

Anxiety



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| What is anxiety? | 4 |
| What can I do to help my child? | 5 |
| Sticky slimy thoughts | 6 |
| Grounding techniques | 7 |
| Useful books for anxiety | 8 |
| Useful videos to help explain and manage your child's anxiety | 9 |
| Helpful strategies | 9 |
| Useful websites | 10 |
| Worksheets | 11 |



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, which can be mild or severe.

Most people feel anxious at some point in their lives, for example before an exam or a medical test. Anxiety becomes a problem when children are unable to control their worries and have constant feelings of anxiety that affect their daily lives.

Sources of anxiety

- Separation
- Peers behaviour e.g. rule breaking, disruption
- Fear of the unknown or change e.g. change in school routine
- Sensory discomfort
- Friendships and bullying
- School work

As many as 1 in 6 young people will experience an anxiety condition at some point (anxietyuk.org.uk)



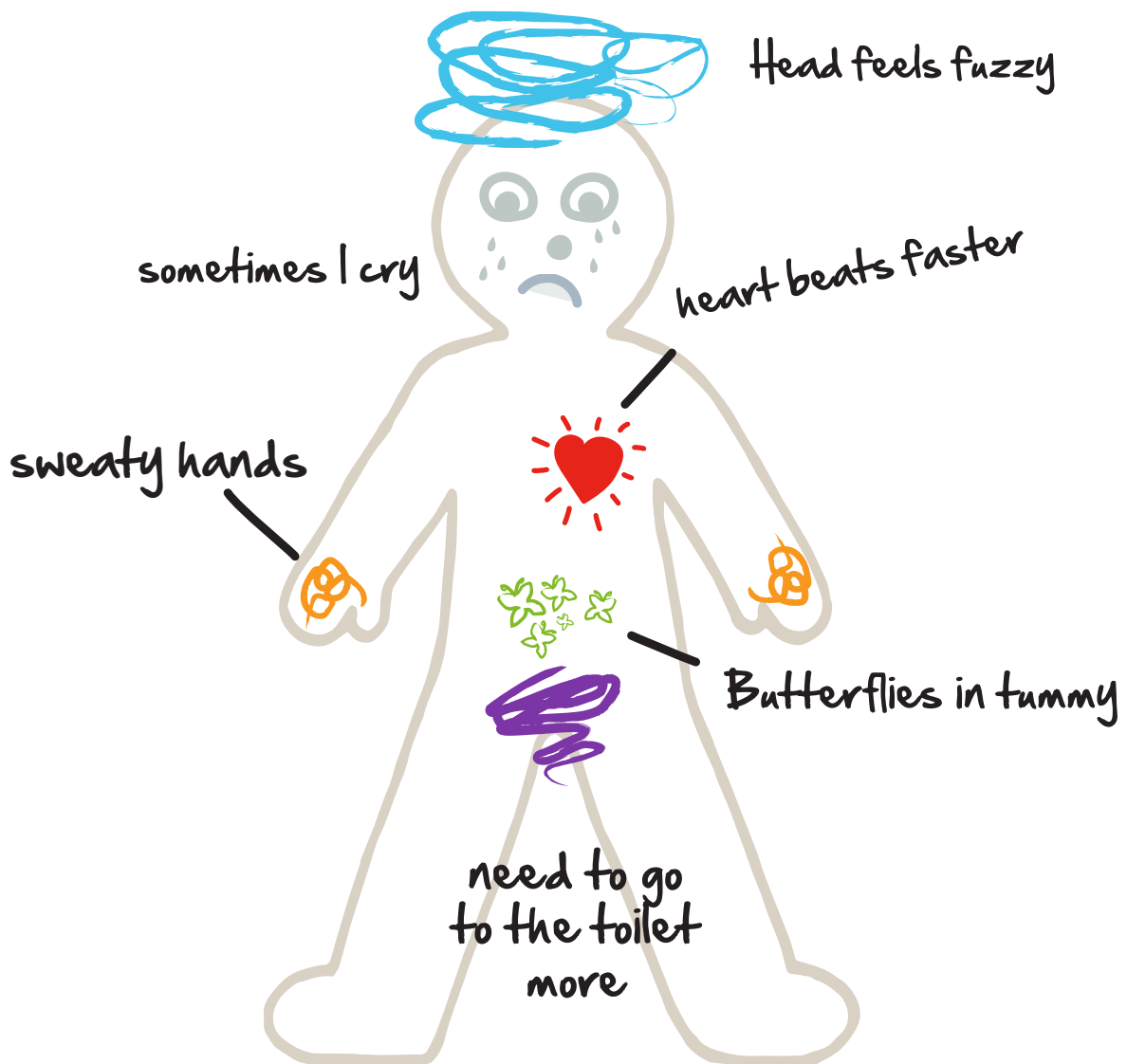
What can I do to help my child?

There are several resources you can use to support your child with their anxiety:

Body outline

This can be used to teach your child how their body might feel when they experience anxiety or worry.

They can draw their feelings on the body outline. For example if they feel butterfly's when anxious they can draw butterfly's in the tummy or if their heart beats really fast they can draw a heart.



What kind of things make me feel anxious?

school

tests

parties

food

Mum and Dad fighting

Sticky slimy thoughts

This can be used for children that do not like to refer to thoughts as anxiety or worry.


These thoughts can be referred to as sticky thoughts and think of positive thoughts to go in the blue bubble.





Grounding techniques


Grounding techniques can help your child return to reality. By focusing on the present surroundings your child can become more aware of their safety and start to feel calmer.


Senses 5,4,3,2,1

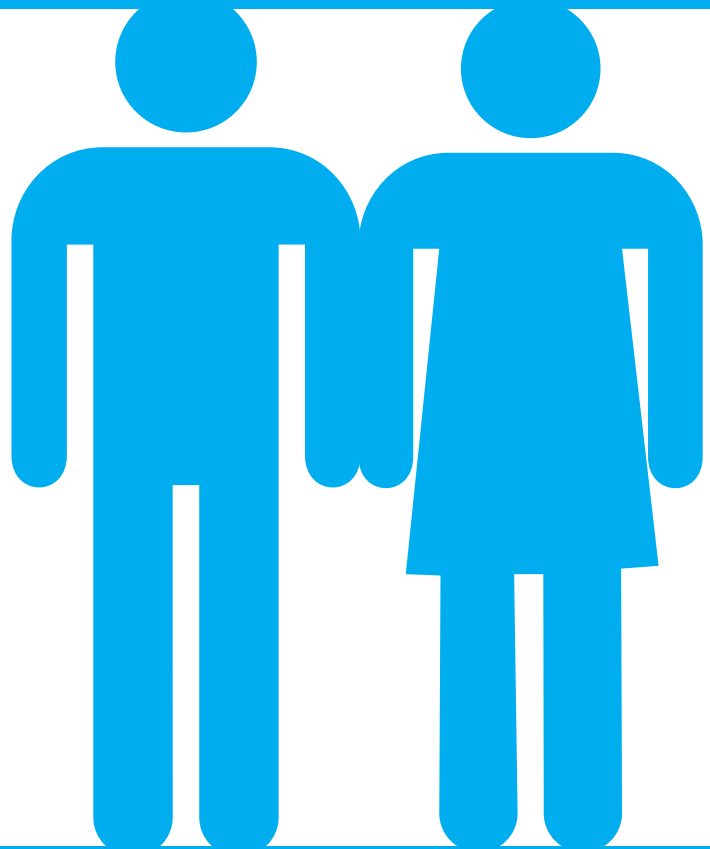
 5 things you can see

 4 things you can hear

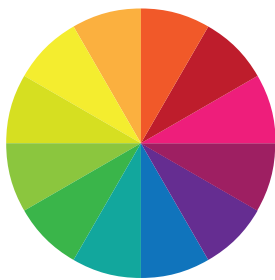
 3 things you can touch

 2 things you can smell

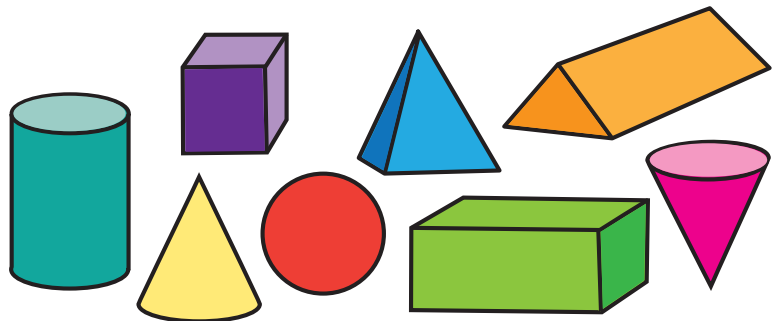
 1 thing you can taste



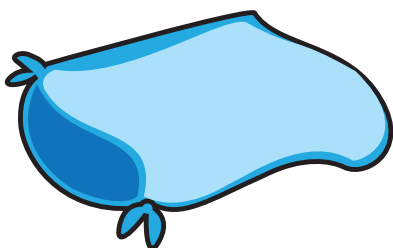
What can you see...



5 colours you can see



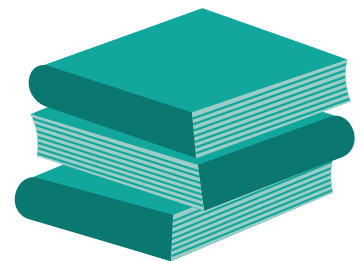
4 shapes you can see



3 soft things you can see

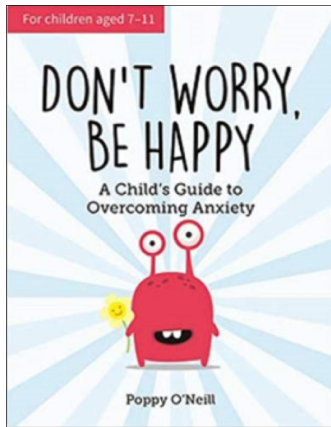


2 people you can see

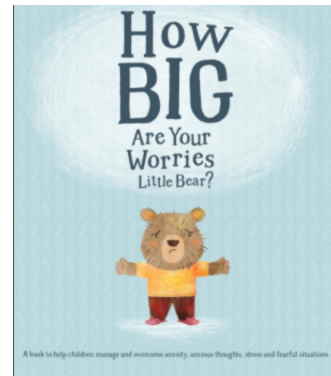


1 thing you can read

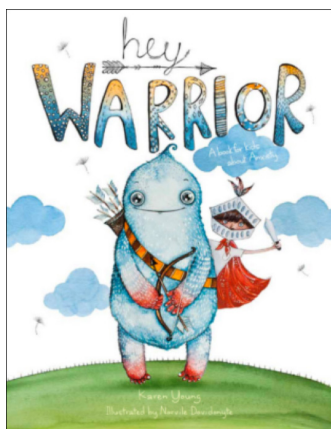
Useful books for anxiety



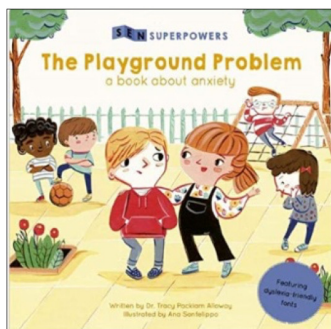
In this book your child will be guided by the help of Fiz - a friendly and supportive character they can identify with - through fun and engaging activities. It also has useful tips, practical information for parents and inspirational statements.



Little Bear is a worrier. He worries about everything! But with Mama Bears help, he soon learns his worries are not so big after all.



A fantastic book to help children understand what actually happens in their brain when they experience anxiety. Kids can do amazing things with the right information. Understanding why anxiety feels the way it does, and where the physical symptoms come from, is a powerful step in turning anxiety around.



The playground problem explores the topic of anxiety. Ruby feels anxious about her show and tell presentation. But when she discovers that Joey is having a hard time at lunch, it's up to Ruby to use her SEN Superpowers to cheer him up. Will it help ease her own anxiety too?



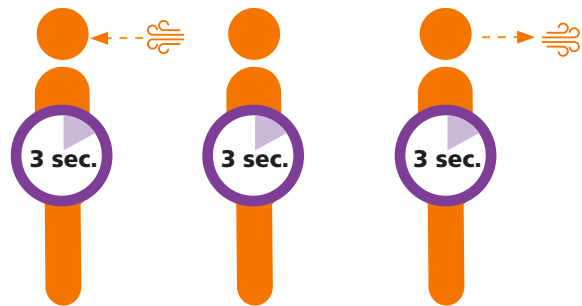
Wherever Jenny goes, her worries follow her — in a big blue bag. They are there when she goes swimming, when she is watching TV, and even when she is in the lavatory. Jenny decides they will have to go. But who can help her? A great book to help sort through worries and make them seem more manageable.

Useful videos to help explain and manage your child's anxiety

- "A guide to anxiety for kids – fight, flight or freeze"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O_5M
- "4 ideas for supporting a child with anxiety"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbMUMFvjv40>
- "A to Z of coping strategies"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EXpkVw3fh0>
- "Coping skills. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding technique"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IM8pgMgjEs>

Helpful strategies

Deep breathing – breathe in slowly for 3 counts, hold for 3 counts and breathe out for 3 counts.



Imagery – think of a place where you feel safe, e.g. your home, a beach, a park. Close your eyes and use your 5 senses to imagine this place in great detail.



Progressive muscle relaxation – technique used to give control over the body's anxiety response.

- Arms and hands – slowly draw both hands into fists, then pull your fists into your chest and hold for 15 seconds. Slowly release whilst counting to 30.

- Jaw – tense the muscles in your jaw for 15 seconds. Slowly release whilst counting to 30.

- Neck and shoulders – raise your shoulders to your ears and hold for 15 seconds. Slowly release whilst counting to 30.



Useful websites

Young minds

Support children and young people to get the best possible support for their mental health and have the resilience to overcome life's difficulties.

The website explains what anxiety is, the symptoms, treatment and where to get help. There are also helpful resources and a parent helpline.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/>

Anxiety UK

Offers support for children and young people who are experiencing anxiety. They offer information about anxiety and free accessible resources.

There is also the opportunity to access online support groups or online therapist-led structured management courses.

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/support-for-children-young-people/>

The Children's Society

Offers information about anxiety and explains different techniques to help support a child experiencing anxiety.

There is also an Advice Hub that offers advice and answers questions about many problems young people may be experiencing.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/how-to-help-a-child-with-anxiety>

Action for Children

Offers information about anxiety in young people and offers examples of ways to manage it. There is also support for parents through an online service, activity ideas to do with children and finding support in their area.

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/children-s-mental-health/children-s-anxiety/>

My fears worksheet

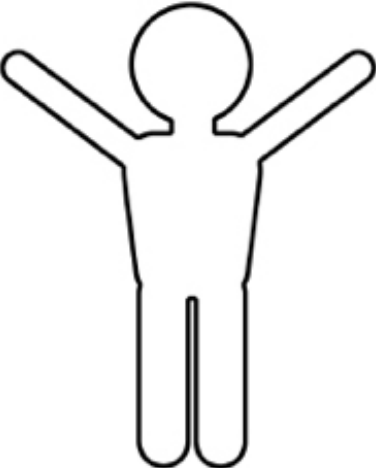
This worksheet can be used to prompt children to begin a discussion about anxiety and fear. It provides an opportunity to discuss feelings of fear and anxiety, why they are important and how they can be harmful. Children can list their fears, describe their thoughts about anxiety, identify where in their body they sense the feeling and finally to create a plan for dealing with fear in the future. The goal of this worksheet is to begin introducing children to the concept that thoughts and feelings are linked, and to increase awareness of their emotions by asking them to identify how their body responds to anxiety.

My Fears

What are some things that make you feel nervous or scared? _____

What do you think about when you are nervous or scared? _____

How does your body feel when you are nervous or scared? Color the areas where you can sense these feelings.



What's something you can do to feel better next time you are afraid?

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Three houses worksheet

The three houses worksheet can be used to discuss a child's likes, hobbies, strengths and protective factors, dislikes, worries and risks related to the child and their dreams, hopes and wishes. The child can either draw or write the things in each house with adult support.

| House of worries (What are we worried about) | House of good things (What is working well) | House of dreams (What needs to happen) |
|--|---|--|
| | | |

The Worry Jar

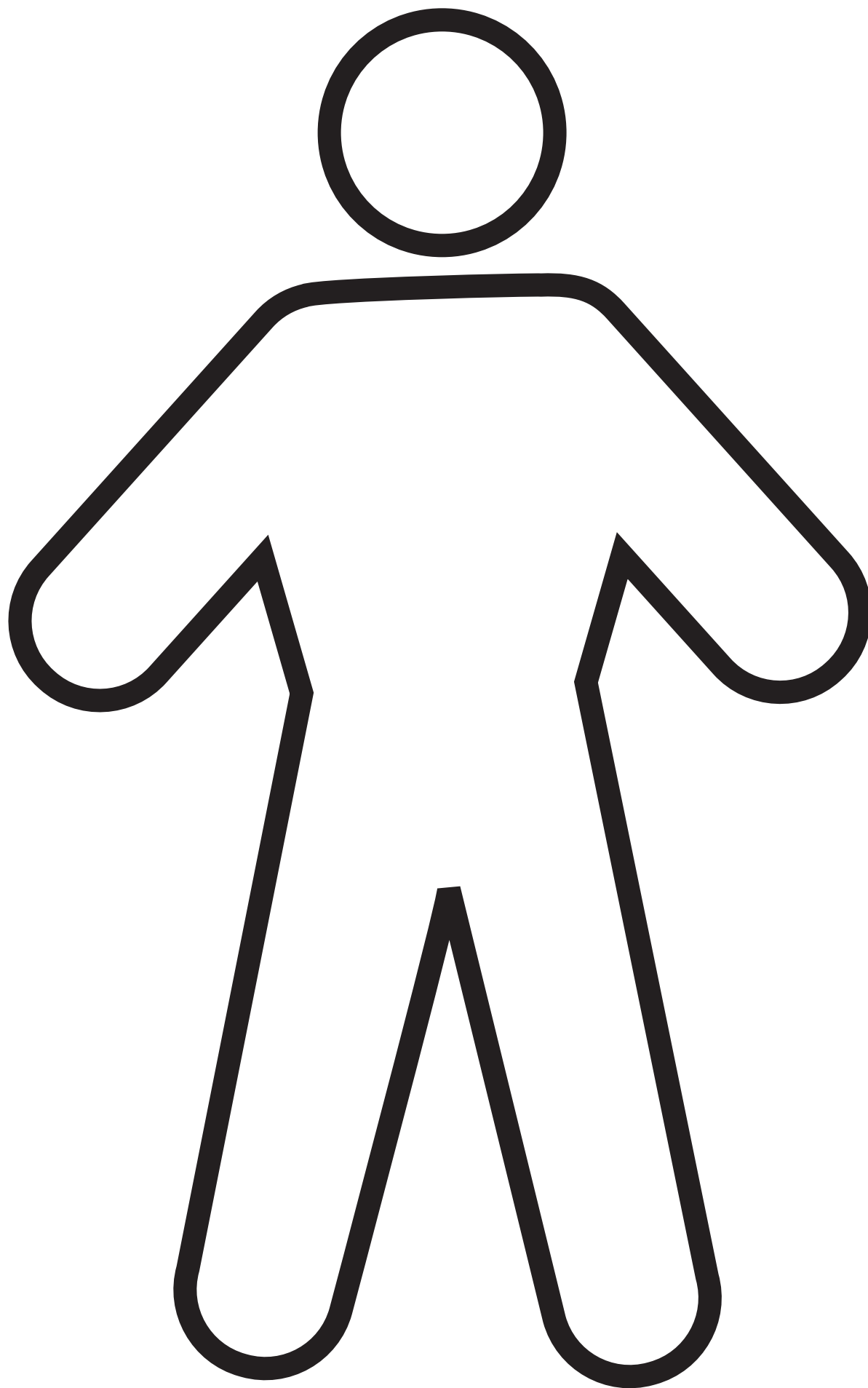
You and your child can create a worry jar using a glass or plastic jar. This is a place for your child to put their worries so they do not need to keep thinking about them. It is like storing or putting them away for safe keeping. Have your child write down their worries throughout the day and put each worry into the jar then close it. You can then agree on a period of time for worrying, for example 4pm to 4.15pm where your child can pick out some worries to talk over.

Worry Jar

**IT CAN BE
HELPFUL TO
PICK A TIME
DURING THE
DAY - AND
ONLY THAT
TIME - WHERE
YOU ARE
ALLOWED TO
GO BACK INTO
THE JAR AND
WORRY ABOUT
THESE
THOUGHTS.**



The body outline worksheet



The sticky slimy thoughts worksheet

Sticky slimy thought versus nice thought

Sometimes we get sticky slimy thoughts. These slimy thoughts start to make you worry about things you don't have to and get stuck in your head. Try and think about a nice thought instead. Mum or Dad can help.



