

AS Survival tips

Communication:

Social stories/comic strips, visual activity/task schedules, now/next, video modelling, tick lists, emotion symbols/scales, (art/sand/model/toy play may also give insight into feelings, which can then be addressed).

Explain rules so they are understood from the child's perspective (visually if needed): make sure they are fair and logical

Calming Strategies:

Learn personal triggers (and avoid or anticipate/plan for, give warning).

Structure tasks/environment and plan/schedule ahead (knowing what is expected and when, will reduce anxieties)

Try different techniques and practise whilst calm (give visual prompts until embedded)

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation/relaxation-tips/>

Sensory Diet Plan

Schedule appropriate activities and quiet times throughout the day.

Have a 'calm box/bag': eg fidget toys; soft material; weighted items; headphones; sunglasses; activities to distract

THINK CBT: Examine thoughts as helpful or unhelpful (and replace the unhelpful ones, even if they are true).

Question, rather than reassure ("What do you think will happen? What makes you think that? What would 'X' think/do about this? What is the best/worst case scenario and the chances of each happening?")

Look for proof and statistics; experiment by testing out anxious thoughts (eg for virus worries: look up survival rates/why quarantining reduces effects of pandemic etc).

Use rewards as incentives.

Chart emotions throughout day (to show they fluctuate) and make 'tool kit' for coping with the more difficult ones (eg 'when I get a thumping heart/scary thoughts, I will: eg do controlled breathing like 4,7,8; do star jumps; write down good memories etc)

Use 'What ifs' to address worries; 'Red/Green' to visually show consequences from decisions; Draw timelines to show 'moments don't last forever' (even if we're unsure HOW long they may last). Focus on the positives: what good may come out of this? Name one good thing from each day; gratitude journal etc. Reduce news intake and too much talk of virus.

