

Worried about your child's anxiety - where to find help and support?

Experiencing anxiety is normal, and most of us will remember times or situations when we have felt anxious. It might have been about going to the dentist, a ride on a roller coaster or worrying about a loved one for example. We can't avoid all the things that make us anxious, but we can help our children understand that everybody feels like anxious sometimes and to help them find a way to cope with how they feel. As human beings, when we are in danger, our bodies are designed to go into the "fight or flight" response so that we can either fight or run away to survive. You may have experienced this when you are nervous or worried and noticed your heart beating faster, sweating, shortness of breath, tension or shakiness in muscles, nausea, or headaches. Normally these changes don't last, but children with anxiety disorders are worried most of the time so are experiencing these exhausting and upsetting feelings every day.

How do I know if my child has anxiety?

We will always have worries about our children, but it is important to take a moment to think about what behaviours are concerning you, how long they have been happening, how often, and if this is fairly normal for the circumstances? If your child is behaving in a way that is making family life difficult, or causing problems at school, or issues getting on with their friends or their anxiety is also affecting their sleep, concentration, eating, toileting and this continues, then it may be time to get them some extra help.

Who can help?

If you have concerns about your child, speak to your GP, to their teacher or SENCO, so they can keep an eye on them and offer suggestions and support. If things don't improve, then they can also make a referral to the experts who can help your child find ways to manage their anxiety. Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental health problems children experience, but if they are identified and treated early on, then the risk of other mental health problems in later life can be reduced.

The Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) team works with young people with a range of mental health needs including anxiety, in collaboration with parents or carers. Referrers may include GPs, schools, social care workers, community paediatricians or counselling services.

CHUMS chums.uk.com is a service that supports children and young people with their well-being and mental health and also offers their parent carers information and advice. Phone: 01525 863924 Email: info@chums.uk.com

Where to find out more on website:

www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk and look under Useful Information