

Anxiety in Adolescents

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1. Adolescents - What is anxiety_

Hi, I'm Fiona Priest. I'm a psychologist working in Child and Adolescent Mental Health and this is... Kia ora koutou, I'm Jess Caldwell and I'm a psychologist working in Te Whata Ora in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health team. And Jess and I have worked with a lot of young people over the years with anxiety and we have had, we've done a lot of work with parents and there are some common things that come up from parents across the years and we thought maybe we'd spend a little bit of time answering some of the common questions that come up for parents and hopefully that's going to be helpful.

So the first, the first place to start we thought is what is anxiety? And so Jess is going to tell us a little bit about that generally and then we'll just flow on from there. Yeah so what, what is anxiety? So anxiety is a really common human emotion that we all have and it's there for a reason. So anxiety is, it sends us a message, it sends us a signal that something's going on and gives us a chance to check

out, check out dangers and it also can motivate us. We might have an exam coming up and feel, start feeling anxious and it gives us the motivation to study more. So what you're saying Jess is that to remember that it's a normal experience that we all have.

Yeah, yeah. And I think the protective kind of part also comes from, you know, caveman times when we lived in a really dangerous world and we survived if we were actually quite cautious and looking for dangers constantly. So our brain's really hardwired to look for dangers and always being on alert. And there's a little part of our brain, our amygdala, which is the alarm system of our brain and that, that's a doing part of the brain, it's not a thinking part of the brain. So when that part of the brain senses we're in danger it just fires off all these kind of responses, sends adrenaline, cortisol all through our body.

But what that's actually doing is getting us ready to fight a danger or run away from a danger. So it's preparing us, it's a life-saving mechanism, it's pumping blood to our extremities to get us really strong, to either run really fast or fight really hard. And that does a whole heap of things to our body as well, some pretty uncomfortable body signals that we're used to, the kind of butterflies in your tummy, sore stomach, might be really sweaty, quite red. And again, that's our body getting ready for the danger. And another response that we can do is also, so we can fight the danger, run away, or we can freeze as well, which we kind of just can stop.

It's kind of hard to talk, we can just comply without thinking. So this response is a, it's just a, it just happens. It's not, it's not much thinking because actually if we were faced with a tiger and we stopped and thought about the different options we have, we'd probably be eaten. So it's an immediate response. It's like an alarm system that goes off, isn't it? Yeah, absolutely. And I think the hard thing is, is because it's so immediate, it just can fire at any time and it can fire when we're not in a physical danger. So if we're getting up to do a public, a public speech, our body can go into all of that.

And because of what's happening in our body, it even shuts off the thinking part of our brain as well, because again, we don't need it. So it's really hard. Often when we're really anxious, we can't even think in that moment as well. I'm just thinking, it's as adults and as we move into adolescence, and we do a lot more of that, having sort of sets. Thoughts that come up. So sometimes even a thought about something can trigger that response, isn't it? You might not have to be in the situation, but what if I was is enough or a memory about the situation. So you're absolutely safe sitting in your lounge and your body still feels as if it's in that danger from a thought or a memory.

So it can be an internal, a response to an internal thing, or it can be to something external. Yeah.

2. Adolescents - Are some people more vulnerable to anxiety_

Yeah. I just wanted to follow on a little bit with the idea of, you know, vulnerability to anxiety, because we know that it's a normal experience. But there are some of us who are just wired a little bit more to be more vulnerable to have those kind of responses. And sometimes that's because of our temperament, that we're more sensitive, and some of our kids are more sensitive than others, or more shy than others. And sometimes it can be that that's the way our family is, so there's an inheritability to that vulnerability. And sometimes it can be those life experiences, what we've been exposed to, and the stress and the adversity around us.

So I'm thinking particularly in Christchurch. About how many of our young people have grown up with the earthquake experiences when they were very young. And there can be a whole lot of other trauma experiences that we have. But all of those things come together to make us more vulnerable to anxiety becoming more quickly reactive or bigger for us. Yeah. And it's important. And it's important to understand that that's okay. That's who we are. It's okay too. But I guess when we have a young person who we're noticing is experiencing anxiety, it's really important to kind of ask the question about what might have changed.

If we're noticing suddenly there's more of it presenting. So to be able to think about it. You know, is there something new or more demanding or more challenging for them and just understanding what stresses may be happening for them. And I think we're going to talk more about teens and what particular stresses might come up for them. But those big sort of, it could be a big adjustment in time for them, or it can be a cumulative thing. You know, there's lots. There's lots of little things that have all just come together at once. And it's the straw that gets too much in there. I think that's a common experience for young people I work with.

Sometimes there's a really obvious thing that's set it off. And for other people, they're like, I don't know what's changed. There's nothing. There hasn't been anything big. But when you talk to them about all the little changes and all the little things they've got going on in their life, they add up. Sometimes I like to think of anxiety or emotions, actually, as a bit like the weather. You know. That things can, each day can be different, or parts of the day can be different. So emotions come and go, and that's okay. But it's when it feels like it's set in, in a particular thunderstorm, it's just keeping on going.

That's maybe, that's more of a something's going on, and we can try and work out with them. Keeping that going. Yeah. Yeah.

3. Adolescents – What does anxiety look like in adolescents

So Fiona we've talked a bit about what anxiety actually is and I think that can look really different for the different developmental ages and so what does it look like in teenagers and adolescents?

I think we were thinking about when we were talking earlier about what's suddenly required in adolescence so there are some common developmental tasks that come up in adolescence and one of the big ones is that they've suddenly they've got more agency more independence and so they're one of their tasks is to start connecting more to people their own age and be less reliant on their parents and that's a big transition for um young people and for parents and so it's important it's part of their development but it's how they can work through that the other big one that comes up for young teens is that whole thing about finding their own identity and who am I and that will naturally mean that they start comparing themselves with others and looking more inward and looking at themselves from the outside and so those are really important steps to be taking but of course it brings up a whole lot of challenges as well so in adolescence there's also so many changes happening to our bodies isn't there and and that changes how we think about ourselves and how we feel about ourselves so we've got to um how we've got to help them kind of navigate that um and we know um in our brains there's so much happening it's almost a bit like what was happening in in um toddlers where there's so many new nerves firing and um and connections that are being made but it's not yet this is what happens in pu at puberty as well but it's not yet sort of organized or um nicely put together so it can feel overwhelming the um the amount of um thinking and processing that's happening um yeah and I think that sensitivity to connecting with peers is a really big one so the um so while bullying can happen across the age range at at um the teen stage a lot more personal kind of sensitivity and attack that comes up because you want to be able to belong to this group that's now separate from your family group and so being excluded or being different becomes a very painful experience

4. Adolescents – The impact of social media

Yeah, and you're going to talk a little bit more about social media, aren't you, James? Yeah, I think social media is still relatively new, and I think it wasn't something as teenagers that we had to navigate. And now for teenagers it's actually such a huge part of their life. And it's a minefield. So there's navigating what people are putting out. It's a place where people are putting out their absolute best versions of themselves. They might put on one picture on holiday, and actually there's sort of 20 other pictures that they've filtered out to get just the right one. So what teens are exposed to is a really biased reality.

So they're looking at everyone else's lives and they're seeing just the... edited best. You know, people aren't putting on the version where they've had a big fight with their parents and they're really upset and that's not what we see behind this one moment in time. So there's what we're exposed to, but I think there's also putting our life out for everyone else to see. Whereas not that long ago it was just your friends and people around you, whereas now actually once you put something out there, it's out there for everyone. It's out there and we're teenagers are being exposed to comments and judgements from, you know, they're seeing other people do that to other posts.

And for them as well, they can put something out there and it can be judged. And from teens who are sitting behind the computer board, you know, keyboard behind the computer, and what they're saying is really, can be really unfiltered and something that they wouldn't typically say face to face. So there can be really harsh judgements. And social media is also another aspect of how teenagers get their information. And with social media, it can be, you know, the algorithm of what they're looking at sometimes can be really helpful. And sometimes they can go down a rabbit hole that's really unhelpful as well.

So it's huge. And it comes right into their space and their room. Yeah, you can't get away from it. Yeah, you can't get away from it. Yeah, you can't get away from it. Yeah, you can't get away, yeah, it's hard to let it be. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And you can't undo it once it's out there. Yeah, it's not something you've heard and a time frame and move on. It's recorded, isn't it? Yeah. I heard it referred to the whole sort of idea of a screen as a black mirror. Yeah. That you're constantly kind of getting all these reflections that are a bit opaque or yeah. It can be quite distorted. Distorted and dark.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

5. Adolescents – Adolescent anxiety triggers

What does it look like? What does anxiety specifically look like in teens as compared with younger children? Yeah, so younger children often worry about their environment. They're worrying about monsters under their bed, worrying about the dark, separation from their parents, or, you know, worrying about what might happen to their parents. Whereas moving into adolescence, there's so much more inward focus. And so a lot of that worry comes about how they're perceived. Worrying about, I mean, adolescence is such that you've mentioned, they're navigating so many more things. Friendships, they're moving into high school, academic pressures.

So there often can be a worry about performance. You know, fear of not doing well. That can even look a bit... Sorry. It can start looking a bit like perfectionism. And I think that worry, how they're perceived, is really, really big. I often think about adolescence as you're so focused on yourself. And I think in doing that, you're so... You believe that everyone else is just as focused on you. And I think as adults, we get to the point where we realise that people actually don't really care what we're doing. They're so busy with their own... They're so busy with their own lives that if we trip over at a mall, we know that, yeah, they might think about it in that moment.

But as soon as they move to another shop, they've got bigger things to think about. Whereas in adolescence, I think, often we can think that we're at the star of a reality TV show and all eyes are on us. And it just feels like that for adolescence. They walk in a room and it's, you know, are they looking at me? Is my hair right? Is my clothing right? It's just... So intense. It's really intense. And there's some normative part of that. And adolescence. And that can also lead to more anxiety, which can... Young people can start missing out on things that they like, avoiding the things that they used to like doing.

Can have difficulties speaking up in class or difficulty even, you know, asking for things in a shop. So there's that real... How we're perceived. And on top of that, like you mentioned, the physical changes, our body changes. Comparing ourselves, you know, thinking about menstruation. Just acne, you know, skin breakouts. Yeah. You know, our height for the males as well. Height, the strength comparing. And it's just constant. So it's a whole lot to navigate. And teens are really much more aware of the world as well. You know, the worry about climate change. War. Racism. Teens are just constantly kind of bombarded with this.

And it's great that they're thinking wider than themselves. And it can be really scary. I was just thinking back, you touched on that move to high school as well. And it is such a big change because at primary school, even intermediates, you tend to have one or two teachers. Mm-hmm. Suddenly, you've got six or seven teachers. You don't have those steady relationships with the adults around. And there's so many more people. You're moving from classes to classes. There's so much more expectation on performance. But for young people who are shy or who are more sensitive, there's so many more opportunities.

There's so many more opportunities of change or situations of change that can trip them up. Yeah. Yeah. They've got a lot going on. Mm-hmm.

6. Adolescents - How does a parent know that their adolescent is anxious_

We've talked a bit about adolescence and what that can look like but how I often get how is a parent going to know that their teenager is experiencing anxiety and I think that it's really hard because teenagers are getting much better at hiding their thoughts and feelings and so often we're actually might be looking at different, we're looking for different things and it might be changes in sleep, there is changes in adolescence with their sleep but they might be sleeping even more than usual or having a lot more trouble getting off to sleep or waking, complaining of stomach aches, headaches, body pains and that really, like we talked about that kind of becoming a lot more self-conscious, again there's that normative part of it but are they starting to avoid some social activities, speaking, in public and even start refusing, you know, a couple days here and there or it's harder to get them to school or they might be having more days off where they're sick, yeah, and it can also be young people can also start lashing out as well, they can be a lot more irritable.

Yeah, and that's an important one, it's not, it's not, although classically we might think of it as the shy or withdrawn or more avoidant. Yeah. There can be a lot of the irritability and the fight response coming through as well, yeah, yeah. Yeah, and I think as well trying, adolescents can also try and get some sense of control over their environment, so it's starting where the bits that they do have control over is their life and it might be little rituals that become a bit more intense, how they keep their room might become more important, Yeah. and I, I think we're going to talk more about when it becomes really problematic and I think these are those still really signs for parents to look out for and it just, it flags that this is time to start talking to a young person.

There's control, having to check things more or even asking more for reassurance that things are okay are very common, yeah.

7. Adolescents - Warning signs

So should we move on to talking about some of the warning signs, or when do we start thinking that, oh, something's going on here that maybe is a concern, and then starting to feel, do we need to help in some way? Yeah, I guess the things that we would notice most are when we're seeing something happening more often, so it's the frequency of it is increasing, or so for example, they're missing school more days than they were before, that they're feeling, you know, saying they're feeling sick more. Or if the experience seems to be going on for longer, more of the time, so there's, they might get distressed about something and not then kind of be able to move through it, they're getting sort of stuck with it.

So the duration has increased, and that it's more intense than you would think. Yeah. Yeah. It needs to be, so it's kind of disproportionate to what the situation is, that suddenly there's a very intense reaction to going to the mall, or having forgotten to do

something more than what it would have been before. So those would be really important warning signs to look out for, and that the distress is present just a lot more of the time.

Whether that's sort of panic, or angry outbursts, or irritability, but there seems to be, there's a state of sort of more tension and distress, and they're kind of on edge more, or more alert, and then of course you talked about the physical pains and not feeling well experiences, sore stomachs and headaches, that can happen in terms of, you know, it happens in children, but it can happen into adolescents as well, and I think when you talk about the rituals and routines, you know, having to do things in set ways, and not being able to be interrupted, when, during doing certain routines, or having to start again and repeat things, then we're wondering, is it becoming a bit more obsessive and, and I liked what you said about anxiety, often wanting us, it feels like, you know, it feels like we're not in control, so then we try and control, and then we end up kind of over-controlling, and so in the end, the anxiety is controlling us, so we want to over-prepare, and noticing when they're doing that, or overdo, or overthink everything, and then when we're overthinking, we start getting really internally focused, and start ruminating, and getting stuck on it.

particular thoughts, and so it's really hard to, to keep focused on the whole, and so those are some of the things we might notice, can you, is there anything else you would like to add? No, I was just thinking, so it's really noticing, has there been a change, are these things happening more often, and are they sticking around longer, and are they kind of more intense, yeah, than what we would expect?

Yeah, yeah, and I guess the other thing that's really important is, is to look at the functioning, is it, is this starting to impact on their functioning, you know, that there are changes in sleep patterns, they're really struggling to get off to sleep, or get up in the morning, or changes in eating patterns, we did talk, you talked a little bit about that self-consciousness, and awareness, and whether that's starting to kind of become more of a concern for them as well, or whether just because they're feeling so tense a lot of the time, it's hard to kind of feel like they've got an appetite, things like concentration starts to get affected, because they've got so many of these kind of stuck thoughts at the heads, it's really hard to, to give attention to, to the other things that you need to do, so performance at school might start suffering, wanting to avoid things, like not wanting to go into public, places, or go to school, you know, go to family events where there's, where there are more people.

Yeah, all of those changes in functioning are important to note as well. No, I think it's really important, because it's, it can be hard, because a lot of this is somewhat normative. Yes, that's true. And I think that, coming back to like, is this actually impacting your life and how is it impacting your life and children, maybe now. In their life, that part can be really helpful to tell, has this become bigger than what we... Yeah, you're right, because sleep patterns do change a bit in adolescence, that there's a lot later on stage, but then sleeping more in the morning, yeah, so what's normative and what, when does...

and needing more privacy is an important thing, they'll want to have more time in their own space, but when does it become a problem, and perhaps it's that, is it getting in the way of things like previous interests that they had, avoiding things that they used to do quite easily.

8. Adolescents – Alcohol and drug use, mood and depression

And then of course there are more serious things that come up or more concerning things that sometimes come up and feel more risky or more unsafe. I think that's a big question that comes up for parents in things like drug and alcohol use, sexual relationships, and again depending on the age, some of that exploration can be considered within the norm. And I think though when a teenager is experiencing a lot of anxiety, for some young people they can turn to drugs and alcohol just as a way of trying to cope and trying to get through.

And so even with drug and alcohol use, it seems to me that there's a lot of anxiety in thinking about actually there is a difference between going to a party and having some drinks with friends and when does that become a point where the young person can't go to a party without drinking because they're feeling too much, too anxious, or actually are they starting to drink, you know, it's that frequency again, are they drinking more often, they might be even starting to drink on their own, you know, they are the really big warning signs around the drug. And I think that's a big concern for parents and caregivers, is how anxiety plays a factor in that.

Another big concern of parents and caregivers is mood and depression. And I think anxiety and, you know, anxiety and mood, they come hand in hand, because it's a lot to navigate in adolescence anyway, and then when you're dealing with constant anxious thoughts about yourself and about the world. It's exhausting, it is a lot, and so sometimes while they're juggling with all of that anxiety, then their mood, you can start noticing their mood dropping off. And I'm thinking, jeez, often anxiety comes up as an anticipation of something that's hard, and then, because when we get to adolescence, we can start doing, just cognitively, we do a lot more reflective stuff.

Then we start thinking about, oh, how did we do, and evaluating and judging, and then that becomes really negative and affects our mood. So they do, they do spin off one another. Yeah. Yeah. When, like, you sort of talked about some more of the riskier ways that young people manage anxiety, and I think when the anxiety can become really intense. And young people often have tried multiple

ways to try and make things easier, they can get to a point where actually they do, they might start using things like self-harm as a way to cope. And I think it can be really hard to understand as a parent, and it's scary.

And for young people that just becomes a way of coping, so it can be a way of just managing those really intense feelings that come with anxiety, or the disappointment, and there's that self-critical part. So it's, yeah, it's a way of coping, it can feel like they're getting through those emotions. They might feel more grounded. They might feel more, yeah, another way to kind of just, a different feeling as well. So it is a really scary thing. Yeah. Yeah. It's scary. It's scary. It's scary. It's scary. It's scary. Sometimes it's a go-to to, what can I do to feel a bit better in this moment? Yeah.

And sometimes it can be bigger than that, that this is, you know, how I feel about myself is so negative. And it's, and it really is trying to understand for each young person what that, what that means for them. Absolutely. It can be quite different for different people. Mm. Yeah. I mean, I think we're all very different. Yeah. Yeah. It's so hard to really relate, like, in terms of, like, being professional and thinking about what that means. Yeah. And I think that's something that's, I think, is kind of underlying the feeling that there are multiple levels of different people, and some people don't have different kinds of values, and some people aren't, I don't know, they're actually just people who don't really have the same values.

Mm. Yeah. And I feel like for me, for example, I've just been quite different, for different people. Mmmm. I know I've been quite different from the other side, and so I think it's an emotional experience, and I've been really grateful for being able to kind of share what's there

9. Adolescents - Discussing self harm concerns

Often parents and caregivers will say I don't want to bring it up with my teenager. Yeah. There can be a whole heap of worry that if I bring it up actually that might put ideas into their head, it might make them more likely to do it. Yeah you talk about self-harm. Yeah self-harm is a real fear so I think sometimes there's a natural response to try avoid talking about it but actually there's no evidence that talking about it increases risk and in fact it's actually the opposite. So yeah it's really important to let your young person know that you're worried. And that you care. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah and that you want to know and be able to support them and that's what they're experiencing.

Yeah. So that's quite heavy. It is and. And so Fiona what are some practical steps that parents can do to help their teens? I guess one of the first things is making sure those basics are reset. So making sure that there are some some healthy routines going on in terms of sleep times and meal times and getting out and having some exercise and staying involved with activities. I think that's really important. I think that's one of the things that parents need to be aware of is that they need to be aware of the activities that are of interest and managing device times if that feels that it's getting out of hand.

How do we help our young person manage that more ably. So sometimes it might mean, often we try and work collaboratively with an adolescent and try and express that. You know the concerns that we have. But sometimes it might mean that we've got to take, you know, set some limits as well. Yeah. Yeah. And I was just thinking about how parenting has two sides to it all the time. Two sides to the coin isn't there? There's the side that's the care and the nurturing and that. Which is what we're all aware of. We are aware of these these decisions. There's the side that's the care and the nurturing and that.

Which is what we want to be required as無時です.

want to do much most of the time but the other side of it is that um being able to take charge when we need to and be be able to have some boundaries and help our young people learn to navigate those um so it's knowing when we need to jump into that side as well and i think when things are going okay and they're settled often we don't have to do a whole heap of thinking about that yeah and actually like you said it's that time we have to be take a bit more control and that see so yeah yeah a bit more yeah but that's a that's a really important yeah holding those limits um and that's just thinking if we think about ourselves when we're feeling overwhelmed or panicky um how sometimes it's really helpful if somebody else says no you go and sit down there i'll do this i'll take over now so that um that somebody else taking charge can actually be enormously supportive and comforting so how do you think we can do that in a way that is that works for adolescents who have this need to be their own person and be independent and have a little bit more of um fighting back because that's how they become independent how do you think as a parent we can navigate taking charge and the care yes i think a quite a natural response for parents is to try it's almost kind of dismissing so if your team comes to you and says i'm so worried about this school camp it's really normal you want going you want to fix it so you go into problem solving or you might say oh no so it's only a couple days like you'll be fine um everyone does it so that real like want to fix it um and so you could do that by trying to downplay the worry or you could do it by trying to fix it or remove the worry is another common one again like you said we don't want to do those things to see our child our teen feel these big emotions so it's really natural to want to just come in and take it away and remove it which in the long term isn't isn't helpful so how do we talk to our teenagers the first part is that nurturing part is really important and that's validation so it's just noticing it's starting by noticing the anxiety noticing what's going on being really curious and that part is really important and i think even for myself if i've got something going on and i'm talking to a friend about this big thing

that's really stressing me or really worrying me there's something about that person just hearing you and getting it that can feel quite containing so even the step before yeah just just being curious and just paying attention something something a little bit different or yeah yeah yeah just noticing absolutely and then that yeah the curiosity um listening yeah and and sometimes as well we think we know what's going on and you think it's a school camp but actually by being really curious and just wondering and those really open-ended questions and not being judgmental you can get a whole lot of information and it's not about the school camp it's about i don't know the car ride there or who they're being paired up with to opening some space for that yeah yeah and um with adolescence it's often why are you doing something else because it feels too intense sometimes if you do that so why are you doing washing the dishes together or tidying up yeah whatever or driving in the car it's a really good one driving in the car it's quite a nice one and you're not having to look at each other yeah yeah yeah yeah so those um those those times are gold really aren't they and to give them space um presence and and interest without yeah intensity yeah

10. Adolescents - Impact on the parents of anxious adolescents

So maybe we need to move on to the next question about, you know, thinking about what it must be like for a parent and what, as a parent, what can we do? And I think it's really, it's the worst thing that any parent has to deal with, to be, to see our child in distress, our young person in distress, isn't it? And to feel helpless around that. And I think as parents, we try and do the best we can most of the time. And each of our young people have their own unique ways of being. And there are different times and different stages that bring up new challenges that we've not encountered before. And I think it's really, it's the worst thing that any parent has to deal with, to be, to see our child in distress, our young person in distress, isn't it?

And so it's not about one size fits all. It's trying to understand more about what's going on. And perhaps it starts also by being, accepting of ourselves too. Because as parents, I'm just thinking we're juggling so many things in that phase of our lives, you know, where we're often juggling work expectations. Financial needs. We're juggling children at different ages and stages. We're, there are often other wider family needs that are coming into play. There might be health issues across the family that we're trying to work, manage as well. So we need to be. Be kind to ourselves and to know that actually we, you know, we, we do try and do the best we can and that it's okay if we're suddenly thinking, oh, we've missed something or we're suddenly noticing and then not be hard on ourselves as why didn't I pick this up earlier, that this life is happening all the time as well.

So I think that's the first thing. That. Um, be realistic about the expectations we have of ourselves, just as we want the, the, our young people to be realistic too. Um, and we're holding a lot often at this stage of our lives when, um, our kids are getting too adolescent. Yeah. Sometimes our own hormonal changes too. Um, and I like your analogy of the duck underwater, because I think as soon as we spot. Um, anxiety in people around us, um, we, it's so infectious, isn't that we, um, we all react to that in, um, really quickly, so it's okay to, to suddenly feel, oh, I'm starting to panic a bit here too, but that I need to be, um, this, you know, I can panic under the water a little bit, but yes, we can do this.

Yeah. I can. Yeah. I can hold this together. Um, yeah, because if we all, if we become overwhelmed too, then it feels harder to kind of get the, the water calm again. Um, and sometimes that means we've got to draw on our own supports, um, and if that's absolutely okay and use the things that work for us, that help us to, um, feel, um, calmer. And, you know, if it means taking a, a, a walk, um, or getting someone else to handing over at times, some of the, the responsibilities we have, yeah. So it's a time where we're really aware and, like, looking after the team, and actually, it's equally important that we're looking after ourself as well.

Yeah. Mm-hmm. Because there's that, um, analogy, isn't there, with the, the aeroplanes, is, where they always, when they're going through all the safety checks and that, and they, they make it very, very clear that it's actually a person's responsibility or a person's responsibility. Yeah. And it is. I think we actually need to, um, and we've been talking about it just now in the, in the chat, and it is, it's not, it's a very, very important thing to, to learn about our own solutions, but that, um, the, the, basic thing is that when we walk in, or when, when we're taking a walk, um, or getting someone else to, handing over at times, it's some of the, the responsibilities we have, yeah.

So it's a time when we're really aware and, like, looking after the team. Yeah. some of the responsibilities we have yeah. So it's a time when we're really aware and like looking after the team and actually it's equally important that we're looking after ourselves as well. Because there's that analogy isn't there with the aeroplanes where they always when they're going through all the safety checks and that and they make it very clear that parents need to put on their own oxygen mask before they assist their children and it is like that. Yeah. We need to do what we can so that we're in the best space to then support.

11. Adolescents – Practical steps that parents can take to support their adolescent

And so Fiona, what are some practical steps that parents can do to help their teens? Yeah, I guess one of the first things is making sure those basics are reset. So making sure that there are some healthy routines going on in terms of sleep times and meal times and getting out and having some exercise and staying involved with activities that are of interest. And managing device times, if that feels that it's getting out of hand, how do we help our young person manage that more ably? So sometimes it... Often we try and work collaboratively with an adolescent and try and express the concerns that we have.

But sometimes it might mean that we've got to take, you know, set some limits as well. Yeah, and I was just thinking about how parenting has two roles, two sides to it. Yeah. Yeah. And I was just thinking about how parenting has two roles, two sides to it. Yeah. Yeah. And I was just thinking about how parenting has two roles, two sides to it. All the time, two sides to the coin, isn't there? There's the side that's the care and the nurturing and that, which is what we want to do much, most of the time. But the other side of it is that being able to take charge when we need to and be able to have some boundaries and help our young people learn to navigate those.

So it's... So it's knowing when we need to jump into that side as well. And I think when things are going ok and are settled, often we don't have to do a whole heap of thinking about that. And like you said it's that time we have to be... take a bit more control and... That's ceaseless. Step in a bit more. Yeah. And that can be hard to do but that's a really important part of parenting too. Yeah. Yeah. Holding those limits. Yeah. And that's just the key. If we think about ourselves, when we're feeling overwhelmed or panicky, how sometimes it's really helpful if somebody else says, no, you go and sit down there, I'll do this, I'll take over now.

So that somebody else taking charge can actually be enormously supportive and comforting. Yeah. So how do you think we can do that in a way that works for adolescents who have this need to be their own person and be independent? And have a little bit more of fighting back because that's how they become independent. How do you think, as a parent, we can navigate taking charge and the care? Yes. I think quite a natural response for parents is to try, it's almost kind of dismissing. So if your teen comes to you and says, I'm sorry. I'm so worried about this school camp. It's really normal. You want to fix it.

So you go into problem solving or you might say, oh, no, it's only a couple of days. You'll be fine. Everyone does it. So that real want to fix it. And so you could do that by trying to downplay the worry or you could do it by trying to fix it or remove the worry is another common one. Again, like you said, we don't want to see our child out. I mean, feel these big emotions. So it's really natural to want to just come in and take it away and remove it, which in the long term isn't isn't helpful. So how do we talk to our teenagers? The first part is that nurturing part is really important and that's validation.

So it's just noticing, it's starting by noticing the anxiety, noticing what's going on, being really curious. And that part. Is really important. And I think even for myself, if I've got something going on and I'm talking to a friend about this big thing that's really stressing me or really worrying me, there's something about that person just hearing you and getting it that it can feel quite containing. So even the step before that, what's happening? Yeah, just being curious and paying attention. There's something a little bit different. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Just noticing. Absolutely. And then that.

Yeah. The curiosity. Listening. Yeah. And sometimes as well, we think we know what's going on and you think it's a school camp, but actually by being really curious and just wondering and those really open ended questions and not being judgmental, you can get a whole lot of information that it's not about the school camp, it's about, I don't know, the car ride there or who they're being paired up with. Yeah. So opening some space for that. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And with adolescents, it's often, why are you doing something else? Because it feels too intense sometimes if you do that. So why are you doing washing the dishes together or tidying up or whatever?

Yeah. Or driving in the car? It's a really good one. Driving in the car is quite a nice one and you're not having to look at each other. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Those times are gold really, aren't they? They are. Give them space, presence and interest without intensity. Yeah.

12. Adolescents – Validating an adolescents concerns

Yeah, and then that kind of the validation part is once we feel like we might know what's going on with them, it's saying I can see that you're really upset about that, I can see this is really worrying you, this is really hard, and teenagers are also really good at correcting us too. If we've got it wrong, they'll let us know. Yeah, I'm just thinking there's a lovely parenting approach called tuning in to teens, and one of the things that they talk about is looking out for the bits for connection, that sometimes teens have a different way of letting you know that something's going on, and it might not be, you know, the obvious distress, it might be coming in and throwing their bag down and then just sort of hanging about, so it's kind of noticeable.

Yeah, I think that's the nurturing part, and that part does have to come first. And that, you know, you talked about taking that kind of control and setting the limits, it's really important, and I think if we just come in with that, a teenager's not going to want to have a bar. Mm-hmm. You know, we know school's really important, that we know keeping routine's really important. If we just come in with just the control part before that nurturing, curious, validating, it's going to be very, it's not going to be helpful, is it? Yeah, we're going to lose them, because we're not including, we're not.

Yeah, that connection. Meeting them where they're at. Yeah. And helping them. Yeah. And helping them feel that we understand. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And my, often I say to parents and caregivers, it's almost more than you think you need to do, so once you feel like you've done that, and you want to jump straight into like problem solving, or no, you have to go to school. Keep with it. Yeah, keep going. Yeah. And, like you said, equally, as a parent, it is our role to keep the routines, keep helping the young person with what we know. Yeah. We're going to let them go where they want to go, but we have to keep a strong connection with them.

Yeah. And we need to be very critical of our own children, and with what we know is helpful in holding that. And at times when things are really difficult for them, we do need to take a bit more control than we usually would. And I think by, again, being curious and nurturing, it gives us time to be more problem, like collaborative problem solving, so instead of you have to go to school, you might have then found out what it was about school that is particularly difficult as you can problem solve together. Is there things you could do that might be helpful? Yeah, what could we change that might make it a bit more manageable for you.

And even beginning to name what's going on and what they're experiencing can kind of give a sense of containment to it, that it's not this huge overwhelming thing, this is anxiety that's bossing you around now. And yeah, we can find ways to manage that so it becomes more workable somehow. It's also okay for us to express our concerns once we've done that, isn't it? That we've made sure that they know that we're trying to understand and that we're hearing what they're experiencing. Yeah. And for us to say, you know, the concerns that we have, and often they're the very basic things, aren't they, that around health, you know, that they're not eating or they're not sleeping enough or around safety or around what they should be doing for their age and stage, you know, connecting with that.

Connecting with others, this involvement with things that they enjoy. And those are the things that we're concerned about. So it's how do we link what the problem is to really some of those really basic things that we really care about for young people. Yeah.

13. Adolescents - Being a coach

So the idea of a parent being a coach, I think it's a really good parallel to when young people come in to see a specialist, see a therapist, that we're also a coach. We're on the sideline, we can't do it for them, but we're absolutely there, coaching them through at each step, giving them skills that might make things easier. And I also quite like the idea of coaches, because when we're thinking about eventually finishing up with a young person, that I like to think they've taken those skills with them. So you might have had different coaches at different points, and you take those skills and they stay with you, and they stay in your toolbox that you carry around with you. And what you're also saying is that it is a... journey. It takes time to acquire and to practice and to be able to ride through, rather than something that can be changed immediately. Absolutely. And even as adults, we're still learning about ourselves and what works for us.

14. Adolescents - Helping parents when their adolescent is in crisis mode

Yes, so that's the general way that we can work with anxiety and we can support parents to do that as well and be a coach. But there are times when those crises are really big and what could we tell parents to do or what could be helpful at those times? Yes, so those are those moments where the young person's kind of fully gone into fight flight and you may notice, so obviously there's an internal response that we talked about, the heart racing, pumping blood to the arms and legs, your breathing's getting quicker. You might not even be able to...

engage with your young person, they might almost just seem like they're in a world of their own and I think to understand that sort of panic point, it's helpful to understand the brain and this is a model I come back to all the time, I think it's just really helpful and Dan Siegel sort of coined this, the brain, hand-brain model and it's just so helpful to come back to. Thinking about where is a teenager, are they at that kind of orange level where we can do validating and we can talk or actually have they flipped into that red where talking, validating isn't what's needed right in that moment or it's not going to be enough to help.

And so the hand-brain model, I like to break it into sort of two parts. So the bottom brain here, this is your brain. We've got your brain. You've got your brain. You've got your brain. You've got your brain stem and your emotion part of your brain. So we call this your downstairs brain and your downstairs brain is where the fight-or-flight-freeze response comes. It's the alarm systems fired. Survival

stuff. Survival. Yeah. It's not thinking. This is to protect us. This is that little amygdala kind of working so hard, isn't it? Absolutely. Yeah. So we've got the upstairs brain, which is our thinking part of our brain.

So this is the part of the brain where we are aware of how other people might feel, might think. We can think through consequences. We can think logically. We can engage in conversations about thinking about, you know, oh, okay, if this is too hard, how could we help you make it a bit more manageable? Problem solve and organize. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. So if someone's feeling anxious, but their upstairs and downstairs brain are still both working together, that's where those last strategies that we talked about are really helpful. Yeah. We can work in that orange zone. Yeah. Absolutely. However, when teens get into the red, it is what Dan Siegel talks about, flipping your lid.

Yeah. Where it's all just downstairs brain. Mm-hmm. Yeah. And so, yeah, we can't think clearly. We can't problem solve. And for parents, I think that's just really useful to start noticing when is in that panic. And it can be a full blown panic attack. And for some people, it's a little bit subtler, but we know when we can't reach someone. You know, you're trying all these things that worked before, but it's just not working. Yeah. And so that's when this part of the brain, what it needs is how do we calm the body? How do we, yeah, kind of that body first to then bring the lid down, and then we can do the strategies that have worked before around problem solving.

So it's more that bottom up approach that's needed there. Yeah. Yeah. And for parents, that can be even just being present in that moment and letting that ride out. Yeah. So it could just be time. It could just be, you know, being that safe person, I'm here, I'm holding that space. So time can be helpful, but also more of those calming body things like deep breathing. Just while you talk about that holding thing, there's that lovely reference to the idea of being the, as parents that, or as adults, that we're the bull. Yes. And the young person and the emotional distress is going, it's the water inside.

And what we're doing is just holding that bowl steady, isn't it? Yeah. And letting that water slowly calm. Absolutely. Yeah. So yeah, we can just hold it with our calm presence. Calm presence. Yeah. Or we could just hold it with, I'm here for you. Yeah. See, this is really hard. Yeah. This is going to pass. Yes. You're safe. Making them comfortable. Yeah. Yeah. Some of those nurturing things too. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. And open to some of that more relaxation, you know, slow breathing. Yeah. When you flip to your lid, you're not going to be able to listen and take on too much of that. But it's just, you know, take a deep breath.

A warm drink. Yeah. Maybe something that's holding onto something. Yeah. And everything can help kind of bring us back and ground us. Yeah. Yeah. Warm drinks. Yeah. Yeah. For some people they do like physical touch, a hug, and others that will make it worse. So yeah, there is a difference between feeling anxious, having some intense anxiety versus this kind of crisis panic where we're working with a flit. We're working in that survival brain rather than the upstairs and downstairs together. Yeah. So you talked about things that we can do with our body, you know, slowing our breathing and we can help them pace that.

Yeah. Model it. What are some of the other things we can do? Things like, sometimes temperature changes can make a difference too. You know, that being warm and having something cosy to wrap around. Or if they're too hot and flustered, having some fresh air and feeling cool. Yeah. Absolutely. Going outside. Going outside can be helpful. Cold flannel for some people. Cold flannels or a warm flannel. You know, it's getting to know what works and that feedback again. Having a warm bath or a shower, yeah, can sometimes help to reset our bodies. In that mode, I know I've sort of made this mistake quite often, is I logically know that there are a lot of things that we can do.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
So, I might not be using a flannel to flick the lid, but I'm still using things like, would you like and— I'm asking. Yeah. Asking a whole
heap of questions. Yeah. And I think it's okay to say, here's a flannel if you'd like it. Yes. Here's a warm blanket, let me know, you know I
can take it off. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But instead of being like, would you like a flannel, I can give you a cup of tea I can— Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
So, it's actually, you need to be— A little bit more, um— Directive?

Yeah. Who knows? Because actually you're— Yes, taking charge a bit. Yeah, in that moment, you are there.

upstairs brain you're the thinking part of their brains and you're doing that for them yeah yeah yeah yeah so that that can put the lid back on yeah yeah and I guess if we catch it before it gets into that rage then sometimes doing some distraction things can be helpful because it takes the attention away from the worry and the triggers for the anxiety and maybe just get some rhythmic thing to do that they're familiar with that might just help to distract but it's harder to do when they've really really really flipped and I think it's also just important to just note though that when the lid is flipped even if we didn't do anything that will eventually come down yeah so yeah it is just time writing it out yeah yeah and there's those other things we talked about that can just help with that right yeah yeah and it's then that we can you know once that's settled then we can do some more of that talking stuff the the problem solving and the thinking about what would be helpful to do and in these moments and coming up with some coping self-talk you know bringing in more healthy perspectives affirmations and things yeah

15. Adolescents – How hard to push as a parent – the fear thermometer

And yet another common question that comes up for the parents and caregivers is that kind of tension of how do I know if I'm pushing too much and how do I know if I'm not pushing enough? Because what we know is that avoidance for anxiety, it feels nice at the moment and it's quite nice for parents too. If we say it's okay not to go to school today and you can just see that anxiety melt away and it feels nice for you and so we can get in a bit of a cycle of avoiding. So how do we hold that line of there are times where we might need to have a day of school because actually there is a whole heap and how do we know then if that's going to be helpful or unhelpful?

Because I think... Sometimes even if we send a message that we don't have to do that thing that's caused a whole lot of anxiety, if we just straight out say that's okay, we don't have to do it, that can also sometimes send a message that there was something too fear. True. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. It can almost reinforce that this is real. Yes. Yeah. Real fear. Or the intensity. The intensity of it. Yeah. It's acceptable. And again, for adolescents it's harder for parents because they are more independent and we are more removed from their life and I think actually thinking of ourselves as the coach can be a helpful way of thinking because we can't play the game for them.

We can't be on the field next to them all the time. But actually if we can coach them. If we can give them enough skills for them to trust that we're there for them when they need, I think that that can be really helpful to take away. Cheerlead and support and yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's a bit more realistic on what we can actually do as parents. And I'm just thinking from a parent point of view, you know, just noticing what we're doing as well, that there's this natural inclination, as we see it, when young people are distressed to what they're doing. To want to rescue them and do it for them.

But notice when we're doing, you know, maybe overdoing the rescuing, that we want to get enough of. Yes. Maybe getting caught up, giving in to patterns as well because it's not unusual when things are scary for young people to really fight back. And. Yeah, and put pressure on us to change things or change what we do, and that doesn't help change the pattern either. Yeah, or that we just get so frustrated and and angry and push too hard to them. So it's kind of really noticing our responses to and those responses are normal responses. But but I'm thinking, oh. Is this helpful or not? Maybe I need to change something and being able to flex that.

That's really. And one of the tools that I quite like that I do use a lot with children and adolescents as well is the idea of a thermometer. So with the how hard to push and how, you know, am I pushing too much or not enough? I really like this because we're looking at the different colours. And. Of course. We've got a thermometer. So, you know, kind of really low to no anxiety to all the way up to the top, which is that really extreme panic place. So when we think about how the running in and rescuing often that means that the teenager is going to be comfortable and their environment is manageable.

And if we're just doing this, what actually tends to happen is their world tends to shrink. So something one week might have been. OK, but actually it tends to get smaller and smaller, the more we just do things that are in the green and feeling comfortable and manageable. And on the other end of that, actually, if we have if we're pushing young people constantly into the bridge, so that really high end panic we talk about, it's like it is it's uncomfortable and it's also unmanageable. And that's also not helpful. When. When I think about the read as a as a parent, it's it can be helpful to think about what's your read.

Yeah. Because while your team's talking about. Going into the dairy and buying some milk. And they're saying, no, I can't do that. Like that is just way too much. It's hard to understand when we've never felt like potentially never felt like that. So I do think about, you know, for me, that would be. Like bungee jumping, skydiving and even just thinking about it, I can feel my body respond and how actually that would just be quite unfair if someone sat behind me and forced me to do that, to do it, then that's not helpful. So we think about actually we're trying to aim for this orange area. So this is what we're going to feel uncomfortable.

The teenager is going to be uncomfortable. It's they're not in their kind of safety zone, but they're not also at that real panic level. And how do we navigate and negotiate what that looks like for the young person? And sometimes it can be in the collaborative discussion and sometimes it's just noticing, you know, you'll get to notice them. You'll notice when they stop talking and they become really red and maybe their breathing changes, then we notice we've gone a bit too much. Yeah. So constant feedback. Yeah. Because even if together you think, OK, well, we're not going to send you into the dairy on your own to get it, that's red, you might negotiate then, can I come with you?

Yeah. What's possible? Yeah. What can we do, you know, breaking it down into what is manageable is really helpful, isn't it? Absolutely. And I think having that trust that, you know, if you're noticing that it's in the red, that trust to kind of pull back for a little bit, because it doesn't mean that you don't have to do it, but it does mean that you have to do it. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It just means in this moment, you just need to take a little bit of a break, a bit of a breather to just regulate, to kind of keep moving forward. That's important, yeah. And when I'm working with young people, I notice when there's that trust, often they actually will go further than I even think.

Yes. Because they have the trust that if it starts getting to red, we can push pause. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So. Yeah. Yeah. That almost frees them up to actually take a step further than they would, than we would have anticipated. Yes. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah.

So that idea of the kind of traffic light colours can just be helpful, and you can talk about it with your team, and you can think about together what is orange, because it's not letting them sit in the green, and it's not insisting that they just do everything that's red. Yeah. It's what's manageable, and how can we do it together, and problem solve.

And I think, you know, thinking about ourselves, it can be different on different days. That's right. So it's in moments, at different times, it can, what's in red. Yes. It can vary, or what's in orange. Yeah. Yeah. Because for the last week, I've been able to go into the dairy and grab something on the way home, but actually today. Yeah. That is just so overwhelming, and it's like that cumulative effect you talked about. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And it keeps going on. Yeah. Yeah. It looks different on a different day. Yeah. Yeah. Our capacity can change. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Our resilience changes.

Yeah. Yeah. So I do quite like thinking about like an orange zone, something we still expect children to go to school, or teens to go to school, keep those routines. But at that level, that's uncomfortable, but manageable. And if it's red, we still hold those expectations as parents, and the things that are really important for them. And how can we problem solve to bring that down to an orange? Or how can we support them? And keeping, you know, taking one step at a time, and holding on to the bigger picture. Yes. As well. Yeah. Absolutely. The goal, the goal is up here. Yeah. But actually, it's those little steps.

We might go up and down some steps on the way, but we're tracking in the right direction. Yeah. Yeah. And keeping on through all that. Those genuine cares. Yeah. Yeah. Those genuine care and curious reflections. Absolutely. And that validation in that moment. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Just noticing, understanding. Yeah. Come back to that when it feels too much. That's when the... When you're sitting in the car outside of the dairy, and the teen's saying, I can't do it, I can't do it. I know this is really hard. I can see, yeah, I can see how big this is for you. And... Yeah. Yeah. How can I help? Yeah.

How can we get you through this? Yeah. Yeah. And knowing, and giving them the message that it does pass. Yes. Yeah. Those intense moments of distress do pass. Yeah. Yeah.

16. Adolescents - When to get help

So, I guess for parents, there's always the question of when should we get help, isn't there? And we've talked today a lot about noticing those warning signs. And if we're finding that they're becoming more entrenched and they're getting worse, too much of the time for too long, it's really hard to shift things, and it's feeling completely overwhelming on an ongoing basis, then that would be a really important sign. And when the functioning is being significantly affected, both the young person's functioning in terms of getting to school, in terms of sleep, in terms of eating, in terms of learning, in terms of connecting with others, and when it's also impacting on the family, when we feel like the family are being held hostage by the anxiety that's so present all the time, or there's...

there are... there's definitely harm and safety concerns, and that's becoming such a huge presence for the whole family, too. And just as you were talking, Fiona, I was thinking absolutely that they are the warning signs that now is the time we need help. And I think it's also important to just keep in mind what we've talked about, those early warning signs and trying to catch it earlier, because there's a lot that we can also do. There's a lot that we can also do before, you know, coming into, say, our service. There's a lot of community support. There's a lot of apps for young people around anxiety, mindfulness.

So I think it's... And just understanding what it is. Yeah. Resources to understand. Absolutely. This is what it is, and this is what happens, and these are the things that are helpful ways to... Yes. And the normative and that understanding can actually just be super helpful at that beginning level as well. Yeah. Yeah. So, Fiona, if we have a parent or caregiver who's noticed the intensity's changed, it's happening for longer, it's affecting the teenager and the family... It's getting... It's feeling quite entrenched, isn't it? Yeah. Where could they go? Where can families go for help? Yeah. Yeah.

Um... I guess a very important step is talking with your GP first, isn't it? And getting... Seeing that the young person can do that. And at high schools, there are school counsellors, and there are a number of NGOs that have specific programmes for working with anxiety, sometimes group-based, but some individual programmes as well. Mm. Yeah. Those would all be options. Yeah. Yeah. And that the GP holds a lot of their knowledge, don't they? Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Um... And there's another judgement in terms of, okay, how, you know, what's happening here... Yeah. ...and what's needed here. So the GP can refer into our service and they can refer into the other community services as well?

Yes, community services. Yeah. Yeah. There's a lot of psychological strategies and therapies that are available for anxiety. Mm. And there's a lot of evidence that they are effective and helpful. And there are also times when medication can be an additional support. And that's... A GP can start with that, but there can be referrals to medical specialists for that, too. Yeah. And I think, you know, I hold a lot of hope. I've worked with a lot of young people who've really struggled with anxiety. Mm. And I have seen, you know, people got to a point where anxiety is not a big part of their life anymore.

Mm. And other people who have anxiety can still be a big part and they've never... Yeah. You know, they've got the tools... Yeah. ...and they can navigate life and... It pops up from time to time. Yeah. But they know that and they pick it up really quickly. Yeah. They get to a point where it's not as big. Yeah. And I think I really like that weather analogy. Yeah. You said that the storms still come. Yeah. And they come for all of us. Yeah. But learning those skills to weather that storm and so it doesn't kind of stick around as long. Yeah. Yeah. But I agree. We've seen so many young people come out the other side.

Yeah. Yeah. And some... Many of them never needing to come back. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. But the more they know about themselves and the more they understand that and their families do as well, the quicker they pick things up and the quicker they can turn things around too. Yeah. Yeah. And another part that I'm just holding is there's a lot of information here and like you said, parents are trying to do their best. They're trying to navigate life. They're trying to do the best for their teenager. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's what we've come back to is actually just some of the basics, you know, actually just spending time with your teenager, doing things that they like.

Yeah. Yeah. That relationship stuff is just so important. Yeah. Yeah. And I think we can often forget that because we get so bogged down with just trying to help with... With the problem. Yeah. Or the thing that's concerning. Absolutely. But actually the... Yeah. The connection is... And the... It's much wider. Yes. And life... There are other things that are happening. Yeah. And keeping those going is really important. Yeah. Yeah. Thanks, Jess. It's been good to share our ideas together.

17. Adolescents – Key messages

So Jess, perhaps we can just think about what we've covered, go over what we've covered today. So we've talked about remembering that anxiety is a normal experience, that we all have that. We've talked about how it might look in teens in particular and what's happening for our teens and in that stage of life and how that impacts. We've talked about how we notice the warning signs of when anxiety is becoming more of a concern for our teens and what we can look for and what parents can look for. And then we talked quite a bit about what parents can do.

I think it's really important in terms of taking care of themselves, looking after themselves because they're going to be a really important resource for their teens and also what they can do, what some practical things they can do around just keeping things and routines as much as possible and how they can connect and engage with the young person and people. Before they can move on to helping them work things out. We also really wanted to emphasise the idea of the role of others is to be a coach and that's what parents do and that's what if they're needing further professional help that's what would be happening too.

And that we do see these, this way of working as really helpful and that young people come through this. Absolutely. Yeah. And yeah, it's, it's something that they can learn to, to manage. Would there be anything else you would want to emphasise? No, I just think like you'd said, just the amount of young people that we've worked with, you know, together over the times with anxiety and seeing them come out the other end. Just learning about themselves, learning ways to cope. That's why, I guess it's why I enjoy the job and I keep doing it. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. The more we, helping them understand their experience for themselves and also how they, how they can face the things that are fearful and scary in a manageable, manageable way, which might feel uncomfortable for them.

Yeah. And then just finishing off with where, where parents and teams can go to find help as well. And that the idea of different, different levels of help as well. And you can start with some of the apps and self-help and reading the early stages to looking at your GP and to a referral to our services. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.