

The global pandemic has turned all our lives upside down and especially for children and young people.

COVID-19 has (and continues to be) a really challenging time; it is important to help young people explore how this unprecedented time has affected their lives and the impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Well, Melva has some ideas that might help you and the young people in your life do just that...

Melva is a mountain-climbing, sweet-eating, eye-rolling ‘just-turned-11-year-old’. She’s also had a bit of trouble battling with anxiety – or ‘worrits’ as she calls them; she has learned some ways to manage them, with help from her Grandpa, her niggling voice, Gideon, and some very unusual friends. Melva has decided to share some of the things she’s found helpful during the pandemic – maybe you can try a few.

1 Make time for loved ones

Melva loves having tea with Grandpa Pebble. They set the table nicely and enjoy a cuppa and a bit of cake or sometimes Grandpa’s latest soup creation. It doesn’t really matter what they eat – the important thing is having calm time together and connecting with one another. Melva says be present without screens, ask questions and really listen to what is said.

2 Do something positive

When we have bad worrits, doing something positive you like, can help you manage your feelings. Melva’s favourite things to do when she has worrits are dancing to pop music, going for a walk, doing something that makes her laugh, playing with her friend Barnabus Boggle and planning adventures. What do you like to do when you feel those bad worrits? What do your friends or family do?





3 Shake it out!

It's really helpful to be able to recognise the physical feelings of worries in our bodies before they become overwhelming. Different emotions make us feel different sensations and you may need to use a way to shake it out of our bodies or bring our bodies back to feeling calm. Melva says, when she feels like that, she shakes her whole body for 5-10 seconds to shake out worry energy. So next time you're worry, shake shake SHAKE!

4 Breathing exercises

Melva also loves chitchats with Feggis – a fainting mountain goat that lives near her cottage. It helps Melva think about her worries and find ways to work through her feelings. Melva says, when she feels overwhelmed, Feggis tells her to close her eyes, to breathe in deeply and slowly, bringing her palm up to her face. Then to breathe out slowly, lowering her hand to her lap. And repeat. It makes her feel calmer and when she feels worry, why not try it too!?

5 Identify the feeling

It can be helpful to identify the sensations we're feeling in our bodies to help us explain them to other people (like the grown-ups in our lives) and plan how to deal with them. Melva uses the sensation chart below to explore the sensations of her emotions; it helps her identify how she's feeling and helps her explain to others. How are you feeling right now? Pick three terms from the sensation chart below!

achy	alive	airy	awake	astounded
bloated	blocked	breathless	brittle	bruised
bubbly	burning	buzzy	calm	choked
clenched	cold	cool	congested	contracted
constricted	cosy	cut-off	damp	disconnected
dense	dizzy	draining	dry	dull
electric	empty	energised	expanded	explosive
fiery	flat	flowing	floaty	flushed
fluid	fluttery	free	frozen	full
fuzzy	hard	heavy	hollow	hot
icy	imploding	itchy	jittery	jumpy
knotted	light	light-hearted	melting	nauseous
nervy	numb	open	piercing	pounding
pressure	prickly	puffy	pulsing	queasy
quivering	racing	radiating	raw	releasing
rushing	sensitive	shaky	sharp	shivering
smooth	soft	sore	spacious	spacey
spiky	spinning	still	streaming	stuck
suffocating	sweaty	tender	tense	thick
throbbing	tight	tingling	trembling	twitchy
warm	weighted	wiggly	wobbly	wooden

6 Speak to a professional

Melva has pulled together this list of resources from mental health specialists to help support young people with worries and anxieties.



Action For Children:

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Anna Freud National Centre for Children & Families:

www.annafreud.org

Anxiety UK:

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Children North East:

www.children-ne.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Tyneside and Northumberland Mind:

www.tynesidemind.org.uk

MindEd:

www.minded.org.uk

NHS:

www.nhs.uk (Search Mental Health Services in the search box to get to a comprehensive list of local organisations and services across the North East)

Young Minds:

www.youngminds.org.uk

And your local GP is also a great place to go for advice, support service sign posting and to talk through any mental health or anxiety concerns or questions.

7 Play Melva Mapletree and the Quest for Barnabus Boggle

And finally, Melva suggests you have a go at Melva Mapletree and the Quest for Barnabus Boggle – Mortal Fools' brand new online Melva game! It's a fun and creative way for young people aged 7-11yrs to explore their worries and anxiety and compete to become the expert worrit warrior.



Visit www.mortalfools.org.uk/melva-online to register your interest and find out more.

Available NOW to use in school or at home



This project is supported by funds from Public Health, Northumberland County Council.