



Welcome

Coffee Connect

5th February 2025

Why do children worry?

Why do children worry?

Children can feel fearful and worried for many reasons, and a certain level is normal. However, overwhelming anxiety often indicates that something in their life needs attention.

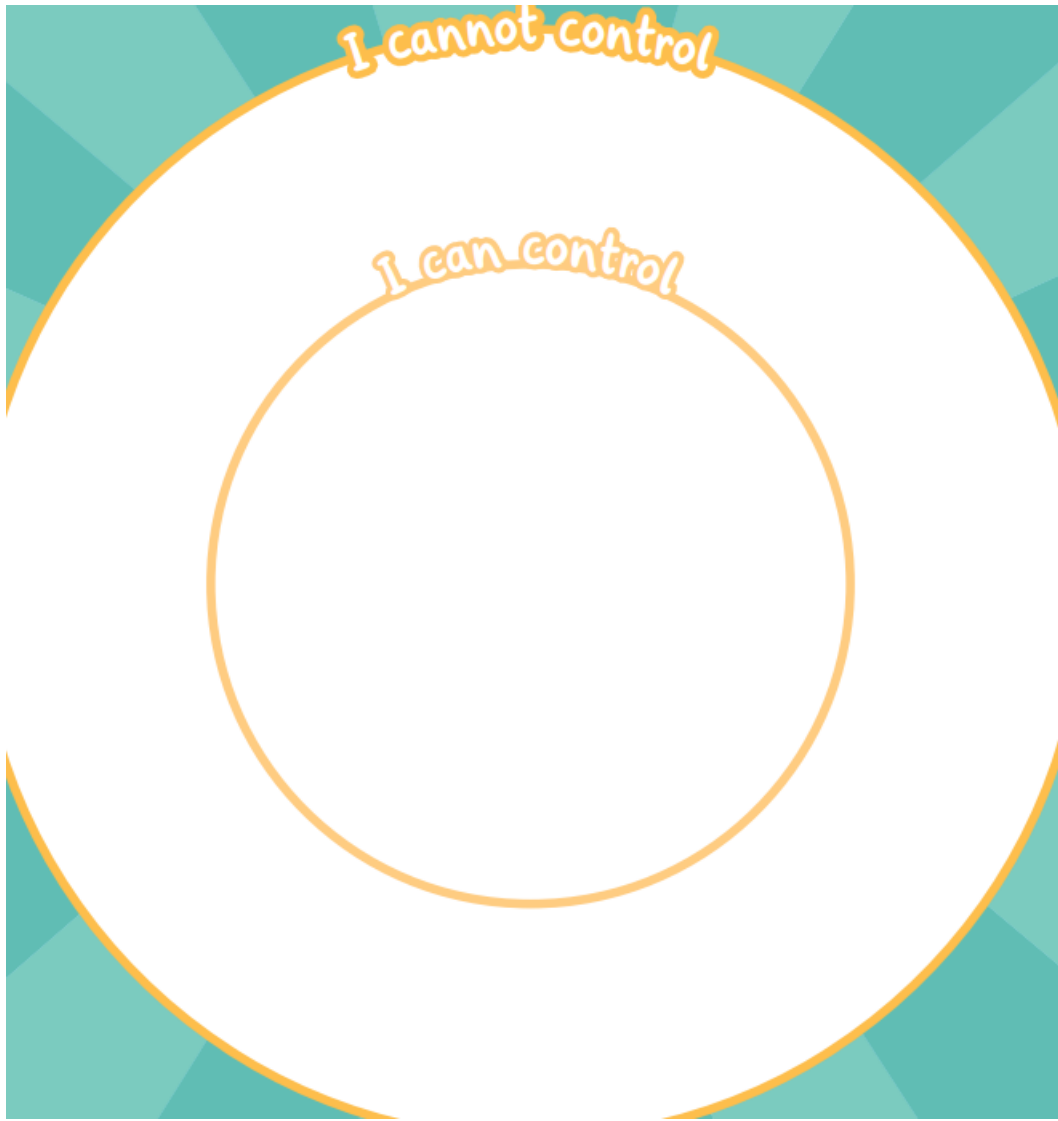
Common causes include:

- Difficulties at school
- Exposure to anxious individuals
- Significant life changes (such as moving or family separation)
- Death or illness of a loved one
- Heavy responsibilities
- Family stress related to housing or finances
- Unsafe experiences (like bullying or discrimination)
- Lack of support for neurodiverse conditions like Autism or ADHD.

Anxiety can vary with age: young children often experience separation anxiety and specific fears, while older children may worry about new schools, tests, or social situations.

I cannot control

I can control





Remind yourself that the things you are probably worrying about are out of your control. This resource can separate the parts of our lives we might have control over and help you feel more relaxed about the 'what ifs' of life.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease such as fear or worry. It's normal for children to sometimes feel worried. For example, a child might feel really worried before a test but will generally calm down once the stressful situation is over.

Most children who are experiencing anxious feelings don't require specialist help. Anxiety is not necessarily a mental health condition, and most of the time it's a natural response to stressful situations in everyday life.

However, when a child experiences prolonged fears and worries that prevent them from doing things they once enjoyed, or everyday things like going to school or seeing friends, it can be a problem.

Common signs in children

Feeling anxious often affects children's bodies, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Physical signs include feeling sick; complaining about stomach aches or other physical problems, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, fidgeting, sweating and a racing heart.

Thoughts include being preoccupied with upsetting, scary, or negative thoughts, excessive worrying about future events, concerns about coping with daily tasks like school and friendships, and being overly critical of themselves.

Feelings include nervousness, edginess, panic, fear, feeling overwhelmed or out of control, and a sense of dread or impending doom.

Behaviours and coping strategies may involve withdrawing or isolating themselves (including not wanting to go to school or be away from parents or carers), avoiding social situations, lashing out or acting aggressively, repeating certain rituals, seeking reassurance repetitively, eating more or less than usual, and self-harming.

Treating anxiety

Anxiety in children is best treated with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which helps change unhelpful or negative thoughts and behaviours. CBT often involves exposure therapy, where children gradually face their fears in a safe and controlled way.

Lumi Nova is a NICE recommended digital treatment based on exposure therapy, a type of CBT. It helps children gradually face their fears through a fun, playful experience, starting with small, manageable challenges that happen within the game, like looking at pictures of a feared object or feared situation before attempting real life challenges. As children become comfortable with each step, they move on to more challenging ones, building their confidence and reducing the intensity of their fears.





Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust have partnered with BFB Labs to offer free access to Lumi Nova for children aged 7-12 facing mild to moderate difficulties with fears, worries or anxiety.

<https://luminova.app/lincolnshire>

Supporting your child

Talk and listen to your child about their worries: When they are feeling calm, start with open-ended questions (e.g., “How are you feeling about school?”) and encourage them to talk about their feelings. Listen with openness and let them know their feelings are understandable and normal.

Help them to understand their feelings: help your child to recognise signs of anxious feelings in themselves. Using a ‘worry thermometer’ or a diary can help them identify triggers and patterns to their feelings.

Help them come up with a plan: Discuss their worries and help them find solutions for dealing with stressful situations. For instance, if they’re anxious about a sleepover, go over some “what if” scenarios and help them formulate a plan.

Provide structure and routine: Children of all ages find routines reassuring, so try to stick to regular daily routines where possible - particularly around meals, homework, digital devices and sleep.

Supporting your child

Manage your own feelings and response: Responding with strong emotions can make your child hesitant to share their fears. Practice staying calm, even when topics are upsetting.

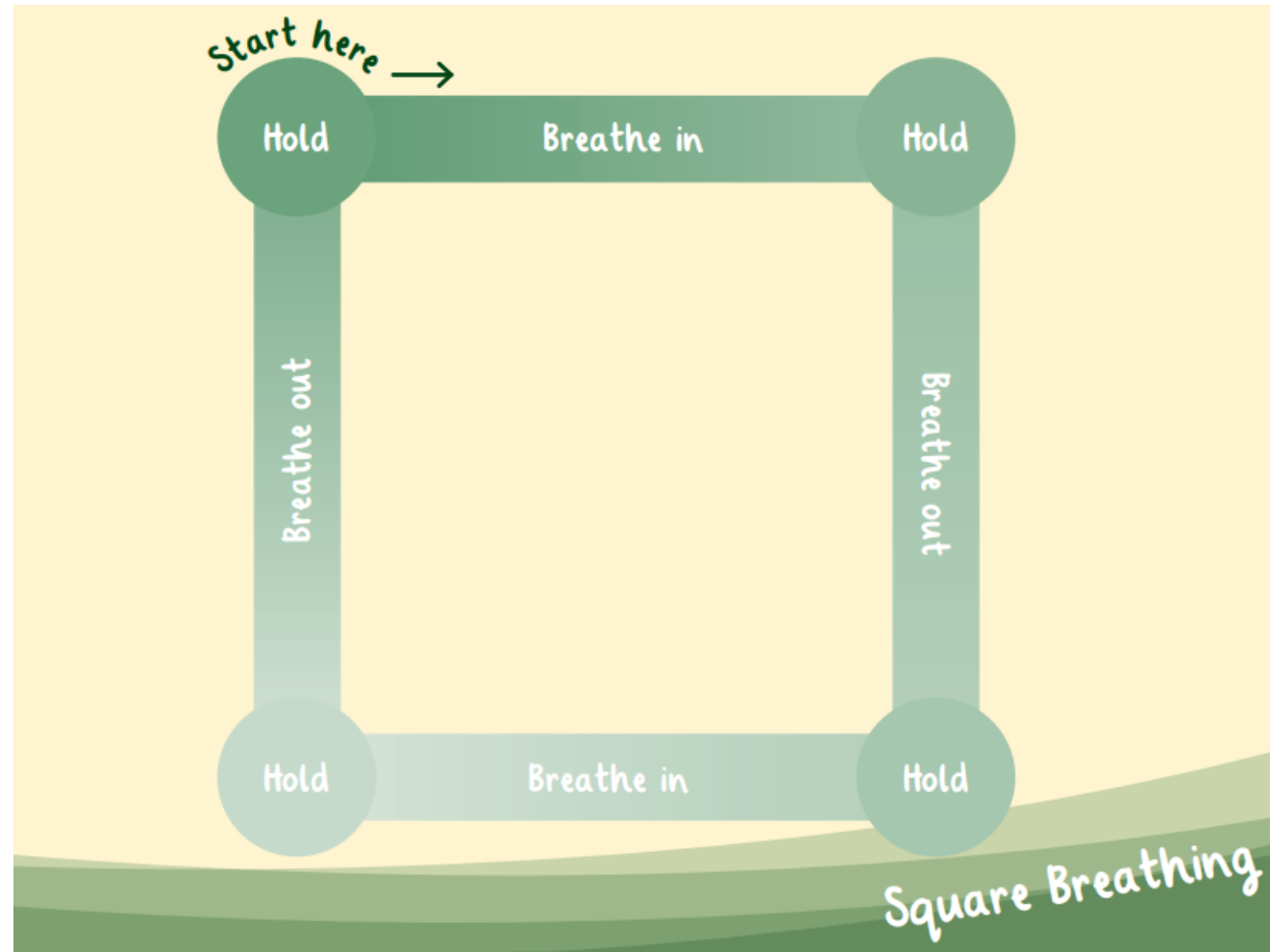
Look after yourself as a parent: By practising self-care, you're more likely to respond patiently and rationally to your child. Prioritising healthy eating, exercise, sleep, and mental health helps you support your children better. Don't hesitate to ask for help from friends, family, or health professionals when needed.

With your support, children can learn to manage their fears and worries. Stay involved and positive throughout the intervention process and try to remember that improvement is possible.

Useful strategies



Useful strategies



Useful websites

Lumi Nova- <https://luminova.app/>

Young Minds - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

Healthy Minds – <https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people/lincolnshire/young-people/i-need-more-help/healthy-minds-lincolnshire>

