

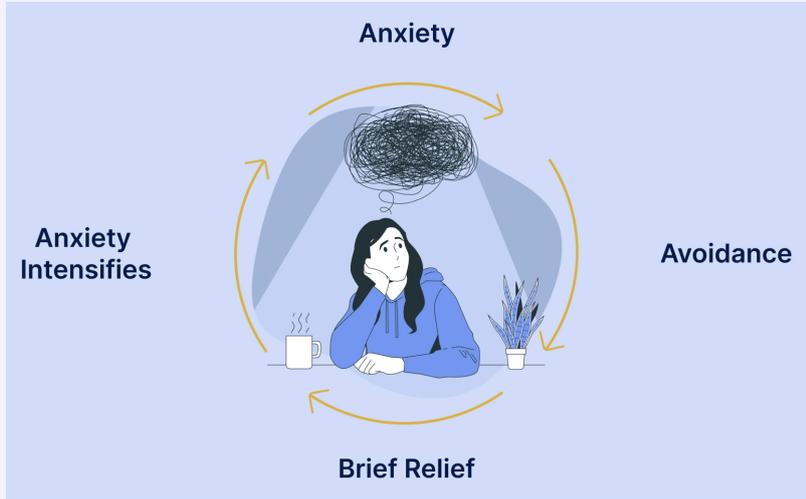


Emotionally Based School

Avoidance

What is school avoidance?

Some young people struggle to go into school or college. They might feel anxious, overwhelmed or stressed which can lead to avoidance. They might find it difficult to come in on certain days or to get to school in the morning. Some young people feel unable to go to school for a longer period of time.



When we avoid things we're anxious about, it makes us feel better in the short term. However, the more time spent away from school, the higher the anxiety gets in the long term. The main way to tackle anxiety is to break this cycle of avoidance by taking small steps to challenge ourselves.



What can you do?

Use regulation and distraction strategies. Breathing strategies, fidget toys, listening to music, counting backwards in 3s. Anything that works for you to distract yourself and calm anxiety.



Think and talk about what makes you feel worried about school. It's helpful to understand what you're finding difficult so you can help school staff and your family know how to help you.



Challenge negative thoughts you might have about school. Thoughts like 'This is hard but I can do it' or 'I've just got to get through today' can be more helpful



Challenge yourself so you can break the cycle of avoidance. This might feel hard but it's how we can make ourselves feel better in the long term!

Take it one step at a time. Focus on taking the next small step, rather than getting stuck on big future worries.

