

# WORRIED ABOUT GOING TO SECONDARY SCHOOL OR COLLEGE?



By Dr. Nihara Krause, Consultant  
Clinical Psychologist, MBE

stem4  
education  
supporting teenage mental health

Sponsored by:



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[www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk)

# INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to 'Worried about going to school?' for students in secondary schools and colleges. This is a workbook that will guide a young person through steps they can take to help reduce difficulties around going to school or college, as well as provide signposts for further help.

Sometimes going to school or college can become tough and this can make every day a challenge. Parents, carers, and teachers (and even the young person experiencing it) might have a hard time trying to understand why this has become so difficult.

By working through this booklet, the blocks to getting to school or college may become clear. So that together, and with some of the activities in the Clear Fear app, a young person will hopefully be able to attend school or college, with practice, one step at a time. There are also some suggestions on steps that can be taken to get further support and help.

Everything is a learning process, especially recovery from anxiety or worry. Taking one small step at a time will allow you to take control and start moving forward. Focus on the present and make this your time to leave behind the past so you can get to your future.



## **Dr Nihara Krause MBE**

Consultant Clinical Psychologist  
CEO and Founder of stem4

stem4 is a charity based in London that promotes positive mental health in teenagers. It aims to raise early awareness and highlights the importance of early intervention in teenage mental health issues.

Clear Fear is an app developed for teenage mental health charity stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause MBE, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and uses the evidence-based treatment Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to focus on learning to reduce the physical responses to threat by learning to breathe, relax, and be mindful, as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.

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# 1

## EXERCISE 1

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### Working out why you might be finding it difficult to go to school/college

Whilst worrying is common, sometimes worries become so overwhelming that they can stop a young person from getting on with what they need to, or want to do. This can also apply to attending school or college, leading to what's called Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

Sometimes it's hard to know the root of a young person's worries but it's generally useful to find out, so that something can be done to change it.



Circle any of the reasons below that might apply to you. Be as honest as you can. It's to help explore possible contributory factors

1. I have fallen out of the routine of school/college after the pandemic
2. I am worried about assessments/exams
3. I find it hard to make or maintain friendships
4. I feel on my own / lonely
5. I worry about my family when I'm at school and wish I was with them
6. I struggle with noise or crowds
7. I'm struggling with some of the work
8. I feel too much of a pressure to achieve
9. I'm not getting on with some of the teachers
10. I find it hard to agree with or follow school rules
11. I find leaving the house difficult
12. I find the journey to school/college and back difficult
13. I don't fit in
14. I'm dealing with a lot of emotional stuff now and can't focus at school/college
15. Some difficult experiences that have happened have left me feeling worried and anxious and it's hard to get over them
16. I'm left out/picked on
17. I experience physical symptoms of anxiety or panic at school that I want to avoid
18. Someone close to me is ill or needs looking after
19. I've lost someone close to me and am finding it hard
20. Any other reason...

Share these reasons with a trusted adult so that they can see what help you need, and work out the steps to getting back on track.

Purchase the full version of the workbook  
on [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)  
or via [www.stem4.org.uk](https://www.stem4.org.uk).

Proceeds from the sale of this workbook  
will be used to continue the work stem4  
does in supporting positive mental health  
in young people.

## ABOUT STEM4

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### Who we are

stem4 is a charity that promotes positive mental health in teenagers and those who support them including their families, carers, and education professionals, as well as school nurses and GPs, through the provision of mental health education, resilience strategies, and early intervention.

This is primarily provided digitally through our innovative education programme, pioneering mental health apps, clinically-informed website, and mental health conferences that contribute to helping young people and those around them flourish.



## **Dr Nihara Krause MBE**

**Consultant Clinical Psychologist, CEO and Founder of stem4**

Dr. Nihara Krause founded stem4 based on the knowledge that early identification and intervention made a real difference in stemming what has recently been reported to be escalating teenage mental health conditions in their often serious and long-lasting course.

Nihara has many years of clinical experience working in a variety of mental health settings with both young people and adults. She has specialist experience in eating disorders and self-harm. Nihara is also a university lecturer, works extensively with the media, and has input in informing government on youth matters. She has a special interest in building resilience, as well as practicing effective treatment techniques for a variety of psychological problems.

Nihara is the clinician who developed the award-winning Calm Harm, Clear Fear, Move Mood, and Combined Minds apps for stem4. Most recently, Nihara developed the Worth Warrior app, stem4's latest app which helps manage low self-worth and body dissatisfaction leading to eating difficulties.

# CLEAR FEAR

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The fear of threat, or anxiety, is like a strong gust of wind. It drags you in and makes you want to fight it or run away.

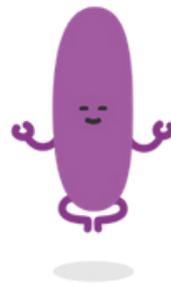
Instead, face your fear with the free Clear Fear app and learn to reduce the physical responses to threat as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.

Anxiety is a natural response to fear, threat and apprehension. However, when anxiety is extreme or goes on for a long time, or the response to a threat is disproportionately large and affects a person negatively, it may become an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are the most common form of emotional disorder and respond very well to a form of treatment called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or CBT.

When you face your fear, you will reduce the threat and glide.

[www.clearfear.co.uk](http://www.clearfear.co.uk)

@clearfearapp



Please note that none of the stem4 apps substitute for seeing a mental health professional / GP. Please see a suitably qualified professional for assessment and advice on treatment.

# STEM4'S MENTAL HEALTH APPS

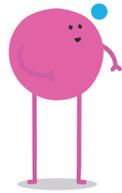


## CALM HARM

A free app to help teenagers resist or manage the urge to self-harm

[www.calmharm.co.uk](http://www.calmharm.co.uk)

@calmharmapp



## CLEAR FEAR

A free app to help children and young people manage the symptoms of anxiety

[www.clearfear.co.uk](http://www.clearfear.co.uk)

@clearfearapp



## COMBINED MINDS

A free app to help families and friends provide mental health support

[www.combinedminds.co.uk](http://www.combinedminds.co.uk)

@combmindsapp



## MOVE MOOD

A free app to help young people manage the behaviours associated with low mood or depression.

[www.movemood.co.uk](http://www.movemood.co.uk)

@appmovemood



## WORTH WARRIOR

A free app to help young people manage negative body image, poor self-worth, and related early-stage eating difficulties or disorders

[www.worthwarrior.co.uk](http://www.worthwarrior.co.uk)

@worthwarriorapp



stem4's award-winning apps are available to download from the App Store and Google Play.



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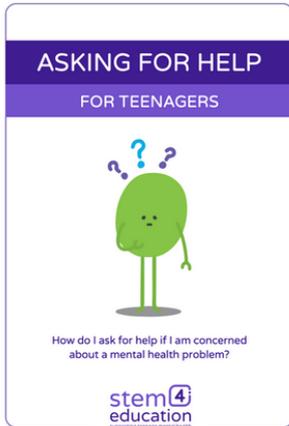
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Please note that these apps are an aid in treatment but do not replace it.

# SIGNPOSTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



1. If you are worried, please speak to a trusted adult such as someone from your family, school or ask to see a doctor who can help.



Follow this QR code to view the [stem4 asking for help](#) booklet

2. Some schools will have counsellors or adults who can help.
3. There are some helplines, but they are all generally for teenagers or adults.
  - Childline [0800 111](#) will answer calls to anyone of any age.
  - SHOUT - you can text [SHOUT](#) to [85258](#)
4. There are some books that are helpful.
  - A Volcano in my Tummy by Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney describes anxiety.
  - The Goodnight Caterpillar: A relaxation story for kids by Lori Lite
  - Huge bag of worries by Virginia Ironside
  - Back to school and what to do when you worry too much by Dawn Huebner
  - Wilma Jean and the Worry Machine by Julia Cook

The [Reading Well Books on Prescription](#) site can also recommend books. Access them with a trusted adult.

5. stem4 also has a booklet for parents and carers which has other support signposts for families.

# SIGNPOSTS FOR ADULTS

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stem4 offers a wide range of resources to help parents and carers support their young people:

Our [website](#) has detailed information to help you support a young person experiencing anxiety, stress and a variety of other mental ill health conditions.

[www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk)

Our [podcast](#) 'Understanding Teen Minds podcast, episode on Emotionally Based School Avoidance Podcast for teachers

[www. stem4.org.uk/podcasts](http://www.stem4.org.uk/podcasts)

Our [resources](#) - stem4 has a wealth of resources that can be accessed online. They are designed with young people and combine the clinical expertise of a Consultant Clinical Psychologist with the needs expressed by our young people.



Links to all our Anxiety apps, resources and podcasts can be accessed via our link tree using the QR code here.



### About our sponsor:

Head Ed is a free mental health literacy teaching resource for secondary school or college PSHE developed by stem4.

Discover an authentic way to teach your pupils about mental health with Head Ed: an entirely free resource for all secondary schools in the UK, to be taught in Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE). The Head Ed programme has been listed in Anna Freud's Mentally Healthy Schools resource library.

Simply register, grab your 'Teacher Pack' complete with Powerpoint Presentations & videos, and you're ready to go.

The number of registrations from each school is unlimited, so all teachers can sign up to have their own accounts and individual access to the resources.

Provide your students with accurate and trusted information in an engaging way: sign up today.

In our latest survey, 100% of users said they would recommend the Head Ed programme to another school.

Visit <https://education.stem4.org.uk/head-ed/> or contact [education@stem4.org.uk](mailto:education@stem4.org.uk) to find out more.



stem4, 51 St George's Rd, Wimbledon, SW19 4EA



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