

INFORMATION BOOKLET
FOR STUDENTS

DO YOU WORRY ABOUT SCHOOL?



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LAUNCHPAD
Tuition Services

your thoughts and

FEELINGS

Are you feeling anxious about school?

Worrying or anxiety is a normal feeling that we all experience from time to time. It can even keep us safe from harm or help us perform in difficult situations. However, sometimes anxiety or excessive worrying can become a problem especially when it stops us doing what we want or need to do. Many children and young people worry about school. This is normal. Anxieties are part of life and learning to deal with them is part of growing up. However sometimes our feelings can make us not want to attend school.

When you think about school are you?

- Worried?
- Scared?
- Feeling unsure of yourself?
- Struggling to sleep?
- Feeling ill?
- Pretending to be ill?
- Feeling low or sad?
- Unmotivated?
- Worrying about friends?
- Bad tempered?
- Overeating or not hungry?
- Snapping at everyone.

These are just thoughts!

your thoughts and

FEELINGS

You are not on your own. All of us feel like this from time to time because of things that happen to us, at home at school or elsewhere. There may be things at school that can make you feel this way, such as:

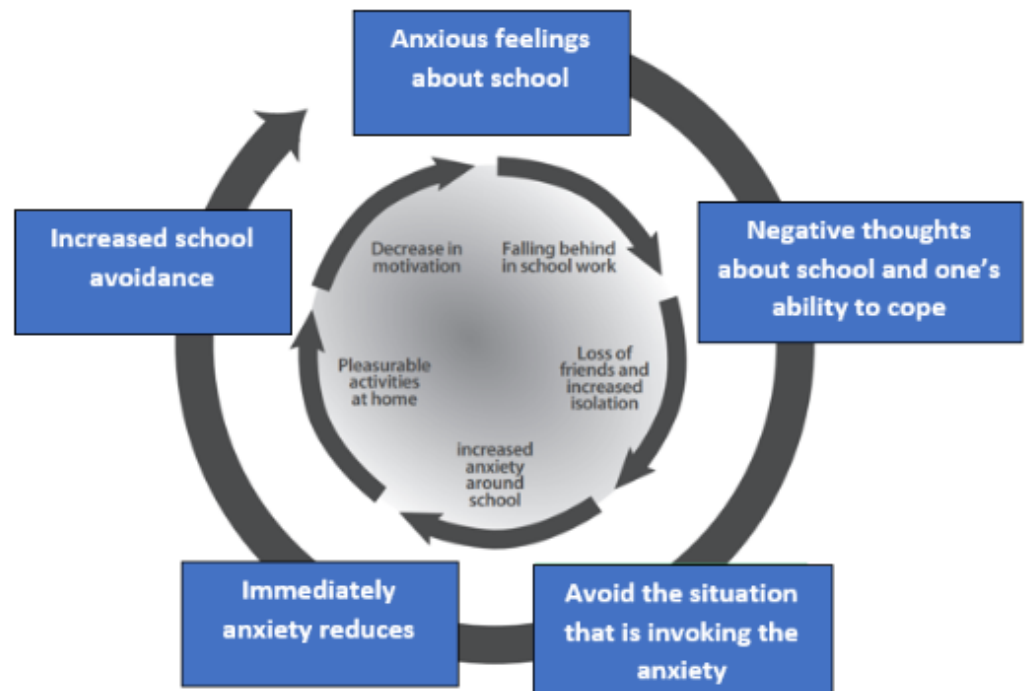
- Problems with friends.
- Bullying.
- Changing school.
- Illness.
- Worrying about exams or tests.
- Worrying about the way you look.
- Not liking the noise at school.
- Not feeling good enough.
- Struggling with the work.
- Worrying about eating in front of others.
- Thinking staff don't like you.
- Pressure to get top grades.

It may not seem like it, but all these issues can be addressed by talking about them. If you keep worries and concerns to yourself they magnify and become overwhelming. Try and take an issue and separate it by writing down the thought, feeling and then the facts that back up the issue. Often there isn't a fact but it's our perception of the issue that makes us feel it's all real.

NON ATTENDANCE

What happens when you don't attend school?

It is very important to try to overcome these difficulties as soon as possible. Sometimes you might feel that staying at home is the best thing to do as it makes you feel better. However, the more time you spend out of school the more you miss out on lessons and the learning gets harder. You also miss out on seeing friends which means keeping friendships going becomes more difficult. It is important to let an adult know if you are worried about anything in school or home and get the help to make it better rather than let things get worse. It is easy to get stuck in a vicious cycle of anxious thoughts:



What do you do if you feel like this?

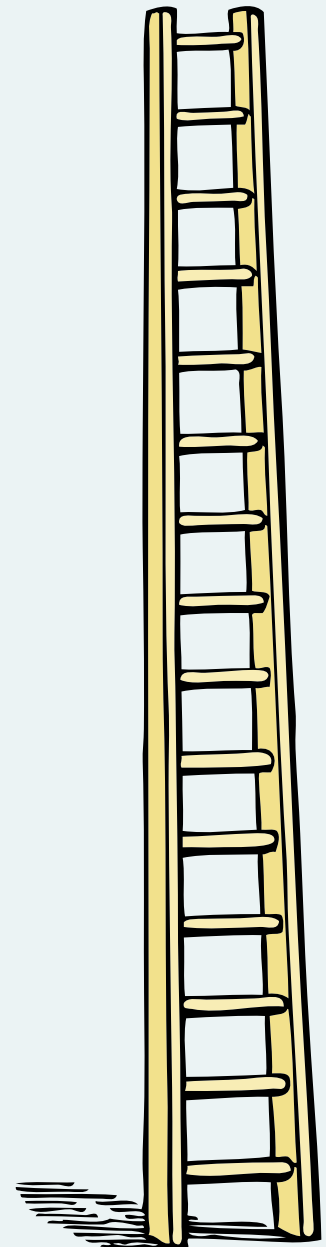
Talk to somebody. This could be your parents, an adult at school, other family members or a friend. Use the following exercises to help you think about the things that are worrying you.

ANXIETY HIERARCHY

Think about the things that are worrying you, write a list or draw them then order them from most worried about to least worried about. Then, talk to someone you trust to help you think about how you might fight these fears and what could help these feelings go away.

For the step list, identify everyday activities that cause little to no stress. Continue listing examples of situations that increase anxiety intensity as you make your way up the ladder. As you reach the top, list activities that cause or would cause the greatest amount of worry.

STEP 10	
STEP 9	
STEP 8	
STEP 7	
STEP 6	
STEP 5	
STEP 4	
STEP 3	
STEP 2	
STEP 1	



Your **WORRY**

Everyone's worry looks different. In the circle below, draw what you believe your worry looks like. Name your worry. This will help you externalize your worry so that it is not something inside of you, but something tangible that you can start to confront and make "go away."



What can your school do to help you?

Find an adult at school you trust and talk to them. They can work with you and your parents to help find out what things are worrying you and what you and they can do to help you. Things they could do include:

- Having a key person to talk to.
- Getting help with schoolwork or friendships.
- Finding a safe space for you to go when you're feeling anxious.
- Changing your timetable so you can cope with it better. These actions could be written up into a plan so that you, your parents and school know what has been agreed to help support you.

What can I do to get back to school?

If your worries are stopping you from getting to school it is important that you work with your school and your parents/carers to help you get back to school as soon as possible. Things you can do to help include:

- Take part in the planning of how you will go back to school. Work with your parents/carers and teachers to think of things that will help you.
- Think about a time that you did cope with a worry. What did you do then?
- Keep in contact with your friends and what is happening at school.
- Catch up on some of the work that you may have missed before you go back.
- Take little steps to get back into the routine – don't expect that everything will get back to normal or will be okay immediately.
- Take the chance! Once you are at school, it may not seem as bad.
- Acknowledge the steps you have taken and celebrate the small successes!

Your whole body reacts when you are anxious.

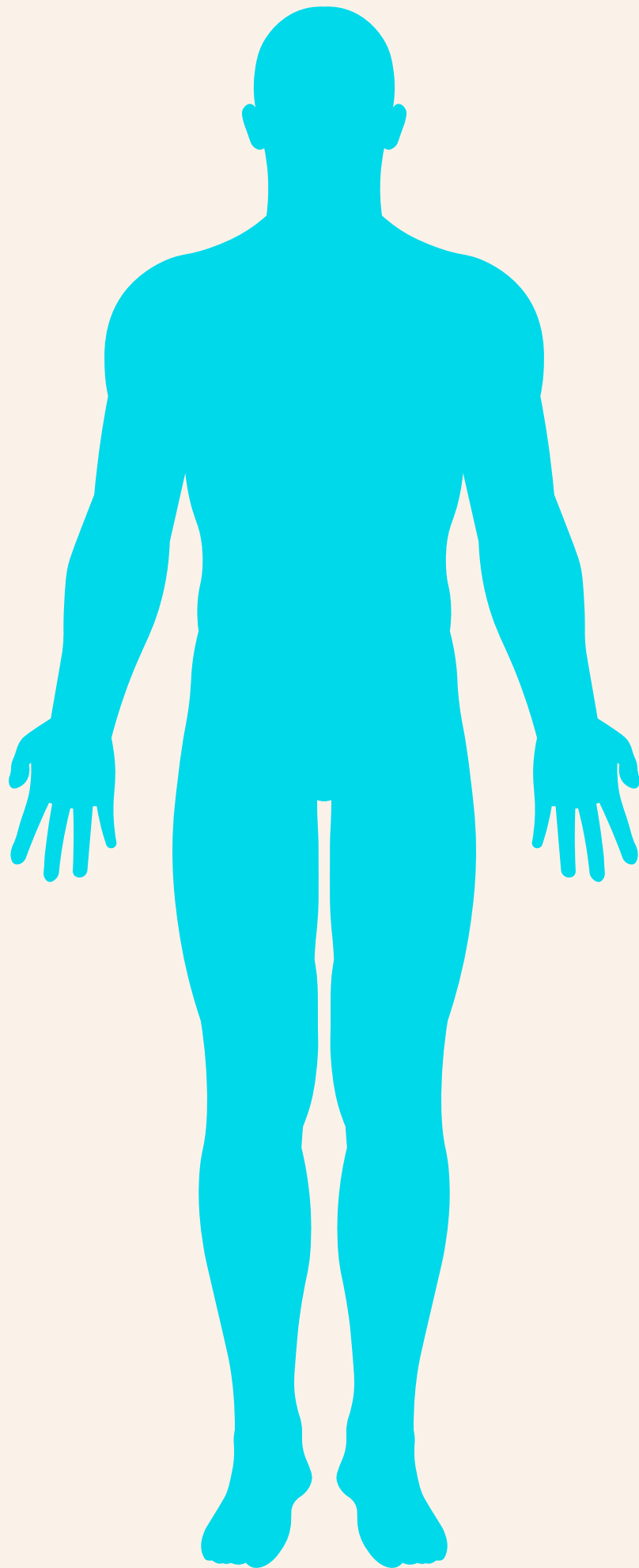
You might feel tired, or short of breath. You might get headaches, or stomach-aches, or feel sick. You may go pale and feel clammy. Your muscles may go tense, your mouth and throat may feel dry, your heart may beat faster and you may feel as though you can't cope with all the thoughts in your head. Try to notice when you start to feel any of the signs above.

Response, Reaction, and Feelings

On the outline provided; draw, colour, or write what happens to your body or within your body when you get worried, anxious and/or nervous. Write down how these various body reactions make you feel and what they make you think. Think about what this means for you and how you can problem solve around these various body reactions, responses, and feelings.

Some people report the following physical effects of social anxiety however everybody responds differently:





WAYS TO CALM YOUR MIND AND BODY

Try relaxing your body

- Sit or lie somewhere quiet and comfortable
- Stretch out your arms and make a fist, then relax
- Push your legs out, wiggle your toes, and then relax
- Shut your eyes tight and pull a scrunched-up face, and then relax

Try calm breathing

- Take a slow breath in through your nose for about 4 seconds
- Hold it for 1 or 2 seconds
- Slowly let it out through your mouth for about 4 seconds
- Wait 5– 7 seconds before taking another breath 5. Repeat 5– 10 times

Focusing on things right now

Spend some time concentrating on things you can see, touch and feel to help you stay in the moment. Look around you and slowly try to find:

5 things you can see

4 things you can touch and feel

3 things you can hear

2 things you smell

1 thing you can taste

Try physical exercise

This increases your heart rate and releases endorphins that help make you feel good. Running, going to the gym, cycling, swimming or team sports such as football or netball are all great exercise. Choose one you love (or try something new!) and build it into your routine.

Think balanced thoughts

If you find yourself thinking a negative thought or worrying a lot of the time e.g. 'I will fail all my exams because I am stupid', try thinking of a more balanced or positive thought instead. For example, 'If I work hard, I'll do ok in my exam'. Every time you notice yourself thinking a negative thought, stop and tell yourself the positive thought. If you find this hard to do, imagine what you would say to a friend to help them feel better!

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

Be careful with your thoughts and feelings. It is easy to allow our feelings to run away and create a story in our head.

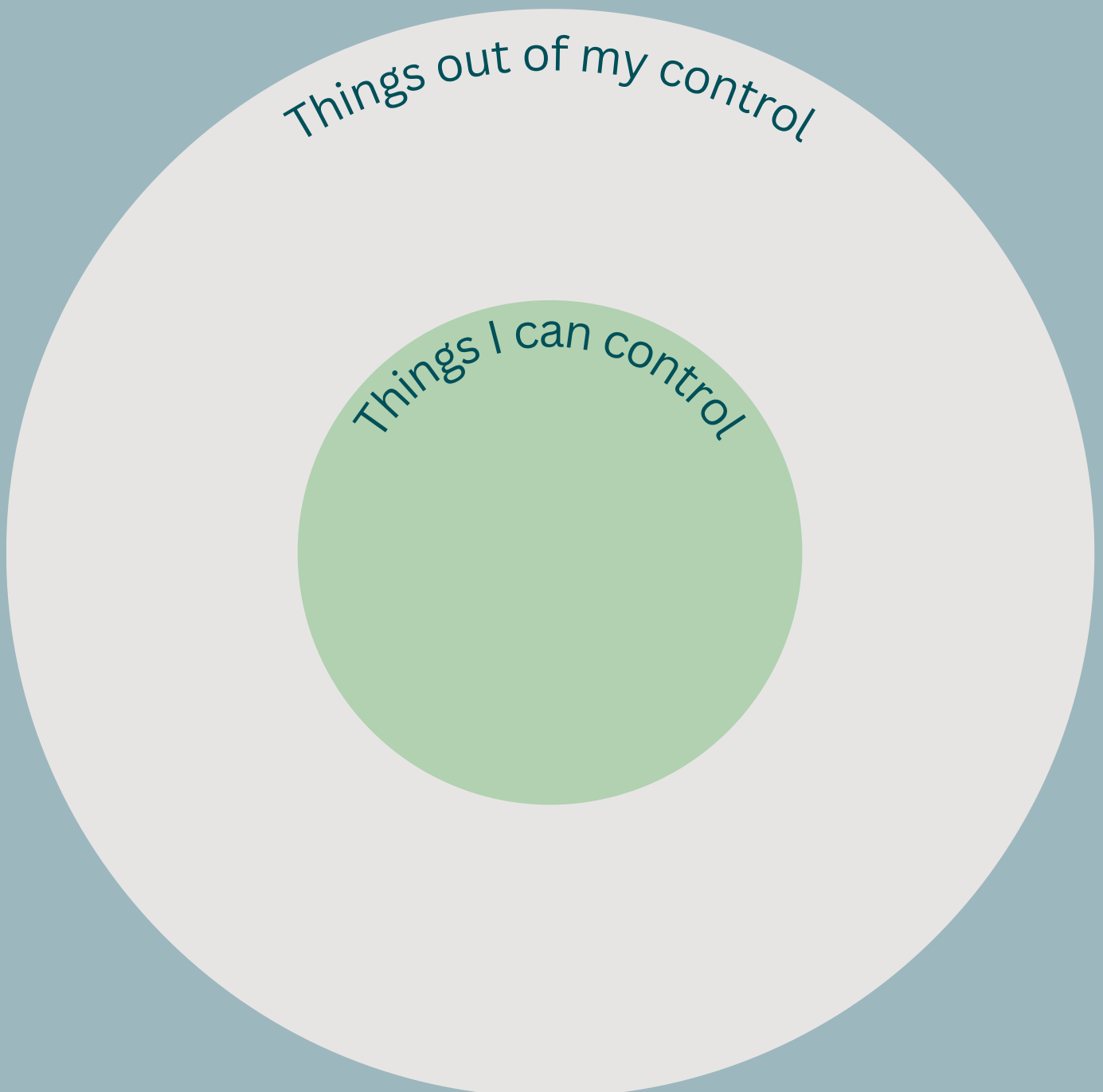


If we cement the thought like it is a fact (everyone hates me)....we create feelings that change our behaviours. Find evidence that backs up the feeling before you create a series of behaviours around these thoughts

NEGATIVE THOUGHT <i>I can't do well in school as I'm rubbish at learning.</i>	EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE THOUGHT <i>None, no-one has ever told me I can't succeed.</i>	EVIDENCE THAT DOES NOT SUPPORT THE THOUGHT <i>I have been to school and had good days and can learn.</i>	POSITIVE THOUGHT <i>School is a challenge, but I can try my best to succeed</i>

CIRCLE OF CONTROL

Many of us, when anxious, will try to find things we can control. This is due to feeling out of control or overwhelmed. This activity is designed to help you identify what you have control over versus what you do not have control over. Think of your most anxiety-provoking situations, and use the circles to identify what you have control over and what is not in your control. Develop this further to help lesson your anxiety and overwhelming feelings.



POSITIVE IMAGERY PRACTICE

Close your eyes and imagine a challenging situation as if it were happening.

BUT...now imagine you feel confident, comfortable and in control.

- What does this look like?
- How does it feel?
- What will be the outcome of you being in control?

DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS

DESCRIBE THE EVENT

DESCRIBE YOUR THOUGHTS

DESCRIBE THE POTENTIAL
OUTCOME



POSITIVE SELF-REFLECTION LOG

Each night reflect on a positive way you have maintained attention or control

DAY

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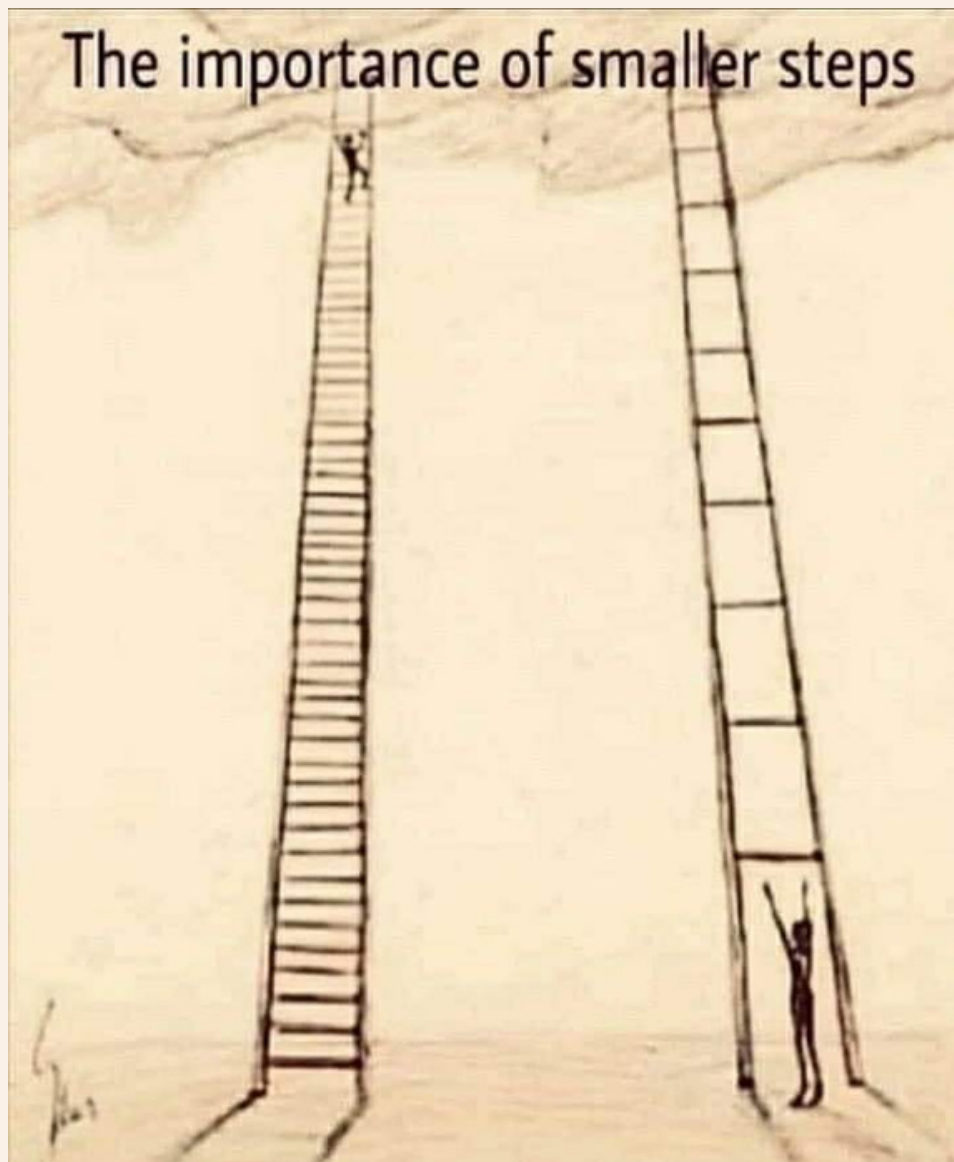
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ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS

Making lists is a life skill to support good organisational skills. It's also really helpful to start to record what you've achieved in your days. Even if it's something small, you need to recognise even small steps towards a goal or achievement.



When working on your goals, it's important to break up long term goals into small steps. As you can see from the illustration, it becomes too overwhelming and you are likely to stumble rather than have a smoother journey if your goals are not manageable .

ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS

LONG TERM GOALS

SMALL STEPS



WHAT I'VE ACCOMPLISHED
SO FAR

A large white rounded rectangle with a teal border, intended for writing accomplishments.

MORE HELP AND SUPPORT

If you want more help or support, there are lots of websites and apps which you may find useful.

Websites

Visit our Parent/Child support section on the Pace and Launchpad website. Here you will be able to access an array of support that is available.

<http://paceandlaunchpad.sthelens.gov.uk/sections/launchpad-tuition-services/parentchild-support/>

The Mix provides information, support and listening for people under 25. Phone 0808 808 4994 (24 hours) www.themix.org.uk

St Helens Local Offer

Visit the St Helens local offer website for advice and support.

<https://www.sthelensgateway.info/>

Some websites have useful worksheets that might help you tackle some of your fears.

Try looking at these sites to see how you can help yourself to feel better

Mighty Moe - an anxiety workbook for children aged 5-11

<http://www.cw.bc.ca/library/pdf/pamphlets/Mighty%20Moe1.pdf>

Worksheets for children, parents and teachers on tackling anxiety

<https://www.anxietybc.com/parenting/worksheets>

Anxiety workbook for young people and adults

https://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/files/counselling/anxiety_moodjuice_self_help_guide.pdf

APPS FOR WELLBEING STRESS & ANXIETY

Companion helps you handle stress and anxiety on the go. Using breathing exercises, relaxing music and games designed to calm the mind, the app helps you change negative thoughts to help you better cope with life's ups and downs. Available free from the App Store and Google Play

Thrive: mental wellbeing helps you prevent and manage stress, anxiety and related conditions. The game based app can be used to relax before a stressful situation or on a more regular basis to help you live a happier, more stress-free life. Available free from the App Store and Google Play

Beat Panic is designed to guide people through a panic attack or raised anxiety using their phone. Available from the App Store

Chill Panda: Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing with Chill Panda. The app measures your heart rate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind. Tasks include simple breathing techniques and light exercises to take your mind off your worries. Available free from the App Store and Google Play

Catch it: Learn how to manage feelings like anxiety and depression with Catch It. The app will teach you how to look at problems in a different way, turn negative thoughts into positive ones and improve your mental wellbeing. Available free from the App Store and Google Play

The NHS website (www.nhs.uk) has a library of apps it recommends - the apps detailed above are all on this list.

If you would like to talk to someone about your anxiety, there are services in St Helens that can help.

Listening Service offering one to one support for young people aged 12-18 who would benefit from mental health focussed support and/or someone to talk to. Referrals can be made at:<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=1ChmIS-LEUq9bKg-pNEpiSaDKkuJ1mdEhA-1yqaQGk1UOUIzVjBVVzJVVFIQSVIPNUZEUFZWVTJTTSQIQCN0PWcu>

You could ask to speak to your school nurse, or school counsellor – if your school has one.

<https://www.wchc.nhs.uk/services/school-nursing-st-helens/>