



# Supporting Mental Health

## Anxiety



### What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear that is experienced as a combination of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings.

All children feel worried sometimes, and this is a normal part of growing up. At certain points, they may become more worried. If your child is struggling with anxiety, there are things you can do to help them – including providing emotional support, working on practical strategies together and finding the right professional help if they need it.

### Our Top Tips

When your child is in an anxious moment:



**Use all five senses.** Connecting with what they can see, touch, hear, smell and taste can bring them closer to the present moment and reduce the intensity of their anxiety. You might think together about five things they can see, four things they can touch, three things they can hear, two things they can smell and



**Sit with them and offer calm physical reassurance.** Feeling you nearby, or holding your hand or having a cuddle if it's possible, can be soothing to extend the conversation.



**Breathe slowly and deeply together.** You can count slowly to five as you breathe in, and then five as you breathe out. If this is too much, try starting with shorter counts. If it works for them, gradually encourage your child to breathe out for one or two counts longer than they breathe in, as this can help their body relax.



Somerset County Council have launched a mobile health service for parents and young people in Somerset making it easier to get health and wellbeing advice. This is available Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm.

Parents of children 0-4 years: Text 07480 635514

Parents of children 5-19 years: Text 07480 635515