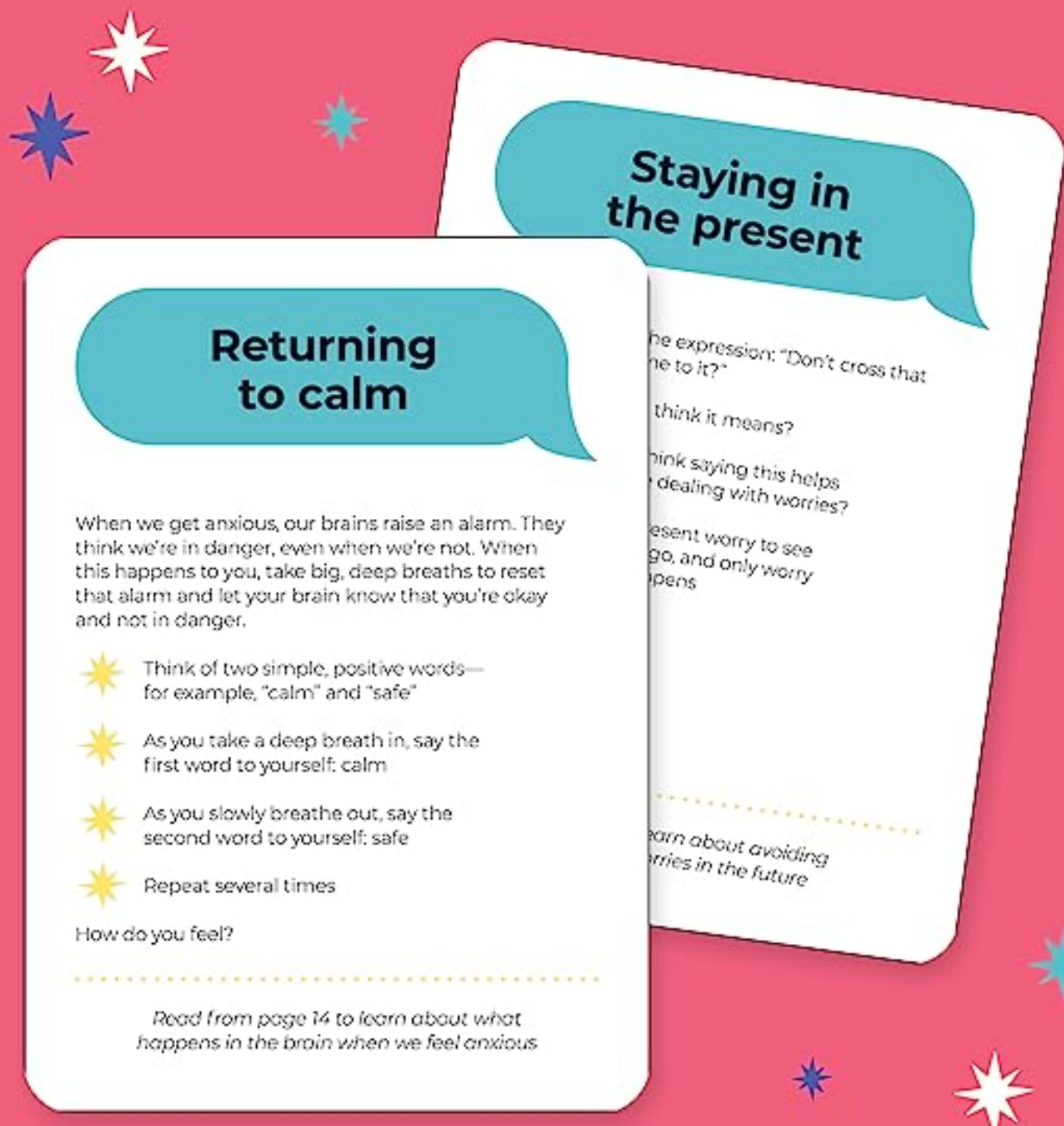
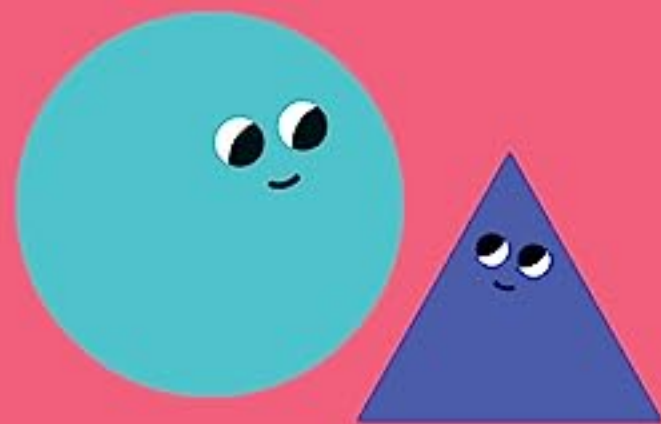


Let's Talk About Anxiety

Start the conversation and help children **open up about worries** and learn how best to **cope in different situations**, with this book and card set created by counsellor Sharon Selby.



This beautifully illustrated set combines practical exercises and 20 engaging cards to provide “conversation starter” guidelines for discussing difficult topics.



es you,
ou?

nd struggles. We are not robots.
e perfect. It's important that we
ay we are, and realize we are not
everything. When you notice yourself
o others, take a deep breath and
que strengths.

ferent strengths. Which ones
in you?

- Loyal friend, caring
- Scientific
- Musical
- Mathematical
- Love reading and writing
- Self-aware
- Logical
- Love animals
- the environment

Try Cards 5, 7 and 14 for talking more about mistakes,
habits and comparing ourselves to others

33

What is fight mode?

In this mode, your body prepares to face danger. To make you stronger, your brain tells your heart to beat faster to pump more blood to your arms and legs. Your breathing goes quicker, too. If a football came whizzing towards your face, you would be ready to hit it away.

What is flight mode?

Your body wants to hide or run away from the danger. Again, your body grows stronger and your mind becomes sharper. You are ready to make a quick escape if you need to by running, jumping or hiding.

What is freeze mode?

When you see a rabbit go into a hole, it goes completely still. This is called freeze mode. When you freeze, you are trying to



Use Card 2 to talk about handling discomfort and facing worries



58 Facing worry and anxiety

Keep it real

Your worry creature may also try to make you worry about something that's in the future. It can be hard not to let the worry grow, but if you bring yourself back to the present moment and remind yourself to check for evidence, you will learn to keep it real.

Let's think through an example: "What if everyone laughs at me when I'm giving a presentation in front of the class?"

What is the evidence?

- 1 Your worry creature can't predict the future and neither can you. Since you cannot know what will happen, it makes no sense to worry about it now.
- 2 It is normal for people to get nervous. That's all you're feeling right now.
- 3 No one likes to be laughed at. It's not realistic to think that kids are going to laugh at you, because they are in the same boat.



26 What helps worry and anxiety?

Why questioning your thoughts works

It is normal to get worry thoughts from time to time, but just because you have them, it doesn't make them true. For example, you might be worried about getting a strict teacher but then you go to school and get a really nice teacher. These worry thoughts were not true and they created days of unnecessary stress. If you learn to question the worry thoughts, you will find it easier to see that there is no real threat.

Try Card 1 to learn how to stay in the present and Card 20 to talk more about 'What if'

Note for adults

Encourage your child to keep an 'Evidence Diary' where they write down a worry, along with evidence that the perceived threat is not actually happening at that moment. Later, if all went well, they can add a few words about the outcome. This diary will be helpful to look back on the next time the worry creature pops up.

27

What does your brain do when you're anxious?

When you are worried or anxious, your brain picks up that you are stressed and decides you need protection from danger. It automatically sounds an alarm which tells your body to go into one of three modes: fight, flight or freeze. One of these modes is a good way to cope with danger. But often, when you are worried or anxious, there is no real danger. Your brain reacts anyway. When this happens, we call it a false alarm.

14 Let's talk about anxiety

Listen: See if you can hear three sounds. You might be able to hear someone talking, a bird tweeting outside or your tummy rumbling. Name the three sounds or count them off.

Can you notice two different textures? Touch your hand, try sniffing your skin.

Former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "A pessimist sees the thief of joy." It means comparing ourselves to others takes away our happiness. Comparing is encouraged by social media, which gives the impression that everyone else has a perfect life. This isn't true, and it can cause a lot of anxiety.

Social media shows just a tiny part of someone's life. A person might have touched up a selfie they're posting or taken many photos just to get one that looks almost perfect. But this is not a realistic snapshot of their life.

Note for adults

Social media creates pressure to be 'perfect', and perfectionism is a form of anxiety. Aim to show that imperfection is normal and a part of life. It's essential to talk to your child about their strengths and help them see that these are their unique gifts.

32 What helps worry and anxiety?