**3) EMPATHISE**

Put yourself in their shoes

Children need reassurance as well as support to build resilience. Anxiety should not be dismissed.

Try statements such as “I notice that you are scared/worried, I’m here to help you through this”

1. **LABEL IT**

**NAME IT TO TAME IT**

Helping children to identify what they are experiencing can be the first step.

Normalising with children and helping them to understand that everybody has anxious feelings some of the time can be helpful.

**2) DESCRIBE IT**

Physical Feelings

Help children to recognise their responses to anxiety and worry.

What does it feel like? Where do you feel it?

Thoughts

Anxiety can trigger unhelpful thoughts which actually cause us to worry even more.

Help children to express their thoughts so that irrational thoughts can be addressed.

Assisting children to come up with more realistic thoughts can be helpful.

Actions

Often worry and anxiety triggers our fight or flight or freeze response. Our body is programmed to try and keep us safe.

Help children to notice what their body is doing. Is their heart rate increasing? Are they breathing faster? Do they get hotter?

Taking back control of the body can help to alleviate feelings of anxiety. Often we can do this by focussing on controlling our breathing. Breathing techniques such as slow deep breaths can be helpful. Other people finding focussing on other ‘senses’ or something distracting can be helpful; perhaps noticing other noises, smells, things you can see, things you can touch.

**4) TALK STRATEGIES**

Seek out solutions together

Equipping children with the skills they need to be able to eventually work through anxiety independently will serve them well for their adult years.

Help children to test out strategies that work for them. Find out what helps. Breathing techniques? Calming music? Talking back to the worries?

Anything that helps them to feel back in control will help them manage their emotions more successfully.