

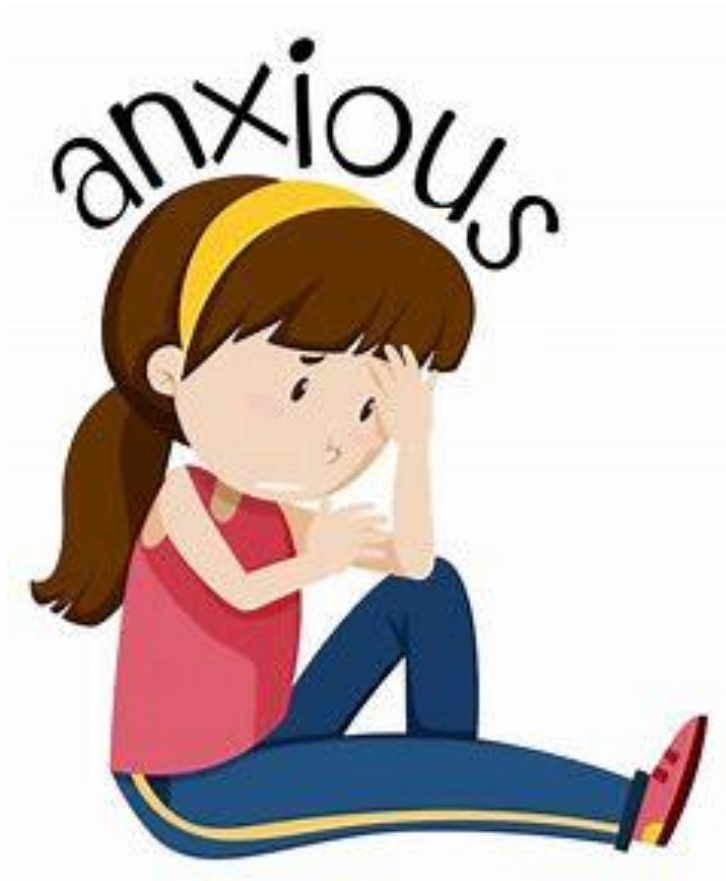


# Dealing with feelings of Worry

Delivered at Gt and Lt Shelford School, 26.5.23

# What (NOT!) to say to your worrier!

Try not to...	If you say...	They will think..	Instead you could try...
<b>Ignore it!</b>	<i>Don't be silly! You're fine!</i>	<i>No one else feels like this! What is wrong with me? No one understands me!</i>	<i>Everyone feels a bit nervous with new things. It's ok. You can still have a good time!</i>
<b>Join in!</b>	<i>You are upsetting me!</i>	<i>This must be REALLY bad if mum is upset too!</i>	<i>It will be ok. This is the plan...</i>
<b>Bribe them!</b>	<i>If you are brave I will buy you an ice cream later..</i>	<i>This must be a scary place if dad is going to give me a prize for staying here!</i>	<i>When I come back, we will get an ice cream and you can tell me ALL about your day!</i>
<b>Predict the worst!</b>	<i>If you really don't like it, you don't have to come back..</i>	<i>I don't want to come back! I am NOT going to like it!</i>	<i>I think you will do some really fun things today!</i>

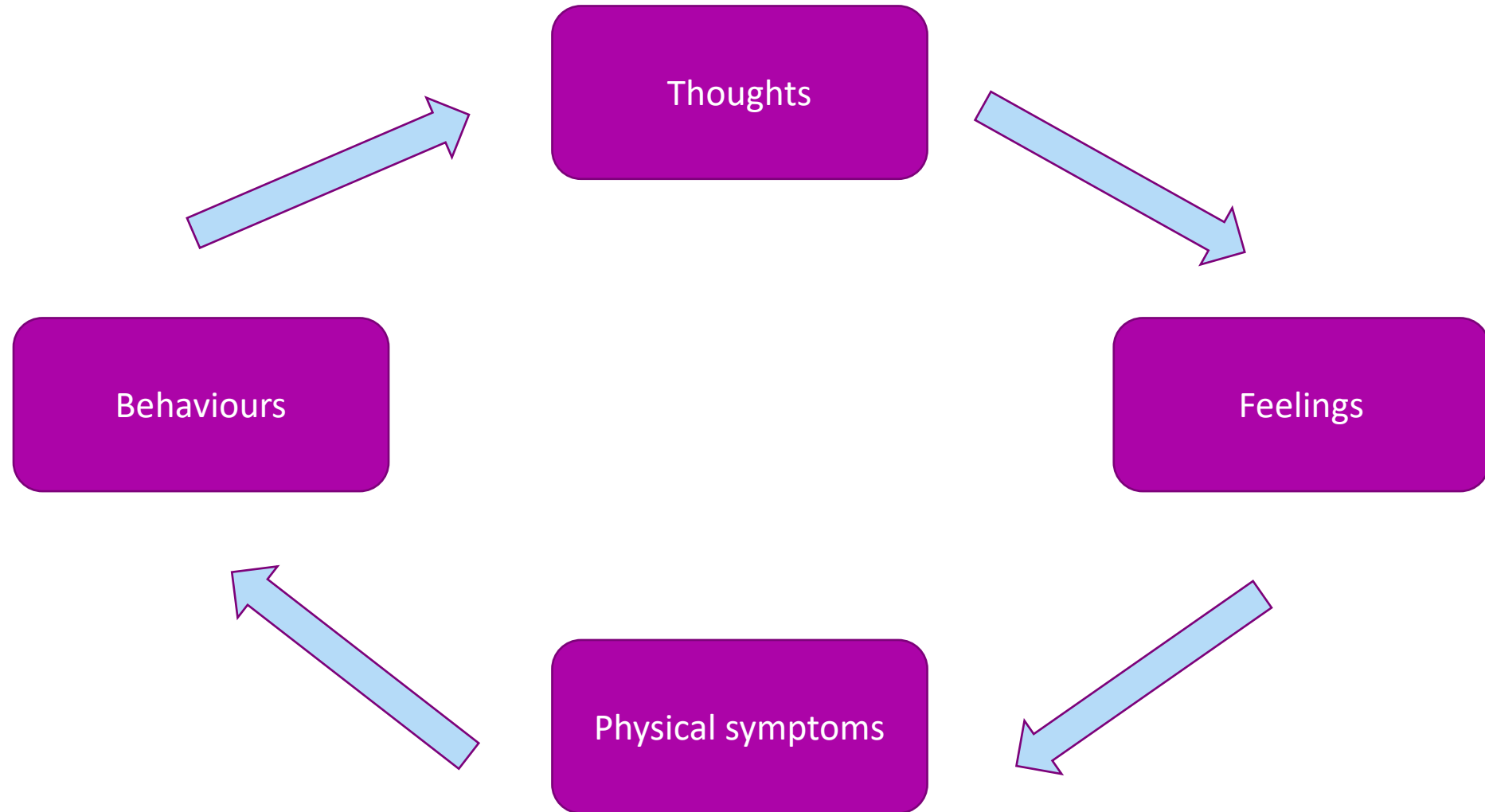


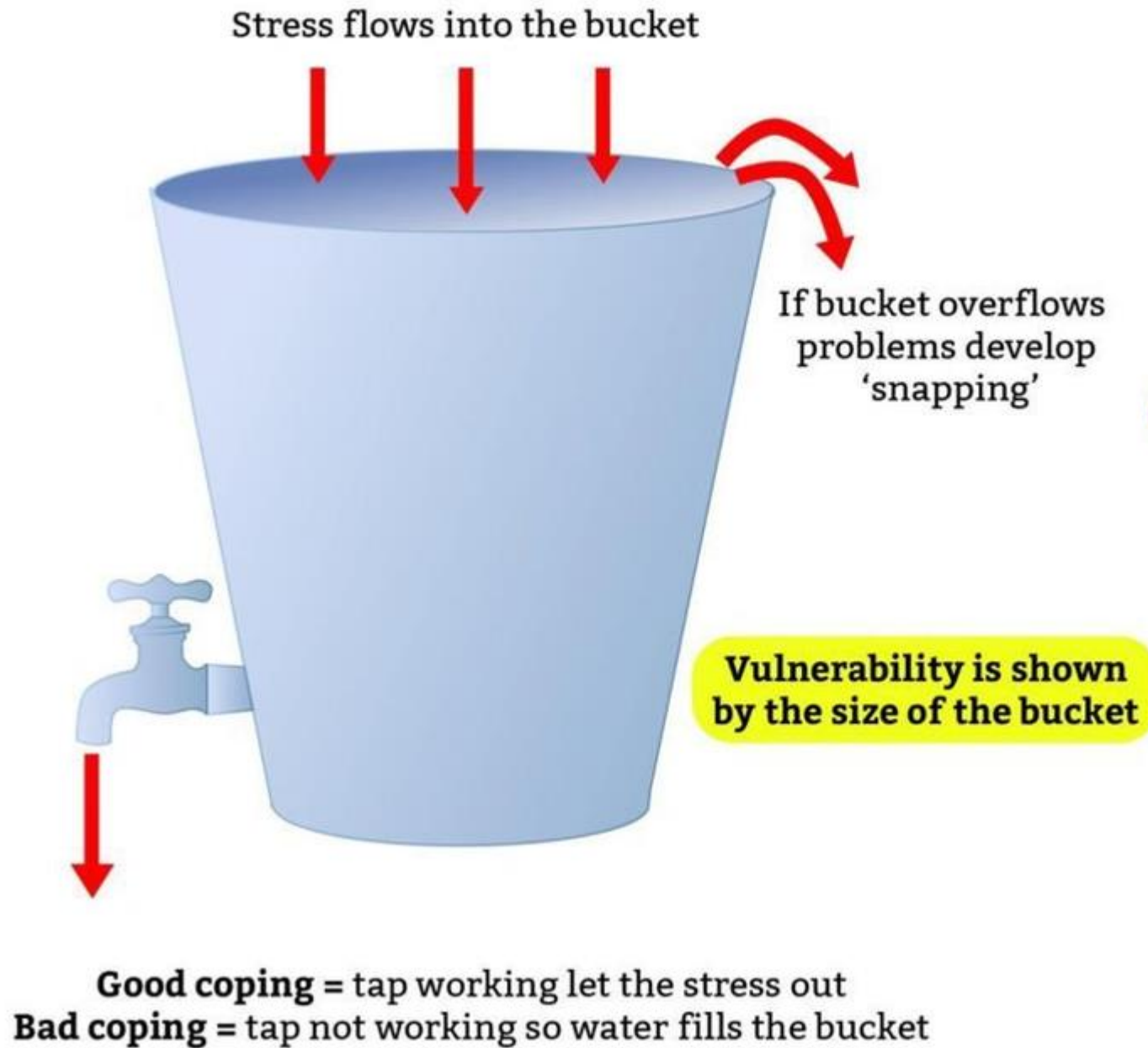
# What is anxiety/worry



**Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling of fear, panic or worry. Everyone experiences feelings of anxiety at some point in their life and it is normal to do so. Anxiety can be a general feeling or it can be about something specific, such as an upcoming exam. For some people, the anxious feeling will go away after a while, for some people it will stay much longer.**

# The cycle of anxiety





# The Stress container



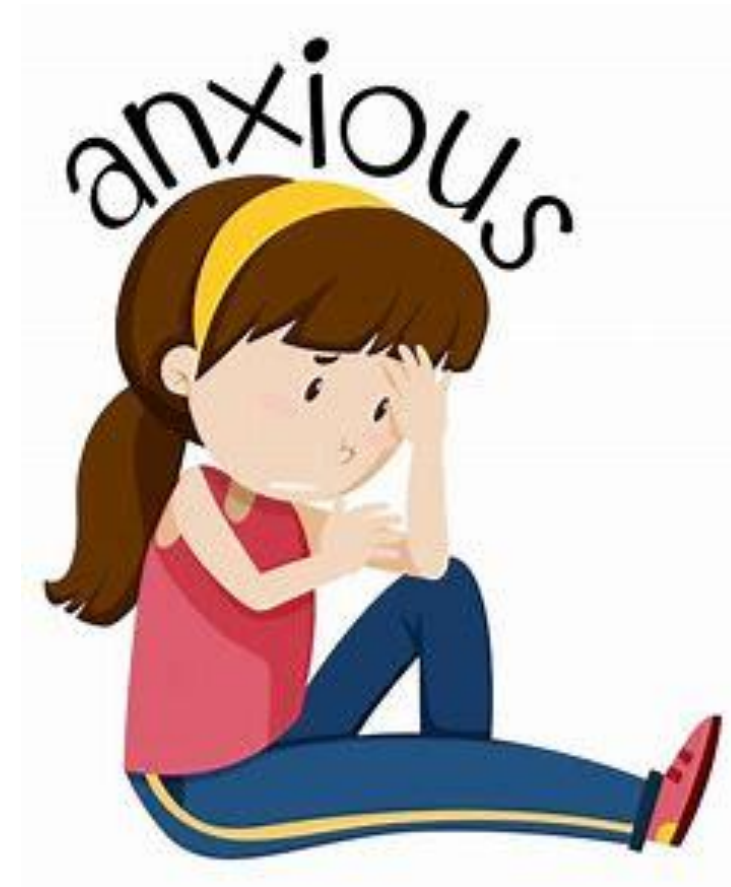
# Anxiety can look like ...

- Fear
- Worry
- Pounding heart
- Sweaty
- Feeling weak
- Nervousness
- Asking questions
- Ruminating
- Imagining the worse



# Anxiety can look like ...

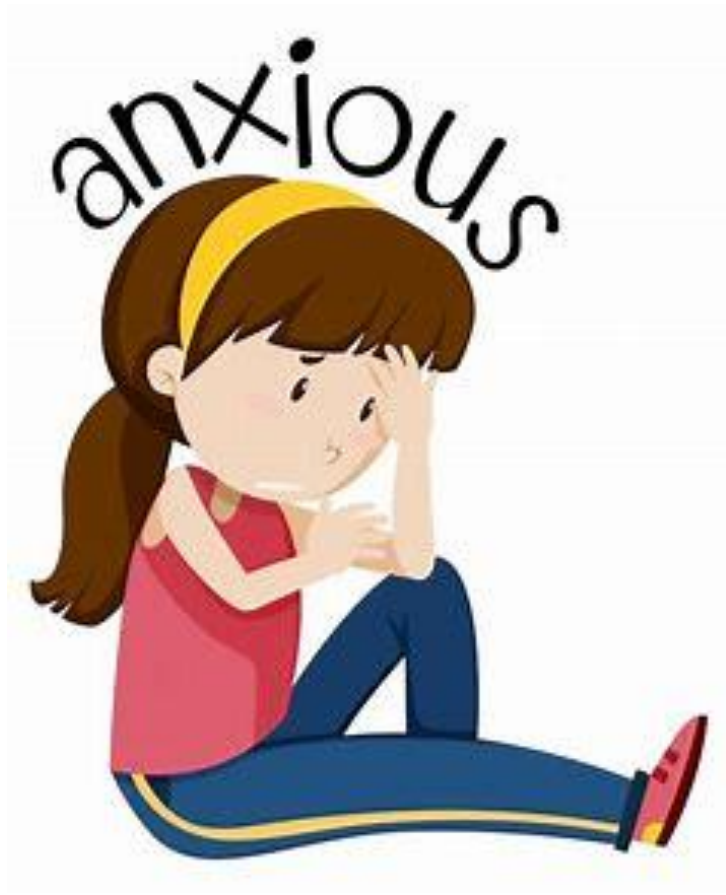
- Anger / aggression
- Opting out / withdrawal
- Denial
- Trying to take control
- Tummy ache
- Trouble sleeping
- Being unable to cope with everyday challenges





- **School work /school in general**
- **Friendship issues**
- **Pressure children put on themselves**
- **Life very fast paced / busy**
- **Not enough down time**
- **Too much screen time**
- **Unrealistic expectations**
- **Not enough time outdoors**

**Common pressures that lead to anxiety/worry**



# The science

## Why do we get Early Warning Signs?

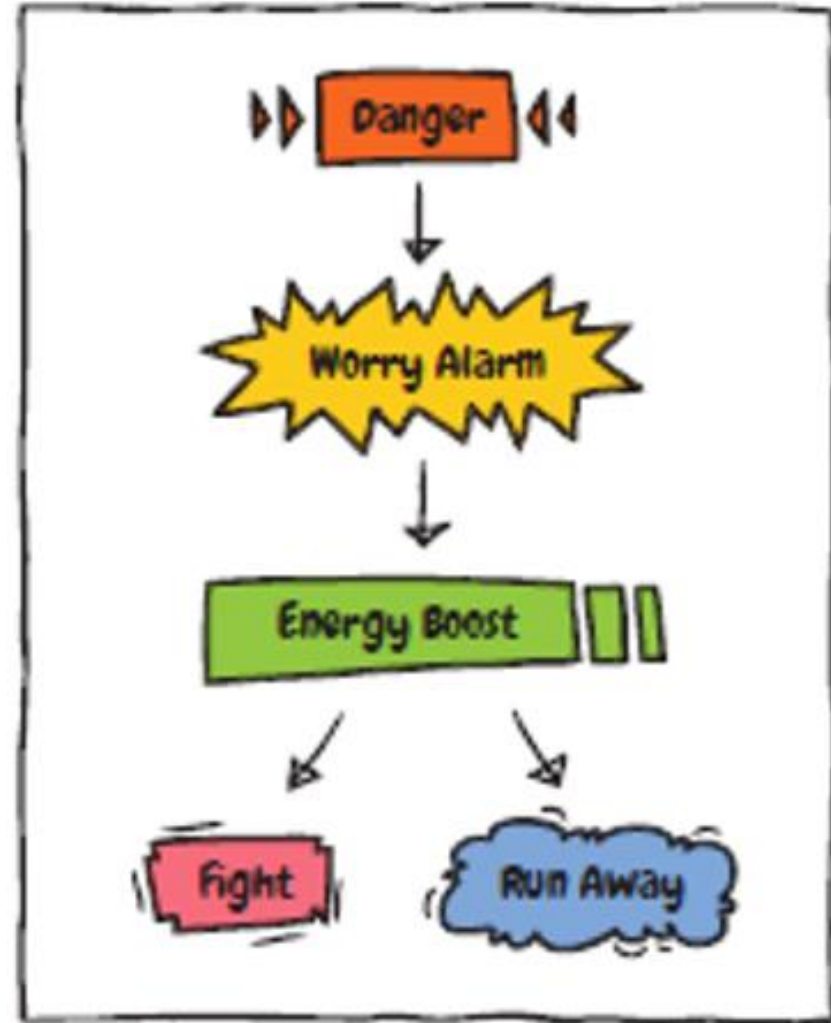
- Early warning signs are a **safety response** in our body which was developed to prepare the body to fight , run away or freeze.
- When we have this response the chemical **adrenaline** is released into our body.
- This can be useful if we are running away from a wild animal or if we need to get ourselves out of danger this is designed to be a **quick fix response**.



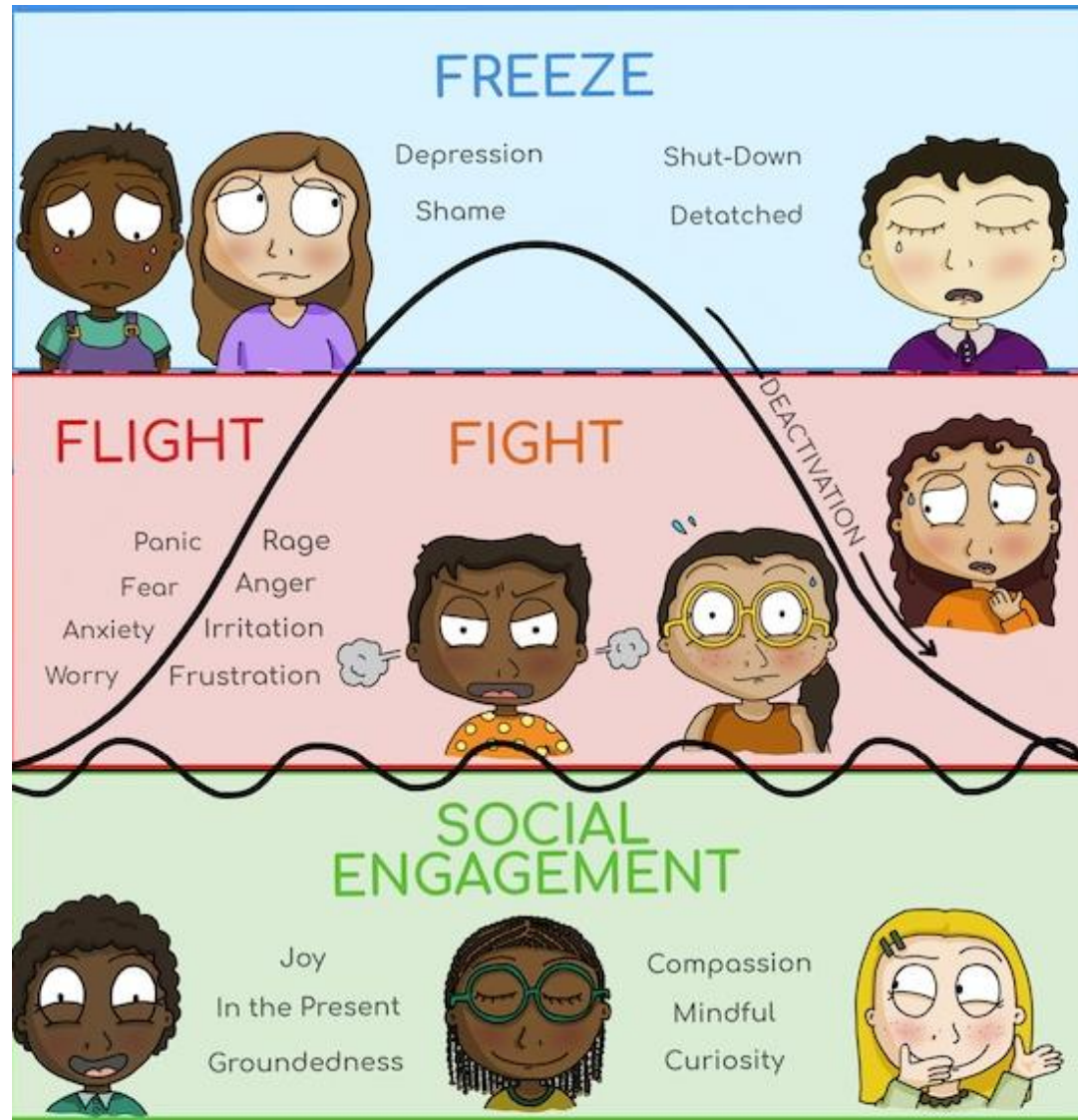
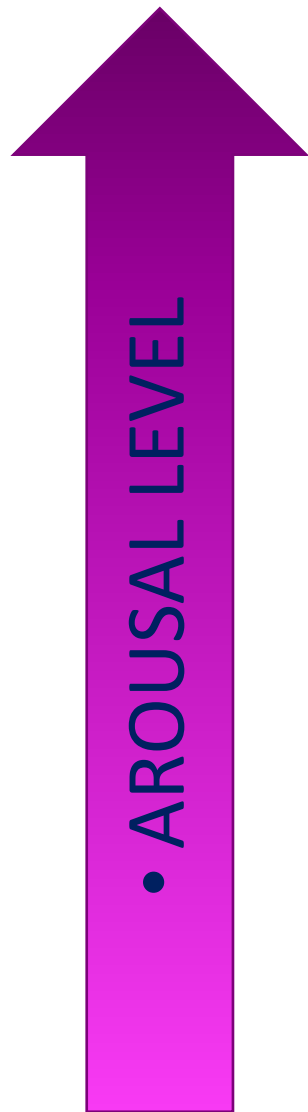
## The Problem with Adrenaline

- Some people can experience this fight flight freeze response, frequently, as a result of thoughts, worries or the environment.
- This can be a horrible and overwhelming feeling in our body which is sometimes called high anxiety.

# Fight, Flight, Freeze

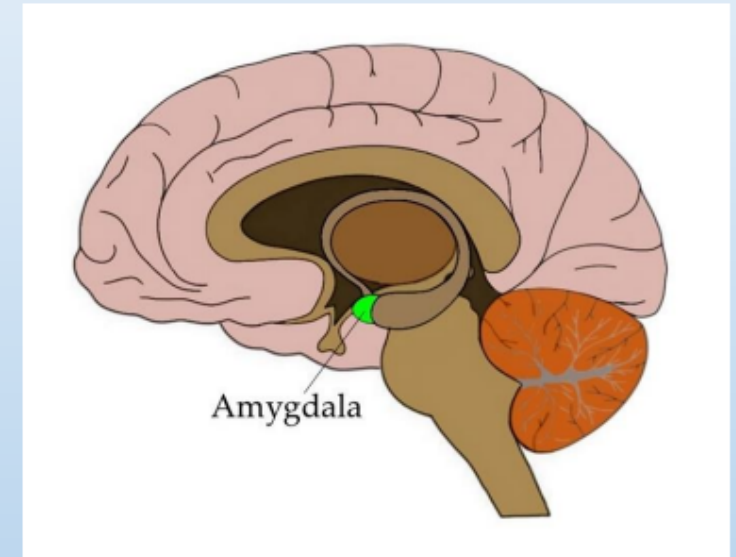


# The Stress Response in Children



# What happens to the brain in ongoing anxiety

- The front part of the brain which deals with cognitive functioning, memory and attention span shuts down
- The primitive part of our brain called the amygdala, enlarges sending signals that you are under threat
- Connectivity between different parts of the brain becomes difficult and is reduced
- We can feel 'wired and burnt out - physically, emotionally and mentally



# Your resource kit

This contains all the things that you already do to calm down, to feel more comfortable with your own physical and emotional state:

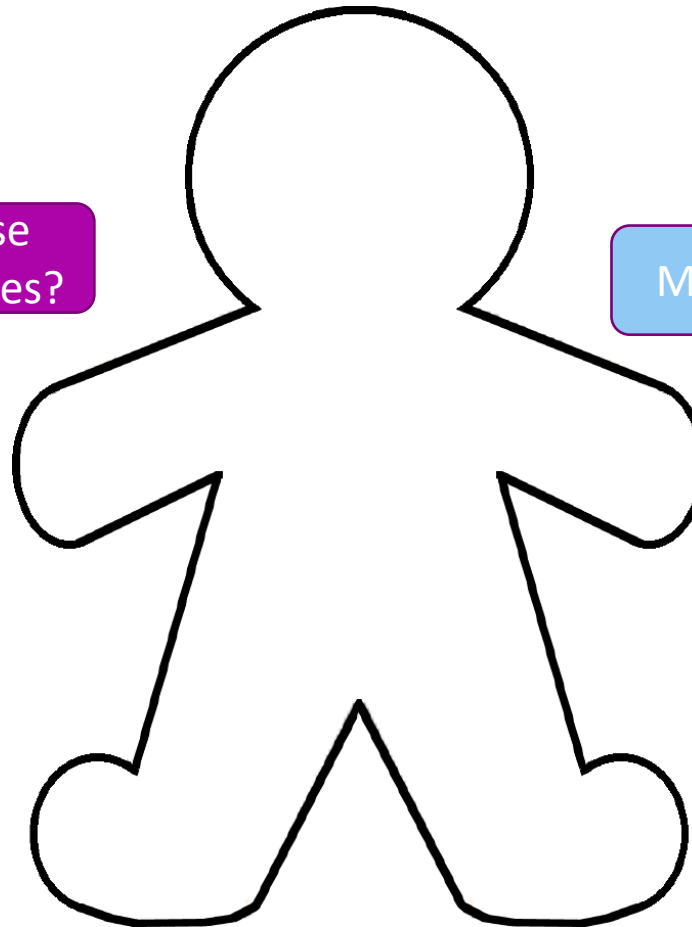
Examples:

- Restful music
- Being by water
- Being in nature
- Eating and sleeping well
- Finding your creative part
- Breathing

# What does anxiety feel like?

First, have a think about what physical symptoms or sensations you have when you're feeling anxious...

Next, think about what thoughts you have and behaviours you show when you're feeling anxious...



Tense muscles?

Mind racing?

Fast heart beat?

Headache?

Getting flustered?

Being snappy with people?

Worrying about what might happen?

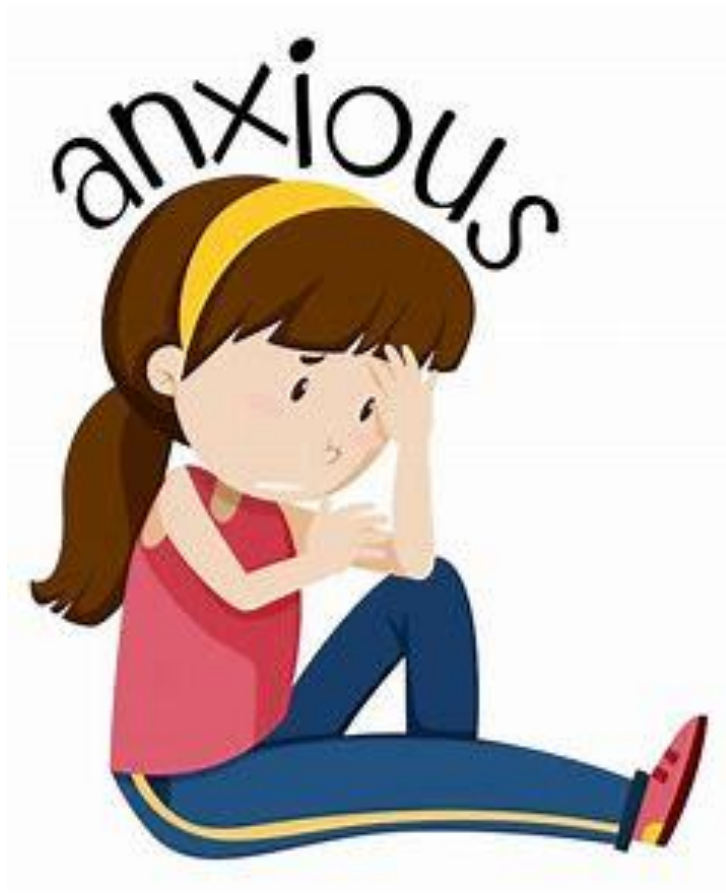
Tummy ache?

Shallow breathing?

Imagining the worst case scenario?  
(catastrophizing)

Avoidance?





# Strategies

**Self awareness**

## Emotions



Specific reactions to certain events



Include cognitive and physiological changes



Help prime our bodies to act in a certain way



Automatic and unconscious

## Feelings

vs



Perceptions of sensations in the body



Not necessarily related to emotion (feeling tired or cold)



Continuous readouts of our internal states

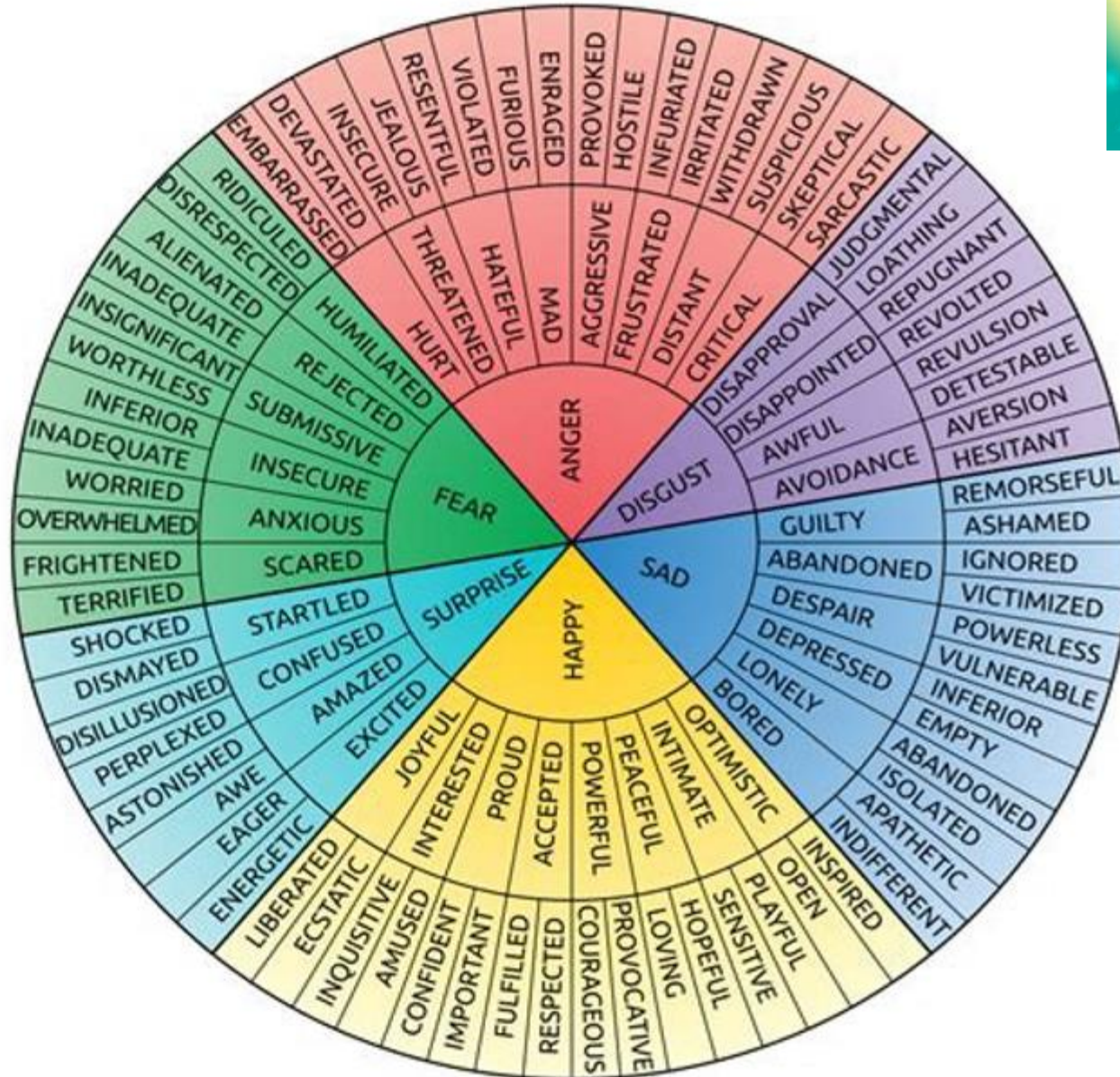
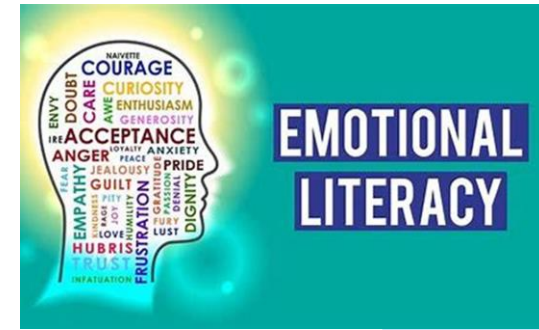


One component of emotion

Learn more: [www.humintell.com](http://www.humintell.com)

**Feelings originate in the neocortical region of the brain and they are reactions to the emotional stimulus.**

# Emotions and feelings wheel

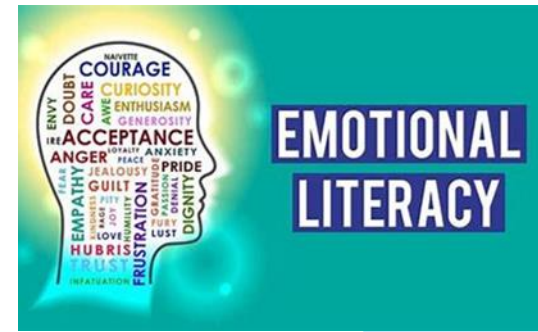




**1 - Promote and encourage the continual growth of emotional vocabulary.**

**2 - No explicit or perceived grouping of feelings that suggests feelings are good or bad, right or wrong.**

**3 - Adults should explore feelings with pupils without ever labelling their feelings on their behalf.**



Alternatives to labelling feelings

- Modelling

*I'm feeling frustrated today because my car wouldn't start this morning. I need to have a cup of tea to help me calm down.*

- Narrating (what is happening to someone else)

*Isaac is crying because he is sad Rachel took the car from him.*

- Explaining strategies

*When we feel angry, taking deep breaths can help us calm down.*

# A Scale of Worries/Anxiety

CHECK IN



**Be self aware**

# Grounding



# ANXIETY GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

---

focus on your breathing, then identify

5 things  
you can  
see



3 things  
you can  
hear



4 things  
you can  
touch



2 things  
you can  
smell



1 thing  
you can  
taste



CamF-designs

**Thinking**

# Making changes to the way you think



- This can be difficult!
- **But** many people have found that it is possible with practice and sometimes with a bit of help from a trusted person.

Some of the ways you can try are-

- **Mindfulness and relaxation**
  - Detective thinking
  - Keeping a feelings diary.
- **Distracting yourself with a fun activity.**
  - Imagining your safe place.

## Detective Thinking

1. What are the facts?
2. What else could happen?
3. What happened when I was worried before?
4. What advise would I give my best friend?
5. What has happened to other people?
6. Who or what could help me?
7. How important will this worry be next week?



**Beware of making  
thinking errors!**



## Unhelpful Thinking Styles

### All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

*If I'm not perfect I have failed*

*Either I do it right or not at all*

### Over-generalising

*"everything is always rubbish"*  
*"nothing good ever happens"*

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

### Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

*Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes*

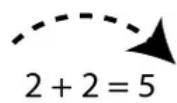
### Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

*That doesn't count*

### Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

### Magnification (catastrophising) & minimisation



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

### Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

*I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot*

# should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

### Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser*  
*I'm completely useless*  
*They're such an idiot*

### Personalisation

# "this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

## Creating a safe place



By creating a safe place in your imagination and practising being there you can use this image at times when you feel anxious to help you to feel more safe or to have some time out to relax.

To do this-

- Imagine a place of safety.
- It may be one that you already know, or it may be one that you can create in your imagination.
- Describe that place to your self.. .the images, the colours, the sounds or silences, the temperature, the whole feel of it.
- Once you describe it to yourself, begin to sense the whole feel of that safety inside your body ... What is the whole feel of the safety within your body?
- See if there is an image, or word or phrase to describe that place.

19



- **In your mind**
- **An actual place**

## Changing How Your Body Feels when you feel anxious.

There are activities you can do to help to get control of your body when you feel anxious.

### Including-

- **Breathing techniques**
- **Relaxation techniques- such as massage, scrunch/relax, body scan.**
- **Sensory play**
- **Getting enough sleep**
- **Eating good food (not too much sugar)**
- **Exercise**

# Making your body feel better

# Breathing and muscles





# Calm Down Strategies for Kids

Pathway 2 SUCCESS



Color or draw



Think happy thoughts



Take deep breaths



Make a list of choices



Set the timer and take a break



Read



Think of a pet



Look at photos



Use positive self-talk



Take a walk or exercise



Write in a journal

# Kid's yoga

Tree pose



Triangle pose



Warrior pose



Butterfly pose



Dog pose



Monkey pose



Mountain pose



Camel pose









Boat pose





**Relaxation**  
*for*  
**Children**

<p><b>Protect Your Tummy</b></p>	 <p>Pretend that a hippo has decided to sit on your stomach. Hold your stomach as tight as you can. Keep holding (Hold for 10 seconds.) Hooray, you did it! The hippo has gotten off your stomach. Let your stomach relax.</p>
<p><b>Chew a Carrot</b></p>	 <p>Pretend that you are eating a big, crunchy carrot. Bite down on it. We want to turn that carrot into mush! Keep biting (Hold for 10 seconds.) Now relax, the carrot is eaten. Let yourself go as loose as you can.</p>
<p><b>Get a Fly Off Your Nose</b></p>	 <p>Pretend a fly has landed on your nose. Using your hands, try to wrinkle up your nose so you can get the fly off! The fly is gone. Now your face goes back to normal.</p>

<p><b>Squeeze a Lemon</b></p>	 <p>Pretend you have a lemon in each hand. Squeeze it hard. Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Keep squeezing (Hold for 10 seconds.) Now relax and let the lemon drop from your hand. Hooray, you did it!</p>
<p><b>Stretch Like a Cat</b></p>	 <p>Pretend you are a cat and you just woke up from a nap. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Now raise them way up high over your head. Stretch as high as you can. Keep stretching (Hold for 10 seconds.) Hooray, you did it! Let your arms drop.</p>
<p><b>Hide in Your Shell</b></p>	 <p>Pretend you are a turtle. Pull your head into your shell. Pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold it tight (Hold for 10 seconds.) Hooray, you did it! You can come out now. Feel your shoulders relax.</p>

**Progressive  
Muscle  
Relaxation**

# Muscles!



<p><b>TIME</b> <i>for</i> <b>BED</b></p> <p>RELAXATION STRETCHES</p>	 <p><b>Little Goose</b></p> <p>Lay on your back with your feet up on the wall and legs straight. Spread your arms apart flat on the floor.</p>	 <p><b>Little Cat</b></p> <p>Snuggle in tight! Sit criss cross applesauce on the floor. Bend forward at the hips and place your forehead on the floor.</p>	 <p><b>Little Cow</b></p> <p>Clasp your hands together behind your back and bend forward at your hips.</p>
 <p><b>Little Foal</b></p> <p>Lay on your back on the floor. Pull your knees in and hold them tight. Whisper about your day.</p>	 <p><b>Little Fish</b></p> <p>Take a deep breath. Puff up your cheeks and hold your breath. Slowly let it out.</p>	 <p><b>Little Sheep</b></p> <p>Stand near a wall. Place both hands on the wall at shoulder height. Bend your elbows slightly and push in and out against the wall.</p>	 <p><b>Little Bird</b></p> <p>Close your eyes and take deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.</p>
 <p><b>Little Bee</b></p> <p>Stand with your feet slightly apart. Bend forward at your hips. Swing your arms in a figure eight motion.</p>	 <p><b>Little Snake</b></p> <p>Lie on your back with your legs straight and crossed at the ankles. Raise your arms over your head and cross them at the wrists.</p>	 <p><b>Little Pup</b></p> <p>Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend forward at the hips and place your hands on the ground, shoulder width apart.</p>	 <p><b>Little Deer</b></p> <p>Sit on the floor with your feet spread far apart. Bend forward at the hips and touch one foot and then the other.</p>

# Stretches



# Scrunch/Relax Routine



Sit on a chair.



Scrunch up your face...

And then relax.



Stretch and straighten  
your arms...

And then relax.



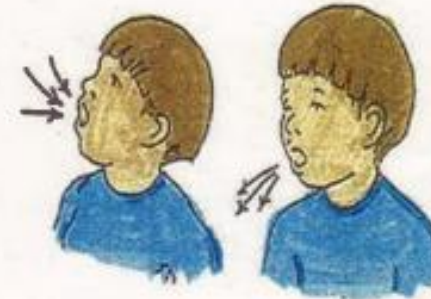
Lift your shoulders and  
then your chest as  
high as they will go...

And then relax.



Stretch out your legs  
and your feet as far as  
they will go...

And then relax.



Breath in as deep as  
you can, slowly...

Then breath out as  
slowly.

# All sorts of breathing

## BALLOON BREATHING



Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

## SHOULDER ROLL BREATHING



Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

## BACK TO BACK BREATHING



Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start - that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, and then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. Their partner should feel the expansion in their partner's back each time they breathe in and then try to sync their own breathing so that both partners are breathing in time together.

## TUMMY BREATHING



Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

## TAKE 5 BREATHING



Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

## BUMBLEBEE BREATHING



Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.

## ELEPHANT BREATHING

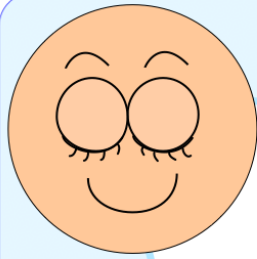


Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

## BUBBLE BREATHING

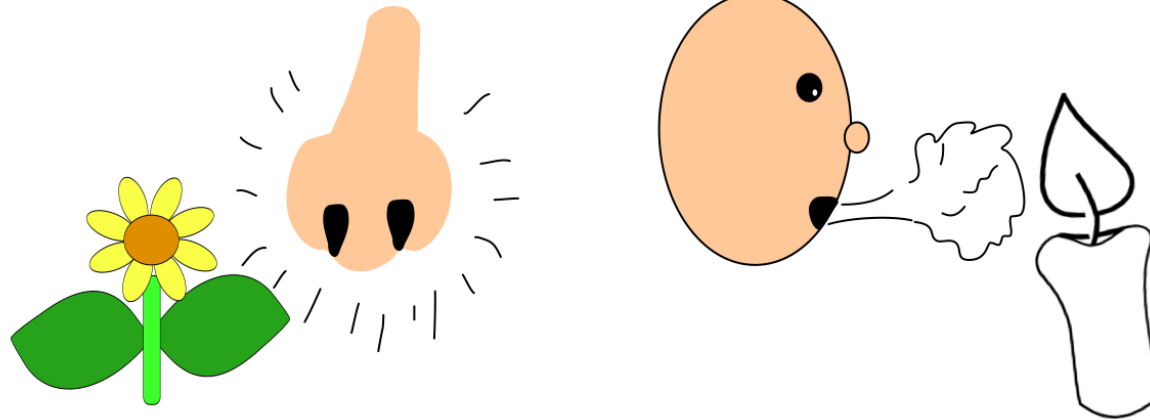


Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.



# Smell the flower and blow out the candle

This exercise is similar to the 'smell and relax exercise'. Breathe in the scent of a flower and then blow out a candle. Long and slow as you relax. Repeat 5 times.



[www.elsa-support.co.uk](http://www.elsa-support.co.uk)

# How to do Deep Breathing

1. Take a deep breath in through your nose.
2. Slowly let out your breath through your mouth.
3. Do this 5 times.

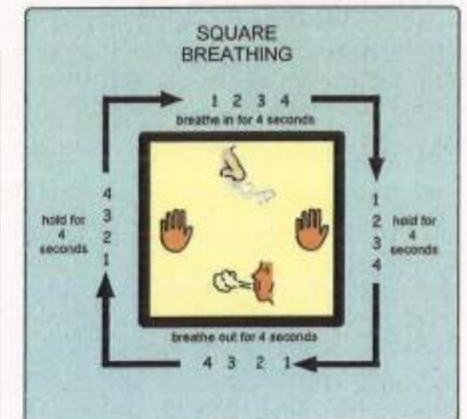
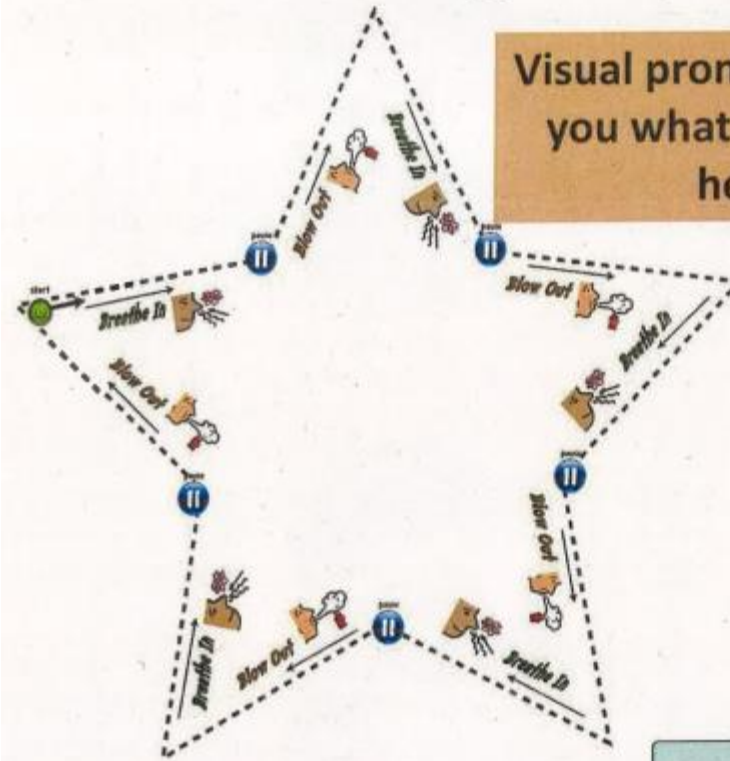
Take deep breath



Remember- you can do your deep breathing any time and anywhere as people cannot tell when you are doing it.

# Breathing Techniques

Visual prompts to remind you what to do can be helpful

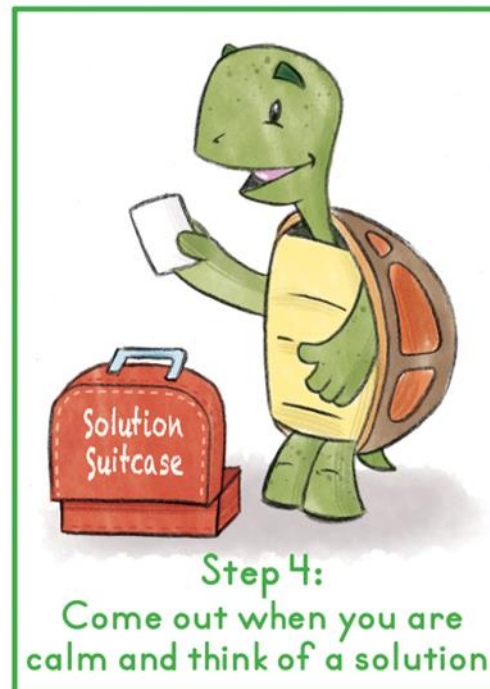




# **Behavioural strategies**

# Turtle Time

# Shell Time



1. Event
2. Think STOP
3. Take a slow breath
4. Withdraw into shell
5. Try again



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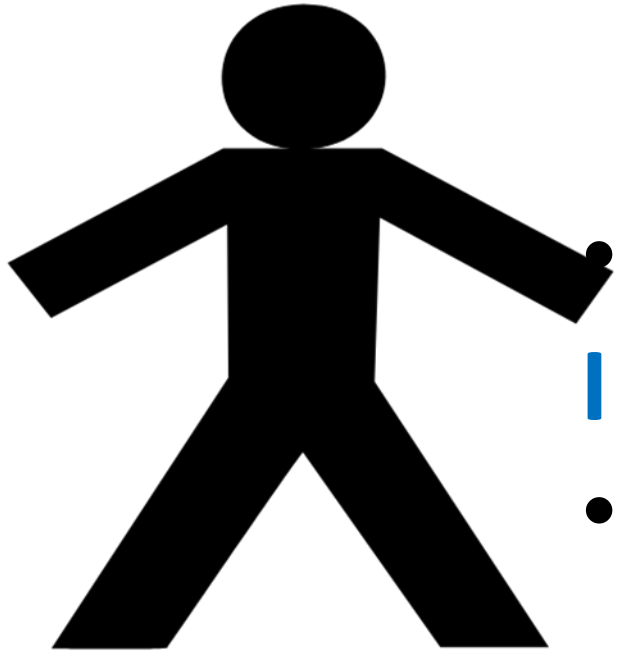


# Negative self talk

**I am not as good as everyone else.**

**Dispute negative feelings**

**I try as hard as I can and do my best. That is what is important.**



# Positive self talk

**I fail a lot.**

**I succeed in lots of things eg ...**

- **There are not lots of good things about me.**

**I am a kind person who cares about my family a great deal.**

- **I am not as good as anyone else.**

**I do not need to compare myself to others.**

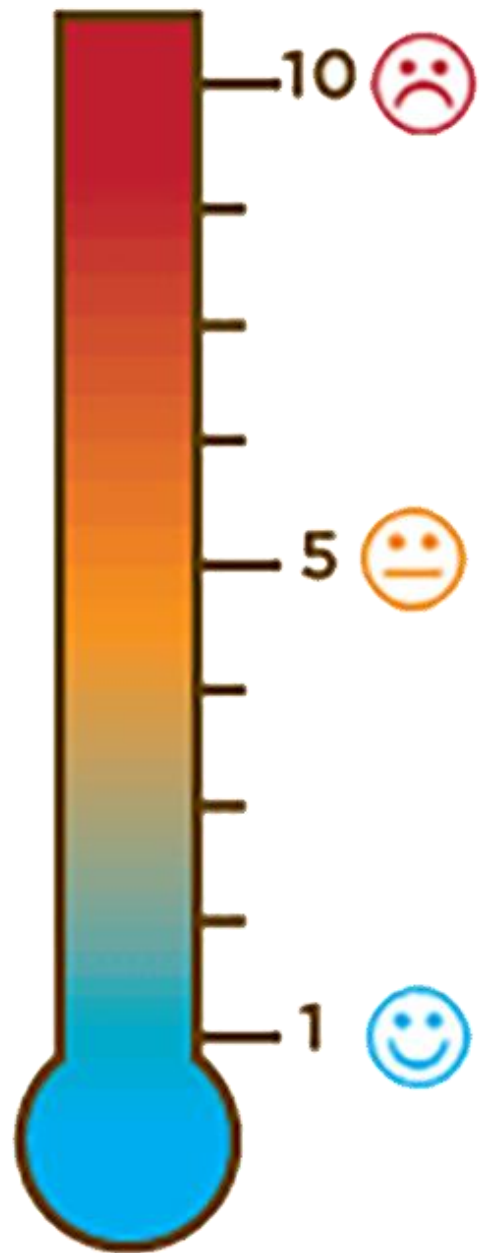
**I do my best in everything I do.**

# Coping Skill:

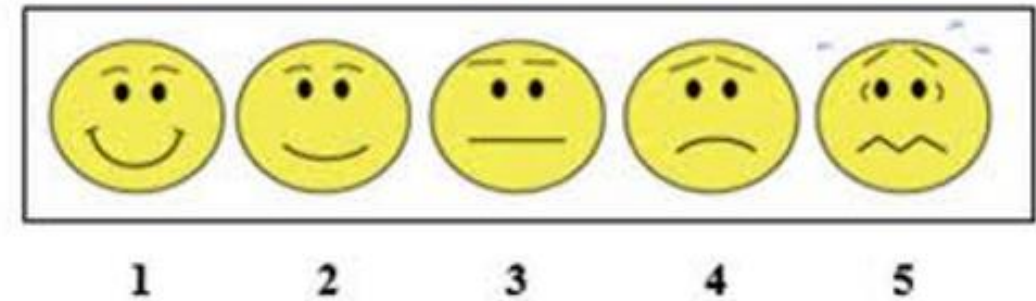


**Worry box – Use a box to write any worries in, this is particularly helpful if your child is a night time worrier.**

## Using A Worry Box



## Scaling



1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Not nervous  
at all**                      **A little  
nervous**                      **Somewhat  
nervous**                      **Very  
nervous**                      **Very, very  
nervous**