

Escape. Connect. Relate.

Anxiety & Stress

Anxiety can manifest itself in many ways; from feelings of tension which develop over a long time to panic attacks and phobias.

Anxiety is defined by the following symptoms; increase in heart rate, sweating, sense of dread, shortness of breath, dizziness, insomnia.

Anxiety and fear can be a difficult cycle to break, an individual who feels anxious about something is very likely to start fearing the anxiety itself, which can start causing problems in their daily life and routine. That's why it is so important to get support as early as possible





ECR Suggested Reads

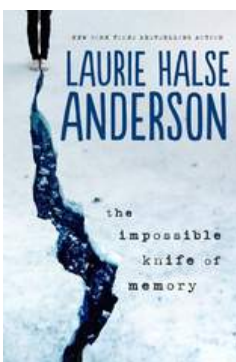
Many of our suggested reads are available from your school library and from [Edinburgh Libraries](#). Some books may contain triggering or upsetting content. Please use the age ratings as guidance and ask your school librarian for help. Books are listed in alphabetical order by author's surname.



The Weight of our Sky by Hanna Alkaf

Unlike most other sixteen-year-olds Melati believes that she has a djinn inside her, one who threatens her with horrific images of her mother's death unless she adheres to an elaborate ritual of counting and tapping to keep him satisfied. But there are things that Mel can't protect her mother from. On the evening of May 13th, 1969, racial tensions in her home city of Kuala Lumpur boil over. Mel and her mother become separated by a city in flames.

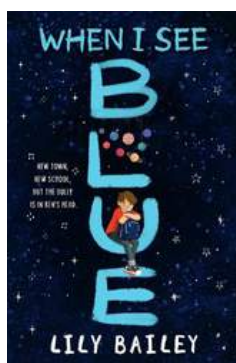
S3+, OCD



The Impossible Knife of Memory, by Laurie Halse Anderson

For the past five years, Hayley Kincaid and her father, Andy, have been on the road, never staying long in one place as he struggles to escape the demons that have tortured him since his return from Iraq. Now they are back in the town where he grew up so Hayley can attend school. Perhaps now, Hayley can have a normal life, put aside her own painful memories and even have a relationship with Finn, the hot guy who obviously likes her but is hiding secrets of his own.

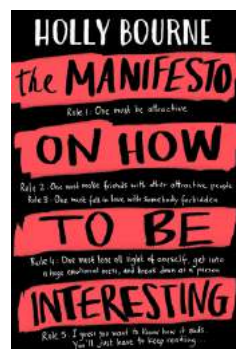
S3+, PTSD



When I See Blue, by Lily Bailey

12 year old Ben is being bullied. Not by other children - Ben is bullied by a voice in his own head. Invisible OCD rules dictate his every action, trying to prevent him from living life like neurotypical people do. Whether it's avoiding certain colours or doing things repetitively and in multiples of four, it is exhausting trying to abide by a secret rule book - not to mention trying to hide it from others. But if Ben doesn't listen to his brain-bully, surely something dreadful will happen?

S1+, OCD



The Manifesto on How to be Interesting, by Holly Bourne

Bree is by no means popular. Most of the time, she hates her life, her school, her never-there-parents. So she writes. But when Bree is told she needs to stop shutting the world out and start living a life worth writing about, The Manifesto on How to Be Interesting is born. A manifesto that will change everything...but the question is, at what cost?

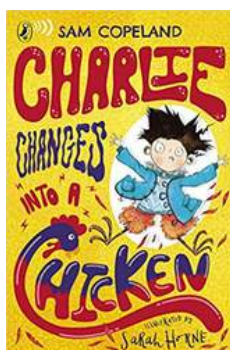
Anxiety, S3+



A Flash of Fireflies, by Aisha Bushby

Hazel's family is moving to the UK and she is sent to stay with her great aunt. Hazel finds change difficult and is nervous about travelling alone and attending summer school. As she becomes more anxious, Hazel is visited by three fireflies. When she was younger, they would appear whenever she was nervous, but she managed to banish them. Now, with so much change in her life, they're back, exposing her greatest fears.

S1+, OCD



Charlie Changes into a Chicken, by Sam Copeland

Charlie McGuffin tries to be an optimist, but in reality he's a bit of a worrier. Some of the things Charlie is worried about: his brother (who is in hospital), their very panicked parents and much unwanted attention from the school bully. Charlie then discovers he has a worrying superpower- the changes into animals! With the help of his three best friends, Charlie needs to find a way of dealing with his crazy new power - and fast!

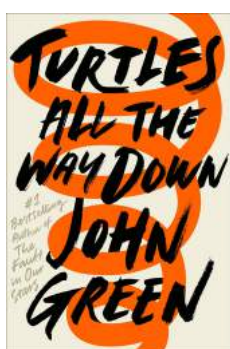
S1+, Anxiety



Under Rose-Tainted Skies, by Louise Gornall

Norah knows that fearing everything from inland tsunamis to odd numbers is irrational, but her mind insists the world outside is big and dangerous, so stays inside. She watches the world through her windows and social media feed. Then Luke arrives on her doorstep: he doesn't see a girl defined by medical terms and mental health. Instead, he sees a girl who is funny, smart, and brave.

S3+, Agoraphobia



Turtles all the Way Down, by John Green

16-year old Aza suffers from both OCD and severe anxiety.

Her fearless best friend Daisy is keen to investigate the mystery surrounding local billionaire Russell Pickett who has disappeared, and Aza reluctantly agrees to help her. Will her inner demons, however, prove too much for her?

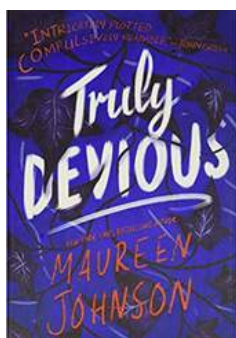
S3+, OCD



The Truth Pixie, by Matt Haig

Wherever she is, whatever the day, She only has one kind of thing to say. Just as cats go miaow and cows go moo, The Truth Pixie can only say things that are true.

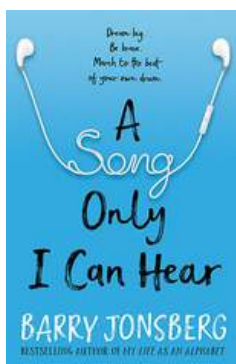
Junior, Anxiety, Series, Poetry



Truly Devious, by Maureen Johnson

True-crime aficionado Stevie Bell is set to begin her first year at Ellingham Academy, and she has an ambitious plan: she will solve the cold case of the kidnapping and potential murder of the school founder's wife and daughter. That is, she will solve the case when she gets a grip on her general anxiety, demanding new school life and her housemates: the inventor, the novelist, the actor, the artist, and the jokester.

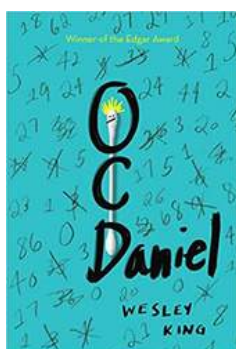
S3+, Anxiety, Series



A Song only I can hear, by Barry Jonsberg

Introducing Rob Fitzgerald: thirteen years old and determined to impress the new girl at school, but it's a difficult task for a super-shy kid who is prone to panic attacks that include vomit, and genuine terror that can last all day. An anonymous texter is sending Rob challenges and they might just help. Or not. Beautifully moving and full of heart and humour, A Song Only I Can Hear is a about dreaming big, being brave and marching to the beat of your own drum.

S3+, Anxiety, Series



OCDaniel, by Wesley King

Max spends football practice perfectly arranging water cups and hoping no one notices. His other strange habits (Zaps) include avoiding writing the number four and flipping light switches on and off dozens of times over. He goes under the radar until 'Psycho Sara' turns up and notices him, and turns to him to help her solve a big mystery.

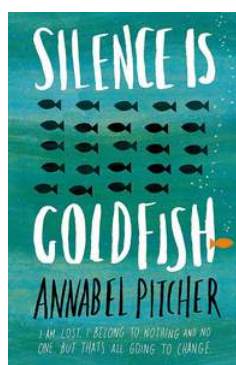
S1+, OCD



Finding Audrey, by Sophie Kinsella

Audrey can't leave the house; she can't even take off her dark glasses inside the house. Then her brother's friend Linus stumbles into her life. With his friendly, orange-slice smile and his funny notes, he starts to entice Audrey out again - well, Starbucks is a start. And with Linus at her side, Audrey feels like she can do the things she'd thought were too scary. Suddenly, finding her way back to the real world seems achievable.

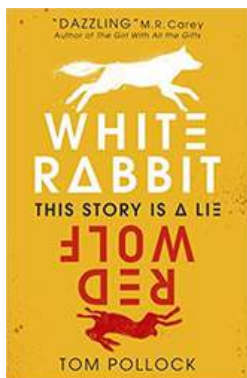
S3+, Agoraphobia,



Silence is Goldfish, by Annabel Pitcher

'I have a voice but it isn't mine. It used to say things so I'd fit in, to please everyone. It used to tell the universe I was something I wasn't. It lied. Fifteen-year-old Tess doesn't mean to become mute. Initially, just too shocked to speak, when she discovers that her Dad isn't actually her father, her condition worsens as time progresses. Tess sets out to find the truth of her identity, and uncovers a secret that could ruin multiple lives. Tess needs help, but she's forgotten how to use her voice.

S3+, Mutism



White Rabbit, Red Wolf, by Tom Pollock

Seventeen-year-old Peter Blankman is a maths prodigy with an extreme anxiety disorder. Peter finds himself caught in a web of lies and conspiracies after an assassination attempt on his mother. Armed only with his extraordinary analytical skills, Peter may just discover that his biggest weakness is his greatest strength.

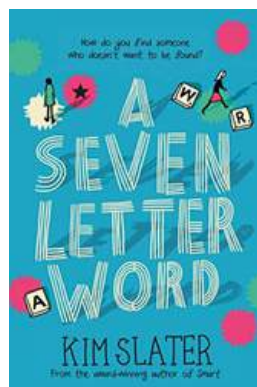
S3+, Anxiety



Fangirl, by Rainbow Rowell

Cath and Wren are identical twins, and until recently they did absolutely everything together. Now they're off to university and Wren's decided she doesn't want to be one half of a pair any more – she wants to dance, meet boys, go to parties and let loose. It's not so easy for Cath. She's horribly shy and has always buried herself in the fan fiction she writes, where she always knows exactly what to say and can write a romance far more intense than anything she's experienced in real life.

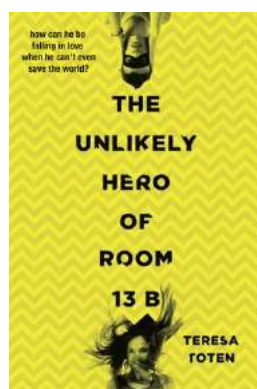
S3+, Anxiety



A Seven Letter Word, by Kim Slater

Finlay's mother vanished two years ago. And ever since then his stutter has become almost unbearable. Bullied at school and ignored by his father, the only way to get out the words which are bouncing around in his head is by writing long letters to his ma which he knows she will never read, and by playing Scrabble online. But when Finlay is befriended by an online Scrabble player called Alex, everything changes. Could it be his mother secretly trying to contact him? Or is there something more sinister going on?

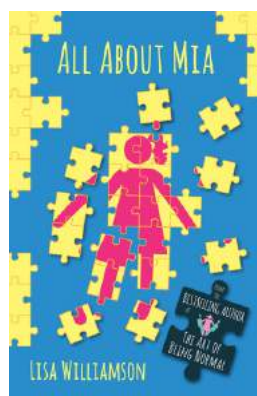
S1+, Stutter



The Unlikely Hero of Room 13B, by Teresa Toten

Adam is drawn to Robyn at a support group for kids coping with OCD. He feels like he wants to protect and defend her. But when you're fourteen and the everyday problems of dealing with divorced parents and step-siblings are supplemented by the challenges of OCD, it's hard to imagine yourself falling in love. How can you have a "normal" relationship when your life is so fraught with problems? And that's not even to mention the small matter of those threatening letters Adam's mother has started to receive

S1+, OCD



All About Mia, by Lisa Williamson

Mia is the middle child, caught between academic high achiever Grace and swimming champion Audrey and she struggles to find what her own 'thing' might be. As her uncertainty increases, her partying becomes out of control, impacting on her relationships not only with her family but with the three friends she never thought she would be without.

S3+, Anxiety



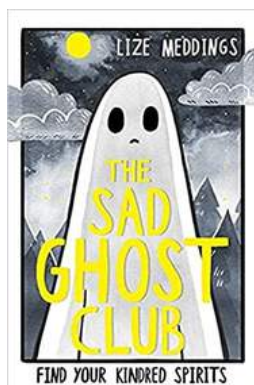
Picture Books and Graphic Novels



A Huge Bag of Worries, by Virginia Ironside

Wherever Jenny goes, her worries follow her - in a big blue bag. They are with her all the time - at school, at home, when she is watching TV and even in the bathroom! Jenny decides they have to go, but who will help her get rid of them?

Junior, Anxiety



Sad Ghost Club by Lize Meddings

Ever felt anxious or alone? Like you don't belong - invisible? This is the story of one of those days, so bad you can barely get out of bed, leave the house, and when you do, you wish you hadn't. But even the worst of days can surprise you. When one sad ghost, lost and alone at a crowded party, spies another sad ghost across the room, they leave together and start the The Sad Ghost Club - a secret society for the anxious and alone, a club for people who think they don't belong.

S1+, Anxiety, Graphic Novel, Series



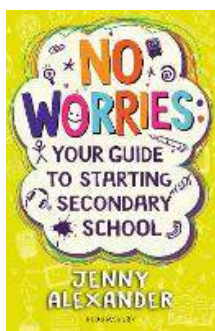
Guts, by Raina Telgemeier

Raina wakes with a terrible upset stomach. Her mom has one, too, so it's probably just a bug. Raina eventually returns to school, where she's dealing with the usual teen issues. It soon becomes clear that Raina's tummy trouble isn't going away... and it coincides with her worries about food, school, and changing friendships. What's going on?

S1+, Anxiety, Graphic Novel



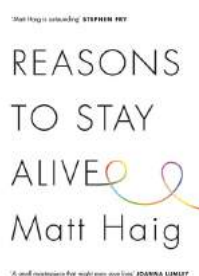
Information Books



No Worries by Jenny Alexander

The ultimate secondary school survival guide, with tips, quizzes and jokes to help children prepare. What if I've got the wrong stuff? What if I don't fit in? What if the older kids are horrible to me? Starting secondary school is a bit like going on a safari - it's a great adventure but sometimes, before you go, you can get a touch of the 'what ifs'. This book is full of info and covers all of the big worries and anxieties you might be feeling.

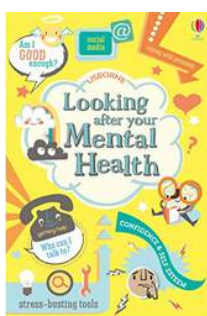
S1+, Anxiety



Reasons to Stay Alive, by Matt Haig

Like nearly one in five people, Matt Haig suffers from depression. Reasons to Stay Alive is Matt's inspiring account of how, minute by minute and day by day, he overcame the disease with the help of reading, writing, and the love of his parents and his girlfriend (and now-wife), Andrea. And eventually, he learned to appreciate life all the more for it.

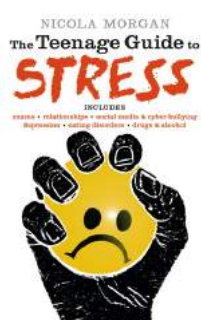
S3+, Anxiety



Looking After Your Mental Health, by Alice James & Louis Stowell

With lots of practical advice, this lively, accessible guide explains why we have emotions, and what can influence them. Covering everything from friendships, social media and bullying to divorce, depression and eating disorders, this is an essential book for young people.

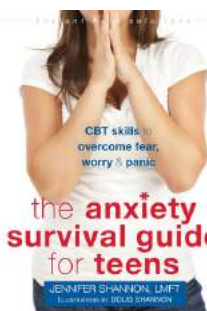
S1+, Mental Health



The Teenage Guide to Stress, by Nicola Morgan

A sympathetic, practical and positive guide to tackle all the external stresses that teenagers face. The Teenage Guide to Stress clearly explains the biology behind stress and, crucially, a huge range of strategies and suggestions to deal with it and prevent negative symptoms, empowering teenagers to take control of their mental health.

S1+, Anxiety



The Anxiety Survival Guide for Teens, by Jennifer Shannon

Based in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), this book helps identify the primitive part of the brain where anxious thoughts arise. It also helps to determine generalised anxiety, phobias, social anxiety, panic and agoraphobia, OCD, or separation anxiety. The book teaches practical strategies for handling even the toughest situations.

S3+ Anxiety



Resources

Disclaimer: the ECR team does not take credit for these links, which are all offered and maintained by external providers

Young Minds

It's really common to develop anxiety at some point. Find out here what causes it and what you can do to feel better.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/>

Stem4

Supporting teenage mental health

<https://stem4.org.uk/anxiety/>

When I Worry About Things

A collection of animated films that use personal testimony to explore mental health issues from the perspective of children. Alongside each, there is more information about the content of the film, and suggestions of how it could be used in the classroom. These resources are suitable for use with pupils aged 8-13.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5QM6H01X6b3JTQF85GLgbFL/when-i-worry-about-things>