



Greater Manchester
Mental Health
NHS Foundation Trust

WIGAN MHST Newsletter

Issue 7: March 2025



HELLO!

Why not take a moment
to stretch out your body?

Raise your arms above
your head and lean
to one side.

Breathe deeply.

Now repeat on the other
side.



MHST Padlet

Scan the QR code
above to access useful
information,
signposting, and
referral forms.

Welcome to issue 7 of the Wigan MHST Newsletter! This month we're focusing on the topic of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). We'll explain how to identify the common symptoms of GAD; introduce you to the fight, flight, and freeze response; and share some simple, yet effective coping strategies. Our practitioners are trained to offer support to young people who present with mild to moderate symptoms of GAD through our 6-8 week worry management intervention. If you recognise these symptoms in the young people you work with, please consult our suitability criteria and consider making a referral.



Over the half-term break Wigan MHST delivered anxiety and low mood workshops to parents at the Family Hubs. These workshops continue to receive positive feedback, with parents valuing the opportunity to learn more about how these common mental health difficulties present in young people. We also offer these workshops to parents, staff, and students within schools - please contact your school's allocated practitioner for more information.

This month also sees the return of World Book Day! Turn to page 2 where we explore the benefits of reading for our wellbeing.

THIS MONTH'S WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH OFFER

- Sleep Hygiene Workshops
- Anti-Bullying Workshops
- Exam Stress Workshops

Contact your school's allocated practitioner to find out more about our offer.

THE BENEFITS OF READING FOR OUR WELLBEING



World Book Day is just around the corner, providing us with an ideal opportunity to shine a light on the benefits of reading and sharing stories on our mental health and wellbeing.



In 2023, the National Literacy Trust's annual literacy survey asked Children and young people aged between 8 and 18 to reflect on the reasons why they read. The survey found that 3 in 5 children and young people reported reading helps them to relax, 1 in 2 stated reading makes them happy and 3 in 10 children stated that reading helps them to feel confident and deal with their problems.



When experiencing adversity, reading can introduce us to relatable characters who face and overcome challenges. This helps us to make sense of our emotions in a safe, structured way.



Reading for 10 minutes a day can not only help you to feel calmer but can help us to boost our mood, reduce our stress levels by releasing tension and lowering our heart rate.

Reading also improves our mental health by keeping our brain active, helping to improve our focus and memory.



Reading together can help build strong, trusting relationships between parents, carers and children.

Reading as part of a regular, night time routine can help relax the mind, feel calm and improve our sleep.



When we read about how characters handle tough situations and overcome challenges, this can help us to learn valuable coping strategies and to understand that set backs don't have to stop us achieving our goals.



www.booksthathelp.co.uk

is a great website that shares titles of picture books to support families and children through a range of challenges.

IDENTIFYING WORRY

SYMPTOMS OF GENERALIZED ANXIETY



Let's imagine that you've been asked to speak in front of your class, or you are about to play in the final of an important sports tournament, or you are about to board a plane even though you do not like flying. The chances are, your body will let you know that you are feeling anxious.



When our brain senses danger, it triggers the fight, flight, freeze response; this is a survival instinct to keep us safe. It happens to us naturally, just like crying when we are sad or sleeping when we are tired. When we are in fight, flight, freeze mode, adrenaline is released, which prepares our body to escape the danger.



On the right, is a list of symptoms that you might experience when adrenaline is released. Whilst these are unpleasant, they are perfectly safe; they are trying to protect us, even though it might not feel like it!



We need the fight, flight, freeze response just like we need a smoke alarm: it alerts us when there is genuine danger and keeps us alive. However, just like a smoke alarm, sometimes our brain is a little sensitive and goes off when there is no danger. Even though there is no threat, adrenaline is released, and we still experience all of those unpleasant symptoms.



The important thing to remember is that whilst anxiety may feel like our worst enemy at times, it is there to protect us and keep us safe. When we learn to identify symptoms of anxiety, understand why they are happening, and learn techniques to control these symptoms, anxiety does not need to be our worst enemy, but actually, our friend.

Symptoms

- Racing heart to pump blood around the body quicker.
- Faster breathing to give the body as much oxygen as possible.
- Butterflies in tummy, nausea or stomach pain as the blood rushes away from the stomach towards the arms and legs.
- Tense muscles as the body prepares to fight, fly or freeze.
- Trembling or shaking due to the energy provided by the adrenaline.
- Sweating to cool the body so it doesn't overheat as it tries to escape danger.

SORTING AND MANAGING WORRIES



Real Worries



Worries that are happening now or are definitely going to happen in the future.

We have concrete evidence for these worries.

Problem-solving can be effective for some real worries.

E.g. I have a maths test next week and I'm not prepared.

Not all real worries can be controlled

E.g. my friend is unwell.



Hypothetical Worries



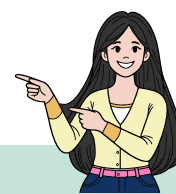
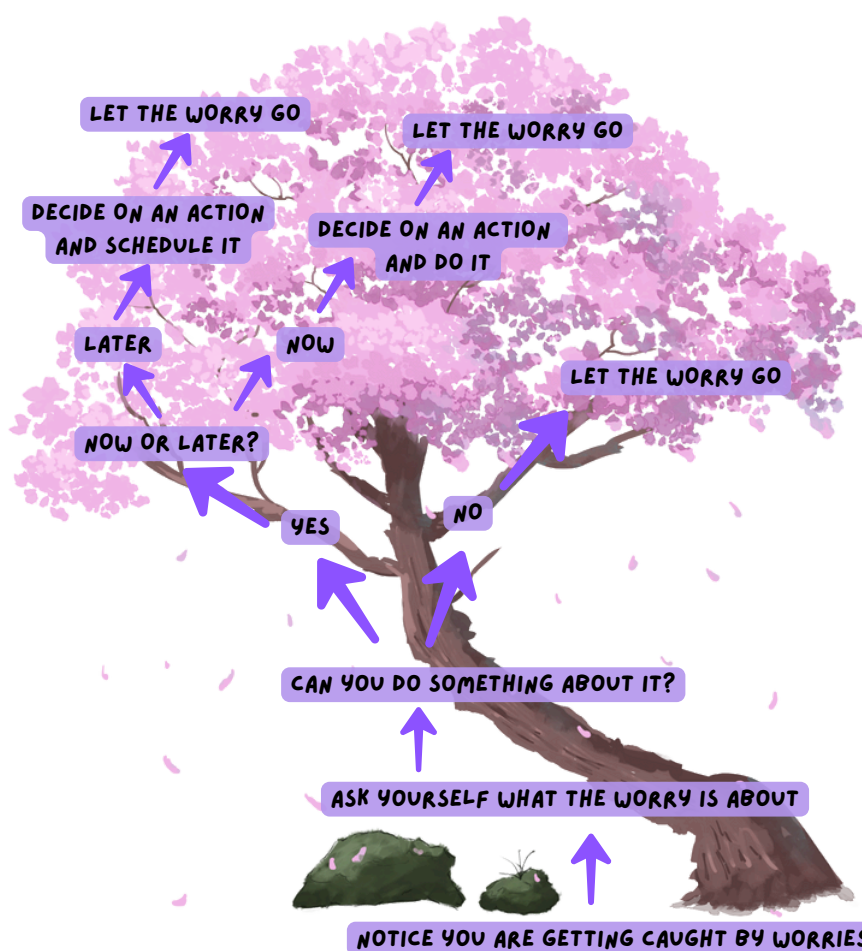
Worries that we have no evidence for.

They are 'what if' worries.

Sometimes called 'fake' or 'trickster' worries.

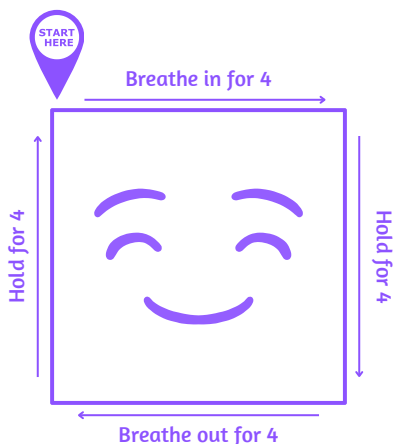
We have no control over these events.

E.g. what if I fall over and people laugh?



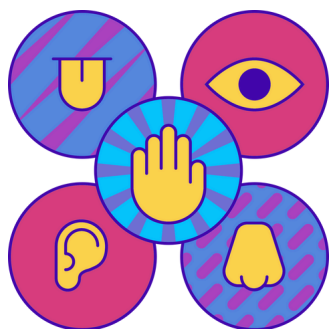
COPING CARDS

PRINT OFF & CUT OUT
KEEP OR SHARE



Pick a colour e.g. red.

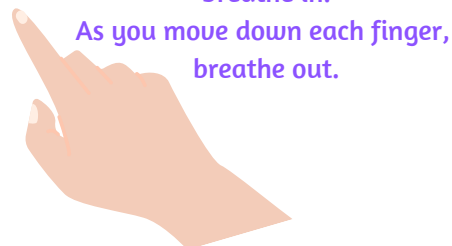
See how many things you can see that are red.
When you do this you are only thinking
of finding the colour.
Pick another colour and repeat.



Use the five senses to help you
notice what is going on around you.
5 things you can see
4 things you can touch
3 things you can hear
2 things you can smell
1 thing you can taste



Spread out your fingers on one hand.
Use your other hand to
trace around all five fingers.
As you move up each finger,
breathe in.
As you move down each finger,
breathe out.



1. Place your hands over your ears.
2. Breathe in deeply through your nose.
3. Breathe out slowly through your mouth.
4. Repeat.



Imagine there is a scanner going over your whole body.
Notice how each part of your body feels as the scanner
moves from the top of your head to your toes.
Notice without judgement.

*Listen to the sound of
the waves that you are
making with your
breath.*



IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Exam Stress

Autism Awareness Day

