



Supporting pupils with
anxiety management in
the context of EBISA

Managing Anxiety – an introduction

Managing anxiety is a complex issue. It can be addressed in terms of learning how to manage a rising sense of panic 'in the moment' via use of well researched breathing practices and other mindfulness techniques. It can also be addressed in a broader sense across time as a pattern of behaviour, related largely to thinking patterns and in part to physiology.

It is not within our remit or gift to be able to explain anxiety management in detail here. However, we are including information related to a couple of tools and strategies that may be helpful within the context of EBSA, as well as some signposting to further sources of information and potential support.

The slides that follow include:

- Signposts to websites explaining some calming breathing techniques and some clips to teach how to use them.
- More specific information on the management of panic attacks
- Use of the Ladder of Courage
- some ideas for things I can do in individual or small group work with a pupil to help teach them about anxiety management
- contacts of organisations in Suffolk offering types of counselling support for children and young people
- ideas for things that parent / carers can do to help with anxiety

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/self-help-cbt-techniques/tackling-your-worries/#video> is a 2 to 3 minute animated clip using an adult female voice over explaining one or two strategies for managing and containing worries.

Clear Fear is an app to help young people manage the symptoms of anxiety, developed by a clinician in collaboration with young people. The Clear Fear app uses evidence based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). It is FREE to download from the Apple Store and Google Play. [Home - Clear Fear App](#)

[BBC - Headroom - Your Mental Health Toolkit](#)

Includes stories to inspire or motivate as well as links to some online meditations to try or calming music to listen to

<https://anxiety.ecrm-registration.nhs.uk/> is a link for signing up to an email programme to get expert advice and tips to help deal with anxiety

[Relaxation techniques - Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust \(cntw.nhs.uk\)](#) a range of NHS endorsed visualisations to use or mediations to listen to

Some breathing techniques and signposts to meditations you could use or teach others to use to aid anxiety management

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/self-help-cbt-techniques/reframing-unhelpful-thoughts/> is a 1 to 2 minute animated clip explaining the concept of 'unhelpful thoughts' and some tips for reframing them, as one anxiety management strategy

[Reframing unhelpful thoughts - Self-help CBT techniques - Every Mind Matters - NHS](#)

www.nhs.uk is the page of written guidance that accompanies the video including a link to a 'Thought record' exercise and proforma for capturing thoughts with a view to reframing (this reflects an approach similar to that used in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy)

<https://youtu.be/pJCpZBledrw> is a 2 minute animated YouTube clip produced by Mind with an English accented adult female voice over, with some 'bite-size' guidance on managing panic attacks

Call 01952 680835 for a recorded breathing exercise to help you through a panic attack (available 24/7) – promoted by the No Panic service.

Managing panic attacks

[Panic Attacks | Signs and Symptoms | YoungMinds](#)

Is the central page on panic attacks on the YoungMinds website, giving a lot of written guidance on self-care, tips for managing panic attacks and how to help someone else having a panic attack.

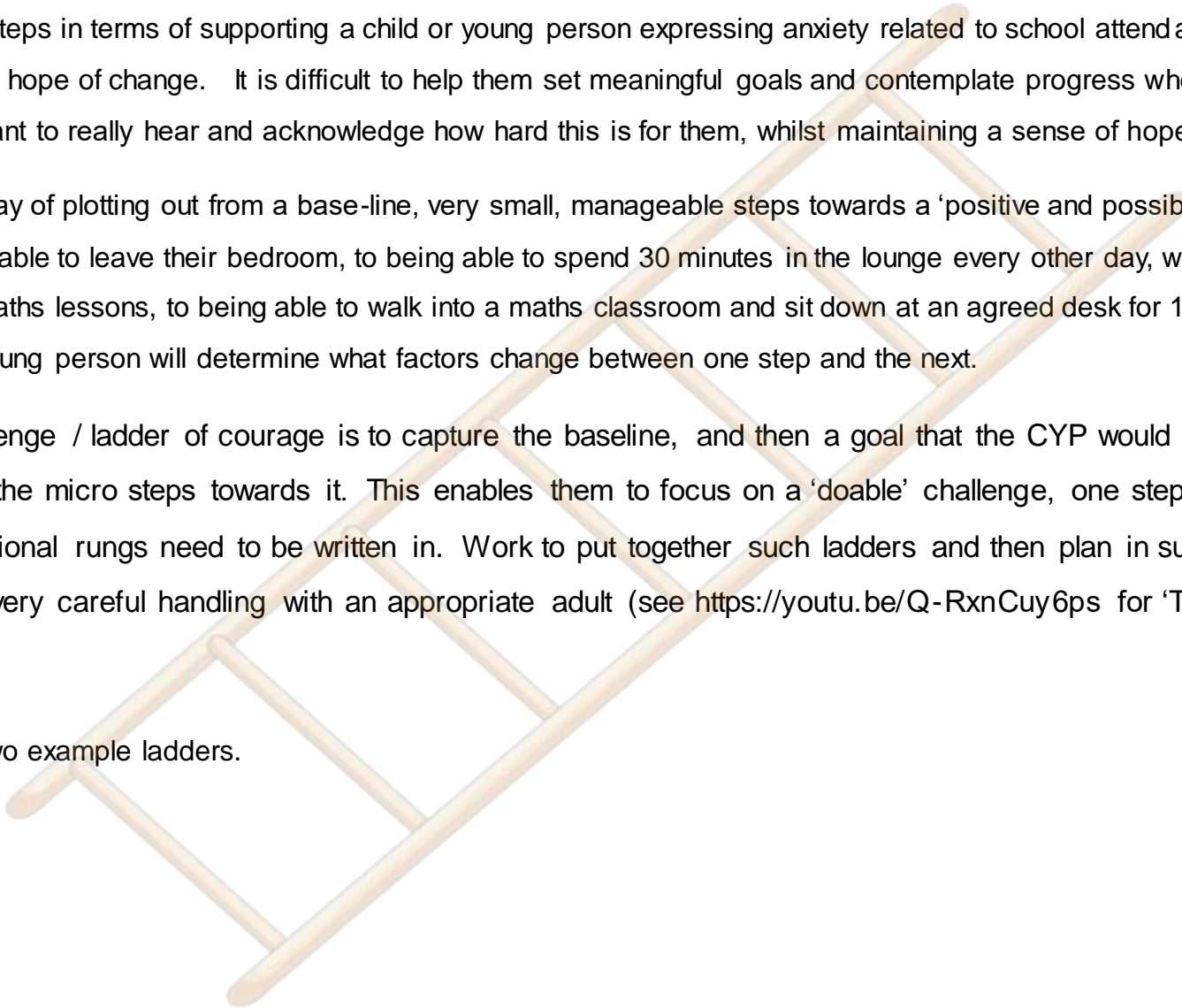
The Ladder of Courage Technique

Deciding on appropriate next steps in terms of supporting a child or young person expressing anxiety related to school attendance, can be difficult when the child or young person presents as having lost hope of change. It is difficult to help them set meaningful goals and contemplate progress when they feel completely unable to face challenge and seem 'stuck'. It is important to really hear and acknowledge how hard this is for them, whilst maintaining a sense of hope and belief that things **can** change for them.


The 'Ladder of courage' is a way of plotting out from a base-line, very small, manageable steps towards a 'positive and possible goal'. For some young people this might be about moving from not feeling able to leave their bedroom, to being able to spend 30 minutes in the lounge every other day, whilst for others it might be about moving from feeling unable to attend any maths lessons, to being able to walk into a maths classroom and sit down at an agreed desk for 10 minutes. Understanding the nature of the underlying challenge for the young person will determine what factors change between one step and the next.


The idea of a ladder of challenge / ladder of courage is to capture the baseline, and then a goal that the CYP would like to achieve *and* can consider as a possibility, and then to plan the micro steps towards it. This enables them to focus on a 'doable' challenge, one step at a time – If the next rung of the ladder feels too far away then additional rungs need to be written in. Work to put together such ladders and then plan in support to help progress through them is clearly not easy and needs very careful handling with an appropriate adult (see <https://youtu.be/Q-RxnCuy6ps> for 'The Ideal Children's Worker').

The slide that follows shows two example ladders.



Ladders of Courage – examples

Ladder of Challenge 4 (Socialising)		
	STEP	At this step...
	8	Daisy will meet at least one friend / social contact socially for at least 30 minutes, at least once a fortnight.
	7	As below and increasing in <u>5 minute</u> increments but where the friend / contact visits Daisy to interact at home for 30 minutes
	6	As below but where the friend / contact visits Daisy to interact at home for 5 minutes
	5	As below for 10 to 15 minutes
	4	Daisy will speak 'in real time' with someone outside of her immediate family for at least 5 minutes once a week on a topic that has been pre-agreed (e.g. using phone / video call)
	3	Daisy will listen to a pre-recorded spoken message from someone outside of her immediate family and record and send a <u>short spoken</u> reply at least once a week
	2	Daisy will compose and send at least one text / email / other electronic message to one person outside of her immediate family, at least once a week
	1	Daisy can recall socialising with a group of other pupils in school and has maintained some sporadic remote / virtual contact with some of them

Ladder of Challenge 5 (Going out)		
	STEP	At this step...
	8	Daisy will be able to leave her home and spend time in another environment for at least one hour a week
	7	As below, extending time out of the house to 30 minutes once a week.
	6	As below, and in addition Daisy will go on a 5 to 10 minute 'round trip' car journey with a member of her immediate family at least once a week
	5	As below, and in addition Daisy will go on a 5 to <u>10 minute</u> walk from and back to her front door with a trusted adult
	4	As below and in addition Daisy will spend 20 minutes in the garden.
	3	Daisy will spend at least 2 x 30 minutes on each day of the school week in a room of her house other than her bedroom.
	2	Daisy will spend at least 30 minutes on each day of the school week sitting in the lounge with at least one member of her immediate family <i>(Note this step has since been broken up into much smaller, more manageable steps by Daisy)</i>
	1	Daisy <u>is able to</u> spend at least 2 hours of time in her bedroom at home every day

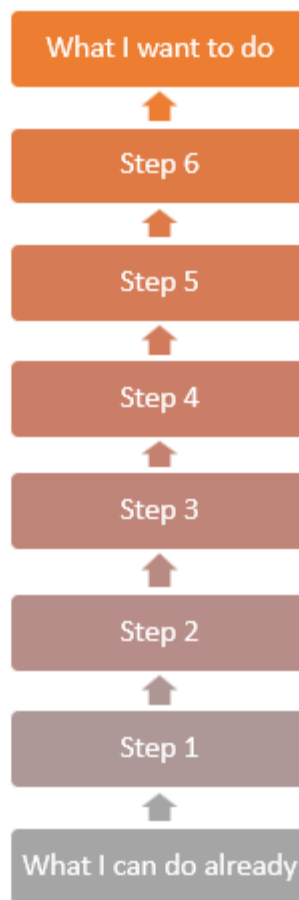
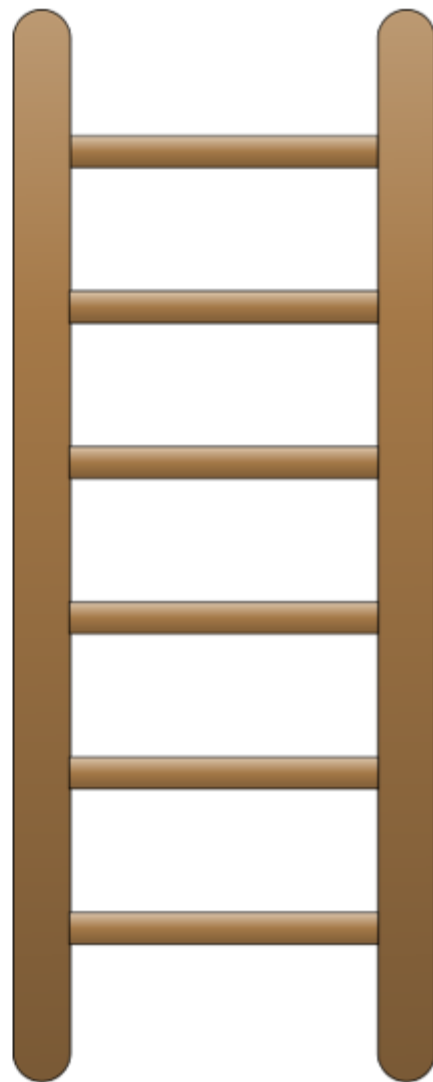
GUIDANCE ON USING THE LADDER OF COURAGE:

- The CYP could be asked at each step, what is going to help them stay strong so as to face the challenge of the next step. They could also be asked what positive thing will they say to themselves once they've either made a good attempt at the next step, or achieved the next step, and / or what one nice thing could they do for themselves as a reward for their efforts towards the next step (trying as much as possible to not make this material goods).
- As part of a support package for a pupil when undertaking this form of work, it might be useful to consider teaching some anxiety management strategies to them such as mindfulness or breathing techniques, sensory calming methods, recognising and re-framing automatic negative thinking patterns and so on – strategies that the pupil can make active use of to help them get through any anxiety provoking moments along their journey.
- Where a CYP makes an effort towards the next step and fails to achieve it, it will be important to have a non – blaming, non – punitive conversation around this, trying to understand the nature of the challenge, and then potentially planning in additional support, or potentially planning further 'rungs' on the ladder to break the challenge up some more.
- It will also help to have a meaningful discussion from the offset as to why the goal on the top rung has been chosen – this has got to be something 'worth' striving for.
- In terms of time frames for moving between one rung of the ladder and the next, this will be dependent on how easy it felt for the student to attain the next step. Students shouldn't feel pressured into moving onto the next rung before they're ready. Progress needs to happen from a feeling of safety.
- There is of course no 'optimum' number of rungs on the ladder – a ladder can comprise of 5 steps or 15 depending on what makes sense for that young person.

My Ladder of Courage

What I'm going to do to help myself to stay strong when I'm feeling worried is:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓



[Free social work resources & tools for direct work with children and adults \(socialworkerstoolbox.com\)](#) although designed for use by social workers, this site has a freely available wealth of information leaflets, activities and resources to use with children and families on topics such as: anxiety, emotional well-being, coping skills, resilience, bereavement etc.

[Therapy worksheets, tools, and handouts | TherapistAid](#) as with the 'socialworkertoolbox' above, this site has a very wide range of freely available resources, articles, videos, worksheets, interactives to use on a plethora of wellbeing related topics.

[Resources for school staff - Suffolk Mind](#)

There are a number of resources available to help you support the wellbeing of your students and that of your own

[Secondary: Mentally Healthy Schools](#) and [Primary: Mentally Healthy Schools](#) are good 'front door' pages from which you can follow a range of links to guide school practice around supporting pupil mental health.

There is also a resource link here: [Resource library: Mentally Healthy Schools](#) from which can be accessed pages of resources and guidance on over 40 mental health related topics.

[Provide - Emotionally Healthy Schools](#) a page of links to evidence-based quality interventions, both universal and targeted, matched to pupils' specific needs on topics such as: exam stress support, relationships, sleep, bereavement, mindfulness. There is an equally impressive range also accessible at [Mental Health Resources For Children and Young People | YoungMinds](#)

[Supporting a Young Person Struggling with Anxiety | YoungMinds](#) and [Anxiety - The Source](#) to find advice, hints and tips for young people and for adults working with them.

[Inspiring Stories and Resources - BBC Children in Need](#) to find resources and stories to continue the conversation with your students about and managing their wellbeing. [Mental health support and advice - BBC Children in Need](#) hosts some guidance, activities and resources mostly suitable for KS3. [Mental health and wellbeing - BBC Bitesize](#) also hosts a range of clips, articles and tips on mental health topics.

Some ideas for things you can do in individual or small group work with a pupil to help teach them about anxiety management



[On My Mind | Resources for Young People | Anna Freud Centre](#) 'aims to empower young people to make informed choices about their mental health and wellbeing'. Content is largely written by 'young people for young people'. Includes links to information posters for school walls, and also resources such as: <https://www.annafreud.org/media/15030/my-self-care-plan-secondary.pdf>. Also gives advice to young people if they're worried about the mental health of someone else.

No Panic

Supports people struggling with panic attacks, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and other anxiety-related issues - and provides support and information for their carers.

They offer a specialist youth helpline for people aged 13-20. The opening hours are 3pm - 6pm, Monday - Friday; 6pm - 8pm, Thursdays and Saturdays. [0330 606 1174 \(Youth helpline\)](tel:03306061174)
sarah@nopanic.org.uk is the email contact.

[Home – Kooth](#) is a website that has articles, discussion boards, on-line chats on mental health topics, as well as offering a free counselling service. The service is well used so sometimes the website buffers. It requires people to log-in but you can do so anonymously and without sharing any personal information

Childline

If you're under 19 you can confidentially call [0800 11 11](tel:08001111), chat online or email about any problem big or small.

[Sign up](#) for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use their [free 1-2-1 counsellor chat](#) and email support service.

[Can provide a BSL interpreter](#) if you are deaf or hearing-impaired.

Hosts [online message boards](#) where you can share your experiences, have fun and get support from other young people in similar situations.

Some contacts of organisations in Suffolk offering types of counselling support for children and young people

The Mix

Offers online information as well as helpline support to under-25s about anything that's troubling them.

Email support is available via their [online contact form](#).

Free [1-2-1 webchat service](#) and telephone helpline available.

Opening times: 4pm - 11pm, seven days a week
[0808 808 4994](tel:08088084994)

<https://www.teenagementalhealth.co.uk>

For Mental Health Support in Ipswich & the surrounding areas **Teenage Mental Health offer help both to parents and children.**

“We can work with you and your child to ensure positive outcomes for all through specialist child therapy” (note however that beyond the first appointment, the service is not free.)

Call: **01473 411324**

Email: reception@teenagementalhealth.co.uk

Address: 31 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich IP4 1AQ

[School Anxiety and Refusal | Parent Guide to Support | YoungMinds](#) written as a guide for parents who have a child who is reluctant to go to school; includes tips and stories from parents who have managed this as well as some expert advice and guidance.

[Parents and Carers | Advice and Guidance | Anna Freud Centre](#) hosts podcasts on children's mental health as well as tips for parental self care, conflict reduction and managing exclusion.

[Five Tips for Families - Suffolk County Council](#) is a link to our page of accessible tips on topics such as: sleep, anxiety, supporting pupils with ASD, positive self-talk, school avoidance

[Online Workshops and Courses - Wellbeing Suffolk \(wellbeingnands.co.uk\)](#)

This service offers a range of short on-line courses & workshops with both adults and children as the focus – some on mental health and some on physical health; they are all free and presented live by clinicians.

[PACT | Parents And Carers Together | Suffolk](#)

Their vision is to “reach all parents and carers across Suffolk who are caring for a child or young person with mental health issues”. They offer support (face to face meetups, online, and our outreach 1:1 service), training (including Youth Mental Health First Aid and parent guided CBT) and tools/resources to help both with a parent/carers wellbeing and via them, their child/young person too.

[Wellbeing advice to help you support your family - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize](#) hosts some links to supporting teenagers' wellbeing for parents / carers with advice on (for example) anxiety, sleep, resilience building and LGBTQ+

www.youngminds.org.uk is an excellent source of information for young people and their parents / carers on anything related to mental health. This link goes directly to the parent page: [Parents Mental Health Support | Advice for Your Child | YoungMinds](#) and includes a parent helpline / webchat facility.

[Anxiety self-help guide | NHS inform](#) is an electronic guide that an adult or older child might use to aid self-knowledge and self-reflection on the topic of anxiety

Some ideas for things that parents / carers can do to help with anxiety



<https://www.mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

Is a site for parents /carers who might be concerned about the mental health of their child or teenager or might just want some hints and tips on parenting. MindEd for Families has advice and information from trusted experts and will help you to understand what problems occur, what you can do to best support your family, and how to take care of yourself.

[Psychology in Schools Team - NSFT Events | Eventbrite](#)

Is a link to a rolling programme of free live webinars from Suffolk Clinical Psychologists specifically for parents on a range of mental health topics including emotional regulation, anxiety, social media, building resilience etc.