

Soothing Atmosphere



Consider all of your child's **senses**:

Sight - dimmed lighting, storybooks, toys put away, no technology/screens for 1 hour before bed

Touch – warm bath, blankets, rubbing back, hand massage, cuddles, consider the temperature of the room

Smell – essential oils such as lavender or bergamot to relax and calm, pillow sprays, lotions

Sound – soothing music, white noise, speaking in quiet voices, lullabies, prayers, reading a story in a low, slow and calm voice

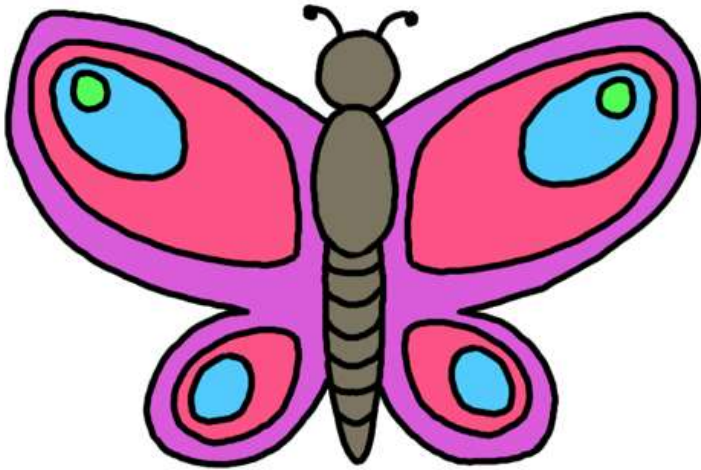
- **Taste** – mindful sip of cool water, notice and pay attention to the taste of toothpaste, herbal tea, warm milk

What to do when worries get in the way?

- Implement 'worry time' during the day e.g., before dinner time (5 – 10 minutes of dedicated time to worry and problem solve)
- Write down any new worries at night-time to discuss during worry time the next day or put in a worry box
- Empathy and validation: 'I can hear that that is really worrying you, why don't we write it down and we can discuss it tomorrow/ at worry time'
- Try the following grounding, relaxation, or distraction exercises



Butterfly Tapping



- Cross your hands over your chest just under your collarbone
- Alternate tapping the left hand and right hand in a steady rhythm
- Match your breathing e.g. inhale for 4 taps, exhale for 4 taps
- You can also use affirmations while doing this:
 - 'I am safe'
 - 'I am in control'
 - 'I am loved'
 - 'I can do this'

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

1. SIT ON A CHAIR.



2. SCRUNCH UP YOUR FACE...

THEN RELAX IT.



3. TENSE YOUR ARMS...

THEN RELAX THEM.



4. TENSE UP YOUR SHOULDERS AND CHEST...

THEN RELAX THEM.



5. TENSE UP YOUR LEGS...

THEN RELAX!



6. BREATHE IN RELAXATION...

BREATHE OUT TENSION.



Calming imagery

Ask child to think of their favourite and most relaxing place – it can be completely made up or somewhere they've been before.

What can you see? Hear? Feel? Smell? Taste?

Help the child build a vivid picture and imagine they are really there.



Body scan



Breathing Techniques

When we feel anxious, upset or distressed, it can be difficult to know what to do to feel better. By using these breathing techniques, we can reduce our anxiety and lower our blood pressure/heart rate. This helps us feel calmer and more focused and helps us to face our fears.

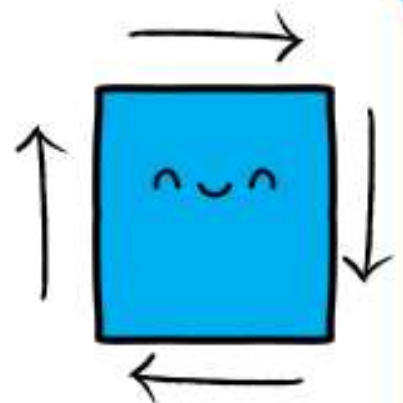
Belly Breathing



- Take a deep breath in and fill your belly like you're inflating a balloon.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath in and fill the balloon in your belly.
- Pause and then let all of the air out of your belly like you're letting a balloon deflate.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath out and let the balloon go down from your belly.

Square Breathing

- Imagine you're drawing a square with your finger in the air.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the top line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line down the side and then pause.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the bottom line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line up the side to make the square.



Finger Breathing



- Use your index finger to trace around the edges of the fingers on your opposite hand.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath in as you go up the first finger.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath out as you go down the finger.
- Repeat until you have traced up and down all five fingers, breathing 1, 2, 3, 4 in and 1, 2, 3, 4 out each time.

Top Tip! Practise these breathing techniques when you're calm so that you're better prepared to use them when you need to.



Count **slowly** when breathing in and out and **repeat** the technique as many times as you need to until you feel calmer.

Problem Solving

If you're struggling with a practical worry, use this step by step guide which helps to break the problem down and solve it in a more manageable way. Practical worries can feel overwhelming and it's easy to put them off. However, it's much better in the long run to solve the problem today rather than put it off until later.

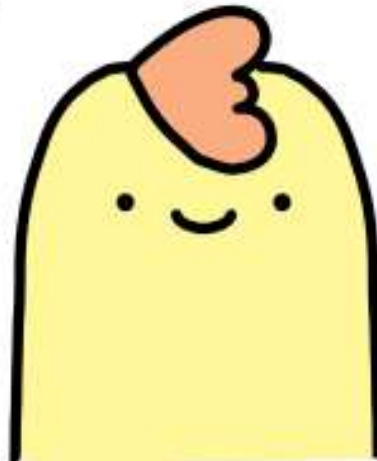
(You'll need some paper and pens/pencils)

- Step 1** Write down your problem in 1 or 2 sentences.
- Step 2** Write down all the ideas you can think of to solve the problem (no matter what they are!).
- Step 3** Make a table and write down ALL of the good things and ALL of the not so good things you can think of for each of your ideas.

	Good things	Not so good things
Idea 1		
Idea 2		

- Step 4** Choose one idea that looks like it could work (if you struggle, see which one has the most good things). Ask yourself, is my idea realistic? If it isn't, choose a different idea.
- Step 5** Make a plan! Write down the answers to these questions to create your plan of action!
- 1) What will you do?
 - 2) When will you do it?
 - 3) How will you do it?
 - 4) Who will you do it with?
 - 5) Could there be any difficulties? If so, what could you do to overcome these?

Step 6 DO IT!



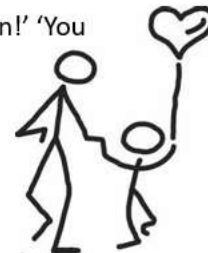
Special Time

- If your child is delaying bedtime to have more time with you, consider adding 10 minutes of 'special time'.
- Special time is 1:1 undivided attention doing a child-led activity. This can become a regular part of your evening and 10 minutes of quality time can make a huge difference.
- You can do activities such as Lego, drawing, imaginative play, jigsaws
- If possible, try to avoid including screens in special time
- Separate special time for siblings!



Praise

- Praise is a great way of motivating your child, especially if it is done immediately
- Try to make praise specific e.g. 'Well done for putting your pyjamas on!' 'You are doing a great job brushing your teeth'
- This makes it clear to children the behaviours you want to see
- Praise effort and steps in the right direction!
- Avoid muddling praise with criticism e.g. 'Well done for putting your pyjamas on, if only you could have done it when I first asked'
- Non verbal praise such as high-fives, fist bumps, hugs, stickers can also be used



Reward Charts

Reward charts are best when:

- They have specific, achievable goals listed
- Rewards are easily attained – we want children to succeed!
- They incorporate the child's interests e.g. space themed as here
- An agreed reward if they get a certain number of stickers
- Stickers/ticks are added to the chart immediately/as soon as possible
- Stickers/ticks aren't removed from the chart – only give the sticker if you won't then change your mind and take it away again



Types of Rewards



- **Inexpensive Items** e.g. Special snack after school, new toy (specific cost limit)
- **Special Privileges at Home** e.g. having a friend over, choosing meal at dinner
- **Special Privileges Outside** e.g. trip to the park
- **Special Time with Parents** e.g. 10 minutes extra playtime

Make rewards sustainable – in an ideal world, they will achieve it every week!

