

One of the major difficulties for children with autism is dealing with an anxiety that often comes from feeling unsure of what's going to happen next and a fear of not being in control.

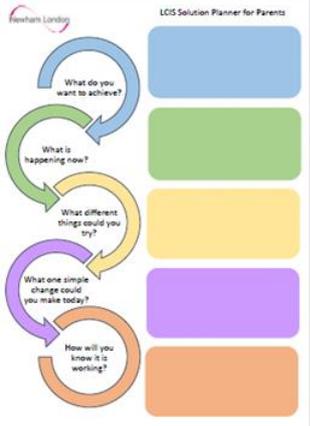
Children with ASD, feel many of the same worries and fears as other children, but when children and teenagers with ASD get worried or anxious, the way they show their anxiety can look a lot like common characteristics of ASD – self-regulatory behaviours e.g. rocking, tapping. Some of your child's behaviours can become repetitive and they may become resistant to changes in routine.

During times of uncertainty, your child might have trouble telling you that they're feeling anxious. Instead, you might notice an increase in behaviours that may be challenging to you or your child is having more meltdowns in the day than usual.

For example, your anxious child might:

- Insist even more on routine and sameness
- Stay in their rooms or not want to leave home
- More trouble sleeping
- Meltdowns during times when they are usually feel regulated
- Avoid or withdraw from social situations
- Rely more on obsessions and rituals, like lining up or spinning objects
- Self-regulate by rocking, spinning or flapping hands
- Self-harm, like head-banging, scratching skin or hand-biting

Here are some ideas to reduce anxiety and manage anxiety for your child:

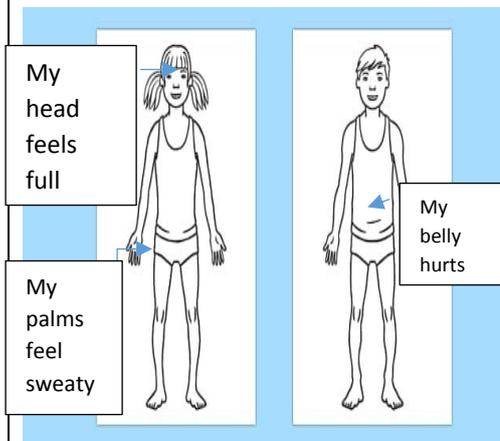
Key Themes	Suggested Support/Strategies	Additional Links and Information
<p>What are the triggers?</p>	<p>-Once you've worked out some of the things that make your child feel anxious, make a list so that you can find ways to help your child manage these situations. For example-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in routine – not seeing familiar family members, transitioning back to school after a long break • Changes in environment- for example, not going to 	 <p>(Solution planner for parents. Available via LCIS professional)</p>

- the park because it is closed
- Unfamiliar social situations – for example, going to the doctors, having to queue outside the supermarket
 - Sensory sensitivities– for example, sensitivities to particular noises, bright lights, specific flavours or food textures
 - Fear of a particular situation, activity or object – for example, sleeping in their own bed, going to the toilet, balloons or vacuum cleaners

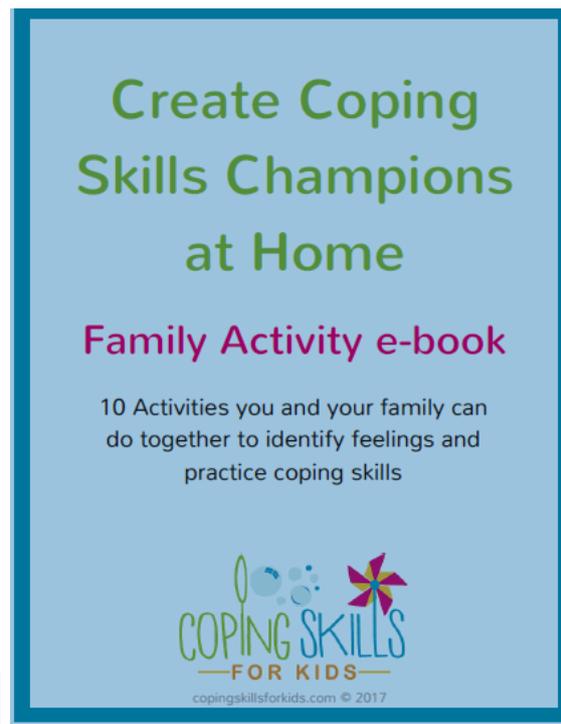
Help your child recognise anxious feelings

Your child might need to be taught what anxiety is and what it feels like in their body. For example, when she feels anxious her palms get sweaty, her heart beats faster, and her hands flap.

You could try drawing an outline of a person's body. Inside the outline, help your child draw or write what happens in each part of his / her body when he /she feels scared or worried.



Create coping skills and anxiety family book



(Available via LCIS professional)

Things you can do as a family

- Create a deep breathing dice
A fun way to explore different ways of breathing. Have fun as a family making the dice.
Take turns to roll the dice and follow the directions of the side that lands on top.



- Feelings memory game
A playful way to get familiar with different feelings.



- Watch this short animation video with your child to see how anxiety and stress can affect a person with autism.

Discuss with your child what each young person does to cope with their anxieties.



Watch the video at :
bit.ly/WindowIntoOurWorld

Teach your child healthy ways to cope with stress, anger and anxiety:

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/>

Online memory game-match the feelings:

<https://matchthememory.com/afaustsmfeelings>

<https://www.anglomaniacy.pl/feelingsMatching.htm#games>

National Autistic Society – Full spectrum awareness.

A toolkit for understanding autism for secondary school students.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/england/young-campaigners-group/our-resources/full-spectrum.aspx>

Individual strategies

There are many things both you and your child can do to manage anxiety.

Deep breathing:

Manage your breathing.

Count backwards:

Give yourself more time whilst counting.

Meditation:

Refocus your mind back to a calm state.

Listen to music:

Relax your mind and body to music.



Writing in a journal

Find a quiet space and write down your feelings and opinions of a situation.

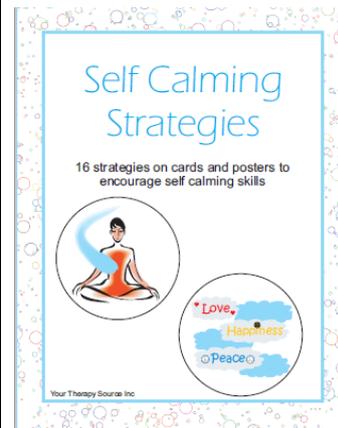
Physical activity

Engage in physical exercise.

Give yourself a hug

Wrap your arms around yourself with a firm hug.

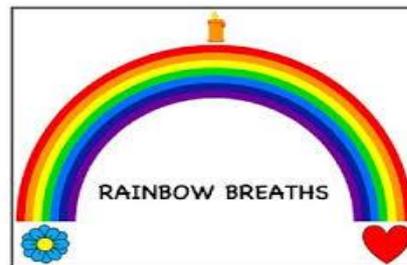
Self-calming strategies



(Available via LCIS professional)

Rainbow breathing exercise:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTy_fogH2v0



(Available via LCIS professional)

Supporting your child back to school

You and your child will need time to prepare for returning to school.

Advice for parents related to change :



(Available via LCIS professional)

Reading resources or books

Read story books to your child on how to recognise and manage feelings. Comment on what is happening in the story and provide examples if your child is feeling the same way as the character in the book.



<https://www.amazon.co.uk/>

Additional support

- Ask your child's school if they are a Place2Be school.  Place2Be provide in-school emotional support to children and young people.
- If you are concerned about your child's anxiety, please contact your child's GP.
- Every local authority has a CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to support children and their families with significant emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties.
- Online training- Learners will explore the factors that impact on stress and anxiety, in order to provide effective support to reduce the impact of stress and anxiety on autistic people <https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/training-consultancy/online/stress-anxiety.aspx>
- Newham Educational Psychology Service work with pupils, teachers and schools to overcome individual and systemic barriers to learning. Speak with your child's school for further information.