



KS4 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 associate with 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 what you think the difference is between the two meanings.**

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 – e.g. 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 scenarios:**

- 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

Choose one of the above and write no more than three sentences to explain which one makes you feel the most afraid or anxious and why you feel the way you do.



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Discuss each scenario with your child. Draw attention to the fact that some might seem unusual, funny: 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) **Consider the following statement:**
“A person who loves insects would not be afraid of seeing a spider in the bath.”

Create statements for the remaining scenarios (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.

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) **The impact of 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) **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.



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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.

8) 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. At the moment, 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, 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.

Your child will design a poster based on coping mechanisms – remind them that a large heading and clear words are important. They 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.

9) Do you think there may be times when fear and anxiety could be considered to be positive emotions? Think about the statements below.

- Fear teaches you not to do something
- Anxiety makes you prepare better for an event
- You are more alert when you are afraid
- If you worry about something, it shows you care





Can you explain one of the above statements in a positive way. You might be able to add to the positive list?

This exercise is all about taking something that seems to be negative and turning it into a positive – for example, fear and anxiety can warn us that something is dangerous and therefore needs to be avoided; they can make you mentally more aware; they can help you to protect others by warning them, etc.

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. 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) – encourage your child to look at some of these sites – using the sites they can gather a list of what can be done to help themselves and others stay safe during the Coronavirus outbreak. 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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