

# 20 talking it out

## for you to know

When people hold feelings of anxiety inside and do not express them, the anxiety does not just disappear. In fact, holding anxiety in can actually make it feel more overwhelming. Expressing anxiety by talking about it helps to release it.

Kelly felt a lot of anxiety whenever she was going to perform in a school play. She was a good actress with a beautiful singing voice, and she often got the lead role in the play. But even though people told her she was very talented, she still felt anxious every time she had to go on stage.

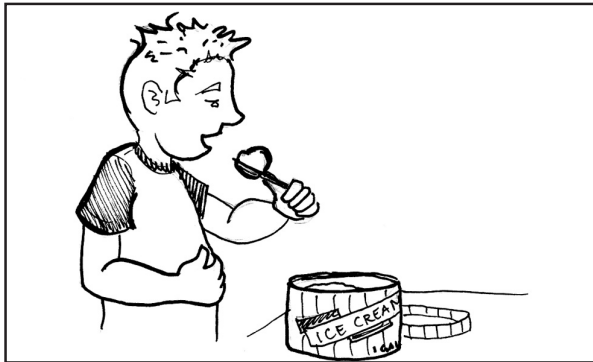
Kelly didn't like talking about her feelings. She was afraid that if she talked about the anxiety, she would feel it even more. She was also concerned that the other kids might think she was weird or wimpy if she told them how anxious she felt. So instead of saying anything, she just tried to ignore it.

By the end of the school year, Kelly had started to get bad stomachaches whenever she had to go on stage. Her mother took her to the doctor for a checkup, but he couldn't find anything physically wrong. Kelly had known her doctor since she was very young, and she felt comfortable telling him about her anxiety. She explained that her stomachaches came only before she performed.

The doctor said Kelly's stomachaches were a result of holding her anxiety inside. He said she needed to start letting it out, or the stomachaches would get worse. He suggested that she talk with her drama teacher about how she felt. When Kelly did, she learned that the other kids also felt anxious before a performance. The drama teacher started encouraging all his students to share their feelings of anxiety. Even just saying, "Wow, I'm a little nervous. Are you?" helped to release it. As Kelly learned to talk about her feelings, her stomachaches came less often and finally went away altogether.

directions

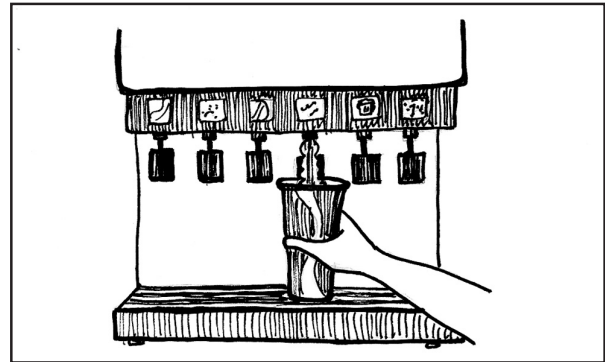
Each of the pictures below shows something that is being filled. Describe what will happen in each case if the item is filled beyond its capacity.



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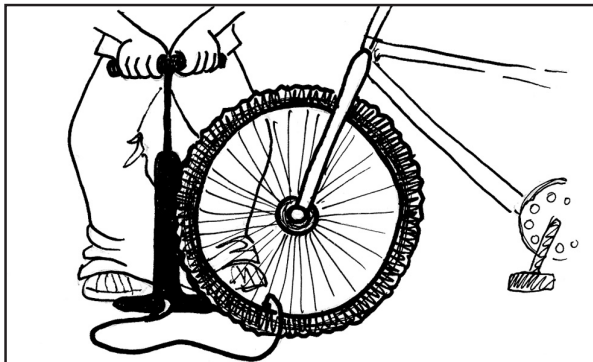
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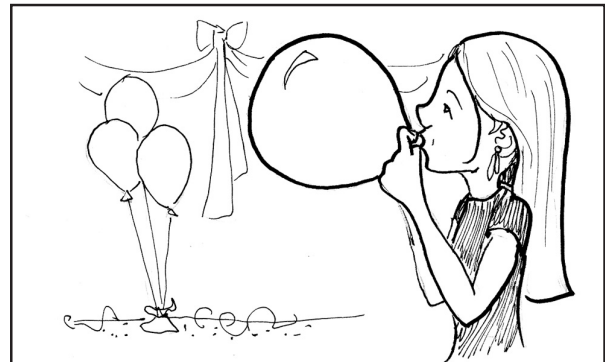
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# more to do

Look at the pictures of the items being filled. What are some things that might happen when a person becomes too full of anxiety?

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What are some things that happen to you when you do not let out your anxious feelings?

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Why do you think Kelly was able to share her feelings of anxiety with her doctor when she hadn't wanted to share them with anyone else?

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What do you think made Kelly change her mind about sharing her anxious feelings with her classmates?

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How do you feel about talking about your anxiety with other people?

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Circle any of the following people with whom you might feel comfortable talking about your anxiety:

- |                        |             |                |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| best friend            | father      | aunt or uncle  |
| doctor                 | cousin      | coach          |
| school counselor       | grandparent | friend         |
| mother                 | employer    | sibling        |
| professional counselor | teacher     | worship leader |

Write the names of anyone else in your life with whom you might feel comfortable talking about your anxiety.

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Circle any of the phrases below that you might say to express anxious feelings:

- I am so nervous!
- I'm a little anxious about this.
- I can feel my heart pounding; I must be nervous.
- I am really anxious about doing this.
- I'm feeling a lot of anxiety right now.
- I'm really stressing about this.

Write any other words that you could use to express your feelings of anxiety.

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