

Let's Talk Anxious Teens

Parent workshop

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Psycho Educational workshops for Oathall Parents

Let's Talk: Anxious Teens

a Parent Workshop from Thought-Full
Mental Health Support Team

Is your child **anxious**?
Over a wide **variety of themes**?
Is it often for no **apparent cause**?

Perhaps you are anxious about their anxiousness?

We'll cover types of anxiety, the correct terminology to use, strategies to give your child and info on anxiety maintenance, that is only sustaining their worries.

Thursday 16th November 5 - 6pm

Future Dates:
Weds 24th Jan
Weds 22nd Mar
Thurs 2nd May
Thurs 18th July

Attending doesn't make you a bad parent, we just want to **help you, to help them.**
We look forward to welcoming you

PROBLEM SOLVE TOGETHER
SHARE QUICK WINS
LEARN ABOUT THE BRAIN
CONNECT WITH OTHER FAMILIES
GAIN IDEAS

Aims of session:

- What is anxiety & the various types of anxiety
- Anxiety in context and what it might look like in teens
- How it works & what keeps it going
- How to support children with anxiety
- *Resources and further support*



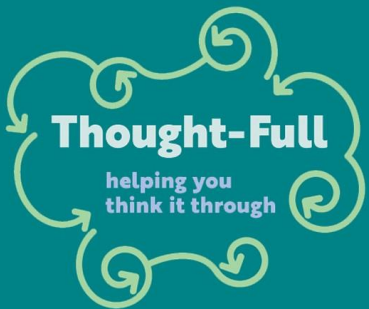
Strictly Come Panicking!?!?!

How anxious would you be?

- If I put a spider in your hand
- If you had to go to a party by yourself when you didn't know anyone
- If you had to do a parachute jump
- If I told you to take over this presentation
- If you were stuck in a lift
- If you had to sing karaoke tonight

Why do we all have different scores?





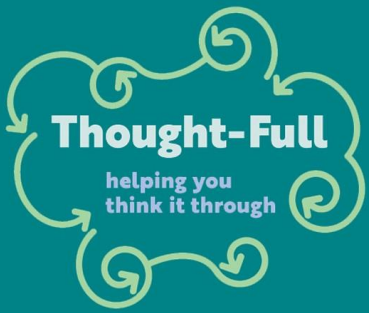
Anxiety: I have or I feel?

- Often people say they '*have* anxiety' when really, they mean they're '*feeling* anxious', there is a **substantial** difference.
- Children can be the worst for this misnomer.
- But we need them to consider which word they mean.
- Only a doctor, diagnoses anxiety.

anxious

(1) (adjective) eagerly desirous; (2) (adjective) causing or fraught with or showing anxiety;

what you permit... you promote.
what you allow... you approve.
what you don't condemn... you
condone.



What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is what we feel when we are **worried, tense or afraid** – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think **could happen** in the future.

Anxiety is a **natural** human response when **we perceive** that we are **under threat**.

It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.

mind.org.uk

Anxiety is common, **EVERYONE** experiences worries, fears, stress and anxiety some of the time.

“Think of anxiety like fog, if it covers everything, makes it makes it hard to see, stops you from doing what you usually do, and generally gets in the way, then it has likely become a problem.”

(Dr Paul Linsley, UEA)

Know which is which

Normal Anxiety vs. Problem Anxiety

Normal

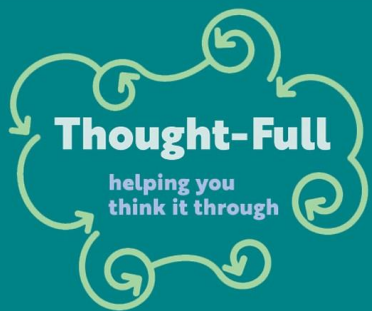
- Triggered by certain events and situations
- Intermittent
- Beneficial

Problem

- Interference with daily life
- Irrational
- Chronic



- There is no denying, anxiety is uncomfortable.
- Children often think it is a problem due to how unpleasant it is.
- But we want it, we just don't want too much of it.



Anxiety is developmental (so is separation anxiety)

Separation anxiety
Stranger danger
Loud noises
Large objects



Imaginary creatures
Noises
Sleeping alone
Darkness
Injury
Animals
Medical interventions
Thunder

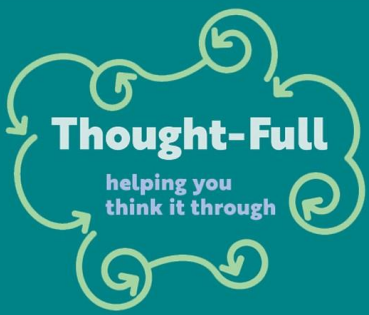


Thunder
School performance
Health
Death
Social competence



New experiences
School performance
Health
Natural disasters
Social competence

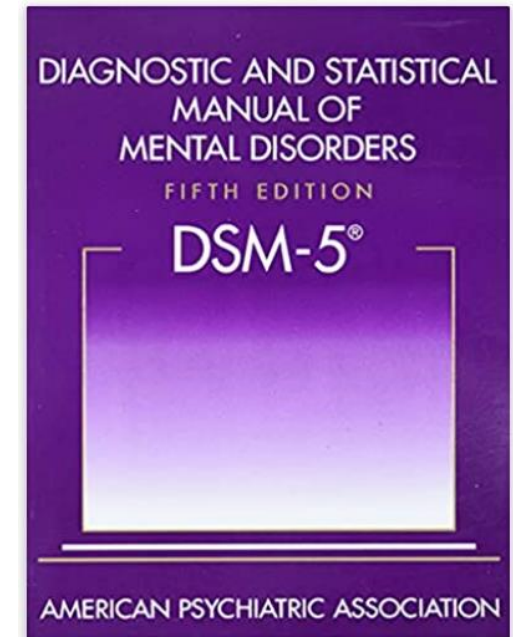


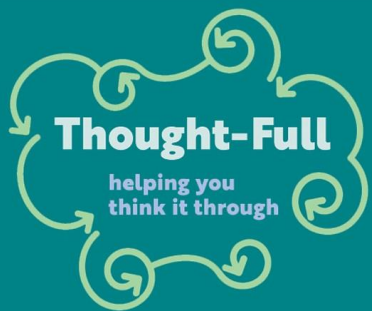


But how many types of Anxiety are there?

There are many common types of anxiety

- GAD – ‘Worries’
- Social Anxiety
- Separation Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Panic disorder
- Phobias
- Agoraphobia
- Selective Mutism
- OCD
- PTSD
- Health Anxiety

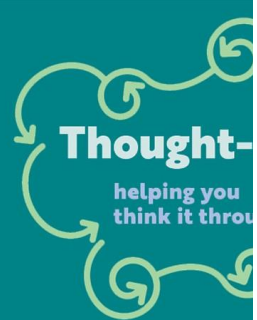




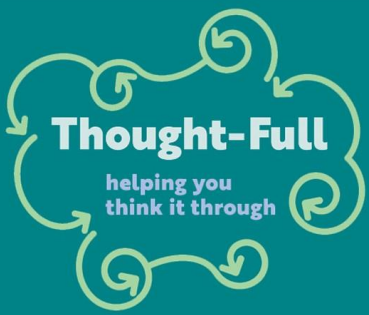
Sorting Activity: in wee groups

- Can you sort the following terms into groups?
- Can you name the 'groups' to define why they are together?

Catastrophising	Difficulties concentrating	Overly Apologetic	Confused	Shaking/ Trembling
Over-exaggerating	Avoidance / Escape	Eating Disorders	Sad	Clenching Fists and Jaw
Self-critical	Falling asleep regularly in school	Angry	Low mood	Tense/hunched posture
Restless	Clinginess or crying	Annoyed	Self-doubt	Sweatiness
Difficulties coping with change	Perfectionism	Frustrated	Dry mouth or thirsty	Getting hot



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Sorting Activity

- How many groups do you have?
- Why might we have given you these 'symptoms' all in one, without 'defining them'?

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Orange =
Behaviours

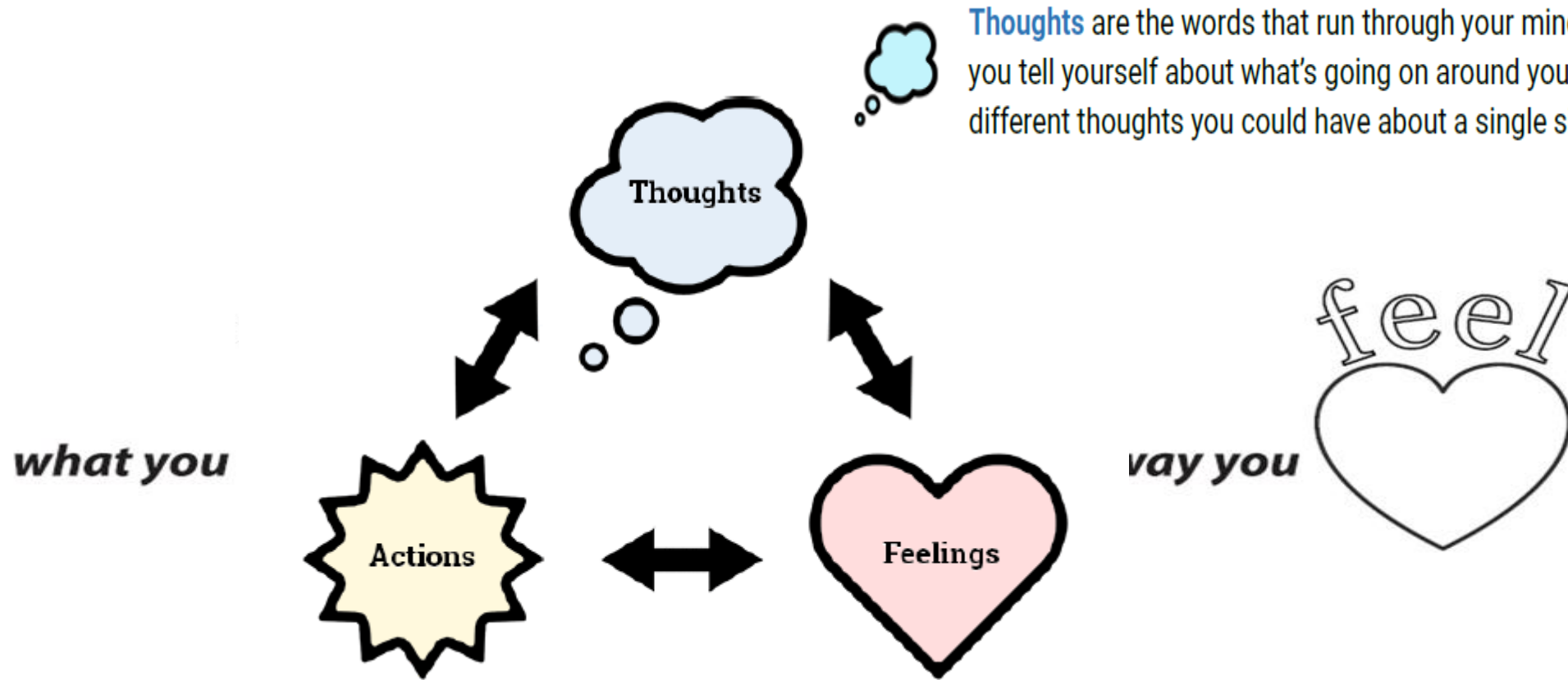
Green =
Emotions

Blue =
Physical
reactions

**What's
missing?**

Catastrophising	Difficulties concentrating	Overly Apologetic	Confused	Shaking/ Trembling
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CBT – the core premise



Thoughts are the words that run through your mind. They're the things you tell yourself about what's going on around you. There are many different thoughts you could have about a single situation.



Actions are the things you do, or the way you behave. Your thoughts and feelings have a big impact on how you act. If you feel happy, you are likely to do nice things. But if you feel angry, you might want to act mean.



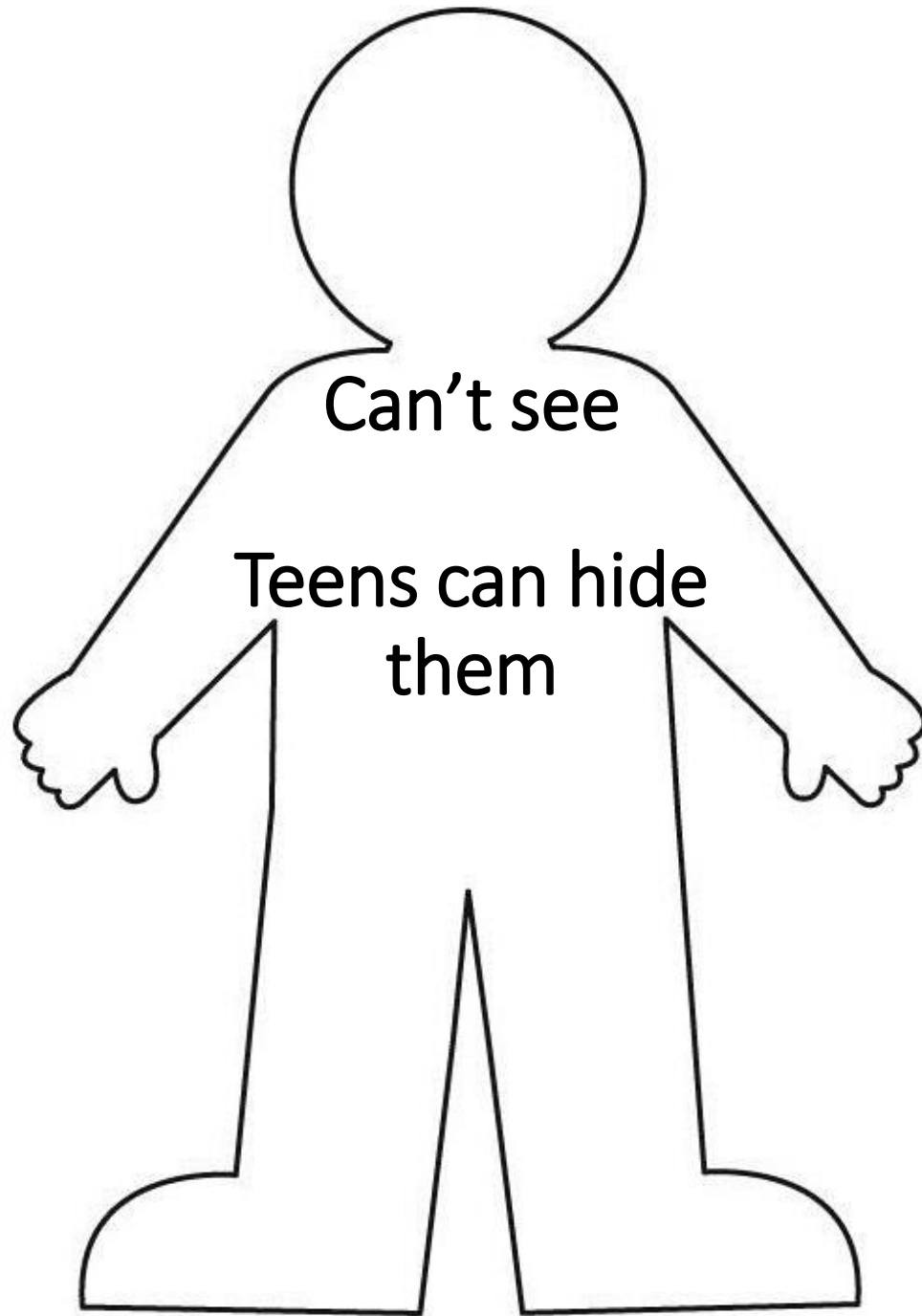
Feelings come and go as different things happen to you. You might feel happy, angry, and sad, all in one day. Some feelings are uncomfortable, but they are not bad. Everyone has these feelings from time-to-time.



Internal vs External Symptoms

Can see

Our teens
can't hide
them



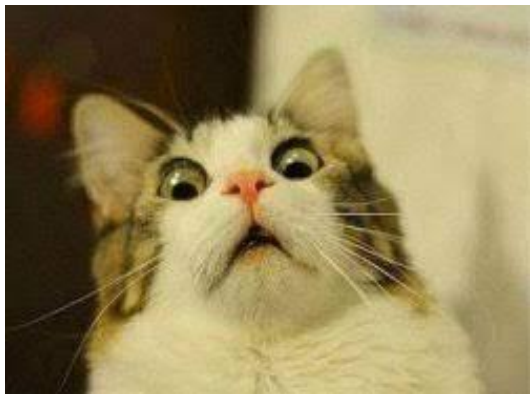
Signs to look out for:



So why do we get anxious?

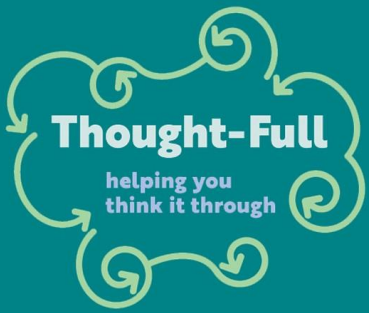
- **Why** each person gets anxious is **harder to answer**.
- But why **humans experience anxiety** is easier to explain.
- As often – although our triggers may vary, the core reason as to why we experience it is the same. We *perceive* that we are facing **a threat**.

N.B – It is the threat we perceive, not the level of danger we are in!









Anxiety Alarm

- Our brain often functions like an anxiety alarm.
- This is in the **Amygdala**.
- Sometimes, it goes off wrongly.
- But our brain uses a '*safe rather than sorry*' policy.
- It'd rather alarm you falsely, than miss any dangers!

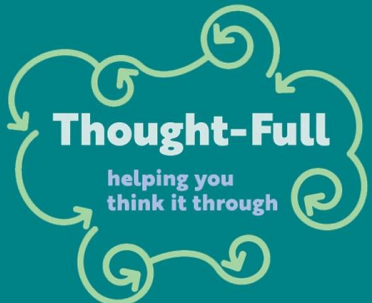


Anxiety is a trait **we want**, an ability to sense danger.

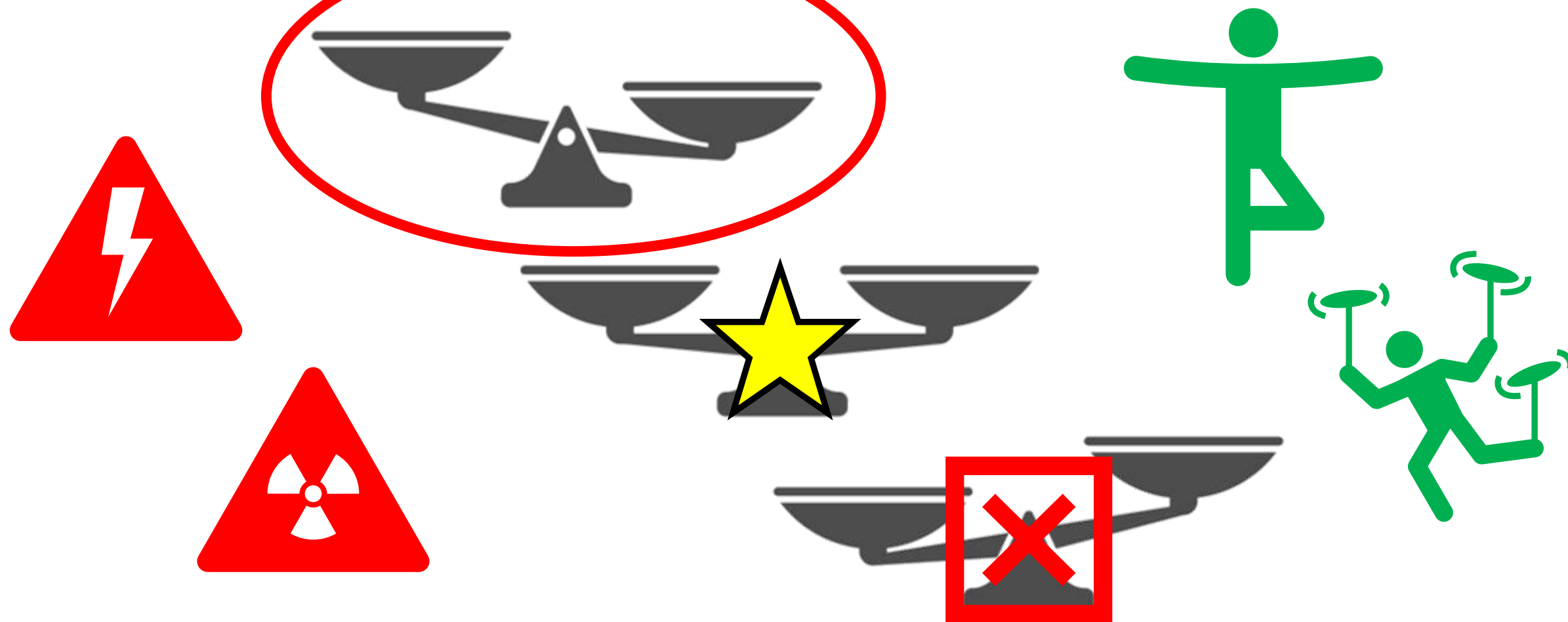
Society's dangers have changed, our brains haven't changed !

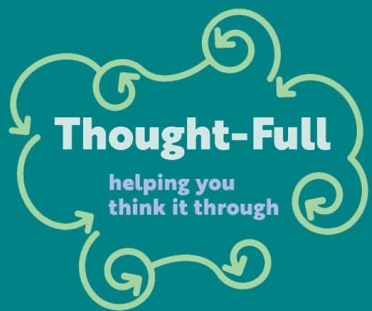
What could be the **dangers** teen pupils face?

Remember – it is the 'perception' of danger opposed to level of threat



The Amygdala Scales





Rebalanced perception, not removal of threat.

- We want young people to be able to **push** themselves (sensibly!)
- We also want them to keep themselves safe.
- It is about ***proportionate responses***.
- We need our *amygdala* to help keep us in check.



A model for anxiety

The Anxiety Curve

The anxiety cycle
lasts from 5
minutes to 30
minutes

Challenging it
helps it pass

Avoiding it
intensifies the
anxiety

**The height of
anxiety**

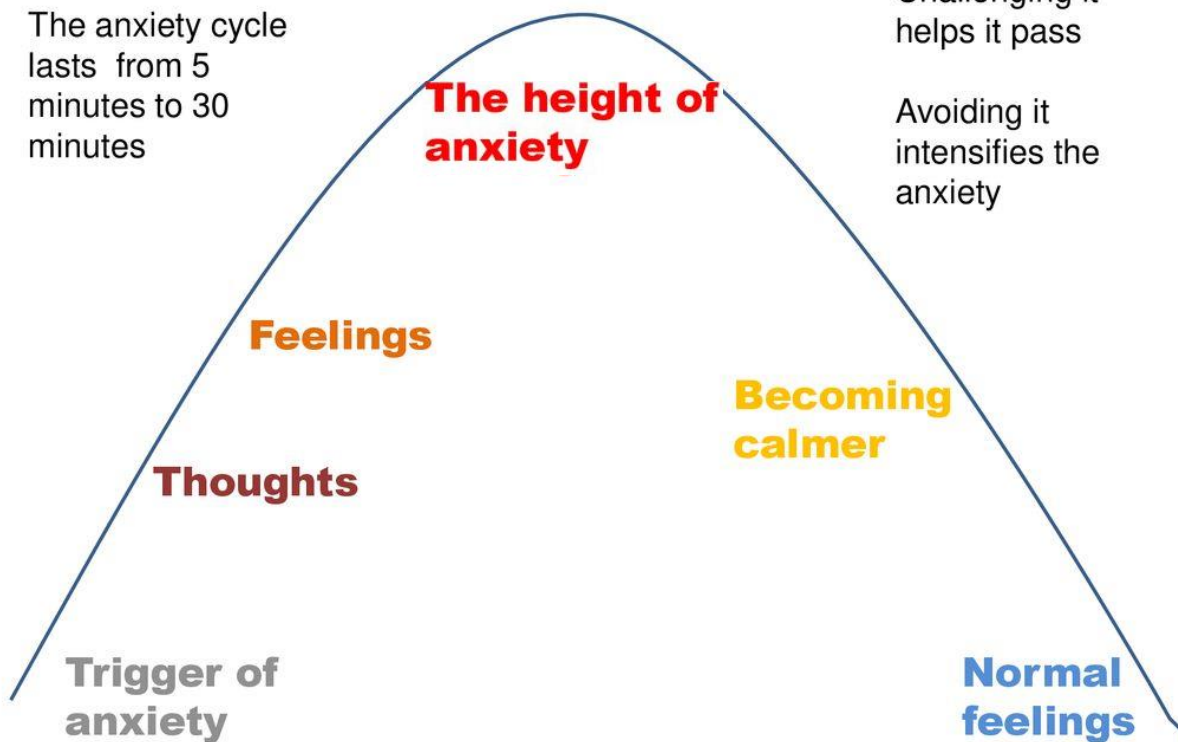
Feelings

Thoughts

**Becoming
calmer**

**Trigger of
anxiety**

**Normal
feelings**



A model for anxiety

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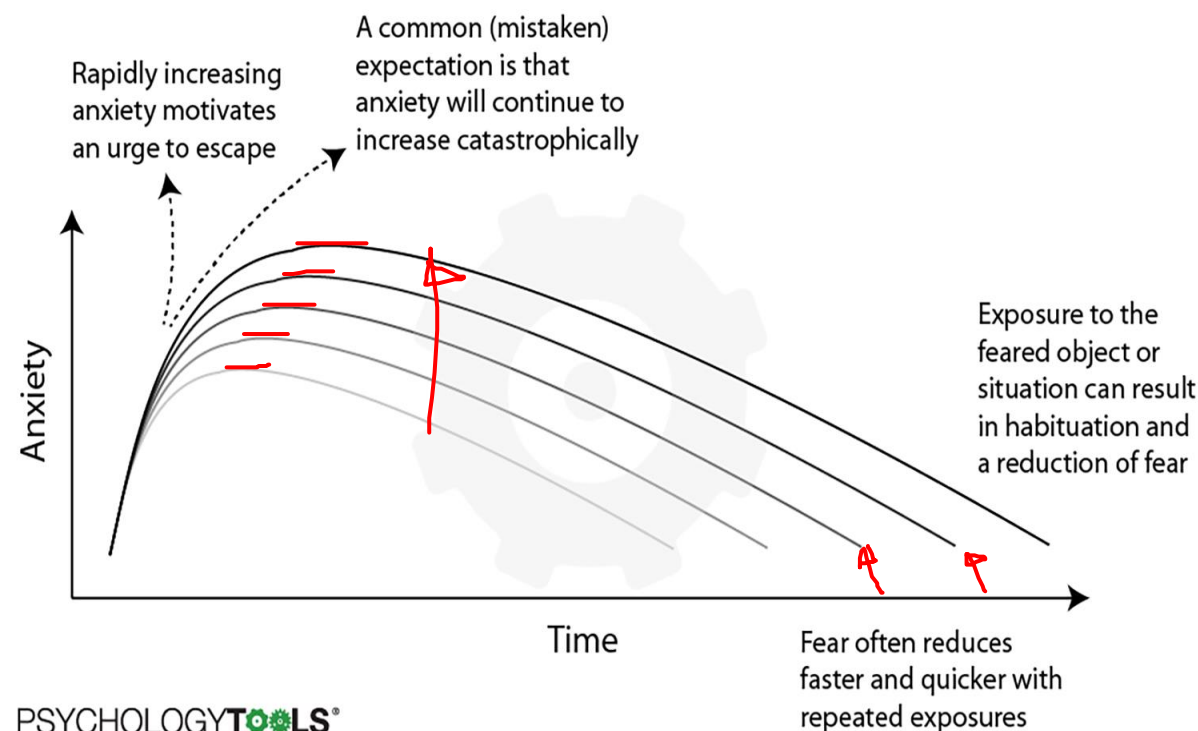
Feelings

Thoughts

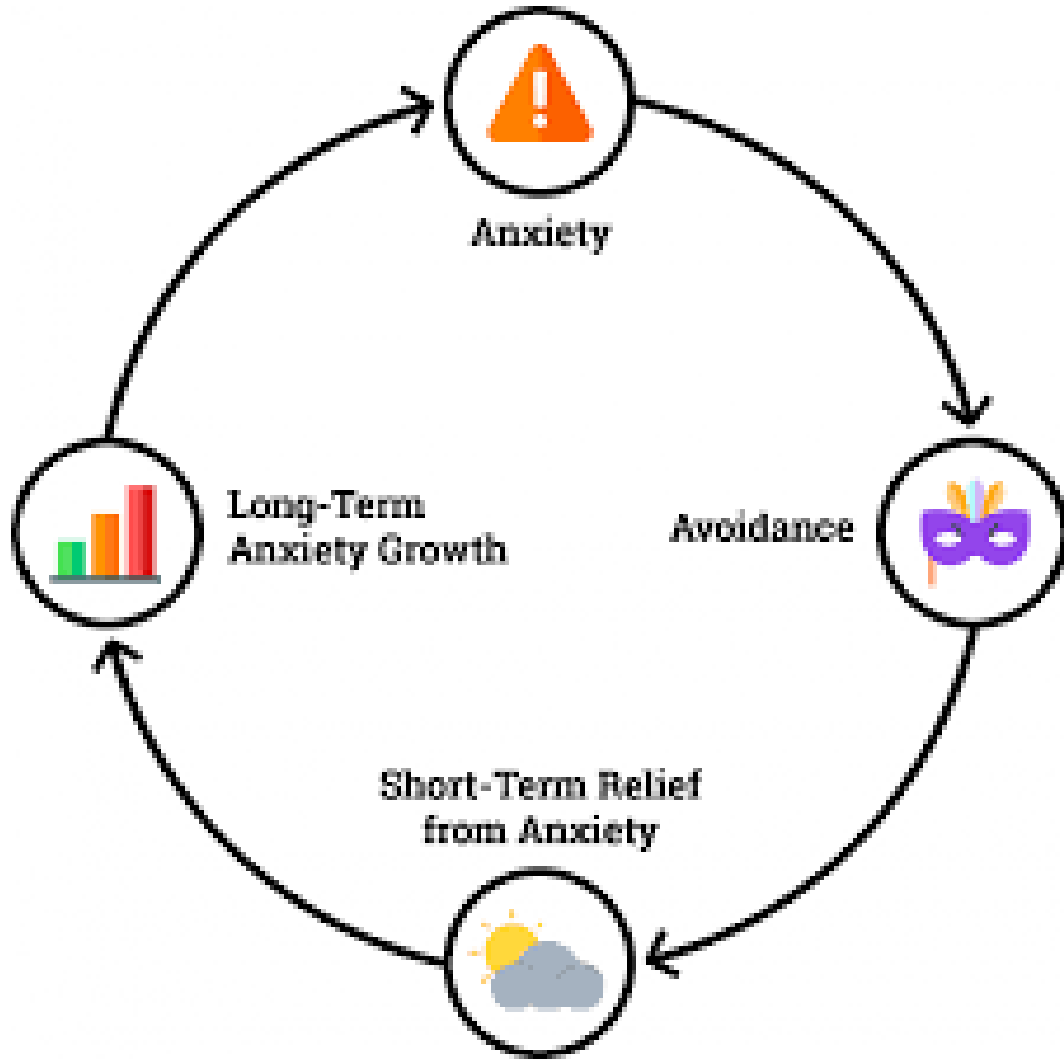
Becoming calmer

Trigger of anxiety

Normal feelings

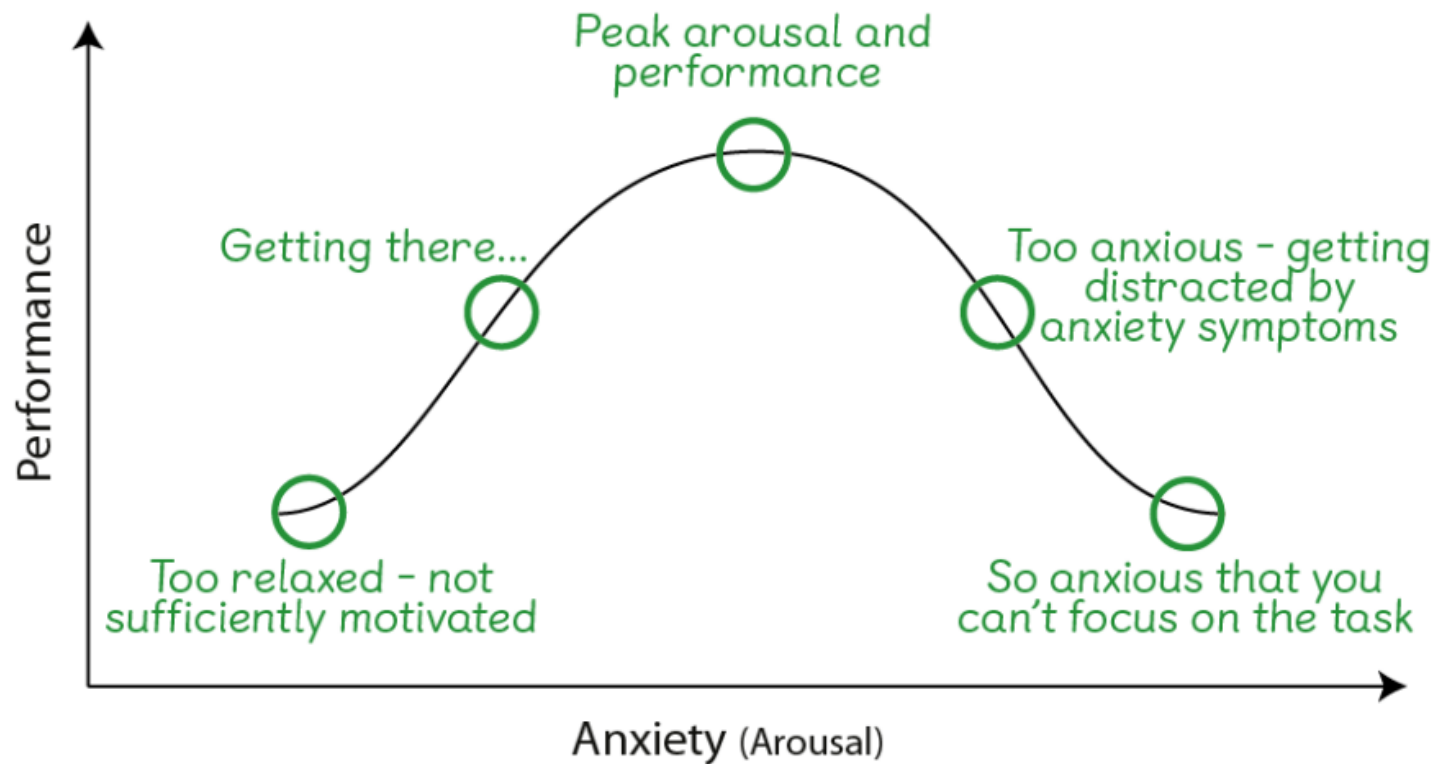


Avoidance – the MAINTAINER



- We can't 'remove' anxiety
- But we can slowly chip away at it.
- Avoiding what we dislike, doesn't help us.
- So short term pain, for long term gain

Anxiety: why we want (need) it



- Anxiety brings out the 'best' in us when we're under pressure.
- So, in high pressure environments, it can help us
- What (main) high pressures do teens face?

The hand model – Dan Siegel

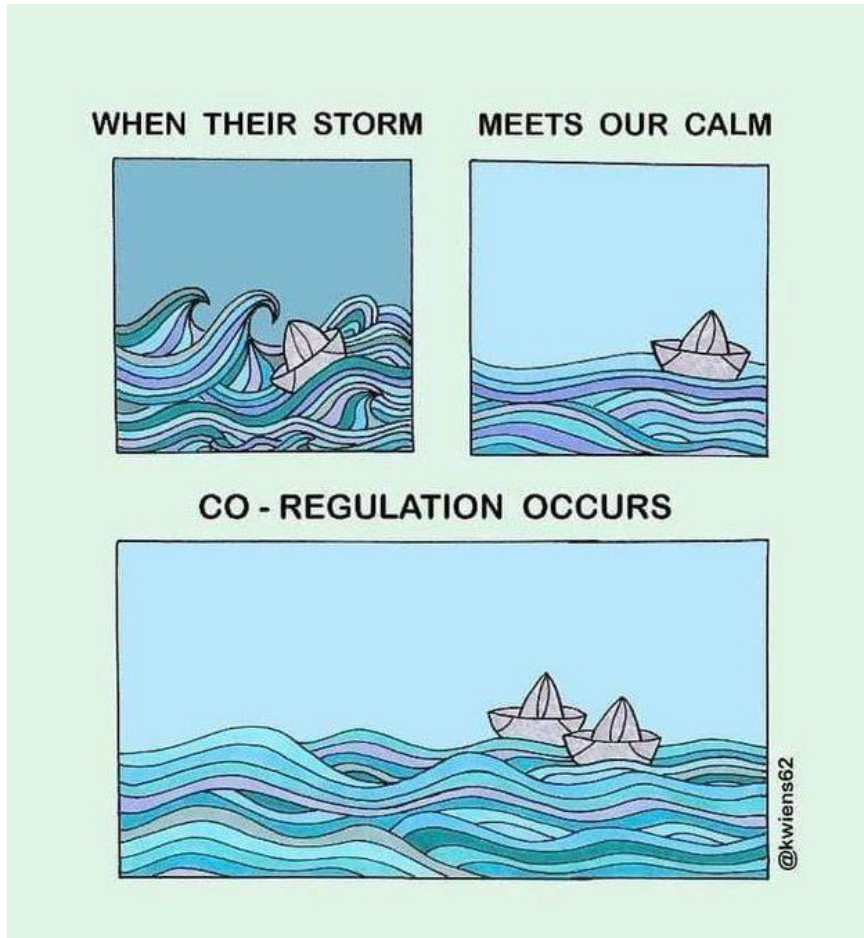
The Hand Model of the Brain

What happens when we "flip our lid"

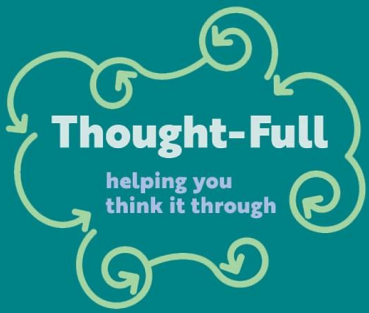
When our brain is working efficiently both the upper and mid brain are communicating effectively. Information comes in and is processed logically. Sometimes too much information is coming in for the Upper brain to process and it disconnects. We "flip our lid" and can no longer access the functions provided by the upper brain



We need to regulate to co-operate

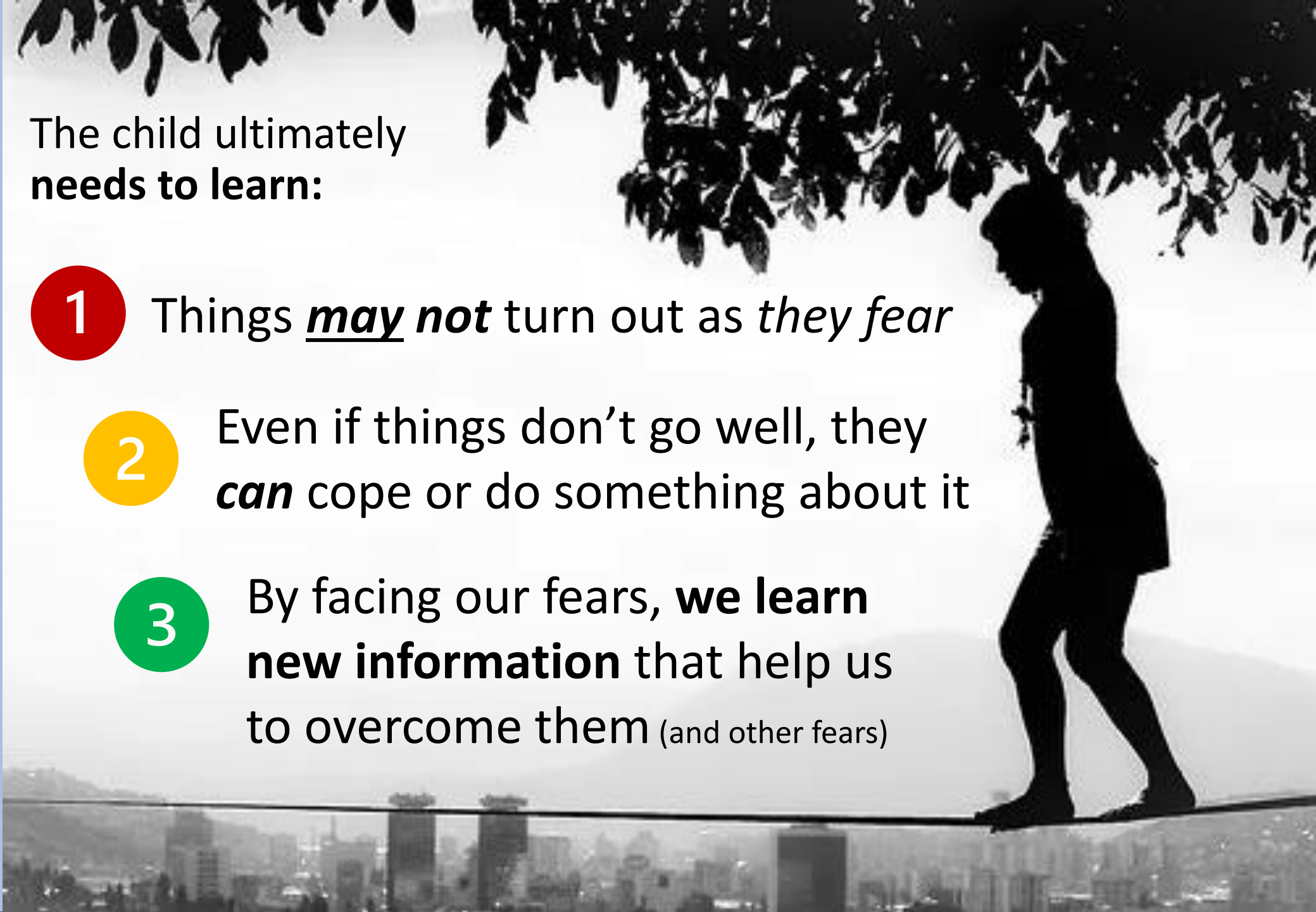


- Anxious people, when they have flipped their lid, are in survival mode.
- They cannot be 'reasoned' with in that state.
- They need to re-close their lid to function again.

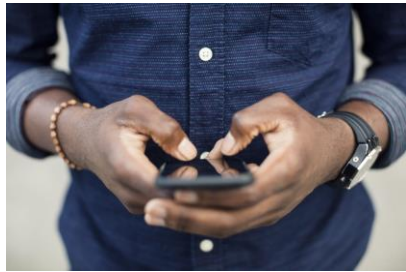


The child ultimately
needs to learn:

- 1 Things ***may not*** turn out as *they fear*
- 2 Even if things don't go well, they ***can*** cope or do something about it
- 3 By facing our fears, **we learn new information** that help us to overcome them (and other fears)



Different ways to respond



Accommodating response

Answering repeated questions about time of mum's arrival

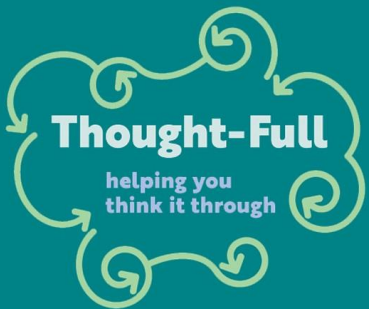
Telling child to text you if they feel anxious at school.

Agreeing to walk down to reception earlier for pick up

Understanding

Confidence





Reading the signs, *not* treating them

Anxiety can take **many forms**.

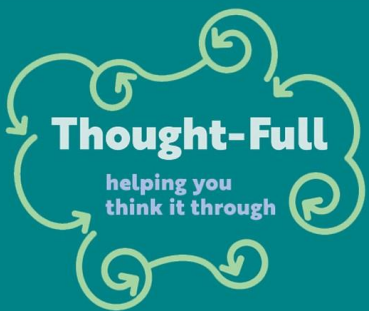
Do you know any symptoms to look out for in yourself?

But how many of these symptoms could you experience for ***other reasons?***

- Anger
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Low mood
- Low self esteem
- Sweatiness
- Shaking
- Trembling
- Dry Mouth
- Crying
- Fall asleep in school
- Self-critical
- Perfectionism
- Loss of appetite
- Weight gain
- Always apologising
- Getting hot
- Thirsty
- Heart racing
- Breathing faster
- Difficulties Concentrating

- Whilst listing symptoms of anxiety is useful, to have an awareness.
- Each person experiencing anxiety, has a **different reaction** and experience.
- Even similar anxieties do not necessarily illicit the same response from people.
- Our bodies and minds have some similarities, but we're all different as people.
- We can all see a 'rainbow' but we don't see the same rainbow.





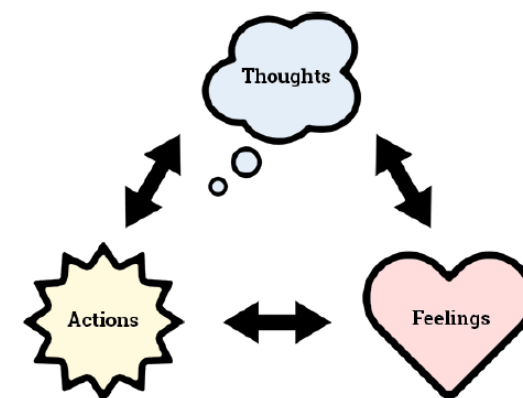
So... what can we do about it?

You need to know, **you cannot remove anxiety** or anxiousness.
Even if the child is distressed. We **need to calm them** to reason with them.

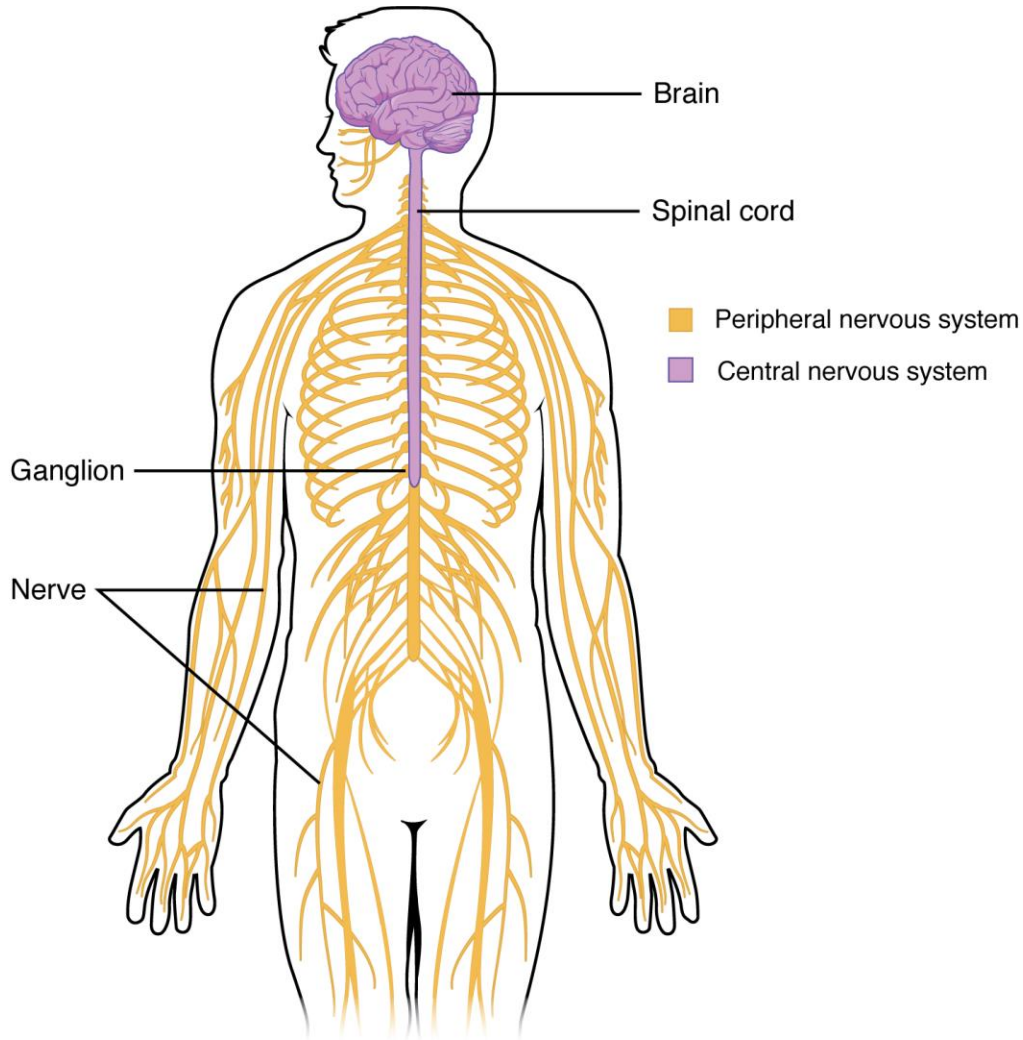
But whilst the brain is powerful...

We can 'trick it' into working for us, rather than against us.

By changing what we think and do!



A link between the physical and psychological



Often explaining why the physical reaction happens, **helps to rationalise** and understand the reason for the 'anxiety'.

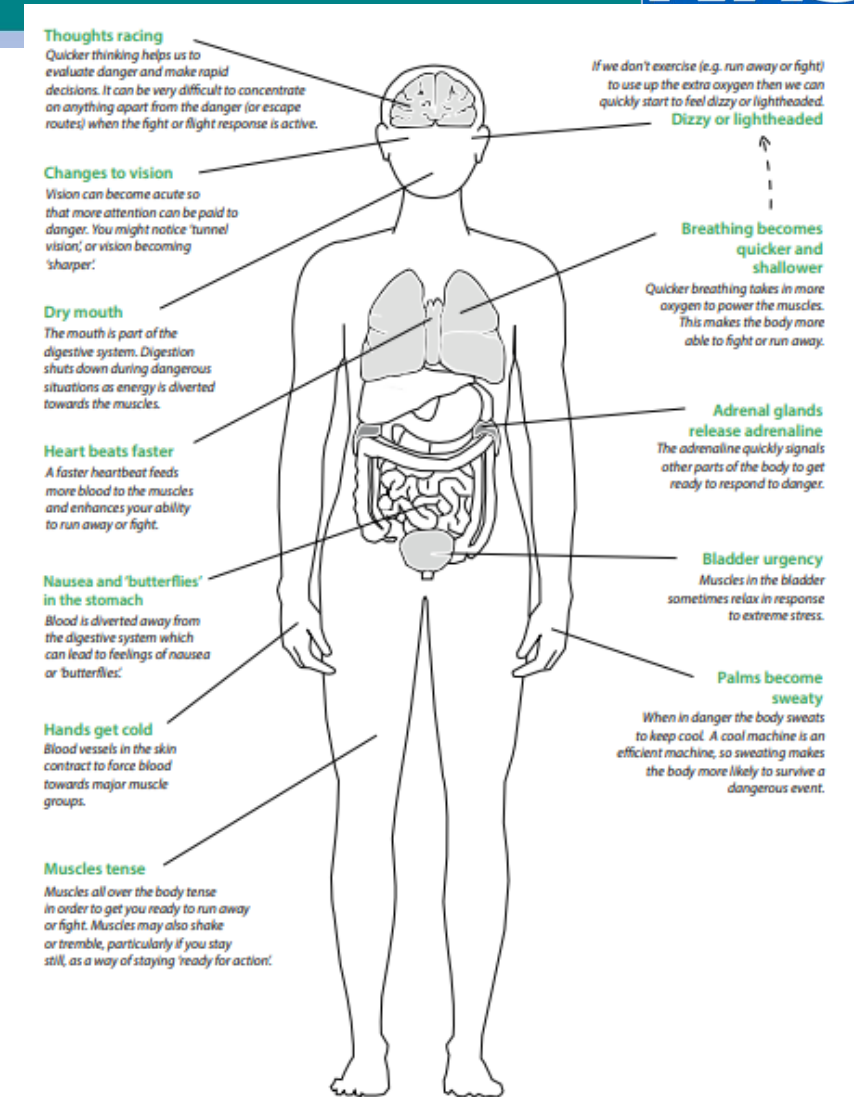
For example:

- the **heart beats faster** to pump blood to the muscles and enhances your ability to run away or fight.
- **Sweating** occurs to keep the body cool and not overheat, most overheating machines stop and shutdown. We want to avoid this.

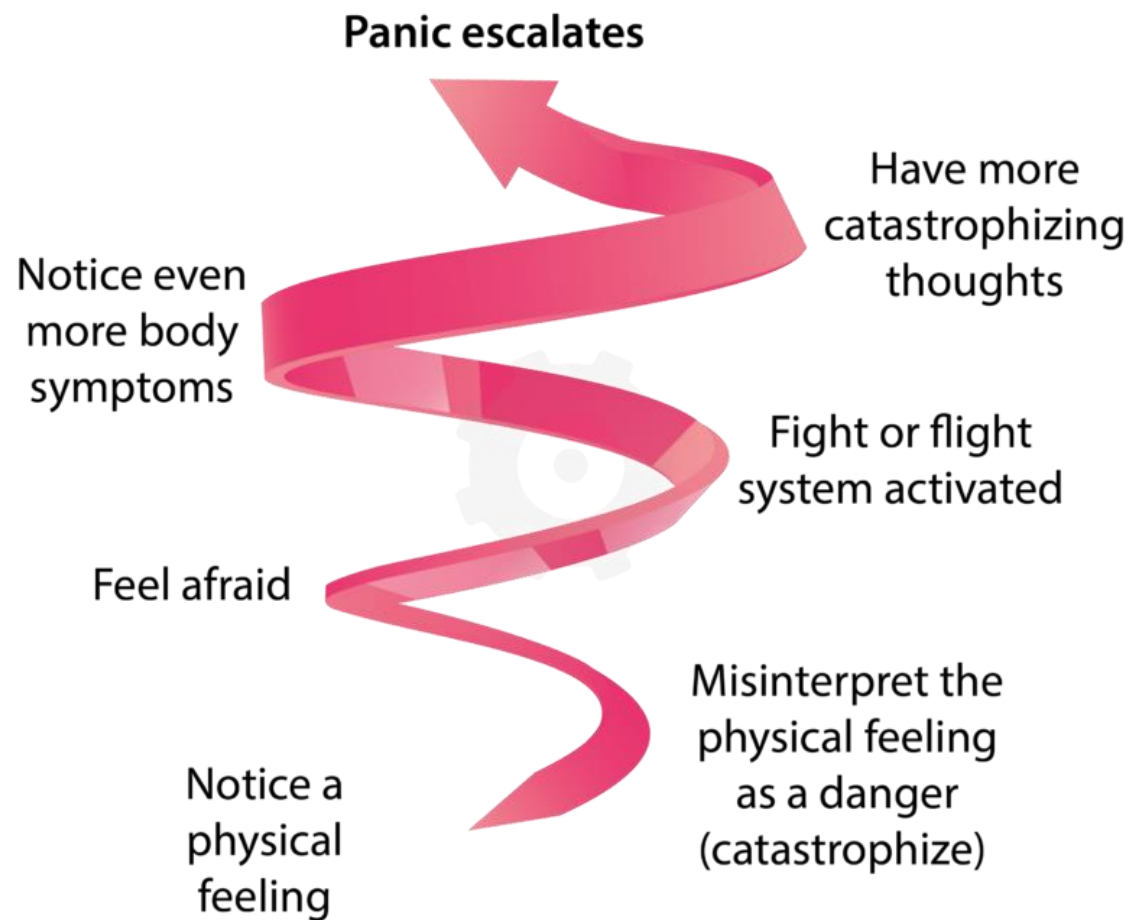


Rationalise their body's response

- If you can identify, explain and rationalise, why their body is doing what it is doing, you're removing the fear.
- This isn't just evidence-less reassurance.
- What they crave is certainty.
- This can help them to understand what is happening, why and that it happens to every single human...
- yes – even the confident ones.



Explaining the physical... to combat the psychological

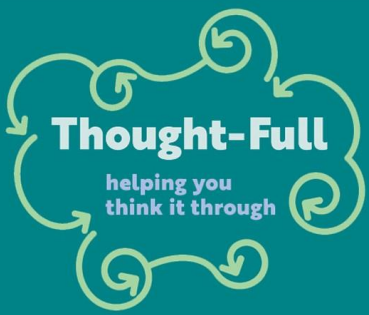


- You won't 'logic' someone out of a panic attack.
- You need to calm them.
- Get them to focus on the here and now (grounding or breathing)
- Then ask symptoms
- Explain physical symptoms
- Try to stem the 'mis-interpreting' of a physical sense of danger.



Even 'avengers' have fears to conquer





BEWARE of too much REASSURANCE

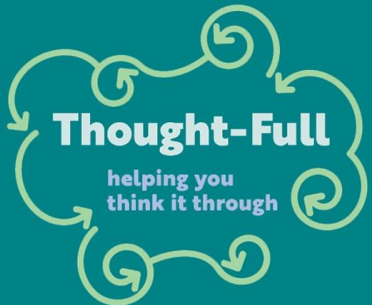


Alternatives to repeated reassurance:

- Disrupt the pattern of reassurance
(e.g. ask child to predict your response)
- Provide reassurance **once**, then on future occasions refer to previous answer or ask child “what do you think I will say”?
Disengage from further discussion
- **Fixed time** for when reassurance provided
e.g. once- on the hour i.e 25 min past only.
- Respond to emotion rather than content
“you sound worried but I know you’ll cope with it” (support)



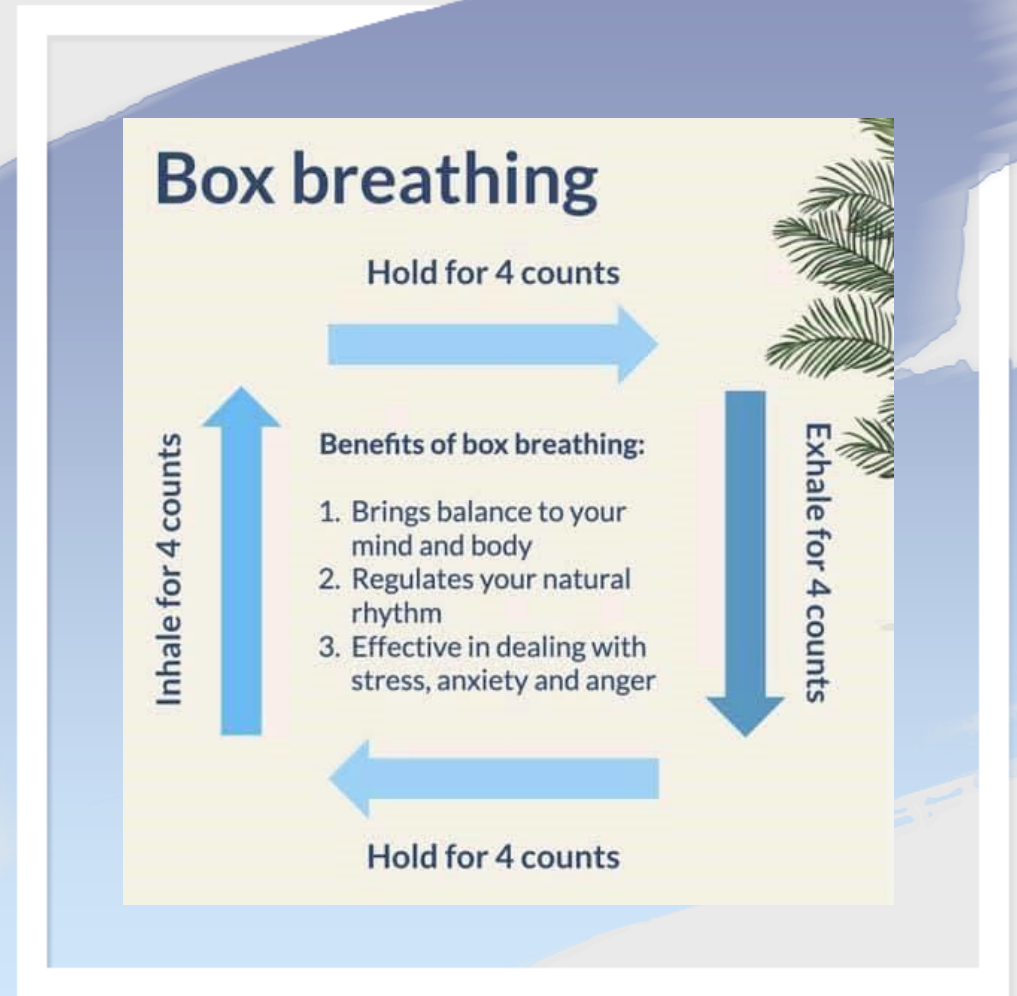
That's all great but I need practical tips...



Box Breathing

- This helps to calm your breathing, slowing it down.
- Gaining back control of your breaths, will help to slow down your heart rate.
- Taking back control.

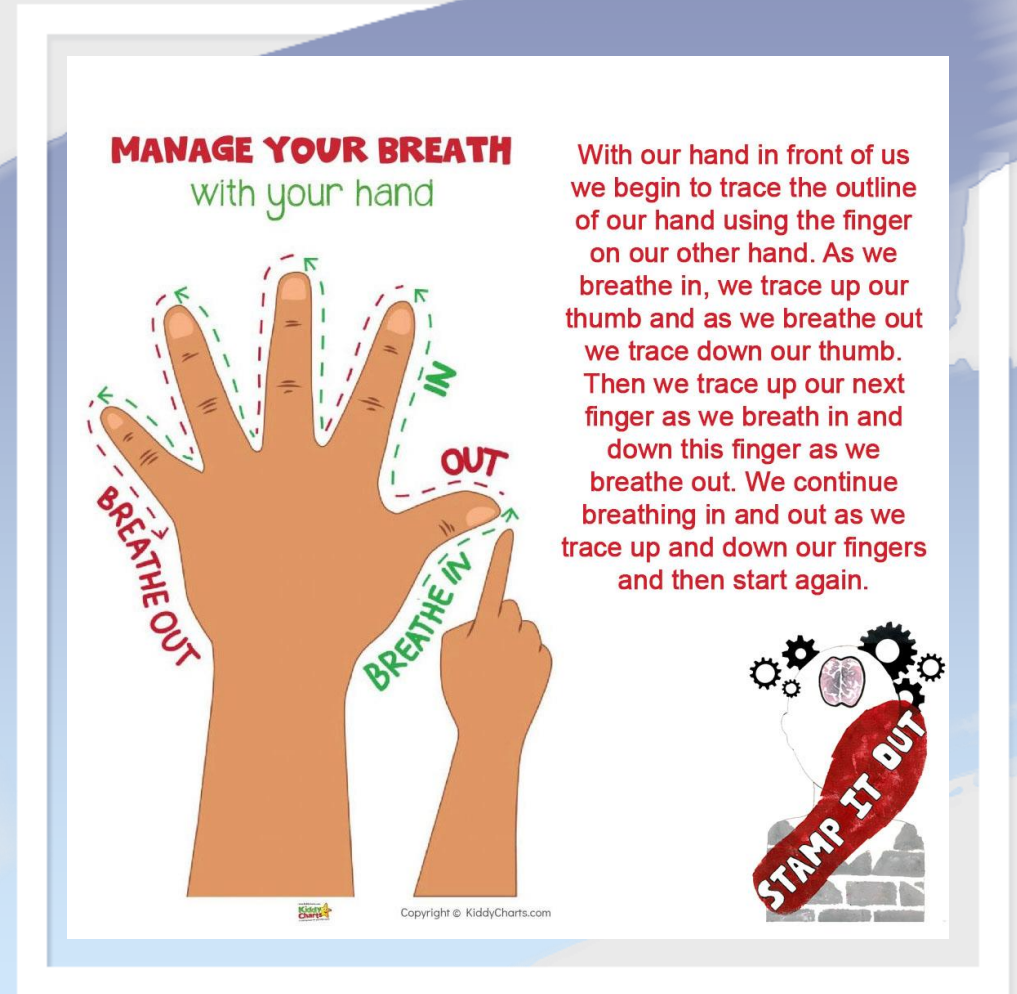
I nose
mouth



5 finger Breathing

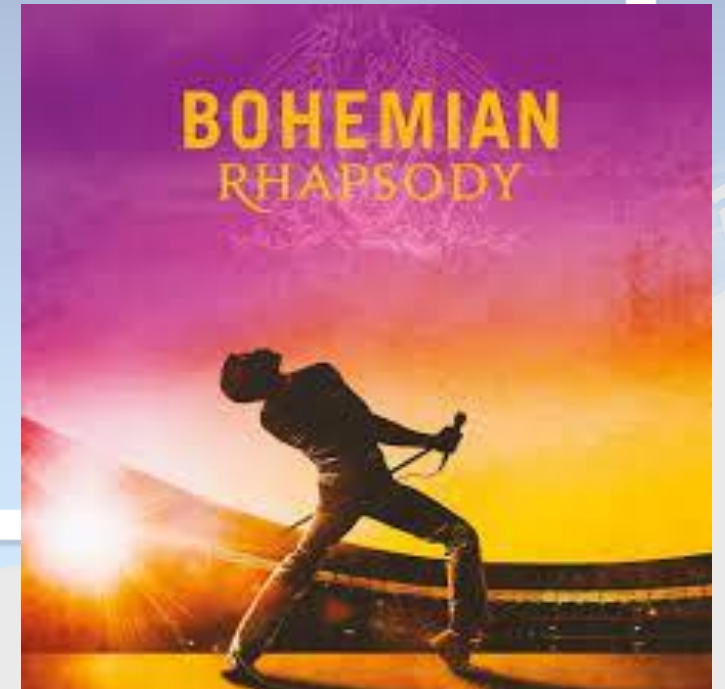
- This helps to calm your breathing, slowing it down.
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I nose
mouth



Distraction Techniques

- Count things
- Think of words
- Imagine a place
- List things
- ***Use your interests***
- Lyrics to a song helps.



Power Anthem(s)

- Hum a song that makes you **FEEL good**.
- The song will distract.
- Crucially - It will use time
- The feelings **WILL** pass
- The more emotive the song, the better – but it's got to be a **FEEL GOOD** song.
- This means no sad, low, slow music, or something you don't **know** well.



Grounding

- Common distraction technique that helps by bringing the attention back to the present
- Engaging the 5 senses
- Plus it makes you think

Stay Grounded Using Your 5 Senses

Relax Your Body, Take a Few Deep Breaths and Focus on the Following...

5 Things You Can See 






4 Things You Can Feel 

3 Things You Can Hear 

2 Things You Can Smell 

1 Thing You Can Taste 

5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Exercise _____

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Positive Thinking

- On the next few slides are some statements.
- Lets say them out LOUD together.
- I need to hear you. I will say it first, then you
- Learn them – remember them – say them in your head when you feel the fog starting!
- Finding your own phrase helps best.





“

*Panic ALONE cannot
harm me*



“

*Anxiety can keep me
SAFE*

A large, expressive red brushstroke serves as the background. Overlaid on this is a white rectangular frame. Inside the frame, at the top, is a large white opening quotation mark.

“

THIS is not WHO I am



“

THIS is not WHAT I am



“

*This is **JUST** anxiety*



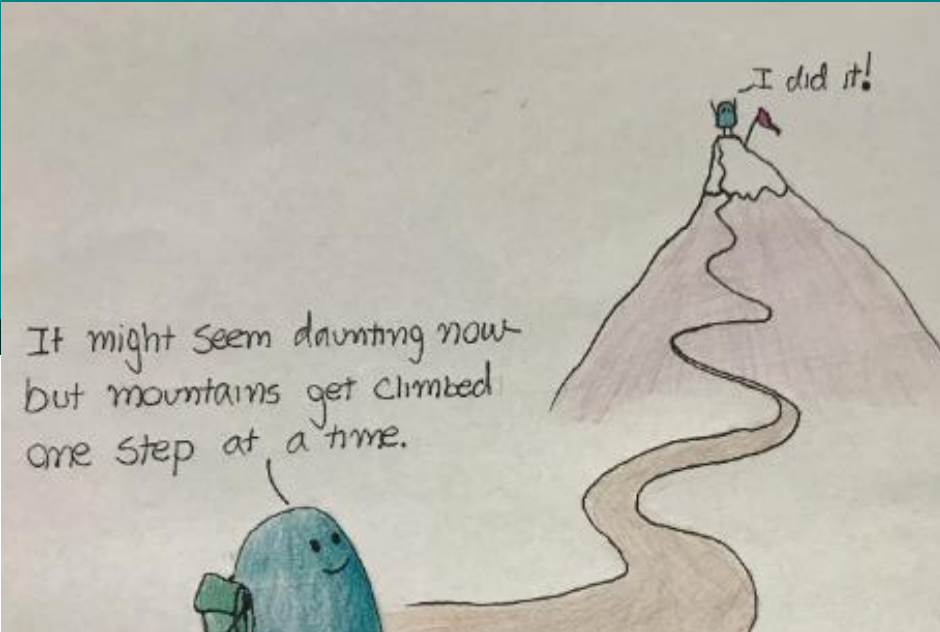
“

This SHALL pass



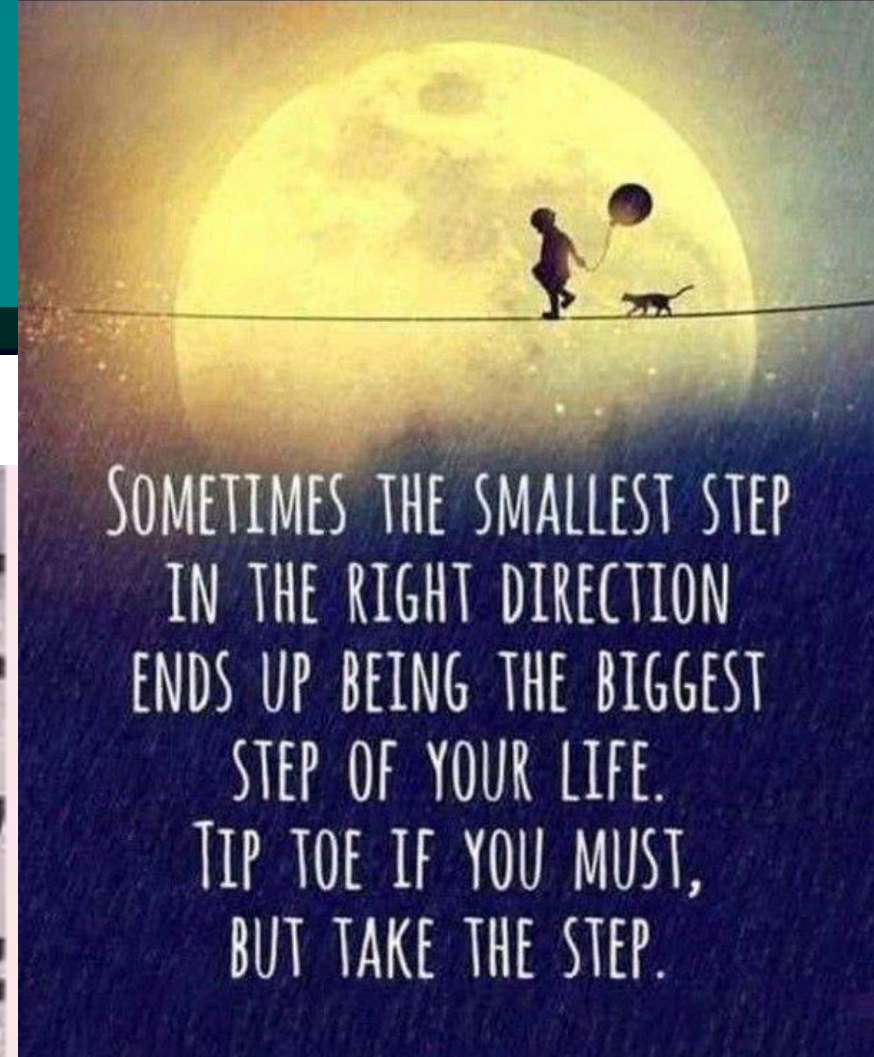
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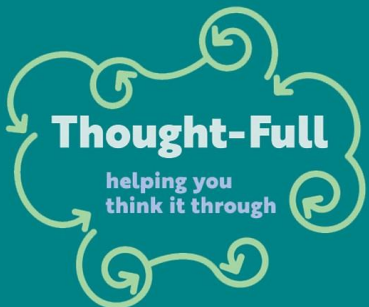
I am IN CONTROL



Closing remarks

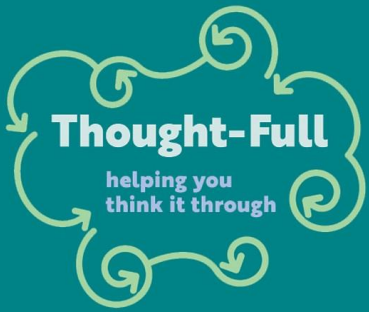
**IF YOU ARE
PERSISTENT,
YOU WILL GET IT.
IF YOU ARE
CONSISTENT,
YOU WILL KEEP IT.**





BUT THIS IS MUCH WORSE





Want to know some more?

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/MHF-The-Anxious-Child-booklet.pdf> (booklet for parents)

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/talk-to-children-about-feelings/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/>

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/downloads>

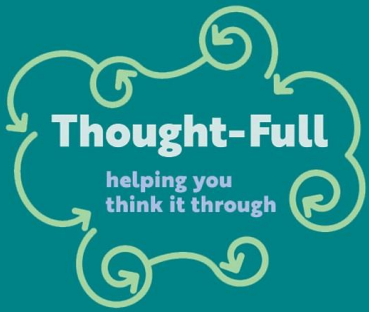
<https://childmind.org/topics/anxiety/>

YOUNGmINDS
fighting for young people's mental health



Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families





Want to know some more?

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YOUNGmINDS
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**Child Mind
Institute**

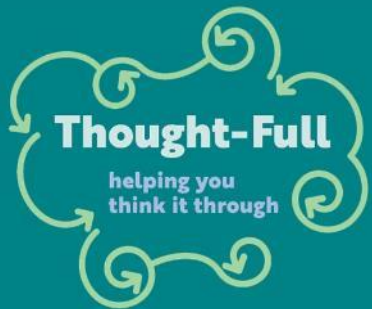


Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families

Please write your email on your
feedback form if you want the
slides directly
sent to you

Thank you
for listening





Themes of workshops



- Active Listening
- Anxiety
- Building Resilience
- Common mental health difficulties & overview of Mental Health
- Emotion Coaching
- Exam stress
- How to talk mental health with young people
- Introduction to mental health & common MH difficulties
- Low Mood
- Self-esteem
- Separation anxiety
- Sleep
- Stress and Trauma
- Teenage brain