

Advice for Parents: What to do if my child is worried or anxious about life after lockdown?

Everything changed very quickly and we had to ask our children to get used to things being different. Lots of children and young people understand why we had to make those changes and it might have brought lots of mixed feelings, both good and bad.



Being asked to 'go back to normal' and come out of lockdown is likely to bring other feelings. Mixed feelings are again very normal, for children and grown-ups. Especially as changes are likely to keep happening. It is important to remember that even good changes can be tricky to manage.

Most of us will have changes that we are worried about or make us nervous. These will be different for different people. Our children are all different too and may worry about some things more than others. Below are some top tips to help you help your children if they are worried or nervous about starting to do things again:

Give children space to share their fears. It's natural for children to worry. Let them know they can always come to you for answers or to talk about what scares them. It can help to have 'worry time', a set part of the day to get all the worries out. Sometimes children find it helpful to write worries down and throw them away. Remember, no worries are 'silly' and try not to use phrases like 'don't worry'. Children might be worrying about something which seems small to us as adults but are very real to them!

Know what they're looking at. Be aware of how your children get news and information, especially older children who go online independently. Point them to age-appropriate information so they don't end up finding news that scares them, or gives incorrect information. If you are talking with the other adults around you, or on the phone, just be aware of what kids can hear. They might not always look like they are listening, but it is amazing what they hear! You might want to look at [this link](#) which shows how the media shows facts differently to get us to click on their stories. And this [BBC Newsround link](#) on how to spot fake Covid-19 news.





Give your child specific things they can do to feel in control and focus on what you are doing to feel safe. Teach children that getting lots of sleep and washing their hands well, eating healthily and exercise can help them stay strong and well. Explain that regular hand washing also helps stop viruses from spreading to others. You can do these things together too.

Talk about all the things that are happening to keep people safe and healthy. Young children might be reassured to know that hospitals and doctors are prepared to treat people who get sick. Older children might be comforted to know that

scientists are working to develop a vaccine.

Let your children know that it's normal to feel stressed at times. Everyone does. Recognising these feelings and knowing that stressful times pass and life gets back to normal can help children build resilience.

Take small steps. Everyone will have been doing things a bit differently during lockdown. Some children may not have been outside their homes/gardens. Others may have had to go shopping with a parent or been at school and be more used to changes like 'social distancing' and seeing people in facemasks. If your child is worried about going out, start small with just a little walk or a drive to see some of the changes. It can help to build up each day (within the guidelines) so that children can do a bit more each day, rather than doing everything all at once.



Resources for younger children talking about anxiety and ways to calm down

[Booklet for children with key worker parents](#)

[Cbeebies ways to help kids keep calm](#)

[Comic explaining anxious thoughts](#)

[Cosmic Kids Youtube Channel Yoga and Mindfulness for Kids](#)

[NHS Sleep Tips for Children](#)

[How to make your own calming mood jar/bottle](#)

Resources for older children

[Video: ways to support young people through anxious times](#)

[Mood Cafe is a site that has relaxation resources, information about understanding anxiety and tools to manage unhelpful thoughts.](#)

[How to look after your mental wellbeing](#)

[List of NHS approved apps for mental health support, relaxation and sleep](#)

[Relaxation exercises](#)

[MindMate is for young people and their families to help you explore emotional wellbeing and mental health issues](#)

[Mindwell provides information on looking after your mental health and support](#)

Helplines

Childline - Telephone 0800 1111

The Mix - Aimed at people under 25. Telephone 0808 808 4994 from 4pm and 11pm everyday of the year. They also run a crisis text service, text THEMIX to 85258.

Crisis Text Line - Text SHOUT to 85258