack for them to carry around.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Anxiety intervention sessions 1-6 <a href="#">Anxiety Intervention Session One (teacher made) (twinkl.co.uk)</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Making a worry doll <a href="#">How to Make Your Own Worry Doll Worksheet (teacher made) (twinkl.co.uk)</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Making a worry bag may be helpful. <a href="#">My Bag of Worries and Sadness.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>The worry tree</b> Make a plan to let your worries and anxiety disappear. Identify the worry, what are you</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Step forward for SEND worry tree (page 15)</p>

<p>worrying about? Is there anything you can do about it? Make a plan on the worry tree.</p>	
<p><b>Think about our main worries</b> Think about 5 worries and rank them in order. Think about how they make you feel and how you can change how you feel about them.</p>	<p>This is adult led and may be used in conjunction with a worry doll or worry bag</p> <p><a href="#">My Main Worries Worksheet / Worksheet (teacher made) (twinkl.com)</a></p>
<p><b>Make A Pensieve</b> In the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling, Dumbledore makes a pensieve to put all his thoughts and memories into when he feels overwhelmed and worried. You can also make a worry jar. With an adult, the children write down their worries and place them into a jar</p>	<p>Using an empty shoebox, decorate the outside. Make a slot and on small cards, the children can write down their worries. On the back you can write down the solution. You can work on one worry at a time and return to the worries as often as you need to.</p>
<p><b>All about me</b> Draw a large silhouette of the child or draw around the child (2 adults present). Ask the child questions and get them to write the answers inside and around their outline. This is used as a getting to know you tool and will promote discussion. Add in questions about anxiety, school and mix these in with friendlier topics such as:</p> <p><i>My ideal day</i> <i>My best friend</i> <i>What I want to be in the future</i> <i>My favourite subject</i> <i>My least favourite subject</i> <i>My favourite film/TV programme</i></p>	<p>Large roll of paper to draw around the silhouette of a child</p> <p>Felt tip pens</p> 



<p><i>A person I can talk about my problems with</i>  <i>What I would buy if I had £10/£20 or a £1000</i>  <i>The teacher I get along with best</i>  <i>What I did at the weekend</i></p> <p>A good activity for primary children or difficult children to engage. It can help when a CYP is anxious about talking to others. A hands-on activity and can be an icebreaker.</p>	
<p><b>My Helping hand</b>  1-1 or group activity  Everyone draws an outline of their hand and writes on each finger where they can find strength and help. This may be- support in school, books, films, music, parents/carer, friends, themselves, close friends etc. On the thumb, write the name of someone you trust, on the little finger something that makes you happy like swimming or reading. On the palm write something they consider to be a strength within themselves. E.g. the ability to cope in a crisis or to listen to others.  An activity for older CYP who can reflect on themselves and world around them.</p>	<p>Paper  Felt tip pens</p>
<p><b>My mountain to climb</b>  Ask the CYP to think about their success in the future and list it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pass GCSE's</li> <li>○ Go to college</li> </ul>	<p>Felt tips and pens</p>



<p>worry a lot and have negative view on things.</p>	
<p><b>The magic circle</b></p> <p>Think about something you have done recently which you really enjoyed. Write it in the circles.</p> <p>What you <b>DID</b> How you <b>FELT</b> What were you <b>THINKING?</b></p> <p>This will promote self-esteem and lift mood.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Magic Circle</b></p> 
<p><b>How many positives?</b> Working with CYP to think about:</p> <p>I am I can I have</p> <p>Helping CYP to think about all the positive features in themselves</p>	<p>Many resources on the Young Minds website for Primary and Secondary</p> <p><a href="http://youngminds.org.uk">How Many Positives Activity Sheet (youngminds.org.uk)</a></p>
<p><b>Calming activity to help with anxiety</b></p>	<p><a href="https://youtu.be/30VMIEmA114">https://youtu.be/30VMIEmA114</a></p>
<p>A free 7 ways to support children and young people who are worried guide has been written by Centre clinicians and identifies seven ways you can use CBT to help children and young people who may be experiencing anxiety.</p>	<p><a href="http://annafreud.org">Guide to supporting children who are worried   Ways to support young people and children with anxiety (annafreud.org)</a></p>
<p><b>Dance</b></p> <p>Dance is often thought of as a great way to change how you feel. Dance can be a form of artistic expression you don't have to follow the rules or learn</p>	<p><a href="https://youtu.be/Q3OFbq9IZCU">https://youtu.be/Q3OFbq9IZCU</a></p>

<p>a specific type of dance – you can also just find a space to move (with or without music) in a way that feels natural or intuitive to you,.</p> <p>Dance therapists think that mental and emotional difficulties can be held in the body in the form of muscle tension and constrained movement patterns. Releasing those tensions can have a relieving effect for both the body and the mind. Moving rhythmically helps ease anxiety, or you might find moving spontaneously helps you trust your impulses and build confidence like these young people who created this flash mob for Mental Health Awareness Week.</p>	<p><a href="https://youtu.be/ISxmYT4fbBQ">https://youtu.be/ISxmYT4fbBQ</a></p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/388Q44ReOWE">https://youtu.be/388Q44ReOWE</a></p>
<p><b>Spending time outdoors</b></p> <p>A lot of people find spending time in nature is an important part of their self-care routine. Some of them say it helps them to be mindful and appreciate life, others say it helps them see the bigger picture outside of their own head and thoughts and some simply find the fresh air helps them relax. It can include things like going for walks, spending time at your local park or beach, growing plants and much more.</p>	<p>Let go of stress and get outdoors</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/5vzydrnhfCl">https://youtu.be/5vzydrnhfCl</a></p>
<p><b>Drawing or painting</b></p> <p>Many people find that spending time on artistic</p>	<p>Get drawing</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/FEh8xtH31GE">https://youtu.be/FEh8xtH31GE</a></p>

<p>activities, such as drawing and painting, can be soothing. Repeatedly moving a pencil or paint over paper can itself be a calming act, and sometimes being creative is an opportunity to express difficult thoughts and emotions that can't otherwise be put into words, gaining more insights on what you've been through or are going through.</p>	
<p><b>DIY Photo book</b></p> <p>Create a simple DIY photo book to help children manage separation anxiety when away from their families and pets.</p>	<p>Photos and card</p>
<p><b>20 activities that can reduce anxiety</b></p> <p>This webpage provides activities that can assist adults to help children cope with their anxiety.</p>	<p><a href="#">20 Activities That Can Reduce Anxiety in Kids - Teaching Expertise</a></p>
<p><b>Worries and anxiety activities</b></p> <p>These tips and activities can help you to help your children manage their anxiety.</p>	<p><a href="http://justonenorfolk.nhs.uk">Worries &amp; Anxiety Activities (justonenorfolk.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>Links to podcasts, workshops for adolescence, advice for parents talking to children with worries</p>
<p><b>Free child anxiety printables</b></p> <p><b>A collection of free printables for teachers and parents to support anxiety in children</b></p>	<p><a href="http://goodbyeanxietyhellojoy.com">Free Child Anxiety Printables - Good Bye Anxiety, Hello Joy (goodbyeanxietyhellojoy.com)</a></p>

## Recommended reads

Ruby's worry by Tom Percival (3-7 years)

I am stronger than anxiety by Elizabeth Cole

Talkabout for Children by Alex Kelly

Don't worry, Be happy by Poppy O' Neill

Help your dragon deal with anxiety by Steve Herman (4-8 years)

How a unicorn made me stop worrying by Steve Herman (4-8 years)

When my worries get too big by Kari Dunn Baron (3-12 years)

The anxiety toolkit for teens by Teen Thrive (13+ years)

Happy confident me journal by Annabel Rosenhead (6-12 years)

The Worrysaurus by Rachel Bright (1-5 years)

What to do when you worry too much by Dawn Huebner (6-12 years)

When worry takes hold by Liz Haske (4-8 years)

No worries! by Sharie Coombes (7+)

How big are your worries little bear? By Jayneen Sanders (3-9 years)

Starving the Anxiety Gremlin by Kate Collins- Donnelly

Comic strip conversations by Carol Gray

The Huge bag of worries by Virginia Ironside (3-7 years)

An Emotional Menagerie by The School of Life

Dealing with Feeling by Tina Rae

You're never too young to talk booklet

[Advice for parents and carers of primary school pupils | Talking mental health primary school | Anna Freud Centre](#)



# WORRY TREE

Notice the worry.

What am I worrying about?

Can I do anything about it?

Yes

No

Make a plan!

Let the worry go!

What, When, How?

Think about something else.

Now

Later

Do it!

When

How

How

Let the worry go!

Think about something else.



# WORRY TREE

Notice the worry.

What am I worrying about?

Can I do anything about it?

Yes

No

Make a plan!

Let the worry go!

What, When, How?

Think about something else.

Now

Later

When

Do it!

How

How

Let the worry go!

Think about something else.

