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# Coping with anxiety

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Parent  
LineNI™

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Understanding anxiety really helps us to overcome it. Knowing how our brains and bodies work, gives us the insight we need to consider our thoughts, regulate our feelings and manage our behaviours.

Anxiety is essential and keeps us safe. Our bodies produce chemicals such as cortisol and adrenalin to keep us alert in new situations. If we are faced with danger, these same chemicals prepare us for 'fight, flight or freeze'



## Too much anxiety is not so useful....

- \*\*\* If our survival radar becomes too sensitive, our anxiety feelings are triggered when they don't need to be.
- \*\*\* We perceive a threat where none exists.
- \*\*\* The chemicals are still in our bodies ready for action, but we don't need them to keep us safe.
- \*\*\* Instead, these chemicals make us feel anxious and fearful. They dictate how we think and behave

\*\*\*\*\*

Anxiety makes **False Evidence Appear Real.**



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Our survival radar is located at the base (downstairs part) of our brains and is very well developed from birth.

Our brain's rational, thinking, decision making, frontal cortex (upstairs part), begins to develop during childhood.

When we become overly anxious it means our 'downstairs' dinosaur brain has taken control and our clever 'upstairs' brain is not connecting...we have 'flipped our lid'

## What anxiety can look like.....

### Behaviours

Distressed\*\*Tearful\*\*Clingy\*\*Overly helpful  
Quiet\*\*Withdrawn\*\*Refusing and Avoiding\*\*Poor sleep  
Verbal/physical angry outbursts\*\* Irritable\*\*Bossy\*\*Obsessive  
Controlling\*\*Critical\*\*Oppositional\*\*Stubborn\*\*Lying

### Behind the behaviours

Fear \*\* Inaccurate thinking but very real feelings \*\*  
Fatigue\*\*Headaches\*\*Nausea\*\*Sweating\*\*Aches\*\*Racing heart  
Fast/difficult breathing\*\*Dizzy\*\*Restless\*\*Trembling

If we are overly anxious, our comfort zone tends to shrink.

We find more situations stressful, we do less and less and our anxiety levels still continue to rise.



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