Please do not share this resource but direct people to the website where they can Purchase their own copy.

**Notes on this resource PLEASE READ**

This is a booklet to help give children strategies to deal with their worries. It isn’t about fixing them or curing all their problems but supporting them. Knowledge is power and hopefully with your help children will feel empowered to cope with their worries.

It is important that if you are ever worried about a child then you refer them to the relevant service such as Educational Psychologists, GP, Camhs etc. for the appropriate treatment.

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MASTER YOUR MONSTERS

A guide to help you cope with your worries

BY
Debbie Palphreyman

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Worries are Like Monsters

Lots of people think that worries are like monsters. They are scary and keep bothering you.

If you think about them too much they get bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger!

But if you learn to deal with your monsters by perhaps using some strategies from this booklet then they might just disappear or suddenly seem a lot smaller.

This booklet will help you to
‘MASTER YOUR MONSTERS’. 
**Worried and Anxious words**

In this BOOKLET we are going to learn about anxiety and the affects it can have on us. We are also going to learn some coping strategies. There are lots of words that can be associated with being anxious or worried. I wonder how many of them you know.

Let’s sort these words into ‘NOT anxiety’ words and ‘MAYBE anxiety’ words. Write the word under the correct column. You can use coloured pens and write them in any way that you choose. Cross out the word below once you have written it in the grid. Make sure you understand what each word means and discuss those you don’t know the meaning of, with the person who is helping you fill in this booklet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT anxiety or worried words</th>
<th>MAYBE Anxiety or worried words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Calm</td>
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<td>Sadness</td>
<td>panicked</td>
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<td>Jittery</td>
<td>Troubled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
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<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Content</td>
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<td>Concerned</td>
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<td>Agitated</td>
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<td>Butterflies</td>
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<td>Bored</td>
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<td>Tired</td>
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When you have finished, have a good look at both your lists. I bet you have felt a lot of these emotions or had these symptoms. Everyone has. Have a chat with your adult about them. Let’s look at anxiety in more detail on the next page.
We are going to discuss some words now but first you are going to draw around your hand in the space below. When you have drawn around your hand you are going to write N on the first finger or thumb depending on which hand you draw around. E on the next one, E on the next one, D on the next one and S on the last one. This spells NEEDS. You need to know this information to help you with your worries and anxiety.
Anxiety is normal

Anxiety is our bodies reaction to a perceived danger. Sometimes it can be a real danger and at other times a situation where we feel there is danger. Both are Normal. Anxiety can become a problem if it affects our daily lives.

Anxiety is an emotion

We feel lots of emotions all the time and anxiety is an emotion or a feeling. Although all emotions are temporary and they come and go, they can be felt in a massive way that can interfere with our everyday life. They can make us feel horrible!

Anxiety is felt by everyone sometimes

Absolutely everyone feels anxious or worried sometimes.

The emotion of Anxiety is NOT dangerous

When you feel worried or anxious it can feel very uncomfortable in your body. You get lots of physical symptoms but these symptoms are NOT dangerous, they are a normal reaction to the perceived danger. They might feel very dangerous at the time but they will pass because remember anxiety is a temporary emotion.

Anxiety is like a smoke alarm

A smoke alarm alerts us to a possible fire whereas our anxiety alerts us to a possible danger. Sometimes there is smoke but no fire! Our body can make us think that something is dangerous. It can turn out to be a false alarm. When we are tired our smoke alarm might be very sensitive to perceived dangers.

We will discuss some of these in more detail later but for now you are now going to decorate your hand with any pictures that might help you remember these things. You could draw a heart to represent an emotion. People to represent everyone. You can draw anything you like to help you remember these things.
Physical Symptoms of Anxiety

Your body's response to a threat or danger is really amazing. It is like having superpowers. When there is a potential danger in front of you your body automatically gets ready to fight, run or freeze to help you deal with the danger.

Imagine you are walking in a forest and you meet a great big grizzly bear who wants to eat you!

Your body kicks into action without you even trying. A chemical in your body is released called adrenaline. This chemical helps your body get ready for the fight.

Your body will soon realise whether it can fight or not. If it decides you can't fight then it gives you the power and energy to outrun the danger or threat.
The last response your body may have is to freeze. This happens because your body has decided it can’t fight, it can’t outrun so it freezes. See if you can stand really still and freeze. Try it!

There are a few reasons for this. First of all, if you freeze you might not be a threat to whatever is facing you so it may not attack. Secondly it numbs you out so you wouldn't feel pain if you are attacked. Isn’t the body so clever?

Unfortunately, some of the things that happen to your body can feel uncomfortable for you when there may not be any real physical danger in front of you such as a grizzly bear. We will look more at different kinds of threats next time but today we are looking at what happens to our bodies physically when we are anxious or under stress.

Can you think of any times when you were really scared and there was a threat right there in front of you?

Jot them down here if you can think of any.
Let’s look at some of those amazing things that happen to our bodies when faced with danger or perceived danger.

**You need a wee or a poo right now.** Your body is getting rid of all the waste products in your body ready for action.

**You can hear your heart beating really fast.** Your body is getting itself ready to spring into action. Your body needs extra oxygen to reach your muscles so your heart has to beat faster to pump that oxygen around your body.

**You feel a bit light headed.** Your breathing gets faster to get oxygen to your big muscles. This can make you feel a bit light headed.

**You feel hot and sweaty.** All this activity in your body is causing it to heat up. Your body produces sweat to cool you down.

**Your muscles are tense and tight.** Your muscles are getting ready to fight or run as fast as you can. All the blood and oxygen rushing to your big muscles makes them stronger and tense.

**You feel sick or get a tummy ache.** When your body senses danger it slows your digestion down. Your lunch will sit in all the acid in your tummy instead of being digested. Your body thinks it is more important to get your muscles ready rather than digest your food properly.

**You feel shaky or tremble.** Your big muscles are becoming tense and strong and this causes the shakiness.

**Everything looks brighter and fuzzier.** Your pupils dilate to let more light into your eyes so you can see the danger better.

**Your fingers and toes might feel a bit numb.** Your blood is feeding your big muscles and takes it away from those little muscles in your fingers and toes.
So how does feeling anxious and worried affect you physically? Here is a body sheet, pretend this is you. Decorate the body to look like a Superhero because that is what you are when you get all these physical symptoms. You are powerful and strong. What physical symptoms do you get? Write or mark off those areas and talk about them with the adult who is helping you with this workbook. Do you feel better now that you understand what all those physical symptoms are due to?
Imagine there is a smoke alarm, I think most people have them in their homes. They are there to warn us of a fire. If we hear the smoke alarm we can get out of the house and to safety. However, sometimes smoke alarms go off and there is no fire. Perhaps someone has burnt the toast and this would set the smoke alarm off. Anxiety is a bit like that. Your body gets ready to fight or run away from, for example, the grizzly bear. Sometimes though there is no real physical danger and your body is ready for that fight or to run away but there is nothing actually there to fight or run away from. There is no grizzly bear. When we are feeling tired or stressed our smoke alarms can go off more easily. Sometimes we don’t even know what is causing us to feel anxious BUT there are ways to help ourselves feel better. We will be looking at some calming techniques soon.

First of all, let’s look at some situations that might set off your smoke alarm. They might not, but let’s have a look and decide. There are a couple of blank columns so if none of these set off your smoke alarm then perhaps you could write one or two down that would.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>ANXIOUS OR NOT?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falling out with a friend. What if you don’t make up?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moving to a new school. What if no one likes you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A scary film. What if it’s real?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams or tests. What if you do badly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flying in an aeroplane. What if it crashes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A school residential trip. What will it be like away from home without your family?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The dark. What if there is something scary there?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your mum might forget to pick you up from school. What if it happens?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your mum and dad splitting up or divorcing. What if it happens?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So, we know some things now that might make you feel anxious. What can YOU do about them? How can you make yourself feel better?

1. You can try ‘STAR’ breathing when those anxious feelings hit you. Have a practice now. Breathing like this can really calm you down and take away some of those physical sensations we talked about.

EASY isn’t it? Keep PRACTISING!
2. You could challenge and try and change those negative thoughts going around in your mind. You might not have noticed but if you think bad thoughts it makes you feel bad whereas if you think good thoughts it makes you feel so much better. Our little girl here has all sorts of negative or bad thoughts. What advice would you give her? What could she think instead? Talk to the adult who is helping you with this booklet.

We will look at negative or bad thoughts in more detail later. They are IMPORTANT!
3. Inspect the evidence - We often think things will happen and that worries us but there is no evidence to suggest that this will be the case. That thing we are worrying about may never happen. Or if it does it might not be so bad.

What evidence is there to suggest this is true?

4. What advice would you give a friend who was worried about the same thing? Imagine what you would say to him or her. Now say that to yourself.
5. Will I be worried about this in 6 months’ time? Will this still be important? Sometimes we get anxious about what is happening right now but if we step back and think about the situation do you think that in six months’ time you will still be worried about it? Do you think that you will have found ways to cope with your thoughts and feelings by then?

6. Has this happened before? How did it turn out? Sometimes things happen that worry us and they turn out ok in the end. Our anxiety gets better and we feel fine. Ask yourself if the situation you are worrying about now has happened before? Reassure yourself that it was ok before so it will be ok again now.
Think about the WORRY TREE. If you can do something about the worry then make a plan to do it. If you can’t do anything about the worry then let the worry go.
This page is for you to draw your own MONSTER. People often use ‘monsters’ to represent worries. Be creative and use your imagination to draw your worry monster. It’s your worry so you can draw it however you like. Sometimes when we draw something it seems less scary. We are going to look at scaling our worries on the next page.
Scaling your Monsters

When we talk about scaling monsters in this book we really mean worries. Sorting them out and giving them a number depending on how BIG they are. For example, here is a scale using a monster. Number 5 is a MASSIVE worry and number 1 is a TEENY worry.

It can be helpful when you are worried to imagine a scale with the picture you have drawn on the last page. Ask yourself, how big is my worry? How can I make it smaller? What do I need to do? If you use some of the strategies we talked about earlier it might help but we will be looking at some other calming techniques later in this booklet. Remember that your anxiety is normal but it is important you have the strategies to reduce it.

See if you can draw your own scale using the picture of your own monster.
We talked a bit about thoughts earlier on in this booklet. Let’s look at them a bit closer.

Remember that we said that when we think bad things it makes us feel bad and when we think good things it makes us feel good or at least, better!

When something makes us anxious we get automatic bad thoughts. These are called ‘ANTS’ – automatic negative thoughts. Everyone gets them. Can you imagine all these ants racing around in your brain and you need to try and stop them?

You can do this by either:

- Using some of the strategies, we have talked about so far. For example, ‘What evidence is there?’ or ‘Has this happened before?’
- Talking about your worrying thoughts to someone. It is amazing how much smaller your worry will get if you talk about it. That will truly make the ants disappear. When you are talking those ants don’t stand a chance. Your monster will get smaller or even disappear!
- Using some other calming techniques which we will look at soon.
- Changing those bad thoughts to good thoughts or the negative to the positive.

If you stop those ANTS I bet you will start to feel a lot better.

So, how could you stop your ants? Write some ideas in the bubbles around this ‘stop’ sign.
Let’s have a little practice at changing thoughts here and getting rid of those ANTS. Imagine a situation where you would feel anxious and then fill in the questions below.

1. Write or draw a picture below of the situation that made you feel anxious. Where were you? And what were you doing?

2. How did it make you feel? Draw your face and write the feeling word in the box below.

3. What was your automatic negative thought? Write that thought in the speech bubble.

4. What could be an alternate positive thought? Write that in the speech bubble.

5. How would that make you feel differently? Draw your face and write the feeling word in the box below.
Some More Calming Strategies

A MINDFUL MINUTE

You could practise a bit of mindfulness. Mindfulness is about filling your mind and thoughts with what is happening right now. So, all those ANTS HAVE TO disappear because you are not thinking about them. Have a practise at a mindful minute. Your adult will time you. Look at this poster and see if you can do this. The more you practise MINDFULNESS the easier it will become to get rid of those ANTS. Make sure you are in a safe place when you do this though. You could be laid on your bed, eating some chocolate, watching the rain running down the window pane, or looking at a flower or butterfly.

A Mindful Minute

What can I hear?
What can I smell?
What can I feel?
What can I see?
What can I taste?

Take one minute, concentrate and fill your mind with what is happening right now. All your worries will disappear and you will feel calm and relaxed.
A SAFE PLACE

Imagining your safe place can be helpful. You need to use your imagination to create somewhere safe and where you feel so calm and relaxed. You might think that laying on a beach, listening to the waves, smelling candy floss and the salty sea air is your safe place. You might imagine being at the top of a mountain looking down on the land below, smelling the clear, fresh mountain air and feeling the cold of snow as being your safe place. Now you are going to close your eyes and imagine your safe place and then you are going to draw it below. Where is it? Who is there? What can you see, feel, smell, taste, hear?

Once you have this image in your mind then if you ever feel anxious and those ANTS are marching around make sure you close your eyes and think about your safe place. Let it bring you calm and peace.

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Ok, you might not feel like exercising when you are feeling really anxious, stressed or worried but do you remember when we talked about how adrenaline affects your body? How it gets you ready to fight the grizzly bear or out run it; all those physical things it does to your body? Well, interestingly if you use up that energy, caused by the adrenaline, it will actually help you to feel better. You can run as fast as you can around the playground or you can skip or jump or do anything you like to use up that energy that has been produced by the adrenaline.

Exercise makes you feel GREAT! Trust me on that one. The more you do the GREATER you will feel. Try it!

Think about the exercise you could try to do the next time those ANTS start crowding your brain. Draw a picture of you exercising.

MY EXERCISE
**BREATHING**

We talked about ‘STAR’ breathing but there are other breathing exercises you can do too. Here is a list for you to practice:

1. **Bubble blowing** – you could practise with the real thing first. Blow bubbles gently but firmly with your lips pursed. Once you have practised with the real thing then all you have to do is use your wonderful imagination to blow those bubbles.
2. **Blow out the candle** – imagine you are blowing out a candle again and again. Breathe in then breathe out long and slow to blow that candle out.
3. **Blowing up a balloon** – imagine you are blowing up a balloon. It will take 5 big breaths to blow it up. You need to breath in and blow out slowly then breathe in and so on.

**DIARY**

Keeping a diary can be really helpful. It can remind you of - How you calmed yourself down? What your triggers are for anxiety? Also writing things down makes them less scary and I bet your monster will get smaller or disappear. Your adult will give you a diary in a minute so you can practice. These are the things you can write in your diary.

1. The date and time – over a period of time you might notice you get more anxious when you are hungry or tired. Those things are easy to fix aren’t they? Eat more or sleep more.
2. What happened? – What made you feel anxious? What are you worrying about? Can you write or draw what is worrying you?
3. Scaling the monster – Remember we talked about scaling your worries by giving them a number from 0-5 where 0 was ‘no anxiety or worries’ and 5 was ‘massive, huge’ worries or anxiety. Think about your worry and give it a number.
4. ANTS – What are your automatic, negative thoughts? What are you thinking right now whilst feeling really anxious? Write those thoughts down.
5. Physical signs – what is happening in your body? What physical symptoms do you have?
6. Calming strategies – we have looked at loads of things in this booklet. What could you try? Try it and see how you feel. If that doesn’t work try another one.
7. Scaling the monster – After you have tried your calming technique how big is your monster now? Has it got smaller or even gone altogether?

Perhaps you could have a practise with your adult now at filling the first section of the diary.
Congratulations

You have reached the end of the booklet.

You will have learnt lots about worries and anxiety and more importantly lots of strategies to help you cope with them. Don’t forget your diary! Your adult will give you it to take away.

Remember that

Monsters aren’t always scary!