



KS3 Fear and Anxiety - Guidance for Parents

Using your parental judgement, taking into consideration the working environment, your child's ability or time you have to complete the activities with your child, you can decide if you keep the activities as full day projects, or smaller bitesize chunks to enjoy over a longer period of time. This document has been designed to aid parents and families to work together to encourage academic and educational involvement throughout this difficult time.

- 1) **Write the heading "Fear" and underline it. Time yourself for one minute and write as many words and phrases as you can that you think of when you see or hear the word. Now do the same for the word "Anxiety".**

Encourage your child to focus on the physical responses to fear and anxiety, for example, sweaty hands, as well as the emotional reactions, for example, feeling scared, worried, etc.

- 2) **Look up the definition of the word "Fear" – you can use the internet or a dictionary for this task. Write out the definition in your book. Do the same for the word "Anxiety".**

Encourage your child to use a dictionary or an online resource accurately.

- 3) **Looking at the two definitions, try to explain how you think the two words are linked. Think about the emotions they create and what might be the cause of those feelings.**

Draw your child's attention to the words in each list which are similar – fear and anxiety are similar emotions. Discuss what sort of events might be the cause of such feelings – you could discuss the Coronavirus outbreak. You may choose to discuss the differences in meaning – for example, fear is more immediate – a response (usually) to a specific situation, anxiety is more low level and can last for a day or much longer – it sometimes doesn't seem to have a specific cause.

- 4) **Consider the following events:**
 - a. Seeing a spider in the bath
 - b. Making a trip to the dentist
 - c. Standing on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea
 - d. Travelling in a lift
 - e. Flying in a plane
 - f. Swimming in the sea
 - g. Watching a programme about Coronavirus on TV
 - h. Taking a rollercoaster ride

Write out as a heading the one that makes you feel the most afraid. In three or more sentences explain why you feel the way you do.





Discuss each scenario with your child. Draw attention to the fact that some might seem funny and some they will be able to really imagine why someone might be anxious or afraid. You may choose to talk about events that are not on the list.

5) **Think about the following statement:**

“A person who loves insects would not be afraid of seeing a spider in the bath.”

Create statements for three of the other events (b to h) which give suggestions as to why someone might not find their situation frightening. You can be as creative as you like! Write your ideas in your book making sure that you put the event you are describing as a heading.

This exercise draws attention to the fact that what might be frightening to you, is not frightening for someone else – we all experience fear and anxiety at different times and it can be very different for different people. Knowledge and understanding are important factors as to whether we feel fear, for example, a dentist will not be afraid to go to the dentist!

6) **Coronavirus has been significant for everyone in this country and around the world and many people are feeling anxious and afraid because they don't know what's going to happen. This is a natural reaction.**

a. Consider how your life has changed recently. Under the heading “My Life Now”, make a list of all the changes you have experienced

b. Now write in continuous sentences underneath your list and explain how these changes have made you feel

c. Write a short paragraph in your own words about why you think these changes have been necessary

Discuss each of the points with your child. Encourage them to talk about what they are going to write first and then allow them time to compose their work. Point a. is a simple list of what's changed in your child's life; Point b. allows your child to write about how the changes have made them feel – remember to emphasise (if necessary) that feelings of fear and anxiety are perfectly normal. Point c. should be reassuring – i.e. the Government have imposed these changes in an attempt to protect us – it's the same for everyone.

7) **Look at the phrases below: you may have heard some of them being used by friends and relatives; you may have seen some of them in newspapers or on social media; or you may have heard some of them on TV.**

- **Social distancing**
- **Self-isolation**
- **Panic buying**
- **Lockdown**





Take each phrase and write it as a heading. Write down what you think it means.

Thinking task:

Do you think some of these phrases might be seen as “problem solving”? Do you think some of the phrases are negative and make you feel frightened?

This exercise allows your child to understand the precise meanings of the phrases. You could check definitions together on the internet if you wish. The thinking task could result in the following: maybe some of the language is quite powerful but the words are dynamic and offer a solution to a problem. Again, reassurance here is key.

8) Write out the definition of the word “Resilience”.

Under the definition, write out three examples of resilience. You may want to think about what is happening in the media at the moment; or you may wish to consider sport, or someone who you admire – this could be a friend, family member or a celebrity.

Write a few sentences to explain about a time when you think you have shown resilience.

Encourage your child to draw on their own experiences – they may have had a bad exam result but this has made them more determined to do better next time; they may have performed badly in a sport’s match but they have trained harder.

9) Here are some strategies for coping with anxiety and fear:

Don’t see the whole elephant! If a task seems overwhelming and difficult to start, try breaking it up into easier and more manageable chunks. Give yourself a pat on the back for completing them.

Give yourself time to think about all the good things in your life. At the end of each day – take time to think about what went well.

Go for 3! Try to think of 3 things that you have that you are grateful for.

Activate yourself! Be physically active – even a short brisk walk can get rid of at least some of your anxious energy.

Talk to someone! Trusted friends and family members can help when you’re struggling.

Plan ahead. Planning and active preparation can be extremely reassuring and takes away some (maybe not all) of the “fear of the unknown”.





Inform yourself. It's easy to get frightened by what you see and hear – especially on the news or social media. Now, because the country is dealing with Coronavirus and nobody knows exactly what's going to happen, it's easy to believe everything you read.

Using a double page (you could Sellotape two pieces of paper together) design a poster which explains to people your own age how they can help themselves to be more resilient in coping with fear and anxiety.

You can use different coloured pens, post-it notes, drawings and diagrams (you could download images from the internet), make sure your writing is clear and big enough to be read from a distance – this is a poster!

Help your child to design an attractive poster – a large heading and clear words are important. You could use Word, or a hand designed method (coloured pens, post-it notes, downloaded internet images, pencils, etc.). The result should be a poster which clearly delivers methods for coping with anxiety and fear.

- 10) **With resilience and good sources of information, big problems can be made to seem smaller. It's about taking control of feelings so that you have at least some control over a situation, so it makes you feel better.**

Give yourself ten minutes and show off your knowledge about how you can help to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. You could present your information as a spider diagram or as a list. Aim for six points and write them in your book, the first has been done for you:

- **Keep 2m away from other people**

Encourage your child to consider what sort of information is reliable (BBC TV, BBC website and radio; the World Health Organisation; Public Health England; NHS website) – you may wish to look at some of these sites together.

Help your child to focus on how they can help themselves and others to stay safe during the Coronavirus outbreak by making a list of all the positive action they can take. Emphasise that by doing positive things they can have more control over what happens to them and their family which in turn will reduce their levels of anxiety and fear.

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