

Summary: 24.4.2020

The Evidence Based Practice Unit (a collaboration between the Anna Freud Centre and UCL) is producing a series of 'research bites' based on very rapid reviews of existing research. These are not thorough or extensive reviews, rather they aim to offer concise and timely insights on some topical issues.



The banner features the EBP Unit logo on the left, which includes the text 'EBPU Evidence Based Practice Unit' and 'A partnership of' above the logos for UCL and the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. On the right, the text reads 'April 2020' and 'Mental health and the coronavirus research bite #1: Self-management strategies for young people experiencing anxiety'.

Self-management strategies for young people experiencing anxiety: There are many variations of self-help. They range from general activities, like exercise, to approaches that directly address anxiety, like information leaflets and websites, interactive apps and digital self-help tools

Key resources Online information and resources

- The Anna Freud Centre's self-care resources, developed with young people: www.annafreud.org/selfcare
- The Anna Freud Centre's guidance on supporting young people's mental health during periods of disruption: www.annafreud.org/coronavirus

Research tells us that creative therapies such as music therapy with a professional can also be helpful for reducing feelings of anxiety. Research with adults shows that creative arts, including art, dance, drama and music, can have an important role to play in improving wellbeing and reducing stress and depression.

Take-away message There are several self-management strategies and sources of advice which children and young people who are experiencing anxiety during the coronavirus pandemic could access. **Evidence suggests that making use of online courses or apps and doing physical exercise could be helpful.** While our rapid review did not find clear evidence for all available strategies, it does not mean that these strategies are not helpful to some people or that they should not be used, and the ability for young people to choose self-management strategies according to they like and find useful could be important.

Apps

Lots of mental health apps for children and young people are available to download. A selection is included below. These apps have been through a vetting process by [NHS Digital](#), [ORCHA](#) or [Our Mobile Health](#).

Chill Panda

What it help with: stress, worry.

Age: 6-12, but can be used by children younger than 6 with an adult.

What is it? A family friendly relaxation, breathing exercise and activity app designed by a Clinical Psychologist and recommended by the NHS in the UK.

Chill Panda aims to help children and adults to start to understand how their bodies respond to different feelings. To start learning about this you can use the app to take your heart rate, use a simple scale to rate your feelings, and then do some play-based activities demonstrated to you by a panda avatar. It aims to enhance self-regulation of emotions by introducing ideas and skills that could help children and families understand the relationship between their feelings, body sensations and different activities.

Feeling good

What it can help with: low mood, stress, worry, anxiety, depression.

Age: 16+ / teens version for 11-15 years.

What is it? An audio mind-body programme that takes you through a set of 12 relaxation and visualisation exercises. This aims to allow you to switch to a helpful state of mind and let go of the negative emotional triggers which underpin distress, whilst simultaneously increasing your positivity and focus. The techniques aim to build a resilient mindset of positive motivations, removing the blocks to positive internal vision, and enabling goal focused outcomes.

Superbetter

What it can help with: anxiety and depression

Age: 13+

What is it? Superbetter is a game played in real life which aims to build resilience and success. Playing Superbetter unlocks heroic potential to achieve goals that matter. It aims to help to tackle challenges including anxiety and depression.