

ALL BIRDS

have ANXIETY!

Humans aren't the only ones to experience anxiety. *All Birds Have Anxiety*, is a humorous and comforting little book that explores the ubiquitous nature of stress, how it can be constructive, and what we can do to experience less negative anxiety and more joy in our lives! The author, Kathy Hoopmann, shares insights into this book, and explains why she chose to use bird images to illustrate it.



Anxiety Disorders are prevalent in our society. And they come with lots of letters: GAD, OCD, PTSD, SAD. They can affect children just as easily as adults. In 2015, in the Young Minds Matter Survey, Australia, it was revealed that 278,000 children aged between 4 and 17 years experienced an anxiety disorder in the previous 12 months. And we're not talking about feeling a bit anxious here. These are crippling experiences that can leave a person gasping for breath, hiding from others for months, panicking to the point of hysteria, or compulsively repeating patterns and actions. Anxiety Disorders disrupt lives, strain friendships and can hurt families.

And yet, despite the prevalence of anxiety, where almost everyone will either have had a anxiety attack during their life, or know of someone who has, there is still a huge stigma about revealing the disorder to others.

A/Prof James Scott, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at The University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research states, "*Stigma and a low level of mental health literacy are two important and highly modifiable reasons for the ongoing unacceptably high levels of anxiety disorders in children living in high income countries such as Australia.*"

So it became obvious to me that there was a need for a book that not only realistically and truthfully revealed the massive difficulties associated with anxiety but also made them less threatening, and more easy to explain to others, including to family, school, friends and health professionals.

As this would be a book that was promoted to children, it was vitally important that I validated their experiences with gentleness and sensitivity. My books, *'All Cats have Asperger Syndrome'*, *'All Dogs have ADHD'* and *'Inside Asperger's Looking Out'* all used photos of animals as a vehicle to explain complex diagnoses. So I decided to continue with that theme and searched for an animal that often displayed symptoms of anxiety.

I have to admit that I was dubious at first of using birds. Of course, I recognised that birds indeed must experience anxiety on a daily basis. In fact, the 'good' sides of anxiety, such as being aware of danger, and an instinctive urge to protect themselves and their young, are what keeps birds alive. Birds are also constantly under threat from other birds and animals, from human intervention and exposure to the elements, all of which could cause 'bad' anxiety. It is well documented that confined birds may compulsively peck themselves, or pace back and forwards in their cages, or rock and shiver. Birds caged directly in front of a window, can become anxious if they cannot hide from something that frightens them. They may screech and thrash if they are constantly watched by an 'enemy', such as the house cat.

So I knew that birds certainly experienced anxiety and for that reason alone, I thought they would be a good vehicle to explain human anxiety. However, I was worried that with their hard beaks and feathery eyes, that I would not find enough images to anthropomorphise them. How wrong I was. Birds are so expressive! I was able to find hundreds of photos that were cute and fun and could be used to get complex concepts across in a way that a child could laugh and say, "Yep, that's how I feel," without making them even more anxious.

Once the vehicle of birds was decided, I then focussed on two main points. First, I wanted my readers to come to a full understanding of the unrelenting enormity of anxiety, and how it pervades every aspect of a person's life, day and night. Secondly, I was determined that this would be a positive book of hope. I spoke to psychologists, doctors and psychiatrists to learn about the methods they taught to deal with anxiety on a day to day basis. I chatted with people with anxiety and asked them what helped and what didn't. Then I summarised all their answers into the simplest language I could. Not everything in the book works for everyone. But the important thing is that there *are* things that can help.

Anxiety does not have to rule a life forever—at the very least, it can be tamed, even if it never goes away completely.

As an Anxiety Disorder is often found alongside other difficulties, *All Birds have Anxiety* is printed in the dyslexic font that has been designed with every letter unique so that when the letters are flipped or rotated they do not blur with other letters. For a person with dyslexia, this can help alleviate one extra stress in their lives.

With the book out for less than a month, I began receiving reports of it being used in a victim support unit to calm adults in an agitated state. A widow of a man killed in a terrorist attack spoke of it giving comfort and putting a smile on her face. Parents have written that it helps their children realise that what they feel is normal, it's okay to be worried, and anxiety does not have to control their life.

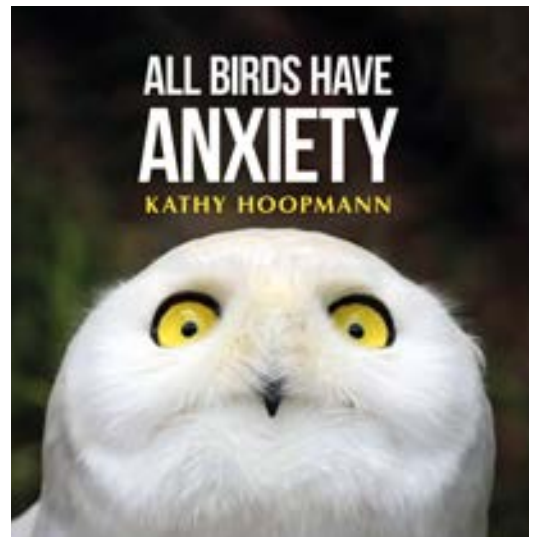
And that is my greatest desire for this book. That it validates the enormous difficulties faced by those with anxiety, whilst giving helpful advice on how to cope. And most importantly, that it gives them hope that there will come a time when they can glide through their days without anxiety, and face a future worth living.

ALL BIRDS HAVE ANXIETY

Kathy Hoopmann, Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2017

Life as a bird can be stressful! From worrying about airplanes, windows, and getting enough worms to eat, it is clear that birds can be anxious beings. Through a light-touch, quizzical depiction of bird behaviour, *All Birds Have Anxiety* uses colorful images and astute explanations to explore with gentle humor what it means to live with anxiety day-to-day, and how to begin to deal with it. Following the style of the best-selling *All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome* and *All Dogs Have ADHD*, wonderful colour photographs express the complex and difficult ideas related to anxiety disorder in an easy-to-understand way. This simple yet profound book validates the deeper everyday experiences of anxiety, provides an empathic understanding of the many symptoms associated with anxiety, and offers compassionate suggestions for change. The combination of understanding and gentle humor make this the ideal introduction to anxiety disorder for those diagnosed with this condition, their family and friends and those generally interested in understanding anxiety.

ISBN: 9781785921827



BIRDMANIA

Bernd Brunner, Allen & Unwin 2017

Packed with intriguing facts and exquisite and rare artwork, *Birdmania* showcases an eclectic and fascinating selection of bird devotees who would do anything for their feathered friends. In addition to well-known enthusiasts, such as Aristotle, Charles Darwin, and Helen Macdonald, Brunner introduces readers to Karl Russ, the pioneer of "bird rooms" and lover of the Australian budgerigar, who had difficulty renting lodgings when landlords realized who he was; George Lupton, a wealthy Yorkshire lawyer, who commissioned the theft of uniquely patterned eggs every year for twenty years from the same unfortunate female guillemot who never had a chance to raise a chick; Ambrose Pratt who leaves us a beautiful example of a devoted relationship between a lyre bird and an Australian hermit; Mervyn Shorthouse, who posed as a wheelchair-bound invalid to steal an estimated ten thousand eggs from the Natural History Museum in Tring; and Tibbles the 19th century cat, who belonged to the lighthouse keeper on Stephens Island in New Zealand, and who collected many of Lord Walter Rothschild's bird samples.

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