

*Helping
you to help
your child*

Simple Phrases for Calming Anxious Children

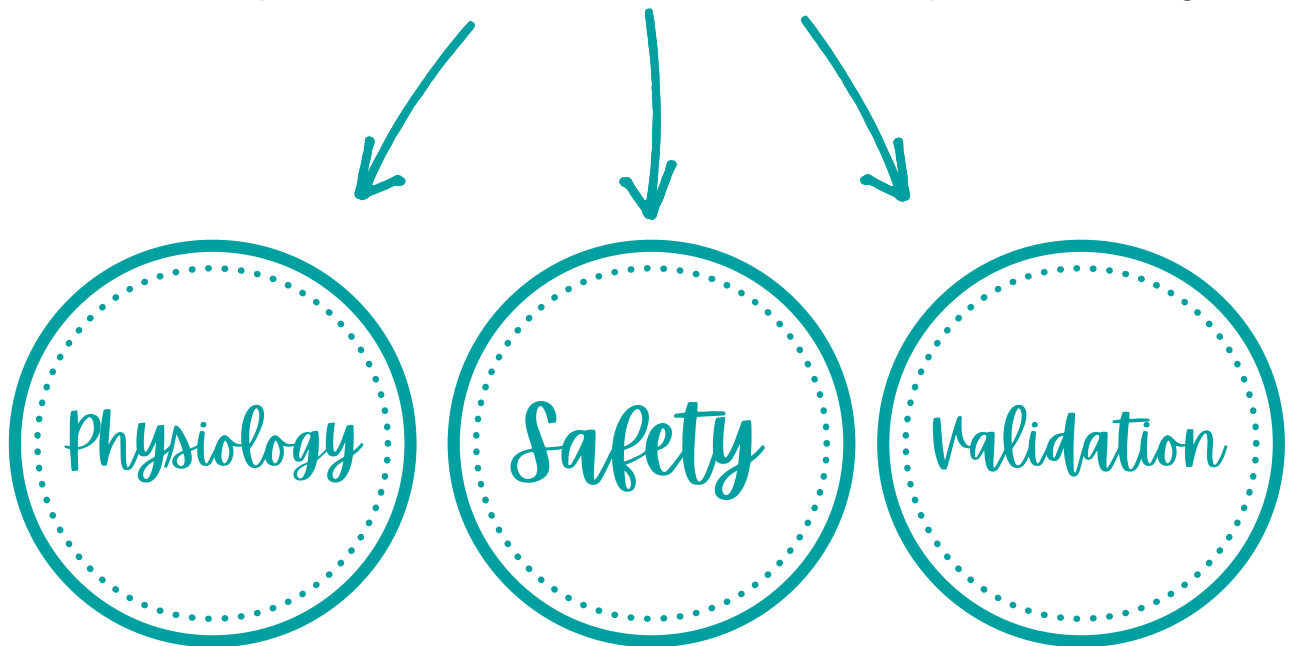
A guide for parents, carers and other
supporting adults



Introduction

The best words are YOUR words... experiment

I've generally found that there are three categories of phrases that tend to strike a chord with anxious children. These are phrases linked to safety, phrases linked to physiology and phrases that validate how they are feeling.




I've shared some examples in this document, but remember, the best words are often your own, so just use these as a starting point.

Notice what works well and make a note of those phrases to use again or adapt further for next time.

Safety

Using phrases that reassure a child they are physically and emotionally safe can be deeply reassuring.

Sometimes a child needs to hear an adult they trust say 'You're going to be okay'



Physical
Safety



Emotional
Safety

~ **Try phrases like** ~

I'm here. I've got you

It's okay, you're safe

I'm going to stay with you

You're going to be okay

It's okay to cry

You're not in trouble

Remind your child "You've done this before, you can do it again"

Physiology

It can be helpful to use phrases that acknowledge the physiology of panic and anxiety, that remind the child of the biology behind why they feel how they do right now and that this feeling will not last indefinitely.

Panic can leave us feeling like we're dying, but we're not... sometimes the most helpful thing is a simple reminder that they've been here before and survived, and we know they can do it again.

~ Try phrases like ~

Your body is responding in an anxious way

This will pass

Let's see how you feel in one minute

Your body won't feel like this forever

You've done this before, you can do it again

Your body will start to feel better soon

Validation

We need to be careful not to dismiss or minimise a child's concerns. If they feel anxious or panicked, that's a real feeling even if we don't understand or agree with the trigger for this feeling.

Acknowledging and validating how a child feels without trying to explain or dismiss it can be very powerful.

Even if your child dismisses their worry as 'silly' you can validate it and listen

~ **Try phrases like** ~

That must be really hard

I'm sorry that X is making you anxious

Let's begin to unpick your worry

Do you want to talk about it?

You're worried, how can I help?

It's not silly, if it's making you feel like this

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- Thank You! -

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Pooky x

