**MAKING A WORRY BOX**

**Step 1: Explaining the worry box to your child**

1. Let your child know that we all worry sometimes, but that when our heads get too full of worries it can make it difficult to do or think about other things.
2. Explain that you’re going to make a box where they can put their worries so they don’t have to carry them around anymore. You might say that you’re going to give their worries to a ‘worry box’, which can hold them so your child can let them go.
3. Reassure them that you’re going to make and use the worry box together. You’ll be with them when they think about their worries, and you can help them talk them through.

**Step 2: Making the worry box**

1. Choose a box or container. If you’re using a cardboard box, seal down the lid using sellotape and then use scissors to make a slit in the top that’s big enough to post slips of paper through – so that it works like a post-box. If you’re using a wooden box or jar, make sure you can open and close the lid. Your child might like to tie the lid closed with a piece of string (but remember to make sure they can undo it easily!).
2. Decorate the box together, letting your child lead if they can. You can use things like felt tips, paints, wrapping or tissue paper, stickers and glitter.
3. Label the container the 'worry box' by writing this somewhere on it.
4. Agree where to store the box, asking your child if a particular place feels right for them. Avoid keeping it in or next to their bedroom. Try to find somewhere that puts a bit of distance between them and their worries. They might want to hide it inside a cupboard in the living room or kitchen. Or, if they tend to worry about things that are the parents’ job to manage, it could help to keep the box in your bedroom.
5. Tear up some slips of paper and leave these next to the box with a pen.

**Step 3: Using the worry box**

1. Agree a time when you will use the worry box together. Ask your child whether they’d like to do this at a particular time every day or week, or just when they’re feeling particularly anxious. Avoid using the box just before bedtime, so they have time to let the worries go before they try to sleep.
2. At the agreed time, ask your child to write down or draw anything they’re worrying about on the slips of paper (you can write for your child if needed).
3. Ask your child to share each worry with you, and spend a moment acknowledging it together. You might show that you’ve heard them by repeating the worry back to them, and thinking briefly about any strategies that could help your child to cope with the worry in the future. Then ask your child to fold up the piece of paper and post it into the box.
4. Recognise together that the worries have been given to the box and can be left in there. Agree not to give them anymore airtime that day – the box has got them and they can let them go.
5. If the box doesn’t have a sealed lid, put the lid back on and/or tie it closed with the string. Then put the box back in the storage place you agreed together.
6. Spend a few moments afterwards thinking about something positive. It might be something your child enjoyed recently, something they’re looking forward to, a person they love or an activity they know they like doing. Some children might like making another box of positive thoughts, in which they can write down and keep their happy things. This box can stay open so that they can go back through it whenever they want to.