

Understanding and Managing Anxiety

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Overview of Training



Introductions



What is anxiety?



The cognitive behavioural model of anxiety



Your role as a parent



What you can do: strategies and techniques to manage anxiety



Signposting

Before we get started

START



- Please double check your mics are muted and cameras are off



- List of resources will be made available



- Please use CHAT function to ask questions at the end



- Please keep details of personal information + schools anonymous



- Comfort break



Anxiety affects us in different ways:



Cognitive (thoughts)

Our thoughts help us spot and avoid danger by assessing situations for risk



Physiological (body sensations)

Our feelings prepare the body for action (fight, flight, or freeze)



Behavioural (actions)

Our actions help us learn to anticipate and avoid future danger



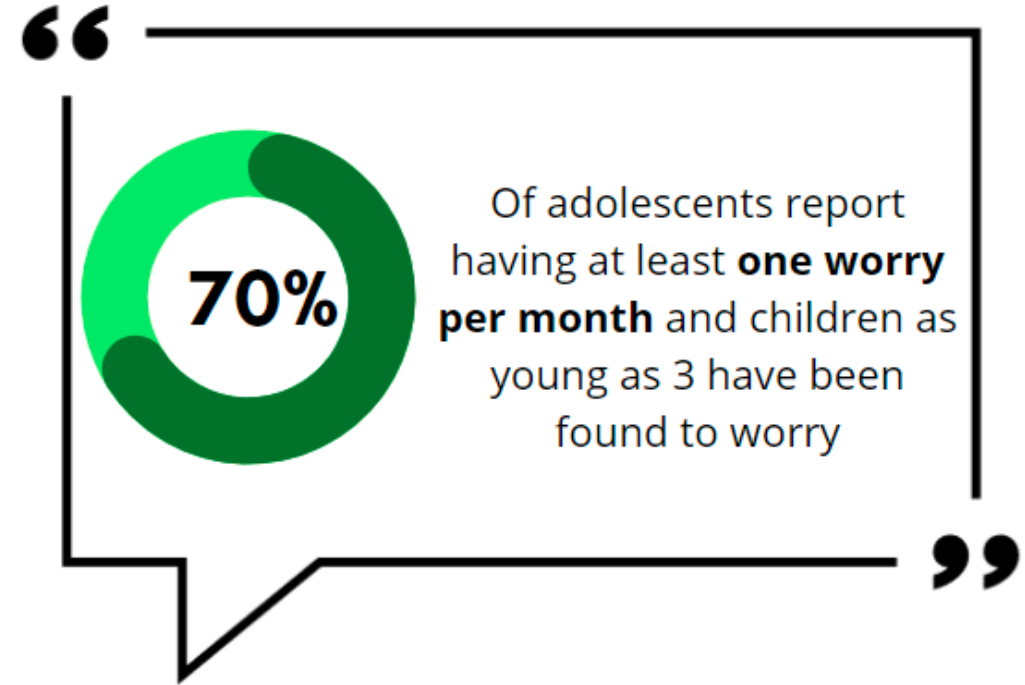
Feelings/Emotions

Can help motivate and support focus,

Fears and worries are common 🙄

Children's worries are often about their **physical security** e.g. fear of scary creatures, being hurt, others harming them.

Adolescent worries are more **abstract** and relate to **negative outcomes** e.g. worrying about school performance, social and friendship issues and well-being.



Most worry is normal and usually doesn't require any intervention

- Will Oggs video will be uploaded separately but here is a similar video explaining the FFF response for children
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O_5M for children
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpolpKTWrp4> for teens

When Does Anxiety Become A Problem?

We all feel anxious for short periods of time or in certain situations, but for some people anxiety **takes over**. Anxiety becomes a problem when it:

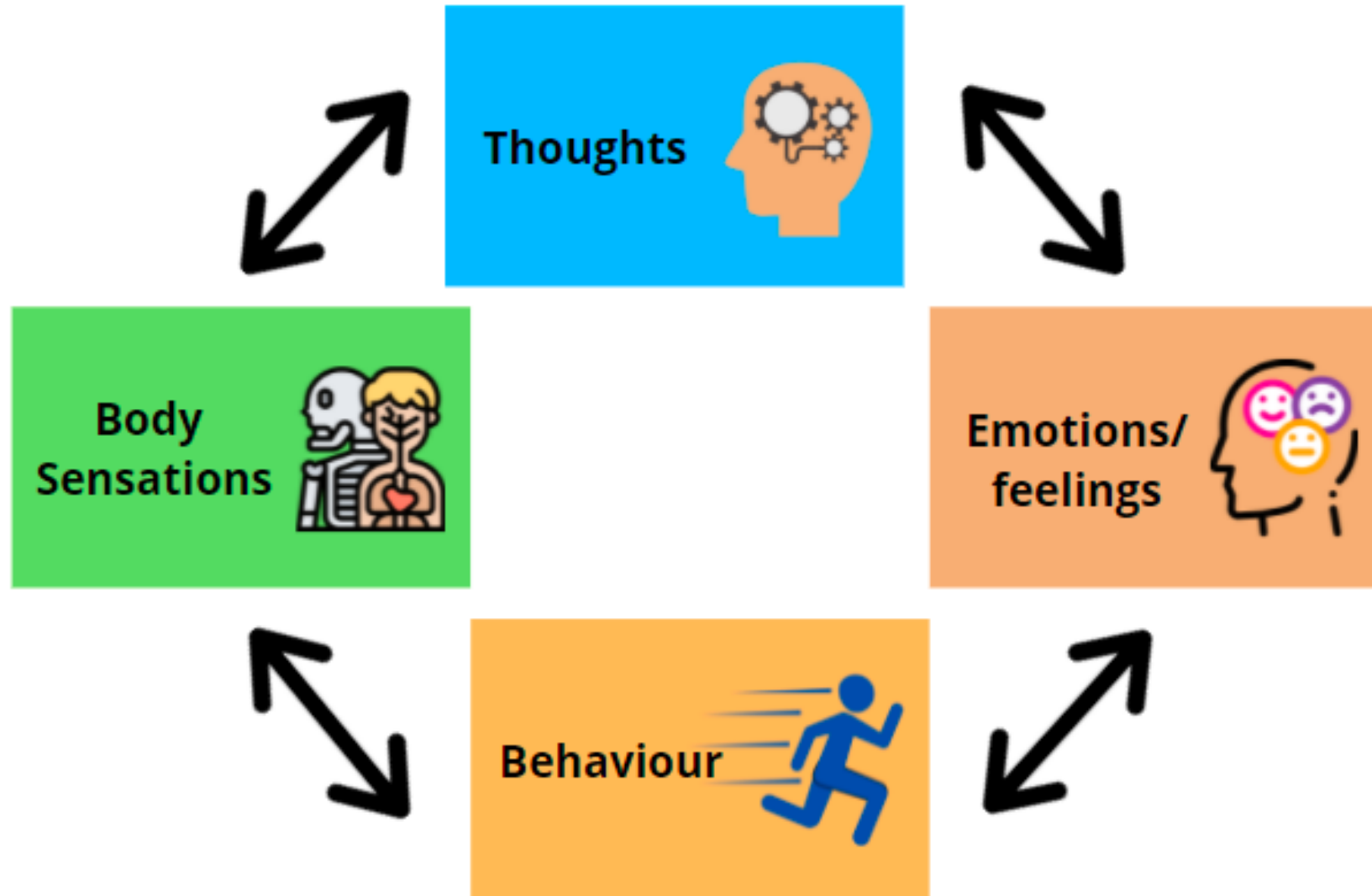
is **persistent** (you constantly feel anxious/worried)

is **severe** (you experience significant and distressing anxiety symptoms)

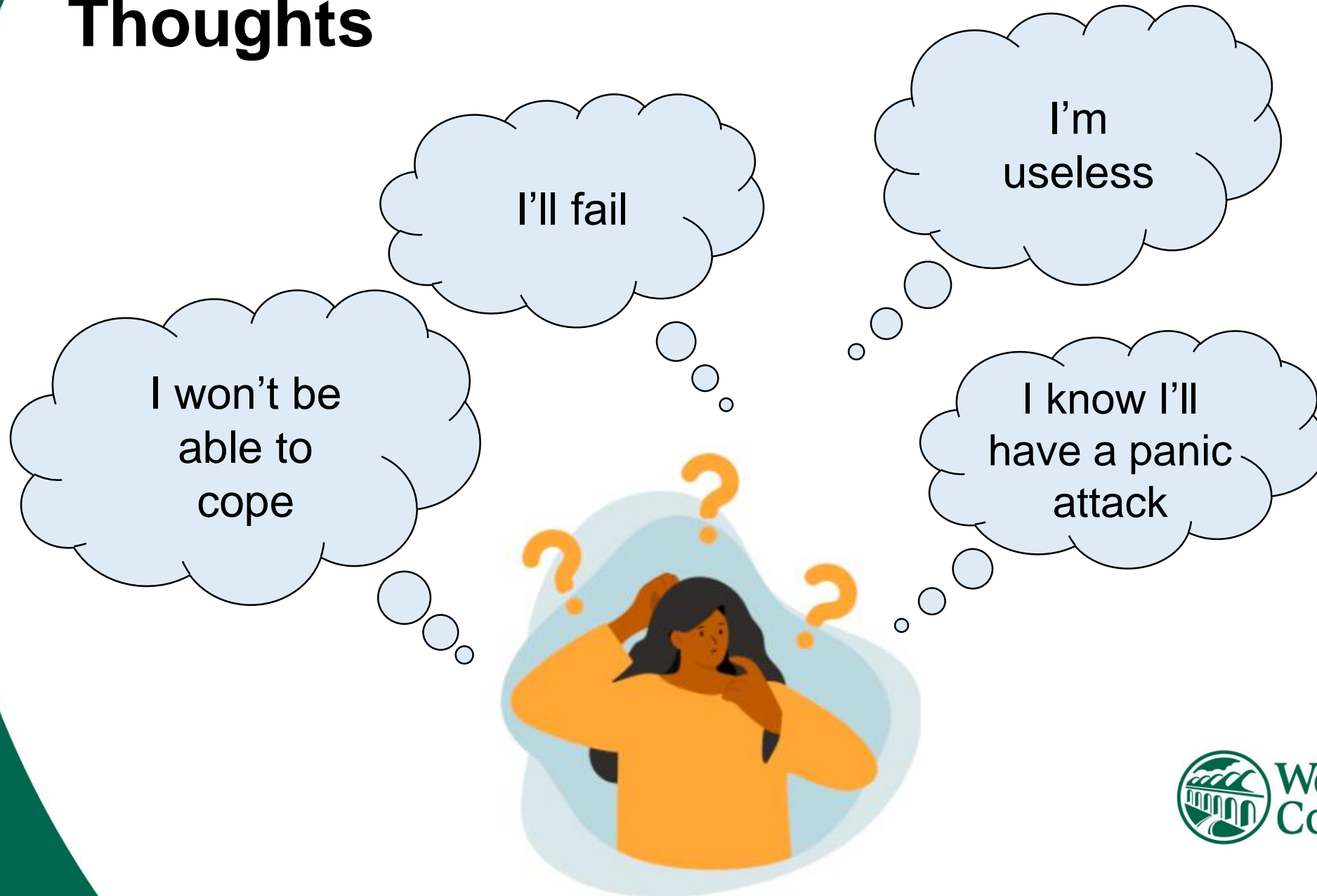
interferes with everyday life (making you avoid going to places or doing things that make you anxious)

**When anxiety takes over,
you may benefit from some help.**

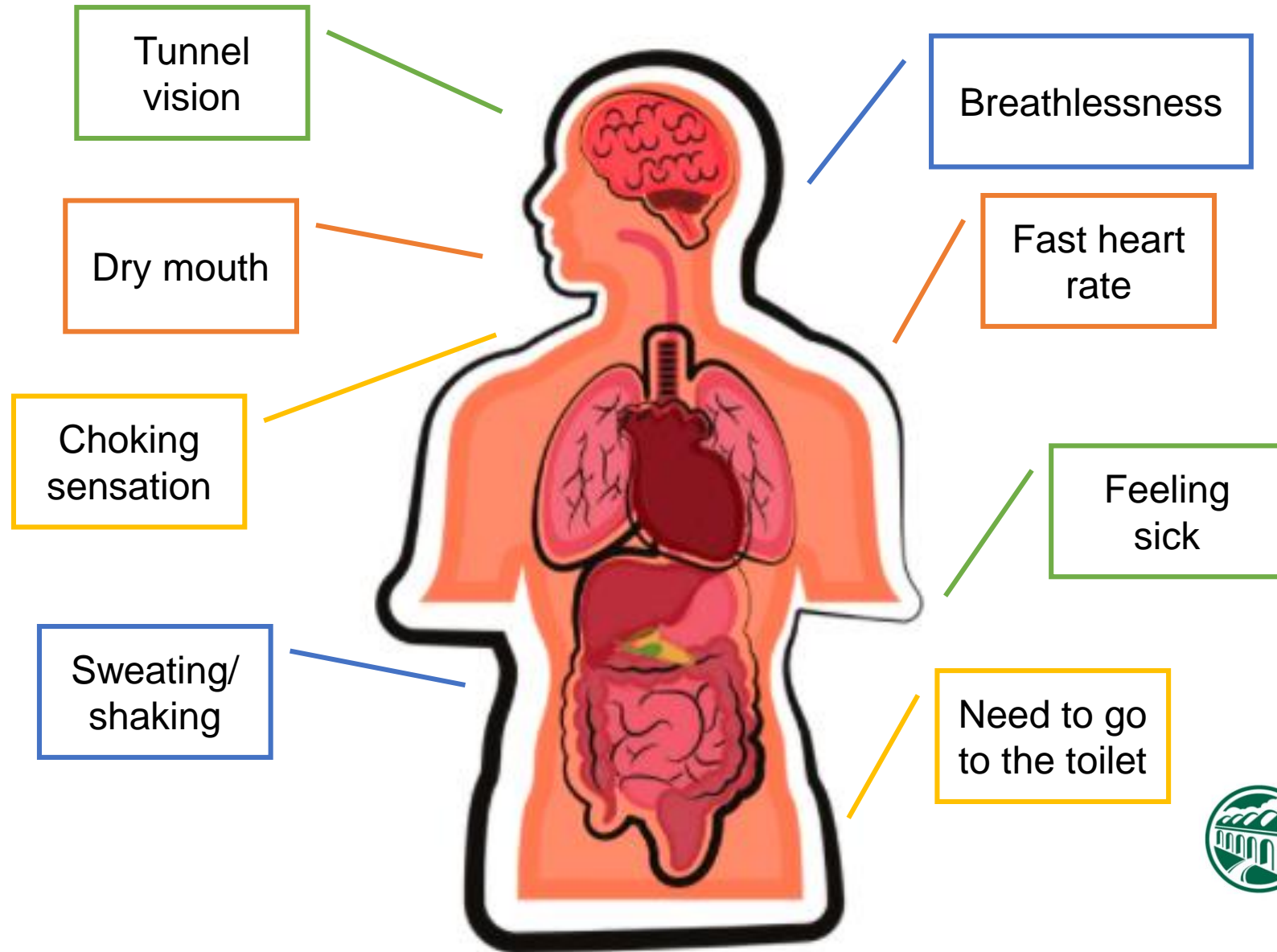
The Cognitive Behavioural Model of Anxiety



Thoughts



Body Sensations: FFF response



Behaviours



Avoidance

Bite nails,
pulling hair,
grinding teeth

Can't sit
still

Putting things
off,
procrastination

Limiting what
we do

Stop doing things
we previously
enjoyed

Getting angry/upset
over the little things

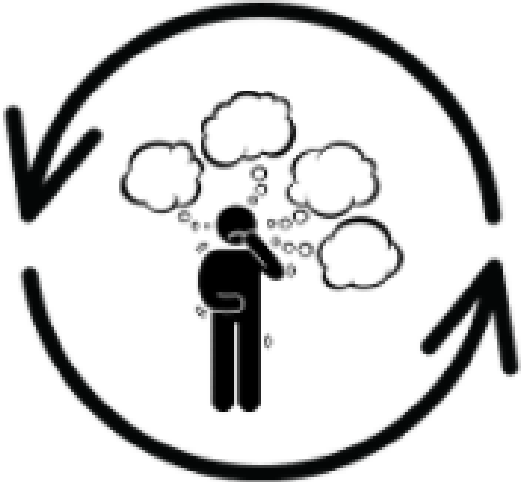
Reduced
motivation

Behaviour: The Pitfalls Of Avoidance

Feelings/emotions
Calm, relieved,
But consequences

Thoughts
I'll be alright now

Challenging/new situation

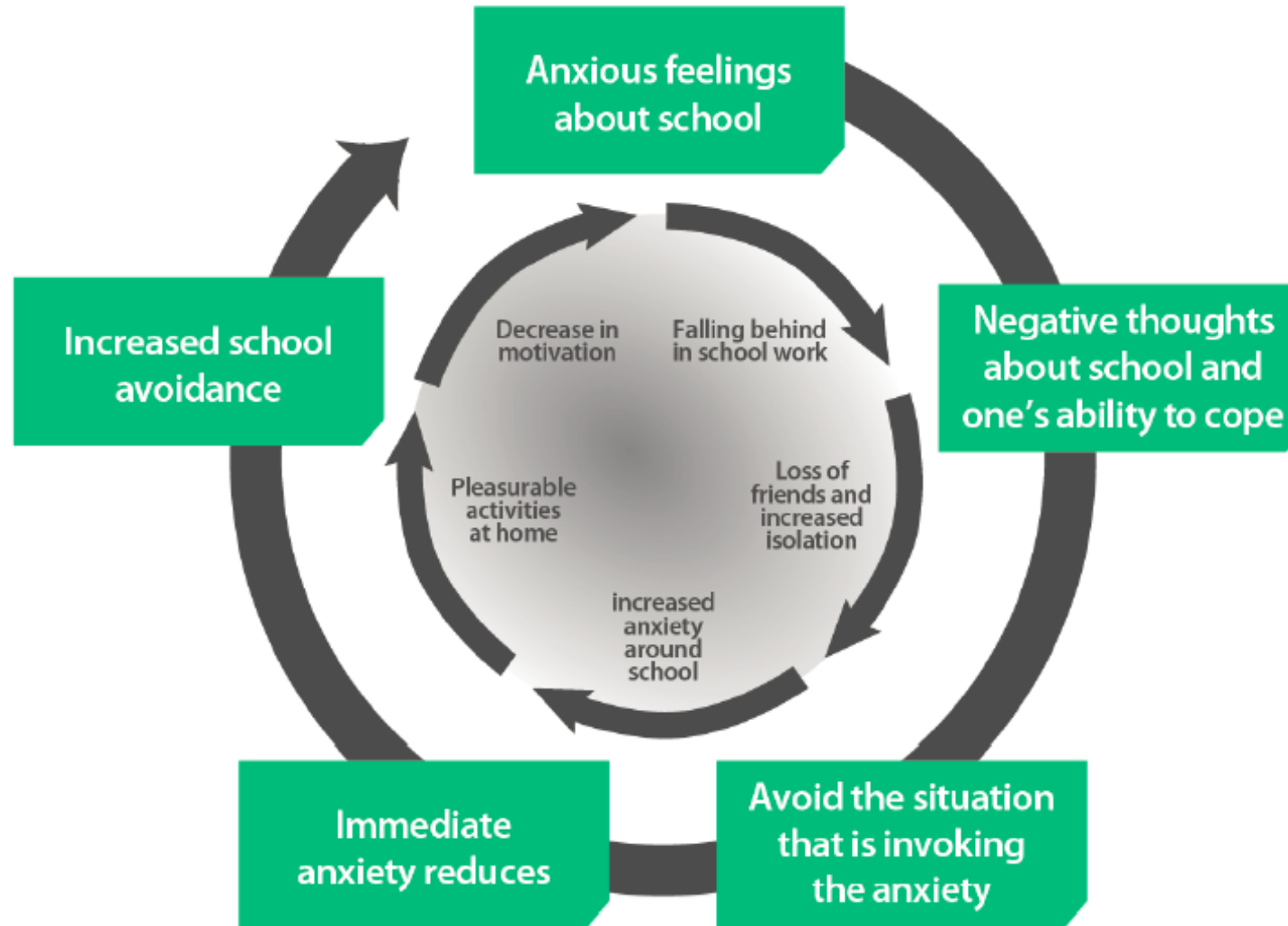


Behaviour
Put it off/avoid

Thoughts
"I can't do this"

Feelings/emotions
Anxious/scared

Behaviour: Avoidance Example



Copywrite – West Sussex Council

Anxiety Management

3 Ways you can help children/Young Person manage their anxieties

Your Role As A Parent



**Support to
Control Thoughts**



**Support to
Controlling Body
Responses**



Break time



Managing Anxiety

Your Role As A Parent



Communication

Psychoeducation

Challenging Anxiety

Modelling

Support To Control Thoughts



Thinking traps

Mood diaries

Challenging thoughts

Support To Control Body Responses



Relaxation techniques

Breathing

Role As A Parent



Parents play a key role in supporting children and young people in managing their anxiety.

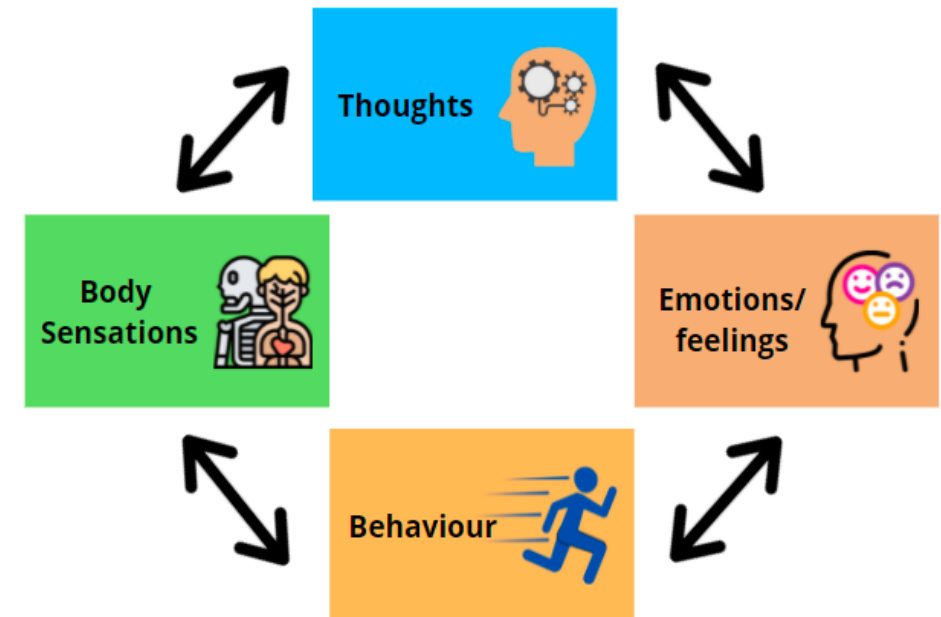
Parents Are Essential To:

- Making children **feel safe**
- Helping to **understand** and us **modelling** how to manage emotions
- **Providing containment** when emotions are too much
- **Supporting** children with challenging their anxiety
- Supporting children with sleep and exercise.

Psychoeducation



- Psychoeducation involves learning about and understanding mental health and wellbeing.
- The first stage of helping young people is helping them better understand what anxiety is and how it is linked to our thoughts, feelings and behaviour.
- Understanding what anxiety feels like for your child/young person



Understanding emotions



Emotional literacy describes **how well a person is able to understand and express their emotions**

To teach emotional literacy—**have regular conversations** about how your child is feeling and **model good emotional literacy** by communicating how **you** are feeling too.

In order for children to feel comfortable talking about their emotions when things are hard, **it is important we normalise when things are going well too.**

- ✓ **Wondering out loud**
- ✓ **Name it to tame**

"I understand why you are upset by what your friend said"

"I can see you're really happy you passed your test"

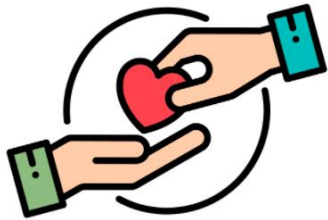
Modelling



- Social learning theory tells us that **children model parents' behaviour** and learn from how parents show and manage their own emotions.
- From a young age we see **parents 'coach' children** through difficult situations e.g. if they fall over and hurt themselves
- **Parents and carers model how to regulate their emotions**



Modelling



Be kind to yourself



Reflect



Allow for mistakes

Communication



- **Active listening:** don't interrupt/argue/give advice; listen attentively and validate feelings
- **Feeling-talk** – talk about feelings, and less about ideas/facts/rules
- **Emphasise** all problems are legitimate
- **Focus on fixing the problem,** not who is to blame for it

Communication in the moment



Safety

"I'm here for you, I'm staying here, you're safe, you're going to be okay"

Physiology

"This will pass, your body is responding in an anxious way, it will pass, you've been through this before you can do it again"

Validation

"That must be so hard, I'm sorry this is making you feel nervous, that sound so hard, do you want to talk it through, It's not silly you feel like this, I can see you're worried, how can I help right now?"

Communication



- Make a time that is **good for you and for them**
- **Avoid** times when people are tired/anxious/upset/hungry/etc.
- **Avoid** trying to have a restorative conversation when things are still heightened – **wait until things are calm**
- **10 minutes of 'Talk Time' a day**



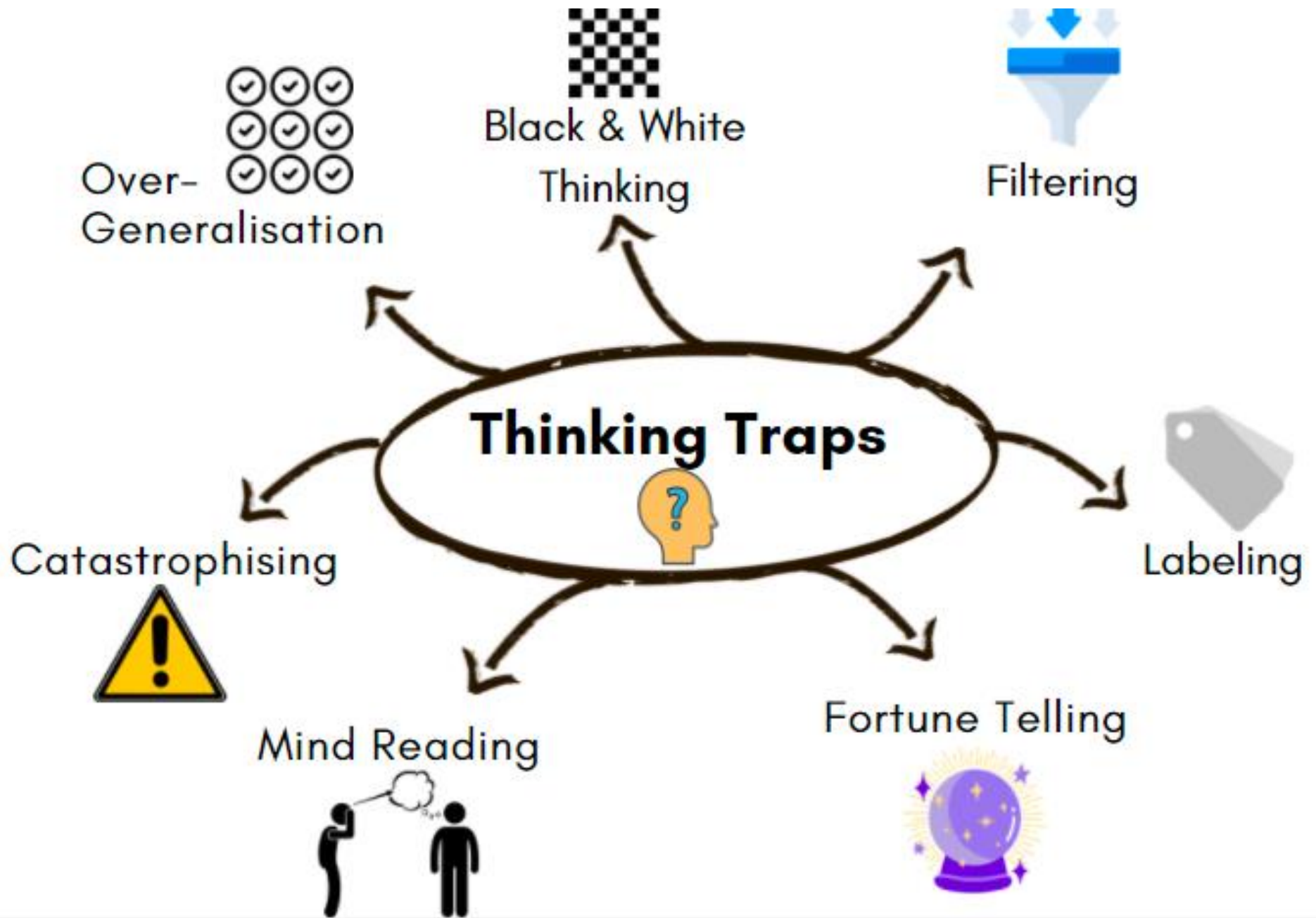
Support to Control Thoughts



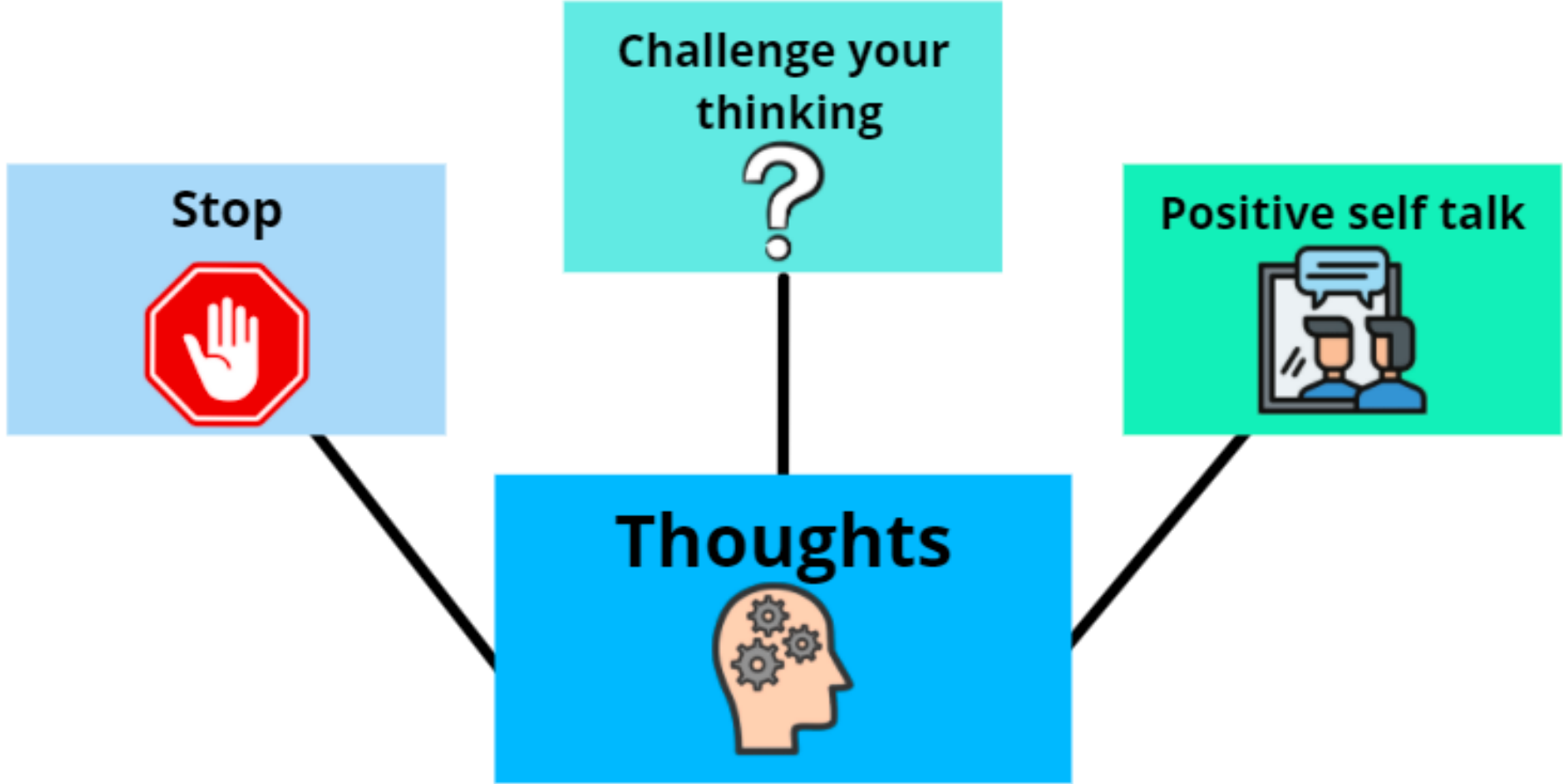
When we are anxious, we tend to think in ways that increase our sense of threat and danger.

We:

- ❑ Expect that negative events will occur.
- ❑ Expect to be unsuccessful & negatively evaluate what we do.
- ❑ Perceive ourselves as being unable to cope with stressful events that may happen.
- ❑ Tend to only think of the possible threats and ignore other information (tunnel vision).



Support to Control Thoughts





STOP – just pause for a minute

Take a Deep Breath – one slow deep breath

Observe – there's that worry again. My body is reacting to those thoughts and I feel anxious

Pull Back – this is just my anxious voice talking, it's time to challenge these unhelpful thoughts

Challenge your thinking



Challenge your thinking by encouraging the child to asking themselves some questions...

1. Is there another way to look at this?
2. What would I tell a friend in this situation?
3. What is the evidence for this thought being true or false?
4. Even if this is true, what is the worst thing that can happen?
5. What is the most likely thing to happen?
6. If my thought did come true, how would I cope?
7. What steps can I take right now to respond in the best way possible to this situation? What help do I need?

Helping to reframe thinking and self talk...

Positive self talk



Coping statements	Come up with statements that remind you how you can cope with a situation. For example, “If I get anxious, I will try some calm breathing” or “I just need to try my best.”
Positive self-statements	Say some positive things about yourself or your abilities. For example, “I am brave,” “I have a lot of strength” or “I can get through this.”
Alternative statements based on challenging negative thoughts	Once you’ve looked at the evidence or recognized that you’re making a thinking error, come up with a more balanced thought such as “90% of the time I do okay on tests” or “Sometimes I make mistakes, but everyone does and it doesn’t mean I’ll fail the class.”

Mood Diaries

- A mood diary is used to track fluctuations in your moods and anxiety levels over time.
- Can help link feelings to behaviours
- This can help young people recognise their triggers, and record progress.
- Use of scaling questions, space to write how your feeling, use of pictures etc.























































































Date:

First Thing					11am					Lunch Time					4pm					<u>Bed Time</u>				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Fill in the table below to record times when you have felt like a 4 or 5 on your anxiety scale

Time?	Where?	Describe your thoughts	Describe your feelings	Describe your behaviour	Describe your bodily sensations	What made things better?

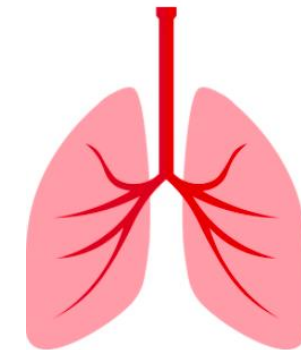
How are you feeling today?

	HAPPY	SAD	SILLY	ANGRY	SICK	DISAPPOINTED	FRUSTRATED	FULL OF PRIDE	EXCITED	SCARED	SURPRISED	NERVOUS	WHO,WHAT, WHY, WHERE, WHEN
Mon.													
Tues.													
Wed.													
Thurs.													
Fri.													
Sat.													
Sun.													

Support To Control The Body



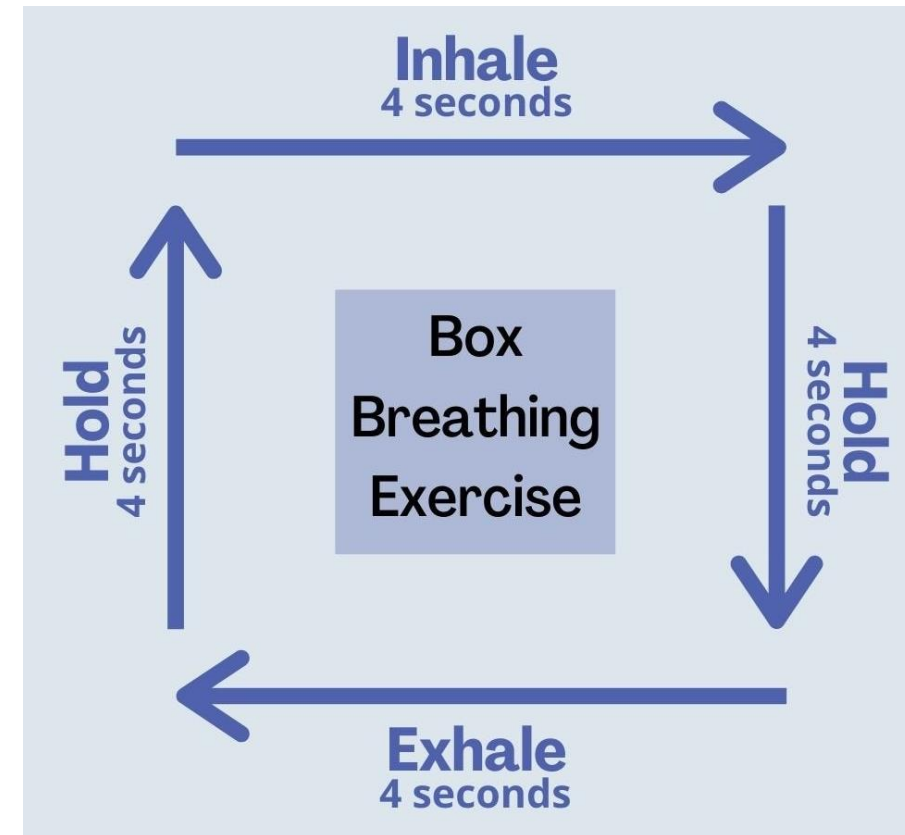
Diaphragmatic breathing stimulates the **parasympathetic nervous system** (PNS) which allows the body to rest and digest, slowing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure and diverting blood supply towards the digestive and reproductive systems. **Activating this system can bring us to a calm state**



By **deactivating/overriding** the Sympathetic nervous system (**FFF response**), we can interrupt the vicious cycle of adrenaline and cortisol which contribute to stress levels and predispose us to panic attacks and anxiety.

Relaxation Techniques

- Useful if you suddenly become anxious and need to calm down quickly and regain control
- Breathe in for a count of 4, hold for 7 and breathe out for a count of 8
- Do this for a few minutes at different times of the day.
Practice when you are calm.



Breathing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQVZgpyVQ78> – Finger breathing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30VMIEmA114> - Ground exercise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYytiS0ymZg> – Box Breathing

Challenging Anxiety



When the process can feel daunting and overwhelming the **parents' role may be to break this down into bite-size chunks** that seem more manageable.

We want them to succeed, so at every point your role is to **help guide them** to that point.

It is also important to keep them **motivated** and reward their efforts of trying.

Graded Exposure

- As we have learned exposure to anxiety provoking situations can help us overcome them.
- However if situations feel too overwhelming to face at once, working up to them can be helpful.
- Graded exposure involves gradually moving in small sequential steps from the least feared situations to the most anxiety provoking situations.
- One of the most important roles for a parent within Graded Exposure is to ensure your child has picked a **SMART goal**



Graded Exposure Top Tips

- ✓ **Post-it notes** allow for **flexibility** when making your ladder
- ✓ **Let your child lead** and tell you what the hardest steps are
- ✓ **Start small** and build on the momentum of success
- ✓ Be aware that **some steps may take longer** to progress
- ✓ Don't be afraid to **review steps** if the 'jump' feels too big



Graded Exposure Top Tips

- ✓ Get **creative**- make them **engaging** where possible
- ✓ Plan ahead with **rewards** and make them appropriate for short, mid and long term goals. And **Praise! Praise! Praise!**
- ✓ Where possible, **create situations to try steps**
- ✓ **Seize opportunities** that arise for progress (within limits)
- ✓ Consider **making your own ladder too** to normalise and model.



Example: Separation Anxiety Hierarchy

Mum out for **evening**

Mum out for **morning**

Mum goes out for **dinner** (one hour plus)

Mum goes **shopping** for one hour

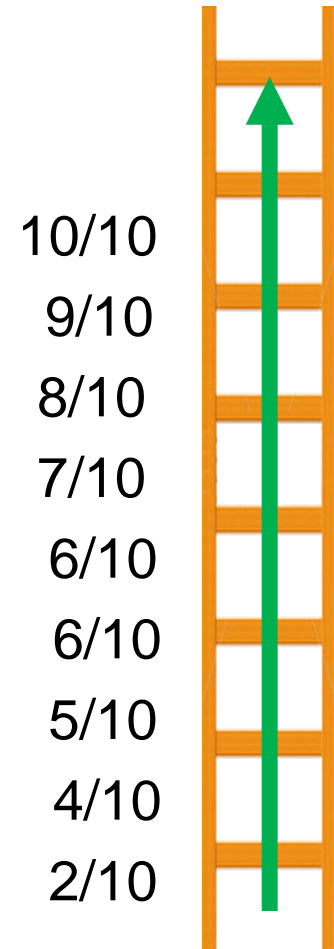
Mum goes to **newsagent** for 30mins (no phone calls)

Mum 'somewhere' **in house** for 15 minutes

Mum in the **garden** for 15 minutes

Mum in the **attic** for 15 minutes

Mum **in next room** for 15 minutes



What We Have Covered

Your role as a parent



Containment

Communication

Psychoeducation

Challenging Anxiety

Modelling

Controlling your thoughts



Thinking traps

Mood diaries

Challenging thoughts

Graded Exposure

Controlling your body



Relaxation techniques

Breathing

Signposting and References

- ❑ [Anxiety UK: Support and advice for those with an anxiety disorder](#)
- ❑ [Breathing Space Scotland: A free and confidential helpline for anyone experiencing low mood or depression](#)
- ❑ [Get Self Help: Education on how to manage stress \(parents and 14+\)](#)
- ❑ [Hands On: Provides advice for supporting children and young people's mental health](#)
- ❑ [Mental Health Foundation: UK-based charity with advice about how to manage stress and links to podcasts \(parents and 14+\)](#)
- ❑ [Moodjuice: Learn more about anxiety and skills to cope with it](#)
- ❑ [NHS Choices: NHS Health Information Website about causes of stress and how to manage this \(parents and 14+\)](#)
- ❑ [NHS Fife Mood Café: Website produced by NHS Fife educating about stress and providing links to external resources \(parents and 14+\)](#)
- ❑ [Penumbra: A mental health charity working to improve mental wellbeing across Scotland](#)
- ❑ [Young Minds: National charity and champion for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#)
- ❑ [Young Scot Aye Feel: Information about how to look after your emotional wellbeing, support from organisations around Scotland and tips on how to promote a positive mindset](#)

Apps

Headspace	App for guided meditation and relaxation
Mindshift	Helps recognise physical symptoms and learn to use relaxation strategies, problem solving and challenge thinking patterns
Mood Kit	Provides distracting activities, a mood journal and aids thought challenging
Mood Tools	Provides guided meditations, an activity tracker and information about depression
Pacifica	App for anxiety including mood tracker, thought record, daily challenges, relaxation
Smiling Mind	App for relaxation exercises, breathing exercises and mindfulness
Stop, Breathe and Think	Contains mindfulness meditations for teenagers
Virtual Hope Box	An app which aims to reduce stress and anxiety, by providing distracting games, guided meditation and controlled breathing.
What's Up?	App to help with breathing, recognising thinking patterns, keeping thought diaries and includes positive quotes
Worry Box	Helps you learn to manage worries through problem solving, self-talk and mindfulness

Thank you for listening, we'd appreciate any feedback. Link in the chatbox or use the QR code :)

