

WEOBLEY HIGH SCHOOL



Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health issues in the UK and often start in adolescence. If your child is anxious or depressed they are more likely to struggle socially and academically both at school and at home. This can have a significant impact on their future. They are also at greater risk of self-harm and, as a parent, it can be difficult to know what to do. However, by getting help early, adverse effects can be reduced. And by parents and schools working together this can further improve their life chances and can lead to a happier home life too.

This leaflet aims to help you identify the signs of anxiety and depression, give you ideas on how best to support your child and provide links to access more information.

Identifying if your child is anxious or depressed?

Anxious: Do they show signs of being excessively or persistently worried around everyday situations? Do these feelings interfere with daily activities? Do they have difficulty controlling their worries? Are their fears out of proportion for the situation they are in? Have you noticed a change in their behaviour? Are they more introverted, get easily upset or angry for very little reason?

Depressed: Are they frequently upset or tearful? Do they seem restless or irritable? Do they often put themselves down or have low self-confidence? Have they described a feeling of being empty or numb? Do they isolate themselves or take little pleasure in activities they used to enjoy?

For over 16's: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/depression-anxiety-self-assessment-quiz/>

For under 16's: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/>

How can you help?

Low mood can be caused by a variety of factors. Having a conversation with your child to identify some of the factors may help. Common causes may include:

- Bullying and cyber-bullying.
- Falling behind with school work.
- Moving school or home.
- Loneliness and friendship difficulties.
- Traumatic events.
- Health problems.

Starting a conversation with your child about their difficulties can be tricky. Picking your moment and thinking about how to phrase things is important.

The charity Young Minds have a useful guide to help you with this: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/starting-a-conversation-with-your-child/#Talkingtoyourchild>

Working with your child's school and letting them know of any issues can help. Your child's form tutor is the best person to talk to initially especially if your child has any specific worries on a day to day basis. You can make appointments to meet with them face to face at Parents' surgeries or they can be contacted via email. To arrange this please call by reception or phone. Tel: 01544 318 159.

You may not be able to explain why your child is suffering but there are definitely things that you can do to help. Going through each of the following suggestions may prove useful.

Encouraging a healthy lifestyle:

Poor **sleeping patterns** can contribute to anxiety and depression and keeping to daily routines can help. For more information about encouraging a healthy sleeping pattern and keeping up with daily routines have a look at the help guides on the Parenting for Mental Health website: <https://parentingmentalhealth.com/guides/>

Eating healthily and regularly can help your child feel better as well as **keeping active**. By planning to do something every day, such as go out for a dog walk, can give your child a sense of achievement. Equally planning something nice to do so that your child has something to look forward to midweek will help to motivate them too.

Encouraging mental health and wellbeing.

Mindfulness is a form of meditation. It allows you to slow down and take notice of the things around you. It is a good way to relax and manage stress and worries. If these meditation techniques are practiced then they can be used in times of worry to induce a state of calm. Mindfulness UK offer free downloadable meditations that are 10 to 20 minutes in length. These can be accessed via the following link: <https://mindfulnessuk.com/meditations/>

Building self-esteem. Often those that feel anxious or depressed can feel worthless. Making your child feel valued and loved can therefore help boost their self-esteem but can also be enjoyable too. Ideas to try include spending quality time together doing things they enjoy, telling them what makes them special to you, listen to their ideas and opinions and encourage them to try new challenges and celebrate them when they are accomplished. More ideas can be found on the young mind website: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/self-esteem/>

When and where to get further help

If your child's symptoms have impacted on their ability to take part in family life or they have affected their ability to cope at school then it is time to take action. If you have tried tweaking their sleeping habits and daily routines, and things are still not improving then you should seek further help.

Contact your GP - they can refer your child to other professionals that may be able to help such as counselling.

Counselling can help your child understand about how they are feeling, learn how to cope with their emotions and stop them becoming overwhelmed. You should speak to your GP, with or without your child, for them to be referred to counselling with the CLD Trust. Further information about the CLD Trust can be found here as well as information about the different forms of counselling: <https://www.thecldtrust.org/counselling-services/information-for-parents-carers/>

There are many charitable organisations both locally and nationally that can help; All have websites with a wealth of advice, some have forums and online communities or telephone numbers so that you can speak to someone in person.

Young Minds is a charity that provides young people and their carers reassurance and advice to help them make positive mental health choices and know what to do if they are struggling. Young people can also self-refer themselves. Tel: 0808 802 5544; website: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Parenting Mental Health. This charitable organisation works to connect and support parents in their vital role to help their children. <https://parentingmentalhealth.com/how-we-can-help/>

Charlie Waller. This is a mental health charity that provides online information to help young people and their families. Follow the link below for information for parents and carers: <https://charliewaller.org/what-we-do-for-parents-and-carers>

PAPYRUS provide support and advice to young people who are struggling with thoughts of suicide, and provide support to their carers through their helpline HOPELINEUK. Tel: 0800 068 4141; website: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/help-advice/>

Family Lives is a free and confidential service that supports families if their teen becomes violent. Tel: 0808 800 2222; email: askus@familylives.org.uk; website: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/behaviour/teen-violence-at-home/>

Need help now?

If you need urgent help with mental health issues here are some services that maybe able to help:

Call the emergency services: 999 or 111

Local NHS Herefordshire mental health support: 24 hour telephone based support, guidance and advice. Tel: 0808 196 9127.

The Samaritans: A free helpline if you are worried about someone and are not sure how best to help. Tel: 116 123

