

Support tips for additional underlying difficulties

Give enough processing time so a child can make sense of what's said and respond in their own time.

Books, films, TV, role play & gaming can help a child learn about emotions, social dynamics & relationships, and develop understanding & skills, in an indirect way.

Collaborate & plan together to minimise uncertainty.

Sensory perception and sensitivity can vary depending on levels of anxiety, illness and environment.

A child may be hyper-sensitive (seeking to avoid a sense) or hypo-sensitive (seeking out more of a sense).

An OT trained in sensory integration can assess a child's sensory needs and suggest a 'sensory diet'.

Support tips for anxiety & distressed behaviours

- Be vigilant in spotting signs that anxiety is escalating - act and adapt quickly to de-escalate.
- Anxiety can be expressed in many different ways - e.g. avoidance, anger, shouting, crying, laughing, not talking, boredom, tics, 'obsessing', skin picking, withdrawing, masking and lashing out.
- Work together with the child collaboratively & proactively to find solutions.

- Distressed behaviours arise when our capacity to cope has been exceeded and we feel overwhelmed, like a panic attack.
- These may include meltdowns, shutdowns, taking flight, physical/verbal aggression & self-injury.
- Keep calm at all times, reduce stimuli, give space & be aware of hazards.
- Afterwards, provide reassurance and recovery time with the child's preferred regulating activity.