



ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

Anxiety

All students will receive a mental health or wellbeing themed Collective Worship each week. Next week we will be looking at anxiety. We are aware that many teenagers are currently experiencing anxiety, whether that is linked to coronavirus or a more general feeling. Although anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling, it also has its uses as it can help us assess situations and then take steps to protect ourselves. Here are some tips to help you manage your child's anxiety, especially over the next few weeks.

1. Focus on breathing. This can be triangle or box breathing where one focuses on breathing in, holding the breath and slowly releasing the breath. This can be done whilst tracing an imaginary square or triangle with your finger. Another option is to slowly trace around your hand with a finger from the other hand. Count to five slowly as this is done.
2. If you or your child are particularly anxious about Coronavirus, think about limiting how much news you watch. Hearing the same news story repeatedly can make us feel overwhelmed and more anxious. If your child does want to watch the news, help them access it from a reputable source.
3. Make a list of fun things you can do, either as a family or alone. When our time is stretched it can be easy to miss out on some of the things you enjoyed doing previously.
4. Eat well and eat regularly. When we are feeling anxious, we use more energy. Anxiety can also lead us to not feel hungry, although it is important we eat often to help regulate ourselves.
5. Praying or meditating can help you feel less anxious. By offering to God the worries of the day, you can rest knowing that you do not have to manage things alone.
6. Help your child to understand what they can and can't control. Although they can wash their hands regularly, keep social distancing rules and wear a mask they can't control the spread of coronavirus elsewhere in the world. Help them to recognise when they are feeling anxious about things they can't control.
7. Recognise what your, and your child's 'trigger' activities are. If their anxiety spikes when they are bored or feeling lonely help them to find ways to fill those needs. Normalise this by talking about things or times which trigger you to feel anxious.
8. When possible, focus on facts rather than catastrophising thought. If you notice your child is imagining the worst in most situations help them to reframe their thinking and look for the facts – this can help them step off a worry-loop or spiral.
9. Try and get adequate rest and routine. This might be rest by sleeping or it could be by playing with a pet, listening to music or chatting with friends online.
10. Try looking at www.youngminds.org.uk or www.beheadstrong.uk for other ideas for supporting your child or yourself with anxiety. If you're concerned about your child's anxiety, you can also refer them for support at Reach for Wellbeing for additional support. <https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/reach4wellbeing>