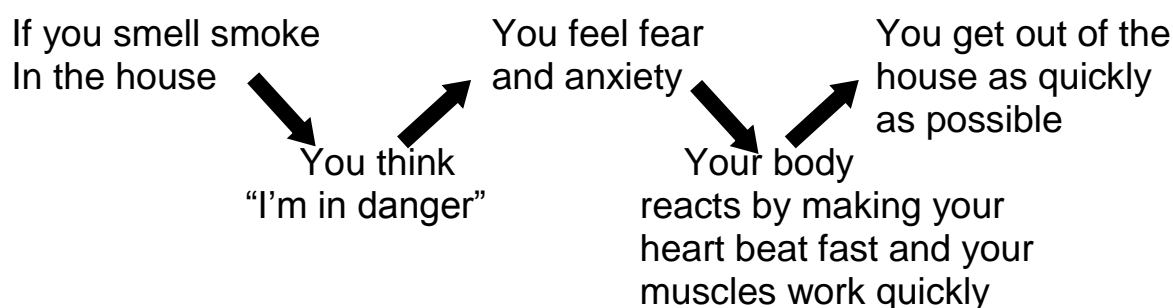


# What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is another word for worries, fears, being shy and being scared or frightened.

It's a natural emotion that helps us to survive. We can't live without it! Anxiety is the emotion that helps to protect us in dangerous situations. If we didn't have any anxiety at all we might get hurt. For example:



This is called the **fight/flight response**. All animals have this response and so does every person you've ever known.

The fight/flight response can be very useful in the situation where your house is on fire but sometimes it happens when there's really no need to be afraid. We might have heard a noise outside and thought it was a burglar but it was really the next door neighbor's cat. Our body still reacted as though there was a danger but there wasn't any.

## Who Gets Anxiety?

Everyone gets anxious. The only difference between the anxiety one person feels and what others may feel is the **degree** of anxiety experienced. You may find you become anxious more easily, more often and more strongly than others. However, the basic emotion of anxiety is the same for you as for everyone else.

If you get more anxious than other kids it's not because you are different, nor are you crazy. It's just because in some people anxiety happens more often. Anyone can be helped by learning to control his or her anxiety. It is especially important for kids who have high anxiety because often the anxiety is causing a lot of interference in their life. It might be affecting things at home, with your family, at school or while you're playing sports.

## **The Three Parts of Anxiety**

If you look at the example of smoke in the house, you'll be able to see that there are three parts to anxiety — your body, your thoughts and your actions.

**YOUR BODY:** Your heart beats faster; your muscles become tense; your breathing gets faster; you'll even be thinking more. These changes prepare your body for action.

**YOUR THOUGHTS:** You start looking for danger and scary thoughts like 'something bad' might happen. Sometimes anxiety may begin as a worrisome thought which cannot be ignored.

**YOUR ACTIONS:** Anxiety causes you to want to run away or sometimes it will make you want to lash out. You may want to stay away from the thing that makes you anxious which sometimes means you miss out on doing things that could be fun.

## **So Why Me?**

About one in every ten children experiences anxiety at a level that causes them to have problems with doing things. Some people are more anxious than others, partly because they are made that way.

People also learn to think and act in an anxious way by watching others or by going through scary experiences.

Where the anxiety comes from doesn't matter anyway because you have within you the power to change your anxiety by learning and applying some new skills.

## **So What Can Be Done?**

Over the next few months you will be learning new ways of worrying less and of facing up to your fears.

Sometimes it will be tricky to learn these skills but if you keep trying you will learn how to control your anxiety rather than it controlling you.

HANDOUT 2.2

# Me and My Anxiety

Here are some pictures of the types of things that some children are afraid of or worry about. Circle the ones that can be a problem for you.



Strange Things



Crowds



Making Friends



Getting Hurt



Being Embarrassed



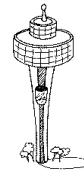
Performing



Seeing the Principal



Night Time



Heights



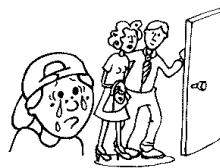
Ghosts



War



Making a Speech



Parents Going Out



Asking Questions



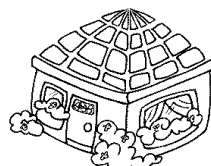
Getting in Trouble



Going to a Party



Bullies



Being Away From Home



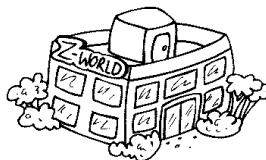
Water



Animals



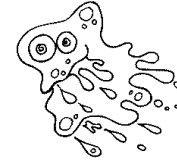
Loud Noises



Shopping Centres



Being Late



Germs



Dogs



Feeling Sick



School



Dentists



Monsters

# What's Life Like with Anxiety?

How does anxiety affect your life? Think about it and complete the following sentences

Being anxious makes me...

---

---

---

Being anxious stops me from...

---

---

---

Being anxious makes me feel bad because...

---

---

---

If I were no longer so anxious, what would be different?

What could I do? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Where could I go? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

How would I feel? \_\_\_\_\_

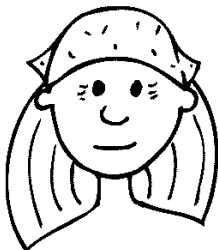
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# Learning about Feelings

There are lots of different types of feelings. One of the best ways to tell how someone is feeling is to look at the expression on their face.

Below is a series of pictures. Underneath each picture write what you think the person is feeling.

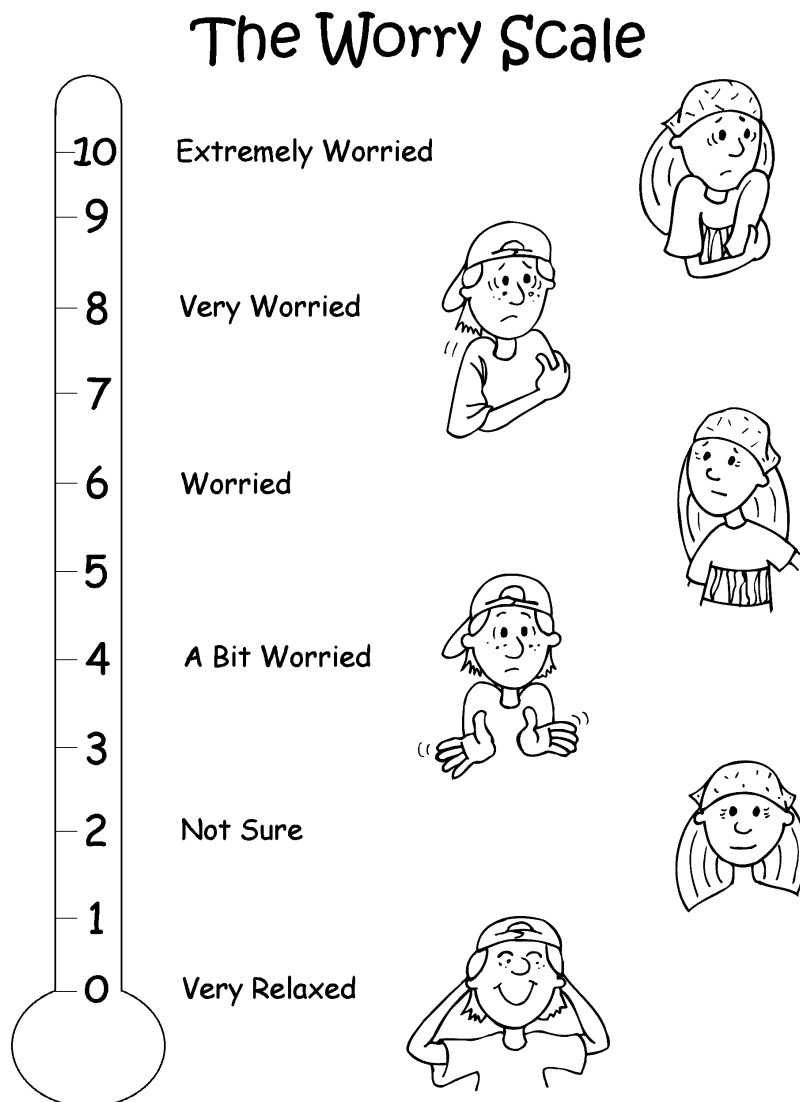


# The Worry Scale

Sometimes when we are worried, we are only a little bit worried but other times we feel very, very worried.

A good way of describing how big a feeling is would be to use what we call a scale. A scale is like a thermometer. When the feeling is low, the number on the thermometer is low; when the feeling is strong the number on the thermometer is high.

Below is a scale for the feeling of worry. We're going to be using it a lot to help tell us how strong a worry is about a particular thing. To use the scale, you think about the situation and then give it the number, which shows how worried you are by that situation. For example if you are about to get up on stage to do a solo song in front of the whole school your worry rating might be a 9 on the scale.



# Top 10 List

Here are some things that are hard for me to do because of my fear, anxiety, or worry.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.