

Anxiety ASC

Teenagers

&

COVID - 19



COVID-19

The current situation is a struggle for anyone to understand let alone someone on the Spectrum. The sudden change in routine, media coverage of people stockpiling and emptying shelves, the imminent school closures and so many unanswered questions that no one has the answers to. Where do we even start? First, I think we need to explain the whole situation in a way that those on the Spectrum can understand.

What is Covid-19?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. Those who get Covid-19 will get:

- a new, continuous cough
- you start coughing repeatedly, a high temperature
- you feel hot to touch on your chest or back and a shortness of breath.



Know the **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

The following symptoms may
appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

Seek medical advice if:

- You develop worsening symptoms
- You have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19
- You live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CDC.GOV](https://www.cdc.gov)



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in 7 STEPS

- 01 Wash your hands frequently
- 02 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- 03 Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue
- 04 Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough
- 05 Stay at home if you feel unwell
- 06 If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early — but call first
- 07 Get information from trusted sources

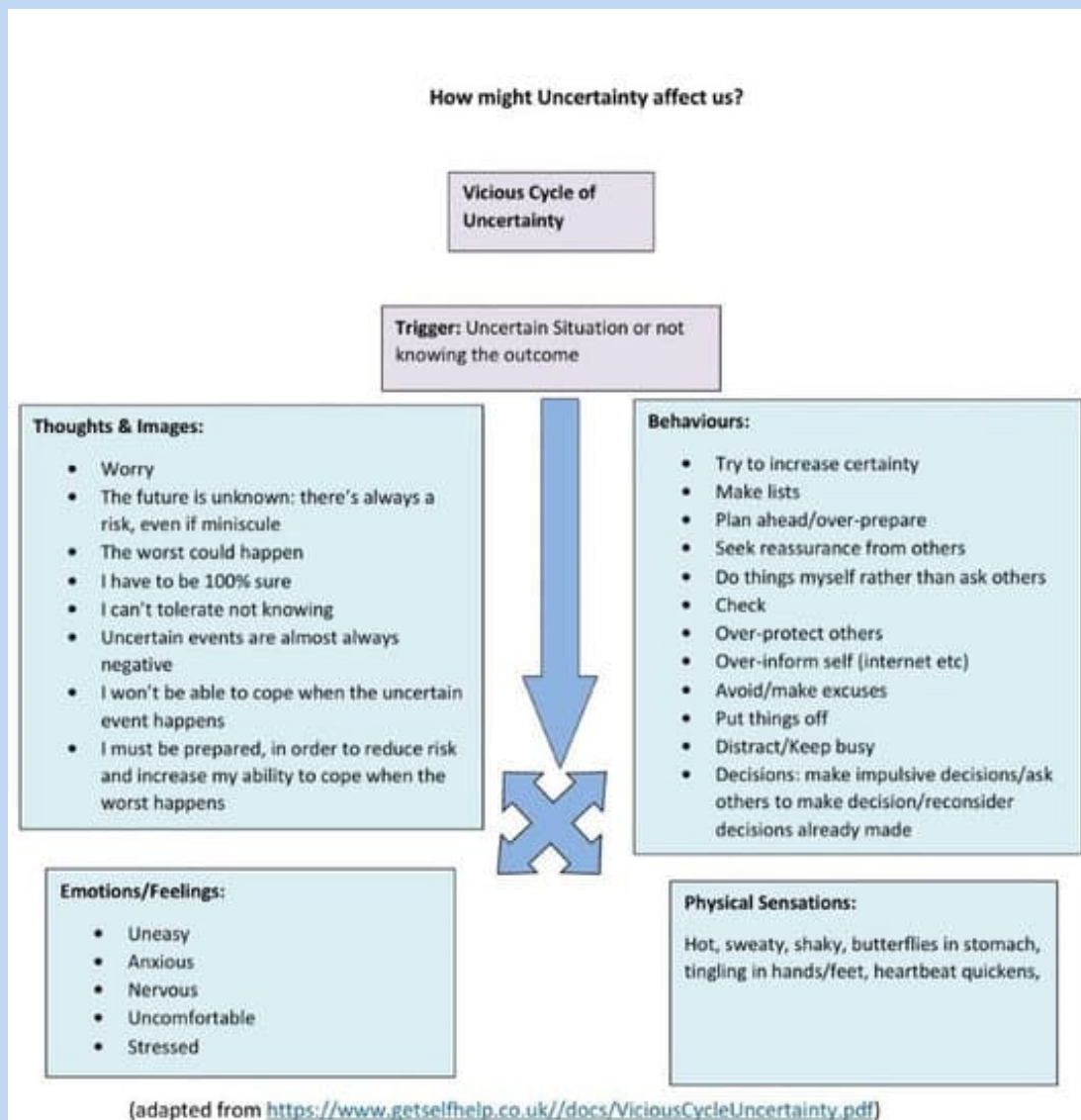


SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Ways anxiety might impact you

We have listed some common ways that anxiety might affect your teen. You might find it helpful to write a list of the things on these lists that are familiar to you or tick off things on these lists that you recognise.

Thoughts & images
Behaviours
Emotions or feelings
Physical sensations

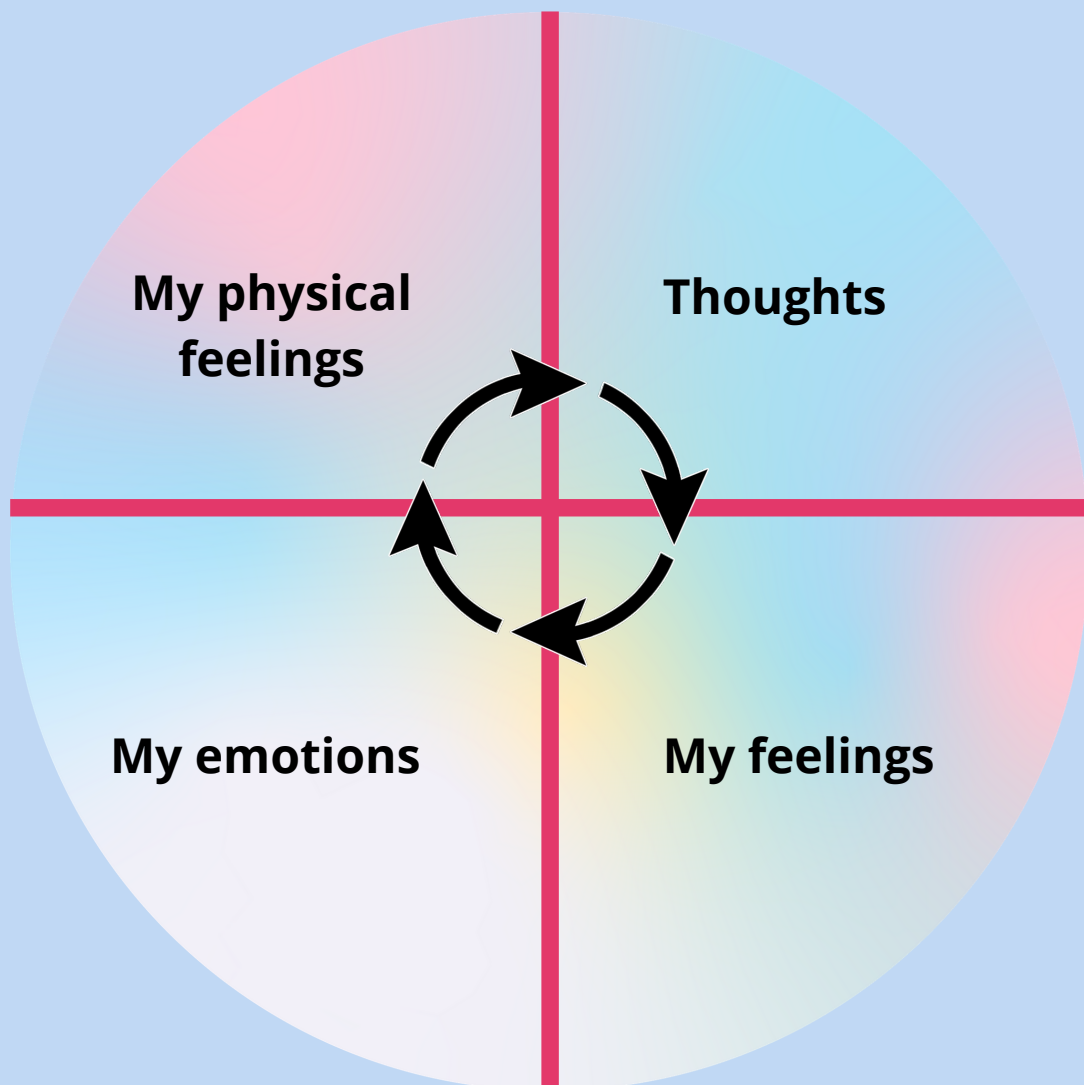


My vicious circle worksheet

MY SITUATION

IMPACT

Now using the vicious cycle worksheet below, write down the emotions, physical feelings, behaviours and thoughts you are experiencing, thinking about how these impact on your life.



Notice the Worry

Ask yourself "What am I worrying about?"

Ask: "Is this a hypothetical situation or a current problem?"
and/or "Can I do something about this?"

If the worry is a hypothetical situation:
Let the worry go or postpone your worry until later
Change your focus of attention - NOW

Notice, right now, your focus of attention

Observe and say to yourself (and notice) whatever you are doing,
e.g.

5 things I can see
4 things I can hear
3 things I can feel or touch
2 things I can smell
1 slow deep breath

RELAX

If the worry is a current problem:

Make an action plan:

What to do

When to do it

How to do it

Schedule it

Let the worry go in the meantime.

Worry Time

1.) Schedule worry time each day for one week. Put it in your calendar. Start by setting aside 15-30 minutes during the morning or afternoon. That will be your worry time. It's best not to schedule worry time right before you go to bed, for obvious reasons.

2.) During that 15-30 minute window, write down all of your worries that you can think of. Don't put pressure on yourself to solve them during that window, but if your mind naturally goes there, that's fine.

Writing the worrisome thoughts down can be therapeutic in and of itself, as it often lends perspective over what's troubling, in a way that can be more powerful than internal reflection alone.

3.) Between worry times: if you start to worry, tell yourself to let go of those thoughts until the next designated worry period. This will feel hard at first, and may require a lot of reinforcing self-talk (e.g., telling yourself over and over to let go of thinking about your worries until it's the appropriate time).

Try not to worry about worrying outside of your worry time! You won't be perfect with this exercise, nobody is.

4.) At the end of the week, take a few minutes to look at what you wrote down over the course of that week. Do you notice any patterns? Any repeat worries? Any changes in the content of your worries?

5.) After doing this for one week, consider trying it for another. As you practise this more, you'll start to notice an increased ability to control when and where you worry; it's akin to strengthening your muscle of thought control.

How to deal with negative thoughts?

Recognise

Negative thoughts

Identify

What triggered the emotion?

Reality check: are you ignoring, minimizing or exaggerating?

Challenge

Where is the proof? Are my thoughts accurate?

Are there any other explanations

Reframe

Reframe so your thoughts are no longer negative

Tips for managing anxiety

Keep a routine & keep learning



Keep active



Eat well



Sleep Well



Stay connected





Day

Activities for today:



 9:00AM Clean-up & have breakfast

 10:00AM Science:

 11:00AM Math:

 12:00PM Lunch time! :)

 1:00PM English:

 2:00PM PE: Do daily stretches

 3:00PM End of school day





Day

Activities for today:

 9:00AM

 10:00AM

 11:00AM

 12:00PM

 1:00PM

 2:00PM

 3:00PM



Relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques can often be a very helpful strategy to use when you are sitting with uncertainty. It can be helpful to identify some relaxation strategies to use when you are trying to accept the feeling of uncertainty.

These could be

Do some exercise (e.g. go for a walk, cycle, do some yoga)

Read a book

Watch your favourite TV show/film

Listen to some music

Do something creative (e.g. draw, paint)

Talk to a friend or family member

Have a bath

Cook

Add some of your own ideas to this list. It can also be useful to review any mindful strategies as you try them out and see what is helpful about each strategy and what is unhelpful. You can then tailor the strategy to make it as helpful as possible.



Useful resources

Mindfulness techniques:

<http://psychologytools.com/technique-mindfulness.html>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk//mindfulness.htm>

Relaxation techniques:

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk//relax.htm>

<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/relaxation.asp>

Websites:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

<https://ticplus.org.uk/>

<https://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.ghll.org.uk/>



Public Health
England

This booklet was created by Young Minds Matter Gloucestershire, part of the School's Mental Health Support Team.

