CAMHS
Anxiety Villains
and
Superheroes
Self-help Booklet

Created by Elizabeth Scott for Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Introduction

Hello, and welcome to the...

CAMHS Anxiety Villains and Superheroes  Anxiety Self-help Booklet

We are here to teach you some SUPER ideas to help you manage your anxiety. This is your work book.

SuperName......................................................................................................................

SuperAge......................................................................................................................
Now it’s time to make your own Anxiety Villain and Anxiety Superhero...

You can draw the picture of your Villain and Superhero here:
A good read with parents or carers

What is Anxiety?

- Anxiety is a normal emotion experienced by everyone to varying degrees; it is usually a response to threat or danger.
- Anxiety is common; there are times when we all feel worried and stressed.
- Certain experiences and memories provoke anxious thoughts and experiences; it's like having an anxiety villain in our head.
- Anxiety is one of the most treatable mental health difficulties. We can become our own superhero and get rid of the anxiety villain from bothering us.
- Anxiety villain can become a problem when it stops us from functioning normally such as attending school or socialising with others.
- Due to anxiety villains in our head, young people can develop unhelpful coping behaviours e.g. risky behaviours, deliberate self-harm.
- Young people often avoid situations that feel unmanageable, which means they don't face their anxiety villains, fears and overcome them. Avoiding things can keep the anxiety going.
- Young people can develop safety behaviours, which can keep the anxiety villains going.
What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) helps people to examine and understand their world. It looks at how our thoughts, feelings, bodily symptoms and behaviours are inter-related.

CBT can help young people look at their current situation by adapting their thoughts, feelings and behaviours to reduce their anxiety (becoming their own anxiety superhero).

Anxiety Disorders that are treated with CBT

Generalised Anxiety

GAD is a chronic anxiety disorder, characterised by exaggerated worry and tension, even when there is little to provoke it. Children with GAD can ask a lot of “What if” questions.

Social Anxiety

Social Anxiety or Social Phobia is an excessive self-consciousness in every-day social situations. There can be a fear of talking, eating and drinking in front of others, or in its extremity symptoms can be anytime children with these symptoms are around people.

Panic Disorder

Panic is unexpected and repeated episodes of intense fear accompanied by physical symptoms that may include chest pain, heart palpitations, and shortness of breath, dizziness or abdominal pain. Children can have Panic Attacks which are very uncomfortable and can last from a few minutes to half hour and children think they may faint or die.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which harm occurred or threatened. Traumatic events can trigger PTSD include violent attacks, accidents and domestic violence to name a few.

OCD

Recurrent unwanted thoughts (obsessions) repetitive behaviours such as hand washing, counting, checking and cleaning are often performed in the hope of preventing obsessive thoughts or to make them go away. Performing these “rituals” can provide only temporary relief and not performing these rituals will increase anxiety.
Mapping out Anxiety

Situation

Thoughts

Behaviour

Physical Feelings

Emotional Feelings
THE COGNITIVE MODEL

SITUATION ➔ THOUGHT ➔ FEELINGS ➔ BODILY SYMPTOMS ➔ BEHAVIOUR

SOMETHING HAPPENS ➔ THE SITUATION IS INTERPRETED ➔ A FEELING OCCURS AS A RESULT OF A THOUGHT ➔ SYMPTOMS ARE FELT IN THE BODY AS A RESULT OF A THOUGHT OR FEELING ➔ AN ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE THOUGHT, FEELINGS OR BODILY SYMPTOMS
Why do we need to breathe?
Breathing is a necessity of life that usually occurs without much thought. When you breathe in air, blood cells receive oxygen and release carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is a waste product that’s carried back through your body and exhaled. Improper breathing can upset the oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange and contribute to anxiety, panic attacks, fatigue and other physical and emotional disturbances.

Fun games with deep breathing:
Breathe out to empty the air out of your lungs. Breathe in deeply and evenly through both nostrils. Hold your breath for a count of five. Use your left thumb to block off your left nostril and breathe out slowly through your right nostril. Breathe in deeply through your right nostril and hold your breath for five counts. Now block your right nostril with your right thumb and breathe out slowly through your left nostril. Repeat several times.

Put on some slow, relaxing music. Close your eyes and listen to the beat. Take a deep breath in for 3-5 beats of the music, hold your breath for 3-5 beats, and then breathe out slowly for 3-5 beats. Repeat, pairing you’re breathing with the music.

Teach these games to someone you care about and practice at home (at least once a day).
Breathing and Relaxation Techniques

Start breathing in for one second and following the instructions around the shape, then increase the number of seconds until counting to 5 each time you are working around the shape.

Square Breathing

Breathe In

Breathe out

Breathe In

Breathe Out

Triangle Breathing

Breathe out

Breathe in

Hold
Fight, Flight and Freeze

70,000 years ago the Cavemen...

Would face threats like...

TIGERS
The caveman could Fight

Flight

Freeze

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Today we still will fight, Flight or freeze

Examples of threats

- School
- Bullies
- Spiders
- Dogs
- Flights
- Public Transport
- Germs
- People
- Snakes
- Busy Places
- Going Outside
- Talking to Others

It can be anything that we are a little scared of; it can set off our bodies natural alarm system.
ALARMING ADRENALINE!
The body’s alarm system

When the brain perceives a threat, it activates the body’s "fight or flight" alarm system, and adrenaline is released into the blood from the adrenal glands. We experience uncomfortable feelings because the adrenaline makes the body systems speed up, diverting blood towards the big muscles, preparing us to attack (anger) or escape (anxiety).

Brain hijacked
Thoughts race which makes it hard to think dearly & rationally. Feelings of being "unreal" or detached.

Eyes widen
Allows more light in - improves (or blurs) vision.

Head dizzy
or light-headed.
Result of our faster breathing.

Mouth dries
Caused by narrowing of the blood vessels.

Breathe fast & shallow.
Helps us take in more oxygen, which is then transported around the blood system. Sometimes experience a choking feeling.

Body heats & sweats
A side effect of all the speeded up systems is that the body rapidly heats. Sweating allows the body to cool again, and to become more slippery to allow escape.

Stomach churns
Adrenaline reduces blood flow and relaxes muscles in stomach and intestines (blood diverted to limb muscles) causing nausea, butterflies or churning.

Heart beats faster & palpitations. Blood pressure and pulse increase as the heart pumps more blood to muscles, allowing us to run away or attack.

Muscles tense
Blood, containing vital oxygen and glucose energy, is sent to the big muscles of the arms and legs - ready for fight or escape. Can also cause aches & pains.

Hands tingle - legs tremble
or "Jelly legs". Blood is diverted to large muscles, and small blood vessels constrict, causing tingling, trembling or numbness.

Bladder relaxes
Inner sphincter muscle relaxes so we might feel urge to pass urine. Outer sphincter remains under conscious control (except in rare terror situations).
What are your Tiger’s?

1.

2.

3.
Practice breathing and relaxation techniques.

Sometimes when we are upset, we forget to breathe. Or we take short, shallow breaths (like a puppy dog panting) that don’t give our bodies the oxygen we need. To help ourselves feel relaxed and calm, we can practice deep breathing.

Deep breathing is when you breathe in slowly and deeply (counting to 4 in your head) as your lungs fill up with air (you can watch your belly stick out as you breathe in). Then you hold in the air (counting to 4 in your head) let the air out, EVEN SLOWER (count to 6) and watch your belly go back in as the air is slowly pushed out. Pay attention to the air as it moves in and out of your body as you count. (If you hear yourself doing this your doing it wrong...)

How did it go?

Easy                       Couldn’t do it
Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Whole Body Script

1. Forehead
   - Squeeze your forehead tightly, then relax.

2. Eyes
   - Squeeze your eyes tightly, then relax.

3. Cheeks
   - Pull your cheeks out as far as you can.

4. Mouth
   - I want you to pretend you are chewing a really big piece of gum. Now relax.

5. Shoulders
   - I want you to try and touch your shoulder blades together and then relax.

6. Arms
   - Pretend you are frostbite. Now you can relax.

7. Lower Back
   - Sit up straight and try to relax as much as you can.

8. Legs
   - Pretend you are at the beach. Now relax.

9. Feet
   - Pretend you are pressing your feet into the ground as hard as you can. Now relax.

10. Toes
    - Pretend you are squishing your toes in the sand. Now relax.

Tyles of Tomorrow
How does your threat alarm system affect your body ..........

Please draw on any bodily symptoms you may have when your alarm system is activated or when you are put in a fearful position or face something that is scary to you ..........

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**Fact or Opinion**

**What’s the difference?**

**Fact**
Undisputed, driven by rational thought, Head

**Opinion**
Personal view, arguable, driven by emotion/Heart

When we are stressed we can be driven by emotions and opinions which can create a cycle that fuel each other.

![Emotion and Opinion Cycle]

**Opinions**
Can lead us to have unhelpful thoughts and carry out impulsive acts like being avoidant, or thinking the worst about a situation which can upset us and maintain the overall problem

**Facts**
Can help us make wise and calm decisions, using rational thinking, it can help us consider what is more realistic, leading us to be less distressed.

**EXAMPLE**
If someone walked past us without saying hello, you may have thoughts like “she ignored me, she doesn’t like me”, this is your **OPINION** this may lead to us feeling upset and reacting in a way where you may tell yourself nobody likes you.

**In fact...**
The only **FACT** is she only walked past; anything else is an **OPINION**, reality is she may not have seen you or she is worried about something and that worry is on her mind, thinking this way is less upsetting.

---

**Are your thoughts....FACT or OPINION??**
## Checking out Fact or Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Initial thought</th>
<th>Evidence to back-up thought</th>
<th>Fact or Opinion</th>
<th>New thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example – Someone ignored me</td>
<td>She doesn’t like me</td>
<td>haven’t got any factual evidence</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>Because she ignored me does mean she dislikes me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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NEGATIVE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS (NAT)

The brain is the largest organ in the body, it likes exercising itself. It sends out electro-chemical impulses (THOUGHTS) and helps us interpret the world around us, each individual has between 70,000 - 100,000 thoughts every day. Without realizing it we are giving meaning to everything that happens to us. We will all give different meaning, to different events due to our experiences, culture, religion, upbringing and family values. Sometimes our thoughts do not mean anything to us, but because we may have bad thoughts, we can tell ourselves off or not like ourselves for having that particular thought!!

NAT can be words, images, a memory, a sound, or a sense we have. They just pop into our head. Sometimes we don’t notice them.

Events can trigger physical and emotional feelings, like feeling happy, nice, sad, horrible, scared, frightened etc.

When certain thoughts make us feel certain emotions like something bad will happen, or I won’t be able to cope, this will lead us to feeling ANXIOUS.

Our thoughts can repeat themselves over and over if we pay too much attention to these thoughts, they can become believable and lead us to feel worse and worse with new unwanted thoughts attached to them.
Thoughts are not necessarily true or helpful.

**DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK**

---

**Homework**

**Thought Diary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>How does the thought make you feel?</th>
<th>Is the thought Fact or Opinion</th>
<th>What does that say about the initial thought?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>
Anxiety Villains
Vs
Superheroes

I am weak. I am scared. I fear my thoughts. I worry about everything. I don't like myself. I cannot do it. The Anxiety Villain wants to pull me into the pit of fear.

PIT OF FEAR AND DESPAIR

The Anxiety Villain can seem very strong and big. They want to play tug-of-war with you, they can say very upsetting things and want you to believe them. So they can pull you into the big dark pit of fear and despair, making you scared and fearful. The harder they pull you towards the pit of fear and despair, you pull back even harder, which can be exhausting. By pulling on the rope and listening, believing and reacting to the Anxiety Villain, will make the Anxiety Villain bigger and stronger.

Let go of the rope. Do not listen. Do not believe them. Do not react. They may well still be there at first, however this new superpower will make the Anxiety Villain grow smaller, weaker and make them eventually dissolve!!!
Questions to ask your Anxiety Villain thoughts:

- **True**
  Ask yourself is this thought true?
  Where is the evidence to prove its true? Is the anxiety villain trying to scare you again?

- **Helpful**
  Is this thought helpful to you right now?
  Using your superpowers what thought would be helpful right now?

- **Important**
  Is the thought important right now?
  What would be important for a superhero to think and do right now?

- **Necessary**
  Do I really need to believe or act on this thought right now?
  Use your superpowers and do not believe the anxiety villain, do what is necessary right now?

- **Kind**
  Is this thought kind to me or others?
  What would a kind thought right now? How would a superhero be kind to themselves or others?

If you answer **NO** to the above questions, dismiss the unwanted thought and use your new superpowers to question your anxiety villain thoughts with questions highlighted in red. This will help you shift your focus of attention from the anxiety villain thought to a new superhero thought, making you feel stronger by defeating the anxiety villain.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNWANTED THOUGHTS TO BE INVESTIGATED</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>HELPFUL</th>
<th>IMPORTANT</th>
<th>NECESSARY</th>
<th>KIND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the anxiety villain trying to scare you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which of your superpowers would be helpful to use right now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What would a superhero think and do that is important right now?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not believe the anxiety villain, what is necessary right now?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would a superhero be kind to themselves and others?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Anxiety Villain vs Superheroes Challenge

We all have problems from time to time however big or small. CBT looks at how you think, feel and act towards situations and it looks at how your thoughts, bodily symptoms, feelings and behaviour connect with each other.

Thoughts - Are words that run through your mind. Thoughts are what you tell yourself about what’s going on around you. They are not necessarily true.

Feelings - Can come and go. Some people have happy and sad feelings all in one day depending on their situation. Some feelings are uncomfortable but they are not bad.

B. Symptoms - If you are fearful or anxious you can trigger the fight or flight response, you may experience unwanted bodily symptoms such as a fast heart rate.

Behaviours - Things we do. Thoughts and feelings have a big impact on how we act. If you are happy you are likely to do positive things, if you are hurt or angry you may want to do negative things.

Superheroes challenge Anxiety Villain thoughts, feelings, bodily symptoms and behaviours. Our thoughts are just guesses they are NOT fact!! Superheroes look and think of new ways of seeing situations differently. Superheroes know that if we come up with new thoughts, we can reduce our bodily symptoms, feel and act differently. Superheroes can break the cycle of anxiety!!
Look at this example:-

**Situation:** My friend Emma hasn't spoken to me as much as usual over the past week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety Villain Thoughts</td>
<td>Anxiety Villain Bodily Symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma must be mad at me</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think of a recent situation that happened to you?

________________________________________

Write down your Anxiety Villain thoughts, bodily symptoms, feelings and behaviours.

________________________________________

Now challenge these thoughts, feelings and behaviours like a Superhero. How would your Superhero think, feel, and behaviour?

________________________________________

What did you notice?

________________________________________
**SUPERHERO CHALLENGE HOMEWORK**

Situation: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety Thoughts</th>
<th>Anxiety Bodily Symptoms</th>
<th>Anxiety Feelings</th>
<th>Anxiety Behaviour</th>
<th>Superhero Thoughts</th>
<th>Superhero Bodily Symptoms</th>
<th>Superhero Feelings</th>
<th>Superhero Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What did you notice _____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
Seeing the bigger picture

When something is distressing us, were so close to it emotionally involved with it, part of it – that makes it really hard to stand back from what is happening. We need to stand back and look at the bigger picture. We need to look at different perspectives.

Finding a different perspective:-

So some people saw a duck, a different perspective is that it’s not a duck it is a rabbit.

Some people saw a young woman, a different perspective is that some people saw an old woman.

A balanced view would be some people see a duck and some people saw a rabbit.

And

Some people saw an old woman some people saw a young woman, looking at the same picture.

This balanced view is kind to everyone

THINK OF BALANCING THE SCALES
WHAT WOULD BE A PERSPECTIVE KIND TO YOU AND OTHERS?
STOPP

Stop and Step Back
Don’t act immediately. Pause.

Take a Breath
Notice your breath as you breathe in and out.

Observe
What am I thinking and feeling? What are the words that my mind is saying? Is this fact or opinion? Descriptions or evaluations? Accurate or inaccurate? Helpful or unhelpful? What unhelpful thinking habit am I using (e.g. mind-reading, negative filter, thinking the worst)? Where is my focus of attention? What metaphor could I use (mountain, tunnel, playground bully, thought train, beach ball, passengers on the bus)?

Pull Back: Put in some Perspective
See the situation as an outside observer. What would a fly on the wall see? Is there another way of looking at it? What would someone else see and make of it? What advice would I give to someone else? What’s the helicopter view? What meaning am I giving this event for me to react in this way? How important is it right now, and will it be in 6 months? Is my reaction in proportion to the actual event?

Practise what works
Do what works and what helps! Play to your Principles and Values. Will it be effective and appropriate? Is it in proportion to the event? Is it in keeping with my values and principles? What will be the consequences of my action? What is best for me and most helpful for this situation?

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www.getselfhelp.co.uk/stopp.htm
www.get.gg
### STOPP Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice the intrusive or distressing thought, image, memory, trigger...</th>
<th>Write your reactions and alternative, healthier responses in this column. What works for you? What will help? What can you tell yourself? What do you need to remember at those times?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STOPP!</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take a breath</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observe</strong> – describe the feelings, images, thoughts, body sensations, triggers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pull back / Put in some Perspective. What’s the bigger picture? Take the helicopter view. Is this fact or opinion? How would someone else see this? Is there another way of looking at this?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practice what works. What is the best thing to do right now – for me, for others, for the situation.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Imagery

Your thoughts have the power to change how you feel. If you think of something sad, it’s likely you’ll start to feel sad. The opposite is also true: When you think of something positive and calming, you feel relaxed. The imagery technique harnesses this power to reduce anxiety.

Think of a place that you find comforting. It could be a secluded beach, your bedroom, a quiet mountaintop, or even a loud concert. For 5 to 10 minutes, use all your senses to imagine this setting in great detail. Don’t just think fleetingly about this place—really imagine it. What do you see around you? What do you notice in the distance? Look all around to take in all your surroundings. Look for small details you would usually miss.
What sounds can you hear? Are they soft or loud? Listen closely to everything around you. Keep listening to see if you notice any distant sounds.
Are you eating or drinking something enjoyable? What is the flavour like? How does it taste? Savour all the tastes of the food or drink.
What can you feel? What is the temperature like? Think of how the air feels on your skin, and how your clothes feel on your body. Soak in all these sensations.
What scents are present? Are they strong or faint? What does the air smell like? Take some time to appreciate the scents.
KIDS 7 MINUTE HIIT WORKOUT FOR SELF-REGULATION

Set an interval timer and complete each animal movement for 45 seconds, with 15 seconds of rest in between. Do as many as you can!

- **FROG JUMPS**
  Hop, hop, back and forth like a frog

- **BEAR WALK**
  Hands & feet on the floor, hips high - walk left and right

- **GORILLA SHUFFLE**
  Sink into a low sumo squat, with hands on the floor, shuffle around the room.

- **STARFISH JUMPS**
  Jumping jacks as fast as you can, with arms and legs spread wide.

- **CHEETAH RUN**
  Run in place, as fast as you can! Just like the fastest animal in the Sahara.

- **CRAB CRAWL**
  Sit and place your palms flat on the floor behind you near your hips. Lift up off the ground and crawl.

- **ELEPHANT STOMPS**
  March in place lifting your knees as high as you can and stomping the ground as hard as you can.

RAISING AN EXTRAORDINARY PERSON
HTTPS://HE3-EXTRAORDINARY.COM
You have now completed this workbook. You now have become a superhero with super powers to help combat your own anxiety villains. You should continue to do the techniques in this booklet even when you feel better as they will be a good reminder of how strong you have become to overcome your anxiety. This booklet can also be used as a blueprint for the future and one that you can refer back to if you wish.

The new superpowers you now have are:-

You can relax

You can use PMR to get rid of any pent up anger or frustration

You understand that Fight, Flight and Freeze alarm is our human threat response system to danger and how adrenaline affects the body. You understand your fears.

You now understand how your Thoughts, Feelings, Bodily Symptoms and Behaviours all connect

You now have the super power to change your thoughts with Fact/Opinion, and THINK

You understand Negative Automatic Thoughts and Thoughts are not real, you have the power to make them go away; we can use imagery to do this.

You can now challenge your thoughts and use different perspectives to look at situations.

You can now see the bigger picture and you can use the tool called STOPP to help you put in place all of your new super powers.

WELL DONE !!!!!!!!
Congratulations

On completing
The CAMHS Anxiety
Villains and
Superheroes Self-Help
Work Booklet
It might be quite difficult to understand what is going on and what it all means. I wonder if it might be helpful to have a look at these books that tries explains it:

My name is Coronavirus:
https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aals%3A%2F%2FAU061272360812-a04-a556-a05-a-260078e656ff

Dave the dog is worried about coronavirus:
https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aals%3A%2F%2FAU061272360812-a04-a556-a05-a-260078e656ff

With everything that is going on it’s important to remember that by being at home you are already doing a lot to reduce risks. However if you’re feeling worried maybe you can try using these with family or on your own to help you relax:


https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aals%3A%2F%2FAU061272360812-a04-a556-a05-a-260078e656ff

Now you’re at home it can feel very different, because you’re not going to school right now. There are some thoughts you might have about what this is like and maybe this can help you to think about it with someone.


Another option may be to write or draw some of the thoughts and feelings you have. Sometimes it can be helpful to get things off your chest. Below is a booklet you could use to do this, but you can use paper you have at home: