



**Educational Psychology  
& Wellbeing Services**

# **Anxiety Activity Book**

## **A Resource Pack for Parents & Caregivers**



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## About This Resource

This Anxiety Resource Book was developed by EPIC to provide practical and fun ideas for parents and caregivers. It provides 11 simple activities to do at home to help children learn how to manage and reduce their anxiety.

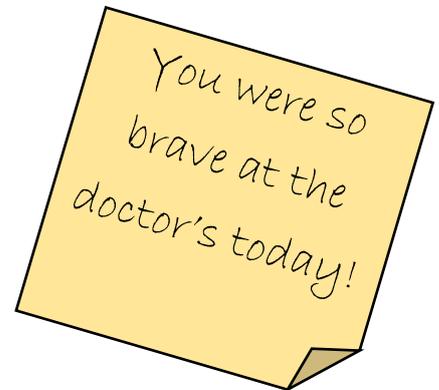
By using some of the ideas and activities in this pack, we hope that children and caregivers alike will find some useful techniques to cope with feelings of anxiety more easily.

## Activity 1 - Encouraging Notes

Approximate time:	5 minutes
Materials:	Post-it Note and Pen
Aim/outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlight your child's strengths by writing them on post-it notes and surprising them.</li><li>• Make your child aware of their strengths and boost their self-esteem.</li><li>• Encourage your child to engage in positive and brave behaviour</li></ul>

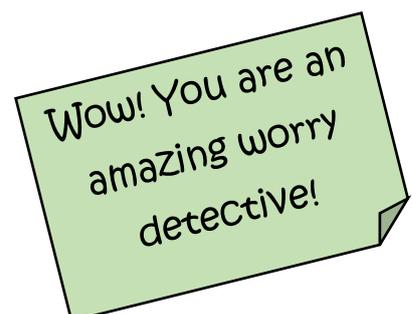
### Activity:

- Write post-it notes for your child to find with positive and encouraging comments
- You could write about:
  - Their character (honesty, kindness, reliability, trustworthiness)
  - When they put in a lot of effort
  - When they achieve something new
  - Steps they've taken towards a long-term goal
  - Strengths that you observe – "You are so creative!"
  - Words of encouragement



### Tips:

- Keep your delivery random so that it's always a novel and pleasant surprise
- Try leaving the notes in their lunch box to give them a positive uplift for the afternoon
- Try to praise process instead of outcome. For example, instead of saying "Well done for winning that award", try "Well done for putting in so much hard work for that award".
- You can use your child's answers to the questions in Activity 3: Getting to Know Yourself if you need some ideas for what to write
- You can use this activity in combination with others to encourage your child, and let them know how well they are doing at managing their anxiety



## Activity 2 -My Worries

Approximate time:	5 minutes
Materials:	Pen and worksheet
Aim/outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make your child aware of what worries them and help them to identify their worry triggers</li></ul>

### Activity:

- Using the worksheet, encourage your child to circle the pictures of things that worry them
- If they have a worry that is not on the sheet, write this down too
- Talk about how they feel when they worry and how you can be there to support them
- Share your own experiences of worry and how you overcame them. Show your child that feeling worried is normal and everyone feels worry!

### Tip:

- You can use this activity to help you think of worries your child might like to try and to overcome in the Coping Step Plans in Activity 10
- You can also use this sheet to help your child know when they might like to use some of the relaxation exercises in Activity 7 and 8.

Worksheet - My Worries



Reading



Writing



Maths



PE



Asking questions



Crowds



Making friends



Being embarrassed



Getting in trouble



Night time



Heights



Going to a party



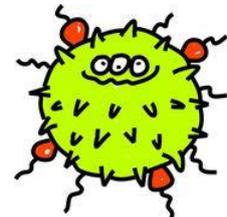
Water



Loud noises



Being late



Germs



Dogs



Spellings



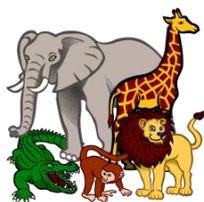
Show and tell



Monsters



Getting changed



Animals



Mummy and Daddy going out



Homework

### Activity 3 - Getting to know yourself

Approximate time:	20 minutes
Materials:	Worksheet
Aim/outcome:	To encourage children to know themselves and help them develop a sense of awareness of who they are and help them feel good about themselves.  Helps children to learn about their own strengths and weaknesses.

#### Activity:

- Encourage your child to answer the questions in the worksheet
- The questions will encourage them to think about things they like and dislike as well as how they see themselves
- Make the activity fun. If your child is stuck on a question, don't worry just move onto the next question and come back to it! – The aim of the exercise is to encourage them to get to know themselves.
- Confirm that everyone is different and that no one will have the same answers and it is good to have different answers and to grow and develop as individuals.

#### Tips:

- You can turn this activity into a joint activity where you interview each other and find out what each other thinks about themselves.
- You can use this activity to help you think of non-material rewards that you can reward them with, such as playing their favourite sport.
- You can use the answers to this activity to help your child think of rewards they might like to set themselves in their Coping Step Plans in Activity 10.
- You can also use this activity to help you think of encouraging notes for Activity 1.

## Worksheet - Getting to Know Yourself

My favourite food is.....

My most favourite lesson is.....

The person I would like to get stuck in a lift with is.....

My most special memory is of.....

The best present I could get is.....

The best time of the day for me is.....

My favourite clothes are.....

The best holiday I've had was.....

I love weather when it is.....

My most treasured possession is.....

My favourite DVD is .....

The sport I like to play most is.....

My favourite animal is.....

The best book I have read is.....

My favourite hobby / activity is.....

My favourite piece of music is.....

My lucky number is.....

The pet I would most like to have is.....

I am good at.....

I look like.....

The bravest thing I have ever done is.....

The most exciting thing I have ever done is.....

If I could change one thing about myself, it would be.....

I am not very good at.....

It is a real treat for me to .....

My best friend is.....

When I need a hug, I go to.....

The best thing about school holidays is.....

The worst thing about being ill is.....

When I am ill I like to.....

The worst thing that happened to me this year was.....

The best thing that happened to me this year was.....

I feel really sad when .....

I feel so angry about .....

If I had three wishes they would be .....

When I am happy I .....

When I am angry I like to.....

I would like to spend a day with .....

I like to daydream about .....

If I were a parent I would .....

If I had special powers I would .....

If I were a musical instrument I would be a.....

## Activity 4 - Highlight Achievements

Approximate time:	20 minutes
Materials:	Pen or coloured pencils and worksheet
Aim/outcome:	To encourage your child to feel good about what they have achieved and use what they have achieved as a way of helping them cope with stress and adversity.

### Activity:

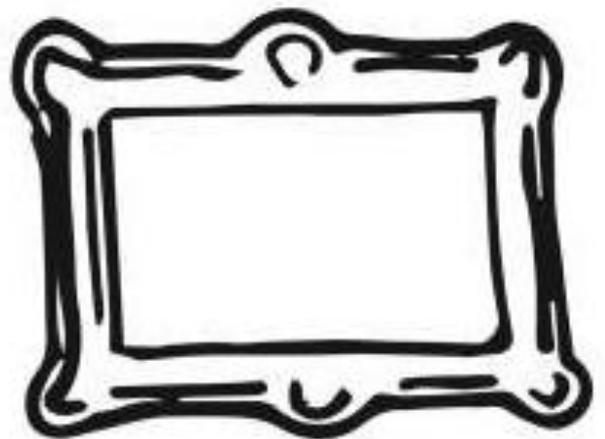
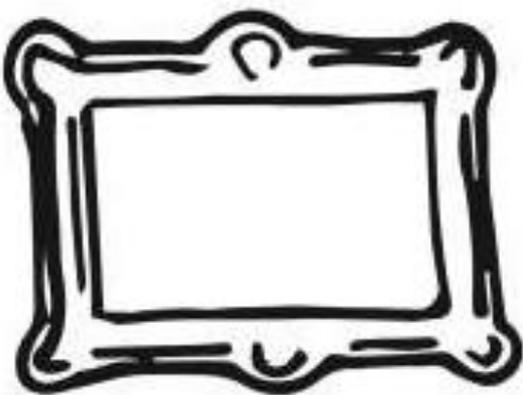
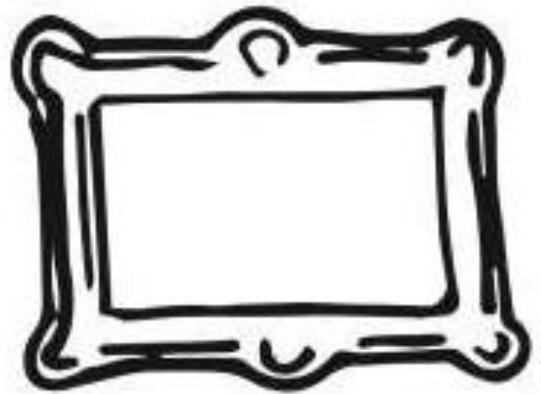
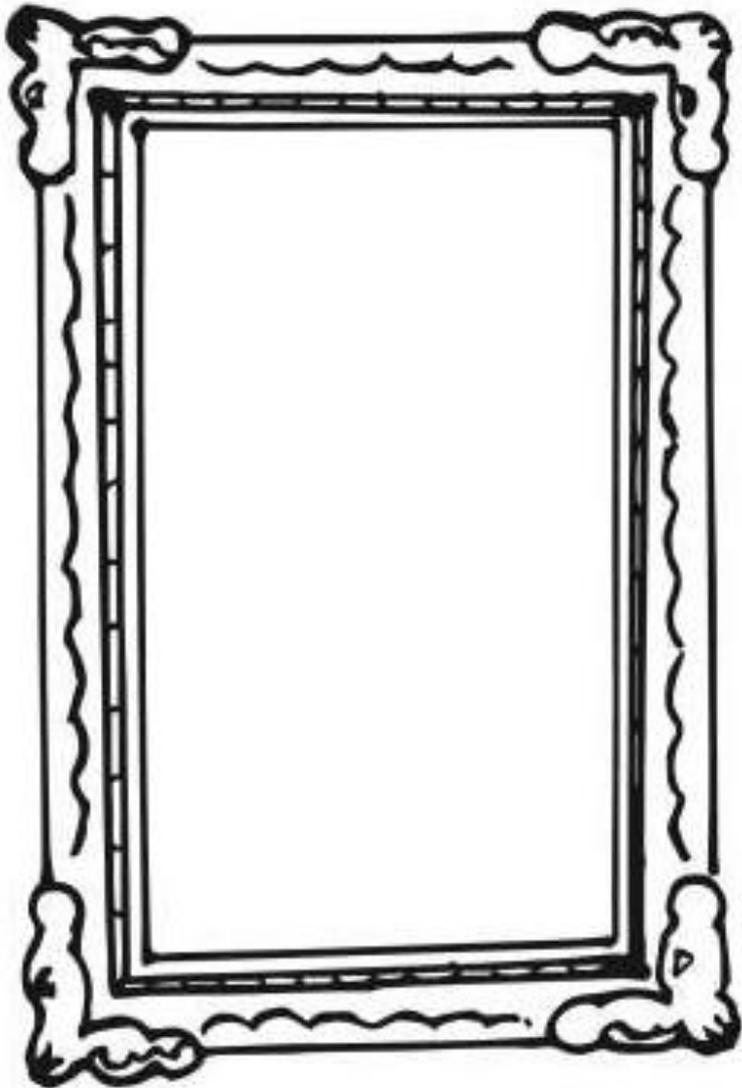
Using the worksheet:

- Ask your child to make suggestions of the things they have achieved in their lives
- Give the handout to your child and help them to write in the picture frames all the things they have achieved
- Try to get your child to write as many things as possible
- Things they have achieved can be: Cooking a meal, writing and sending a letter, a skateboard trick, passing a first aid course, going through a whole week at school without being late...
- Ask your child:
  - Whether they think it is easy to write down their achievements
  - Are there achievements they feel proud of?
  - How and why does remembering their achievements help them to cope when they feel stressed and worried

### Tips:

- Remind your child that remembering achievements help them to remember that they are able to do whatever it is they put their mind to
- Hang the completed activity sheet up in the house to reinforce their achievements and show them that you are proud
- Refer back to the answers in Activity 3: Getting to Know Yourself if you need some ideas.

Worksheet - Highlight Achievements



## Activity 5 - The Connected Tree

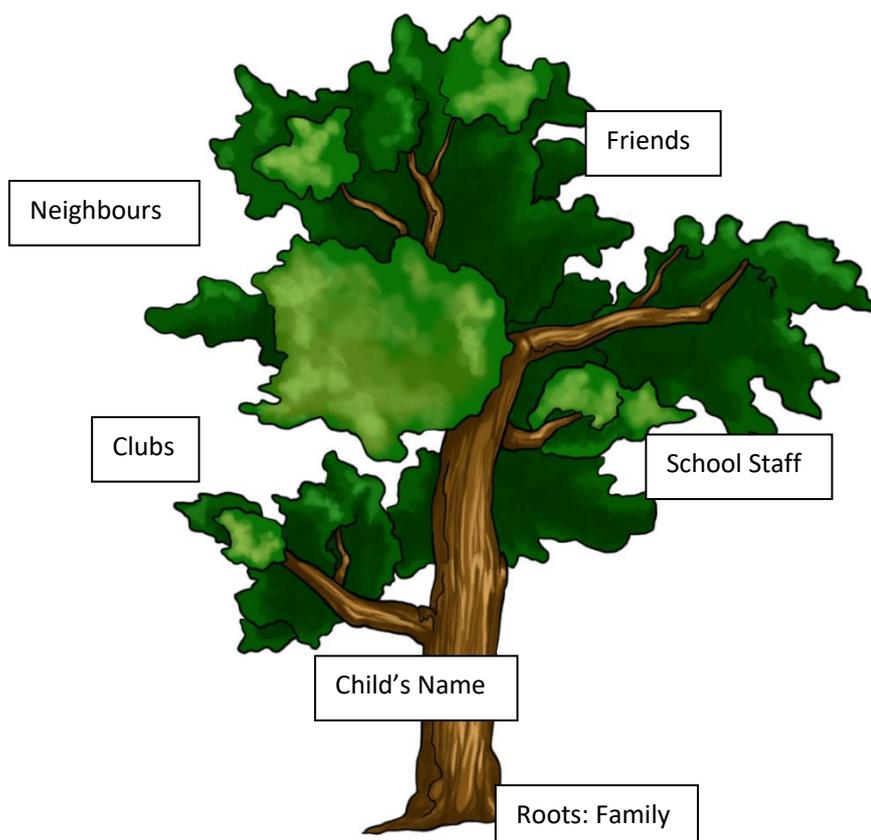
Approximate time:	20 minutes
Materials:	A3 or A4 paper, crayons and a pen
Aim/outcome:	To create a family tree that shows your child how they are connected to many different caring people

### Activity:

- Draw a tree together
- Write your child's name in center of the tree trunk
- Write your family in the roots, then extended connections such as friends, neighbors and school staff in the branches and leaves
- Whilst talking about each person, remind them of how they are connected to them
- Display the tree somewhere it can be seen
- Refer to the connected tree when you can to reinforce your child's feeling of physical safety, support and emotional security

### Tips:

- When your child feels worried or stressed, refer back to the people on the tree to remind them of their positive relationships.



## Activity 6 - Explore Nature

Approximate time:	45 minutes
Materials:	Pen or pencil and worksheet
Aim/outcome:	<p>Build an appreciation for the world and living 'in the moment'. Allow time to explore &amp; be stimulated by nature. Play &amp; exploration through nature develops resilience through building relationships, exploring &amp; noticing things they wouldn't necessarily stop to appreciate otherwise.</p> <p>Providing a focus for the walk (the scavenger hunt) helps to redirect attention away from the child's anxiety triggers.</p>

### Activity:

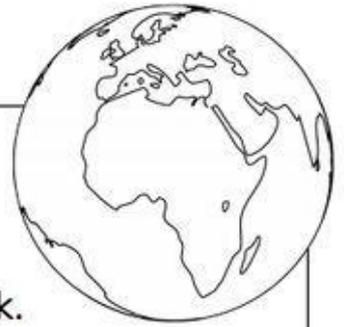
Using the Nature Walk or the Scavenger Hunt worksheet:

- Arrange time to go for a walk together – preferably somewhere that has woodland
- Talk to your child about the adventure they're going to go on. Explain that you're going on a nature hunt
- On the walk, see if you can spot the things on your nature checklist
- If you find something that isn't an animal ask:
  - What does it smell like?
  - How does it feel?
  - What do you think about the way it looks? Is it weird? Is it cool?
  - Does it make a sound?
- If you don't spot everything on the checklist, see if you can find them on your next nature walk!

### Tips:

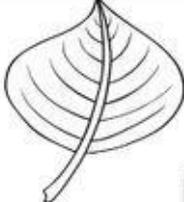
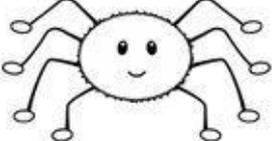
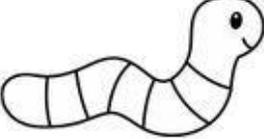
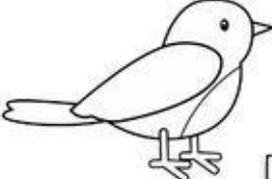
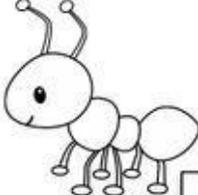
- Don't rush the nature walk. Let your child immerse themselves in nature and enjoy your quality time

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Nature **WALK**

**Directions:** Check off the items you find on your walk.

 dirt <input type="checkbox"/>	 leaf <input type="checkbox"/>	 flower <input type="checkbox"/>
 spider <input type="checkbox"/>	 butterfly <input type="checkbox"/>	 mushroom <input type="checkbox"/>
 worm <input type="checkbox"/>	 bird <input type="checkbox"/>	 ant <input type="checkbox"/>
 bee <input type="checkbox"/>	 squirrel <input type="checkbox"/>	 sprout <input type="checkbox"/>
 tree <input type="checkbox"/>	 cloud <input type="checkbox"/>	 grass <input type="checkbox"/>

# SCAVENGER HUNT

 <p>Smooth Rock</p>	 <p>Rough Rock</p>	 <p>Green Leaf</p>	 <p>Dry Leaf</p>
 <p>Pine Cone</p>	 <p>Wildflower</p>	 <p>Tree Bark</p>	 <p>Tree Branch</p>
 <p>Weed</p>	 <p>Running Water</p>	 <p>Flying Insect</p>	 <p>Crawling Insect</p>
 <p>Frog</p>	 <p>Lizard</p>	 <p>Bird</p>	 <p>Mammal</p>
 <p>Spider Web</p>	 <p>Bird Feather</p>	 <p>Animal Tracks</p>	 <p>Animal Hole</p>

[kindagranola.blogspot.com](http://kindagranola.blogspot.com)

## Activity 7 - Relaxation

Approximate time:	Each no more than 5 minutes
Materials:	Teddy/Cup of water and a straw, piece of chocolate/raisin
Aim/outcome:	Teach children the power of deep breathing and mindfulness

### Breathing

- Deep breathing can help a child to feel calm when they become angry or anxious.
- Get the child to place their hands on their tummy, below their ribs and breath slowly in and out, noticing how their chest moves in relation to their breathing.
- The breaths should be as slow as possible, without it becoming uncomfortable – try breathing in for 5 seconds through their nose, and then out for 5 seconds through their mouth.
- Having a focus on something can be useful when deep breathing

### Breathing Buddy

- Ask your child to choose a soft toy animal to be their “breathing buddy”
- Ask the child to lay down on their back with the toy on their tummy
- Tell the child to focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out
- If you want, count “1, 2, 3” for each breath in and each breath out
- Ask the child:
  - Is your teddy moving up and down?
  - Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
  - Can you feel the air moving out through your nose?
  - Does the air feel colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
  - Can you hear your breath?
  - What does it sound like?



### Hot chocolate breathing

- Pretend you are holding a cup of hot chocolate
- Breathe in for 5 seconds through your nose, as though you are smelling the delicious chocolatey smell
- Then pretend to blow it cool, by breathing out for 5 seconds through your mouth
- Repeat this exercise four or five times until you feel relaxed

### Balloon Breathing

- Pretend you have a balloon inside your tummy
- Breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds, filling the balloon with air
- Then, breathe out for 5 seconds through your mouth to slowly let the air out
- Repeat this exercise four or five times until you feel relaxed

### **Bubble Breathing**

Give your child a cup and a straw half-filled with water.

Ask them to follow 3 steps:

- 1) Breathe in slowly through your nose for 3 counts.
- 2) Hold your breath for 2 counts.
- 3) Breathe out slowly through your mouth into the straw for 3 counts (making small bubbles).

This exercise helps to aid children to practise paying attention to their ability to deep breathe.

### **Star Breathing**

- Spread one hand out like a star
- Use the index finger on your other hand to trace the outline of your star hand
- Take a deep breath in through the nose as you move to the top of your thumb
- Breathe out through the mouth as you move down between your thumb and first finger
- Take another breath in as you move to the top of your first finger
- Breathe out as you move down between your first and second finger
- Repeat until you have taken five, slow deep breaths
- The video link below explains and demonstrates the technique:
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=sh79w9pn9Cg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=sh79w9pn9Cg)

### **Cloud Watching**

- Let your child go outside (or sit near a window), lie down and stare at the clouds
- Ask them to be as still as possible as they watch the clouds float and notice pictures in the clouds.

### **Mindful Eating**

- Give your child a raisin or a square of chocolate
- Ask them to eat it as slowly as they can being aware of all their senses
- See if they notice things they would normally miss.

### **Tip**

- Refer to the My Worries sheet in Activity 2 for an idea of when these activities will come in handy

## Activity 8 - Muscle Relaxation

Approximate time:	5 minutes
Materials:	None
Aim/outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach relaxation and experience the connection between mind and body.</li><li>• Enhances sense of control over their body.</li><li>• Helps children understand what to be relaxed feels like.</li></ul>

### Muscle Relaxation

- Alternatively tightening and then relaxing muscle groups, to improve the child's awareness of their own body and how it feels different when they are relaxed, to when they are stressed.
- Progressively tighten the muscles of that body part, and then slowly relax them back to normal. Repeat four or five times.
- Practice this with which ever parts of the body the child says becomes tense when they feel angry or anxious, i.e. their fists and their tummy.

### Guided imagery

- Imagination is a great way to slow down your mind and help release any worries.
- Ask the child if they have good imagination? Then say, shall we practice?
- Let them close their eyes if they would like to.

Colour - Imagine your favourite colour, the colour that makes you feel peaceful and safe. Imagine taking in that colour with each breath and sending it throughout your entire body as you exhale. Continue this until you can see yourself being filled with your special relaxing colour.

Smell - Imagine your favourite smell, maybe a food you like or the smell of your favourite candle. Think of the smell that makes you feel peaceful and safe. Imagine taking in that smell with each breath and sending it throughout your entire body as you exhale. Continue this until you are filled with your special smell and you feel peaceful and relaxed.

Light - Imagine a light straight ahead of you. That's all you can see. Start with a bright light and as you breathe in it gets dimmer and dimmer until it's just a candlelight. Then breath out, and slowly watch the light grow and become brighter and brighter again.

## Activity 9 - Body Clues

Approximate time:	20 minutes
Materials:	Pen and paper/worksheet, a magnifying glass
Aim/outcome:	Help your child adopt an observer role when dealing with anxiety, giving them a greater sense of control

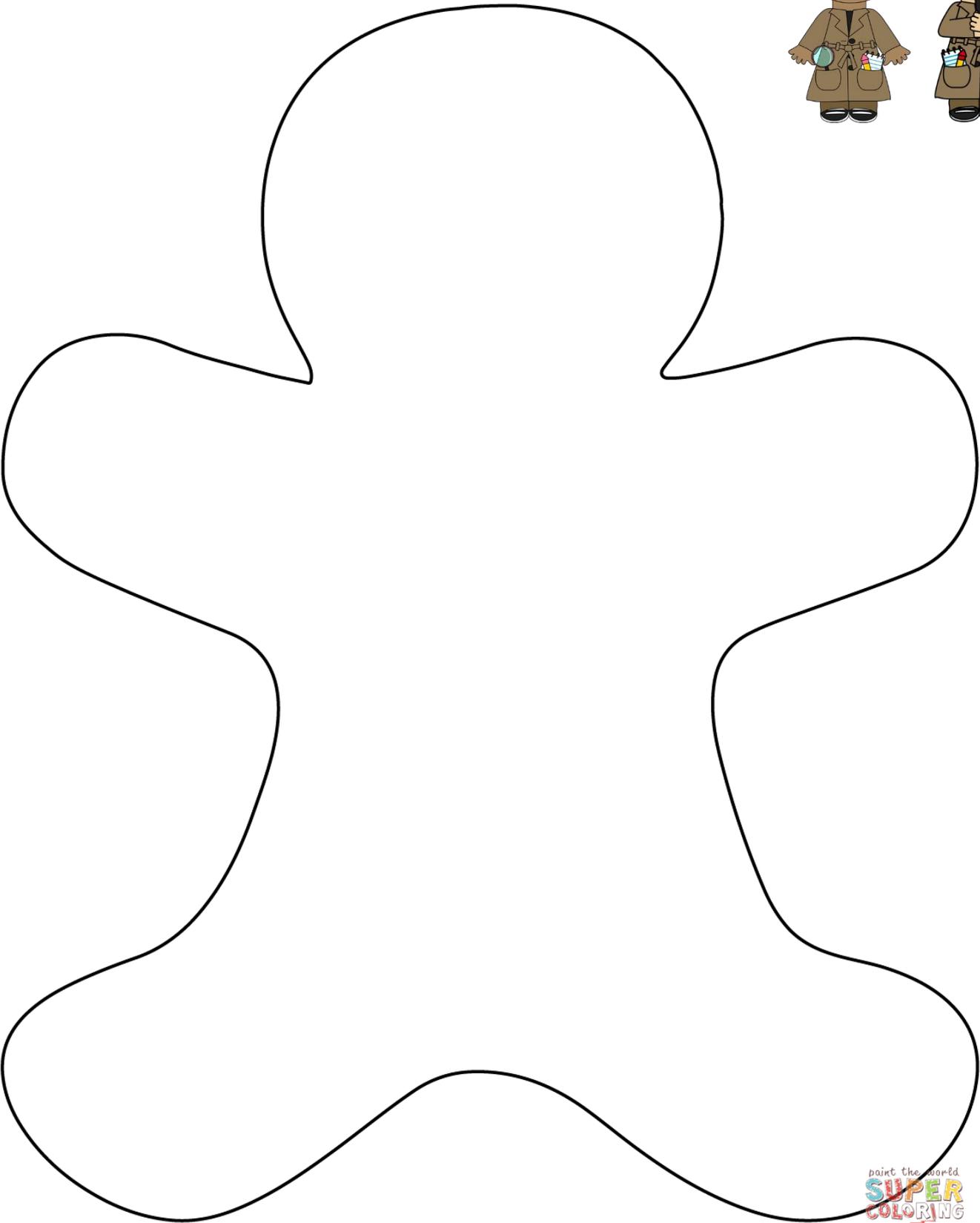
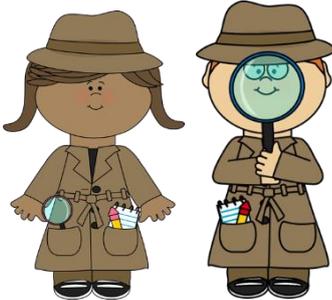
### Activity:

- Encourage your child to be an 'Anxiety Detective' to try and find out what physical symptoms they feel when they're anxious and pinpoint where they are in their body.
- Draw around your child's body and ask your child to identify where he or she feels anxiety in the body.
- Alternatively, your child can identify where he or she feels anxiety on the outline in the worksheet.
- Prompt your child, if necessary, with an example: "When I feel anxious, I get butterflies in my tummy, and I get a big lump in my throat. What happens when you feel anxious?"
- Draw in these body sensations on the sketch.
- Come up with funny or silly names for these sensations to make them less threatening e.g. Mr. Worry
- Refer to your child's anxiety with this new name, particularly in terms of "bossing back" anxiety (e.g. "It's just the worry monster talking. I don't have to listen!").

### Tips

- Giving your child a magnifying glass can help them feel like a real detective and makes the activity novel and fun!
- It might be nice to refer to this activity in your encouraging notes from Activity 1. For example, "Great job! You really showed that worry monster who's in charge!"

Worksheet – Body Clues



## Activity 10 - Coping Step Plans

Approximate time:	20 minutes
Materials:	Pen or pencil and worksheet
Aim/outcome:	Help your child understand their worries and to help fight them by facing them Give your child an understanding that they are in control of their anxiety

### Activity:

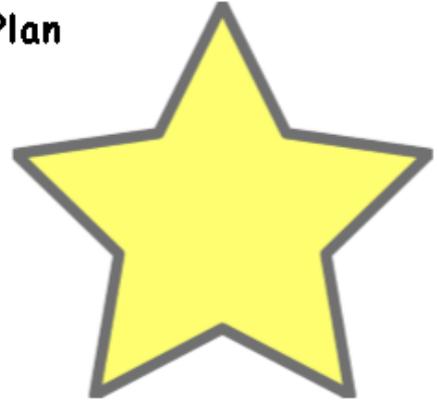
- Discuss with your child something they would like to get better at, or a worry that they would like to overcome. For example, talking in front of their class.
- Break this goal down in to 5 smaller steps that are easier to take on, one by one.
- Order these steps from 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).
- Ask your child to think of a reward for each step. Try to use rewards that are not materialistic such as going swimming or choosing tonight's meal.
- Remember to also add a reward for completing the overall goal!
- Practise the steps in the plan, one by one.
- Try not to rush your child to complete it step; it does not matter how long it takes. Your child should stay on each step until they happy and the step feels easy.

### Tips

- Before you start practising the steps, encourage your child to think of some helpful thoughts that will motivate them if they get stuck later on, and write them down.
- They may also like to make a note of people that can help them if they get stuck.
- Older children may work better with Activity Sheet 7, but Activity Sheet 8 may be more appropriate for younger children.
- You may like to refer to your child's answers in Activity 3: Getting to Know Yourself to help you think of non-material rewards like playing their favourite sport.

\_\_\_\_\_ Coping Steps Plan

My Goal



My Steps

Helpful Thoughts

My Rewards

5.



4.



3.



2.



1.



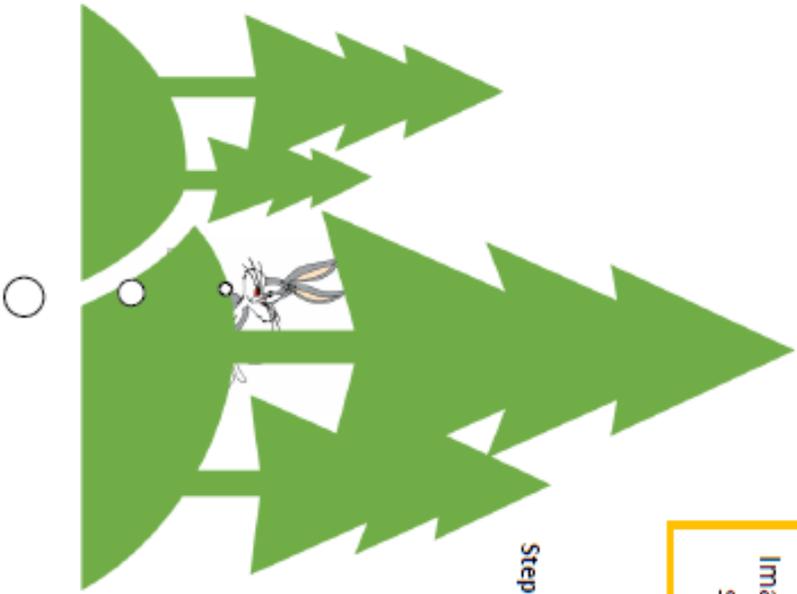
Who can help me if I get stuck?



# Hopping Down the Worry Path



Imagine you are Benny the bunny. You are verry hungry! Every time you face something scary, you move one step closer to the yummy carrot garden.!

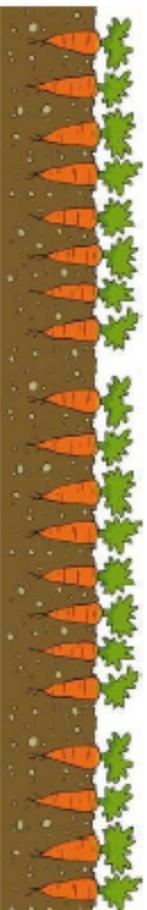


Step 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4 \_\_\_\_\_



## Activity 11 – Sensory Toys

Approximate time:	20 minutes per craft
Materials:	Various (listed below)
Aim/outcome:	Create a sensory toy that will help your child to self-regulate when they become anxious or stressed.

### Textured Balloons:

Give them a squeeze to help calm yourself down if you ever get worked up about something. Keep it in a safe place so you can find it easily.

### Materials:

- Balloons
- Fillers: Sand, Salt, Corn-starch, Marbles, Play Dough, Rice, and something slimy (hair gel works)!

### Instructions:

1. Blow up your balloon and let it hold air for a minute. This really stretches the balloon to make for a larger texture balloon.
2. Using the funnel, fill the balloon with the desired filler such as rice, marbles salt etc.
3. Then tie and secure the top of the balloon.



### **Mini Aquarium:**

A good visual representation of calming stimuli, to refer to when some-one is overwhelmed with a situation or with their extreme emotions.

#### **Materials:**

- Sand
- Empty bottle
- Small ocean animal toys
- Water
- Blue food colouring (optional)
- Small shells (optional)



#### **Instructions:**

1. Fill the bottle with approximately 2 inches of sand.
2. Fill the bottle with water. If the sand is dusty, overflow the water bottle so the dust runs out (the sand should stay at the bottom of the bottle).
3. To prepare their aquarium have child add small shells and a drop of blue food colouring to the water.
4. Next have them select animals and put them inside their aquarium.
5. Close the bottle tight and the sensory bottle is ready to be played with. For more security seal the lid with tape.