



# Managing Anxiety

A guide for  
students

# Hello!



During times like this, we need to look after our mental health and wellbeing. You can't always know what's happening, but you can focus on looking after yourself.

This guide will give you some ideas that can help if you are noticing you are feeling anxious.

There is also some helpful information on a new anonymous online counselling service in Birmingham that is free for you to use.

# What is anxiety?

It's normal to feel a bit worried, scared or helpless about the current situation.

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, like a worry or fear, that can be mild or severe. Everyone feels anxious from time to time and it usually passes once the situation is over.

It can make our heart race, we might feel sweaty, shaky or short of breath. Anxiety can also cause changes in our behaviour, such as becoming overly careful or avoiding things that trigger anxiety and it can interfere with our everyday lives and relationships.



# Why might we feel anxious?

There are lots of reasons why we might feel anxious during the pandemic.

You may be worried about the health of yourself or your family. You could be anxious about not knowing when lockdown will end or your schools studies.

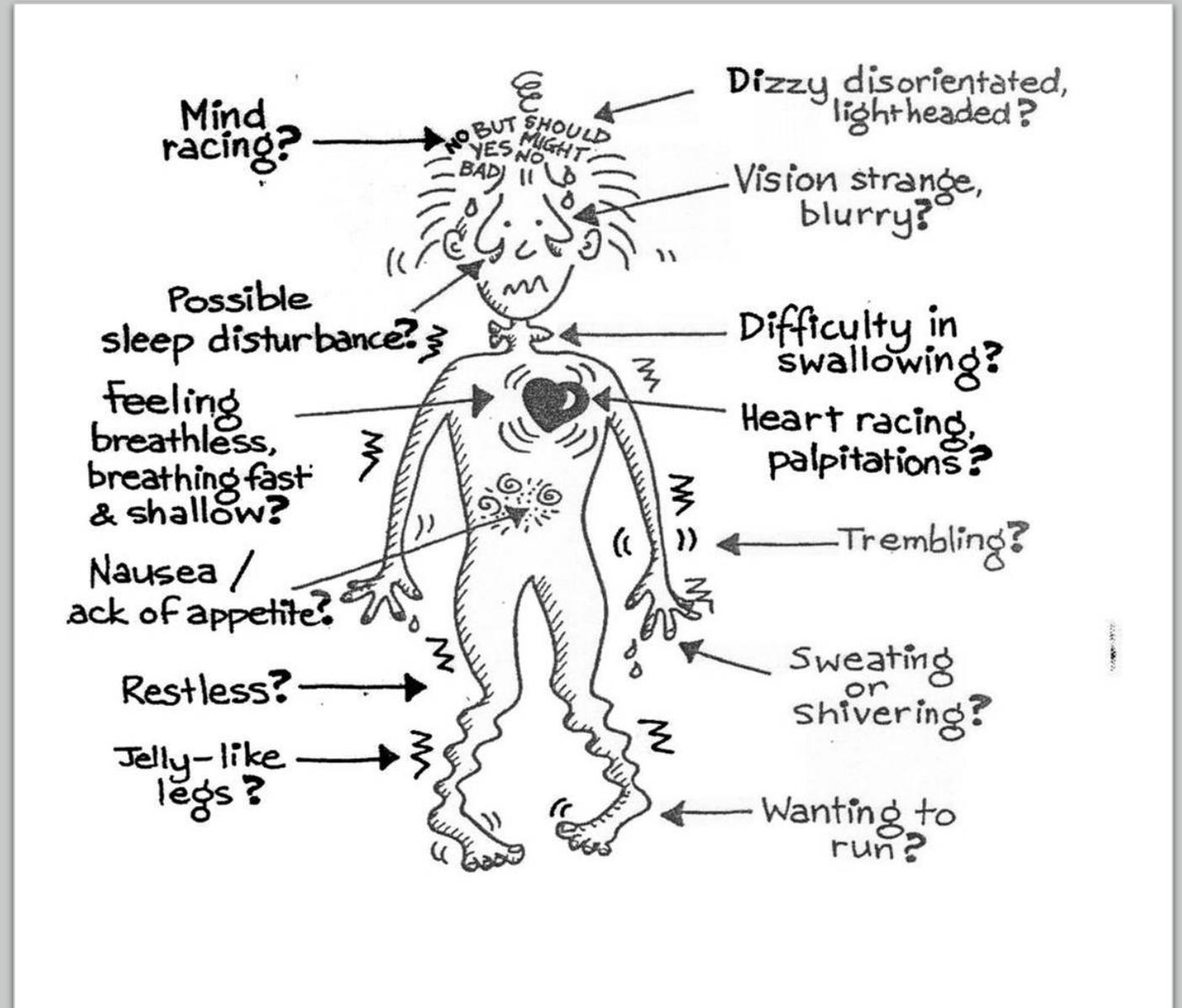
Perhaps you feel anxious about not being able to see your friends or doing activities that you would normally do to keep yourself well.

Our loss of normality and usual freedoms can lead us to feel out of control and therefore anxious

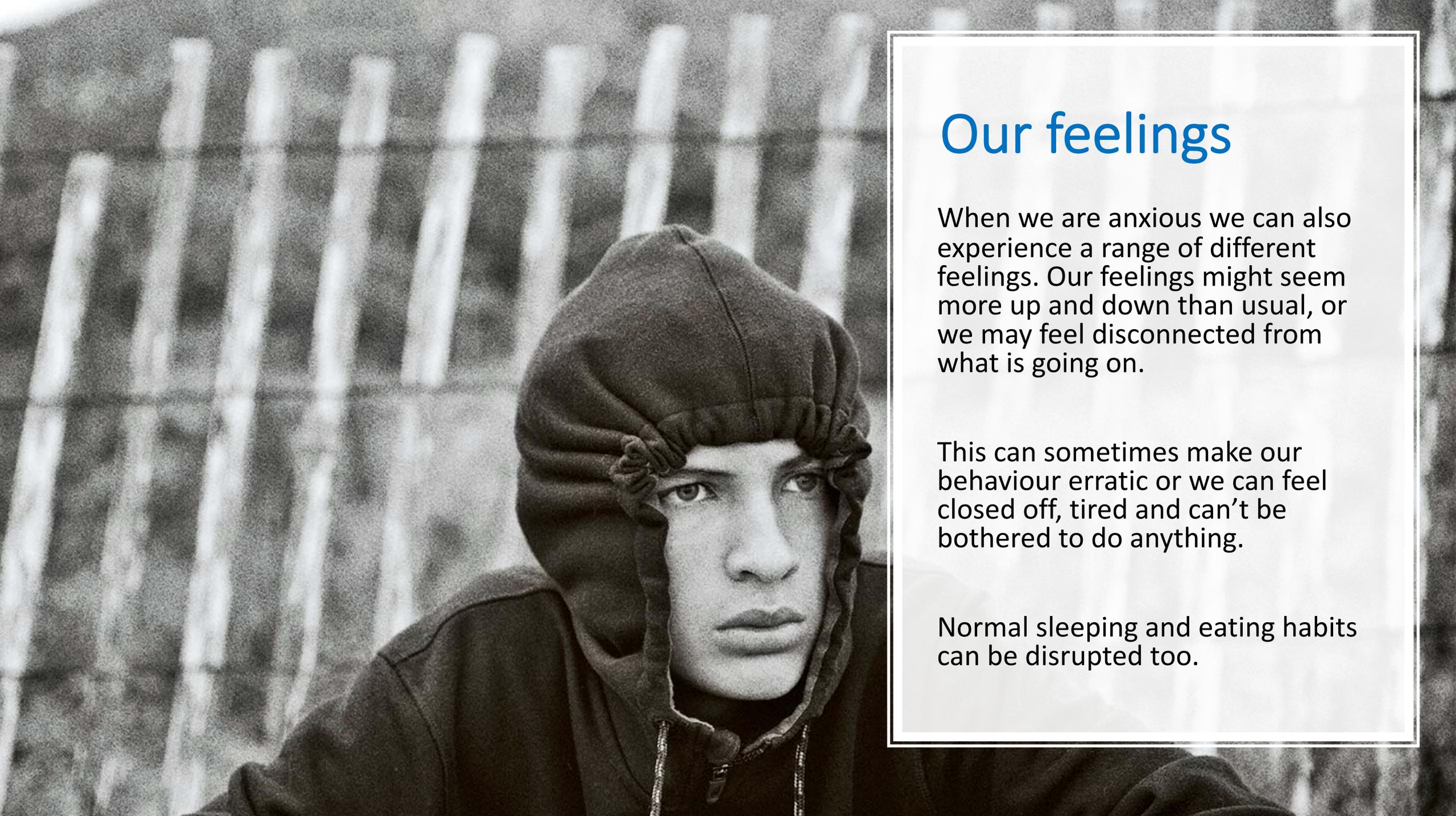


# How do we experience anxiety?

- Sometimes we experience anxiety as a physical sensation. It is different for everyone though.
- Some people experience anxiety as a headache, others in their stomach as butterflies or feeling sick.
- Take a look at the image opposite. Think about when you feel anxiety or worry. Notice where you feel it in your body







## Our feelings

When we are anxious we can also experience a range of different feelings. Our feelings might seem more up and down than usual, or we may feel disconnected from what is going on.

This can sometimes make our behaviour erratic or we can feel closed off, tired and can't be bothered to do anything.

Normal sleeping and eating habits can be disrupted too.



When you notice that you feel or may likely to feel overwhelmed try and focus on what you can control and let go of the things that you cannot control.

Develop a routine to your day, it will give you a sense of control and help your anxiety

## What else helps?

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/coronavirus>

# What to do when you're anxious about a pandemic

Make sure you get your info from reputable sources like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Limit access to media to prevent feeling overwhelmed

Focus on what you can control, e.g. practice good hygiene

Know it's normal and ok to be concerned

Give your thought patterns a 'reality check', e.g. if you get stuck in a 'thinking loop', think about something else, or reassure yourself

Remind yourself to be in the present moment (anxiety is often focused in the future on 'what ifs')

Seek support if needed

Look after yourself

Stay connected with family and friends

# Breathe

When we are particularly anxious our breathing can feel very quick and shallow. This can sometimes lead to something called a panic attack.

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing this.

Give this a try...

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.

4s  
Inhale



4s  
Hold



6s  
Exhale





# Journaling

Use a resource like a gratitude diary (see opposite) to help you to recognise and appreciate the positive things that are happening for you at the moment.

For example on one day write down-

1. Something I accomplished today ...
2. Something funny that happened today...
3. Someone I am thankful for today

**Focusing on positive things like this will lift your mood.**



## Gratitude Journal Three Good Things

### Day 1

One good thing that happened to me today...

Something good that I saw someone do...

Today I had fun when...

### Day 2

Something I accomplished today...

Something funny that happened today...

Someone I was thankful for today...

# Get outside

It is easy to forget how much of a lift you can get from being outside in the fresh air.

If you can, go for a walk somewhere and make a point of noticing all the things around you that you might not always appreciate [don't forget the social distancing guidance of 2 metres].

If you can't get outside, even standing at a window and watching the world go by would be beneficial.

Remember Exercise is really important because it "gets us back into our bodies" and can help lift our mood.



# Something to look forward to...

Ensure that you have some enjoyable activities planned so that you have something to look forward to.

It could be a catch up with a friend over Facetime or WhatsApp, watching that film or cooking something you really love. Having something positive planned will raise your spirits.





# Time to talk

It is OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too.

If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of helplines you can try instead.



The next slide will explain a bit more about a new service in Birmingham called Kooth.com



# Kooth



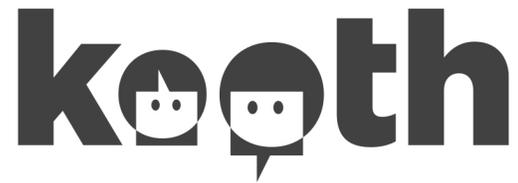
**kooth**  
**Free. Safe. Anonymous.**  
Kooth is an online Mental Health platform for young people. **Need to talk?** Chat to our friendly counsellors.

Articles & Advice   Live Chat   Live Forums

<https://kooth.com> go!

Kooth offers advice on the go. We're by your side when you need us most. for ages 11 - 25

available in your area



Kooth is a safe, confidential and anonymous way for you to access emotional wellbeing and mental health support. It is widely used across the country and is well rated by other young people. It is free for you to use. Check it out here:

<http://www.kooth.com/>

# Useful Organisations

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety/>

<https://www.myh.org.uk/helpline>

myh muslim  
YOUTH  
helpline

## Birmingham Mind Help Line

We are here for you

Current Opening Times - 7 Days a Week  
9:00am — 11:00pm

0121 262 3555

[help@birminghammind.org](mailto:help@birminghammind.org)

Supporting people living in and around Birmingham

Registered Office: Birmingham Mind, 17 Graham Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B1 3JR.  
Registered Charity No: 1003906



Pause is here for you, if you are under 25 and have a Birmingham GP. We offer a non-judgemental listening ear, self-help strategies plus skills for managing difficult situations and feelings. We are open 10am-6pm, seven days a week.

Drop us an email on [askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk) or call 0207 8414470 and we will arrange for one of our friendly team to call you back.

For more info check out <https://www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/>

Pause.

# Keep going...

We all need to take good care of ourselves.

Why not try one of the ideas, but try to do it everyday for at least a few days to see if it helps improve your anxiety?

