LEEDS CONGENITAL HEARTS

Managing Anxiety: Tips and Strategies to Help you Cope

It's normal to be worried.

- It is normal to feel uncertain about all the changes going on in our lives right now. Feeling worried, scared and anxious at times is understandable.

- As humans we generally like to feel in control, and changes can take some time to adjust to. Now that change is happening so quickly it is hard for us to think about what is going on and get a grip on what all this means for us and our families.

- You may feel like you are on a bit of a roller coaster, with lots of ups and downs. It's ok to have 'wobbles'.

- You may have parts of the day which are trickier than others. At these points it might be useful to plan a task (phone a friend/ listen to a song/ do a meditation/ have a dance about!) to help you get through those tricky moments.

What can you control?

- It is so easy to be eaten up with worry and feel overwhelmed. The more worrying you do the more likely you are to feel helpless and things will feel even more out of control.

- It can help to focus on the things you can control. Think about the things you can do to help you get through each day, for example plan a routine to give yourself structure and activities to keep you busy.

- We can't control the world around us, but we can control our actions, so do a meditation, learn relaxation, spend time playing board games, keep a good sleep routine, eat well and exercise.

Be kind to yourself and others

- When we're stressed and worried it's normal to feel more irritable, snappy or tearful. Be kind to yourself and go with those emotional ups and downs. Try not to get cross or frustrated with yourself for feeling upset, angry, sad or frustrated.

- Everyone is different, feels things differently, and at different times, So you might find members of your family are feeling sad, when you are feeling more optimistic. It's ok for us to feel different.

- With everything being so different and our usual routines upside down, a higher level of tension in the house is understandable! If you notice you're snapping or getting on each other's nerves, try to spend some time in different rooms. Notice that it's probably just a build-up of all the stress and worry and try not to beat yourselves up if you have a fall out.

Talk about how you are feeling

- When there are lots of worries swirling around in your mind it can help to talk. The person you are talking to might not have all the answers but sometimes just the worries can help.

- Sometimes people find it helpful to have a time in the day to get all those worries out, so they don't creep into every conversation. Having a set time to either talk about them or write them down can help stop worries taking over.

- Ask for support. It's not a sign of weakness, but a strength.

Keeping Busy

- It can help to distract your thoughts away from worries and try something different to keep your mind busy. It could be watching something interesting or trying a new hobby which you can concentrate on. There are lots of ideas on the internet or apps like Pinterest which you can look through to find something you can do safely at home.

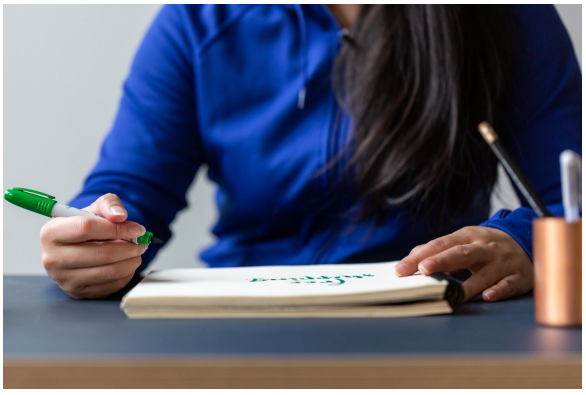
Looking for the positives

- With so much worrying news and disruption to everyday life, it can be easy to lose yourself in your worries. It can help to move your 'spotlight' from those things which make you feel worried and anxious, to those things which feel more positive.

- Think of 3 positive things that have gone well that day.

- Achieve a small goal (sometimes as small as getting up and getting dressed).

- Think of things which you feel thankful for.



- Limit the amount of time you spend watching or reading the news can help too as their 'spotlight' is likely to be on the negative!
- Re-framing a negative situation or thought into a positive one can be very helpful. This might not be easy but keep trying.

- Try thinking about what you have more than what you haven't.

- Small things are important such as the sun shining, hearing your child laugh or the bird singing outside, a home-cooked meal, a cosy bed.