

Hello  
Welcome

Sophie Brown

Education Mental Health Practitioner

16<sup>th</sup> June 2023

# Understanding your child's thought, emotions and behaviours



## Objectives



- Explore how thoughts and emotions have an impact on behaviour.
- What anxiety might look like in our children.
- Tips and tools for supporting your child with difficult feelings and emotions.

**Does anyone have any other hopes for today?**

EVERY SINGLE

one of your

 **EMOTIONS** 

IS VALID

@Colourblind\_Zebra



- Emotive content
- Questions are welcome and encouraged

# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

## North Herts



A child's behavior is not always what it seems

*\*Behavior is communication\**

What we see: Behavior

What we don't see:  
What's under the surface

SOCIAL SKILLS  
SECURITY  
ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS  
POWER  
SELF-ESTEEM  
NEED FOR ATTENTION

BASIC NEEDS  
HUNGER  
ATTENTION  
DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL

PHYSICAL SAFETY  
THOUGHTS  
SLEEP  
SENSORY NEEDS

NEED TO BELONG  
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING  
ATTACHMENT  
NEED FOR CONNECTION  
EMOTIONS  
SADNESS  
FEAR  
ANGER

 PARENTS  
withconfidence



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts

Biological response; Fight, Flight or Freeze



FIGHT



FLIGHT Oohlala!

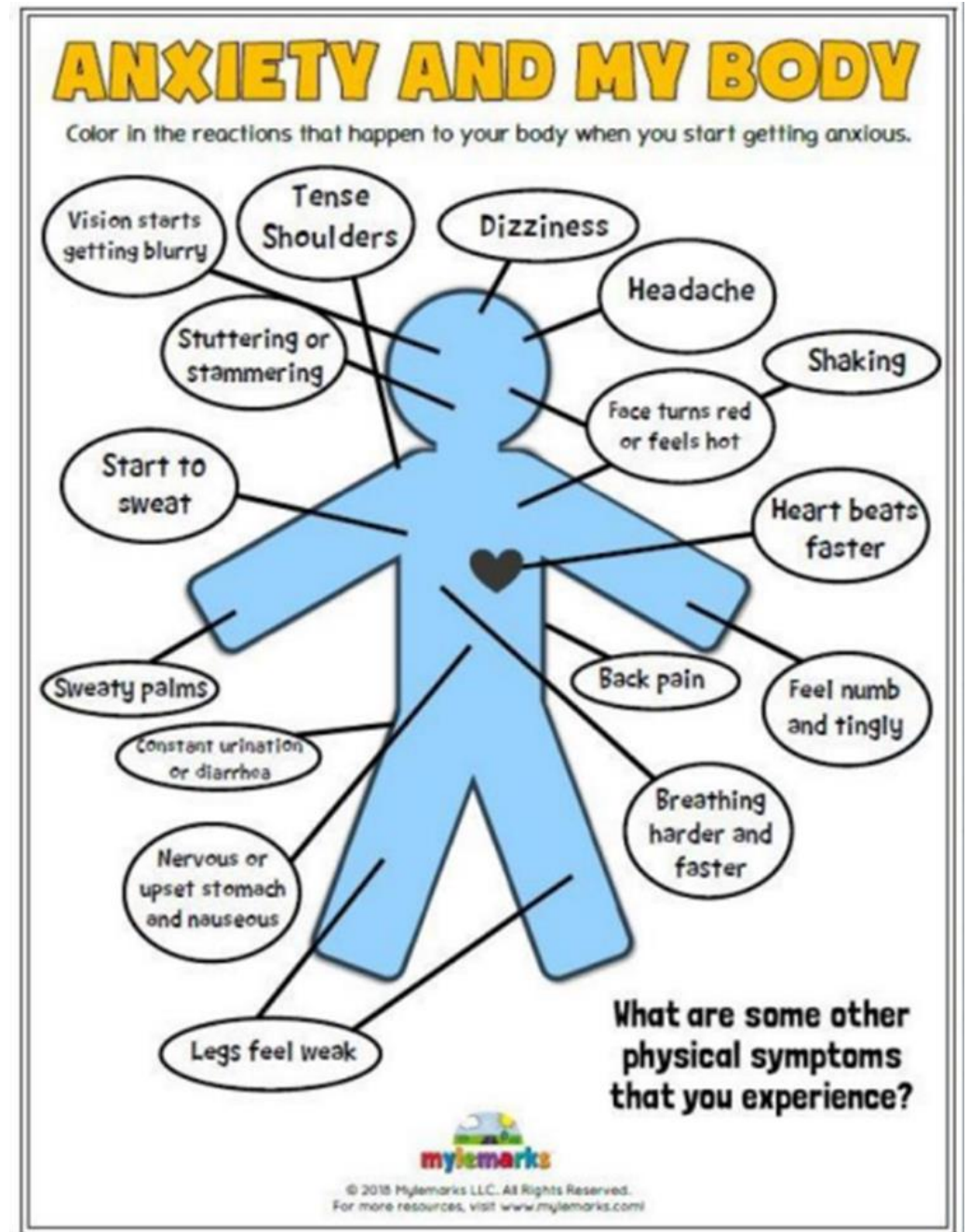


FREEZE



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts

- Recognising and normalising the sensations that we get in our bodies is a good way to start understanding about how we experience anxiety, and the behaviours we see as a result.
- These physical symptoms are very normal and are all down to our body's reaction to threat or danger - flight, fight or freeze response.



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

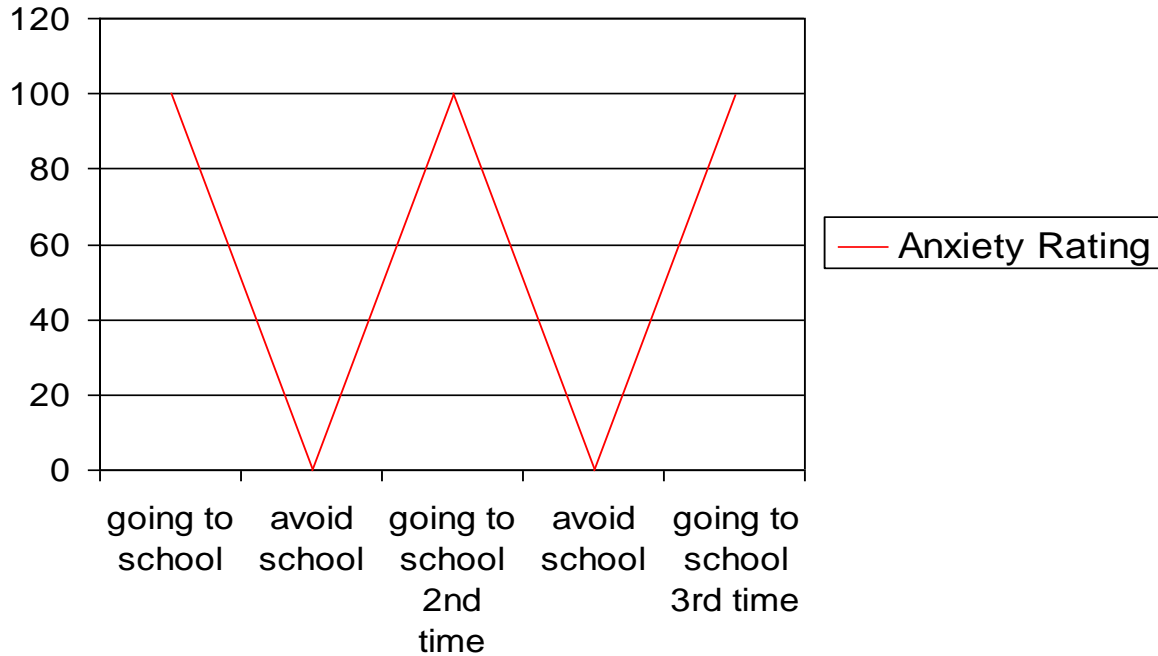
## North Herts

### The cycle of thoughts, emotions and behaviour

#### Maintenance cycle



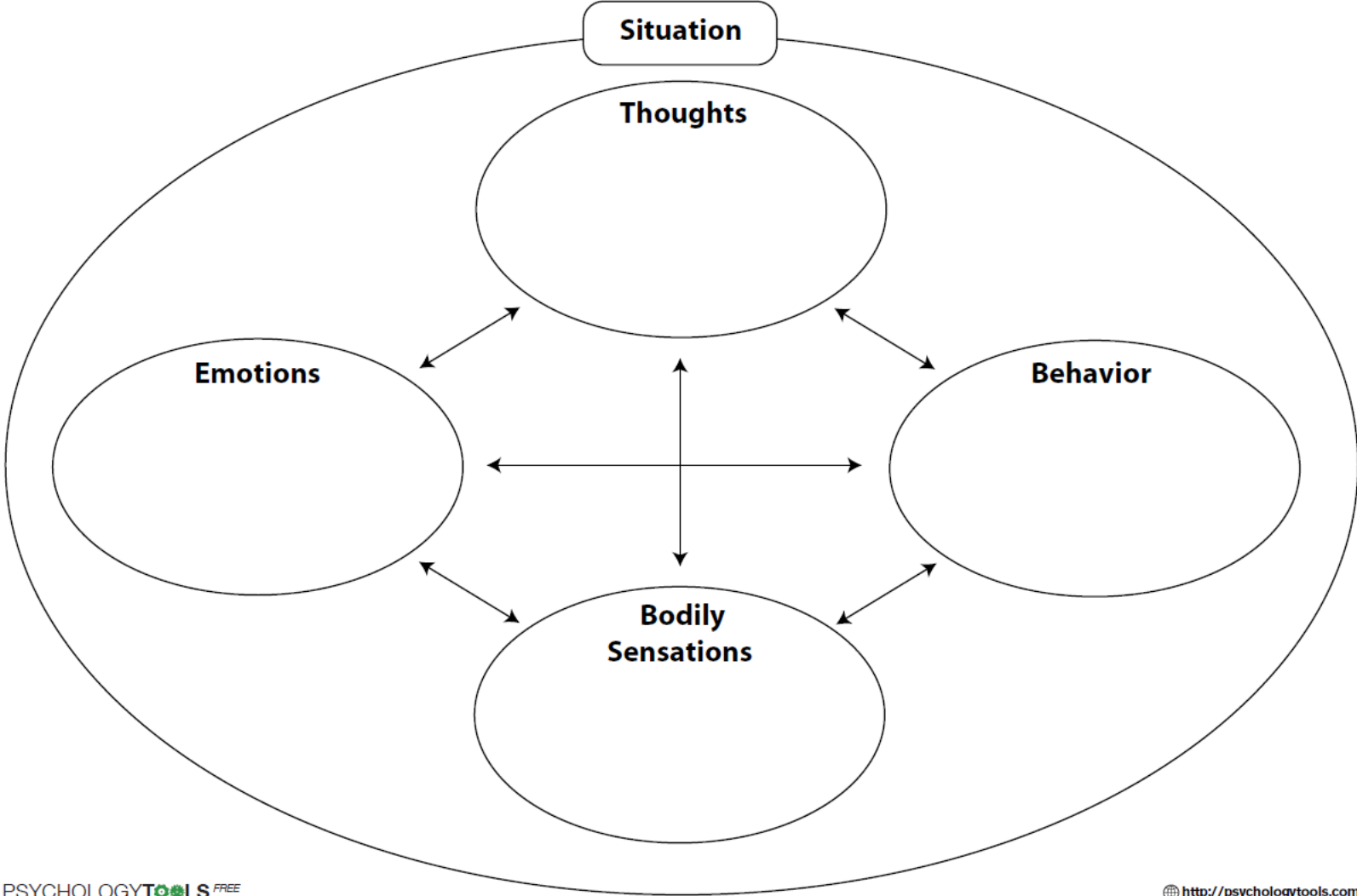
= negative thoughts = anxious feelings = safety behaviour/avoidance/seeking reassurance



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

## North Herts

Cross Sectional Formulation

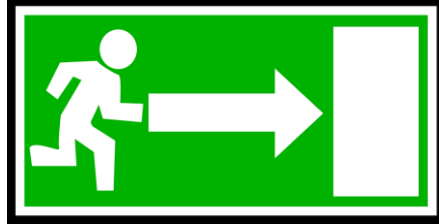




# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts

## What keeps anxiety going?

- Avoidance



- Safety Seeking Behaviours

- Seeking Reassurance

### Behaviour

Staying quiet in social situations

Not touching things in public

Bringing my water bottle everywhere

Wearing headphones on public transport

### Fear the behaviour is intended to prevent

If I talk I might say something stupid and I would feel humiliated

If I touch something in public I could get sick and die

If I get anxious I will get a dry mouth and choke

If someone tried to speak to me I wouldn't know what to say and they would think I am an idiot

'SAFETY SEEKING  
BEHAVIOUR'



& 'AVOIDANCE'



# The Different Types of Anxiety

## **Separation Anxiety**

Fear / anxiety when away from specific person / people.

## **Panic Disorder**

Frequent attacks of intense feelings of anxiety that do not feel like they can be brought under control.

## **Specific Phobia**

Fearful feelings about specific objects or situations (dogs, flying, heights).

## **PTSD**

Bursts of anxiety any time from one month after experiencing a traumatic event.

## **Generalised Anxiety**

Feeling anxious about a lot of different things, over a long period of time.

## **Social Phobia**

Intense fear of social, everyday situations.

## **OCD**

Ongoing unwanted / intrusive thoughts that cause anxiety, and a need to carry out rituals in order to feel less anxious.

## What causes anxiety?

- There is no single factor that causes anxiety...
- Anxiety runs in families, genetics account for 1/3 of what makes children anxious, while anxiety isn't directly inherited, characteristics are (sensitivity)
- Stressful life events may have more of an impact on anxious children
- Children can 'pick up' fears from others, they learn from example
- Children also learn from other people's reaction around them
- Missed opportunities to test out fears and learn how to cope in fear inducing situations

# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

## North Herts



# Stress? Or Anxiety?

## Stress

- Generally, has an external cause
- Ends when the situation resolves
- Can be positive or negative

## Both

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Loss of sleep
- High blood pressure
- Body pain

## Anxiety

- Generally, an internal reaction to stress
- Often, a persistent feeling of dread or apprehension that doesn't go away
- Is constant



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts

## Worry

Form of verbal mental problem solving about potentially negative future events.

Worry becomes unhelpful when:

- it's about a number of things
- Very frequent
- Difficult to control or dismiss



Prolonged / frequent worry generates more anxiety and more worry







## So what can I do to help?

- Talking about mental health
- Listen to your child and take their worries seriously
- Offer empathy rather than solutions
- Normalise thoughts, feelings and emotions
- Challenge negative/unhelpful thinking
- Think about your part in the maintenance cycle
- Look for clues about feelings through their words, tone of voice and body language.
- Predict/preempt difficult situations
- Ask 'open', 'curious' questions
- Some other useful, practical strategies...

# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

## North Herts

### ZONES OF REGULATION!

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
<p>Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p>Happy Calm Good to Go Focused Ready to Learn</p>	<p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Anxious Excited</p>	<p>Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Out of Control I Need Time and Space</p>



# Strategies for managing worries

## The Worry Tree

worry is like a rocking chair:



it gives you something to do  
but never gets you anywhere.  
- ERMA BOMBECK



## Worry Time



### Mental Strength Exercise

#### Schedule time to worry.

Set aside 15 minutes every day to worry.

When your worrying time comes along,  
sit down and worry as much as you can  
(write down your worries if that helps).

When you catch yourself worrying outside of that  
time, remind yourself it's not time to worry yet.

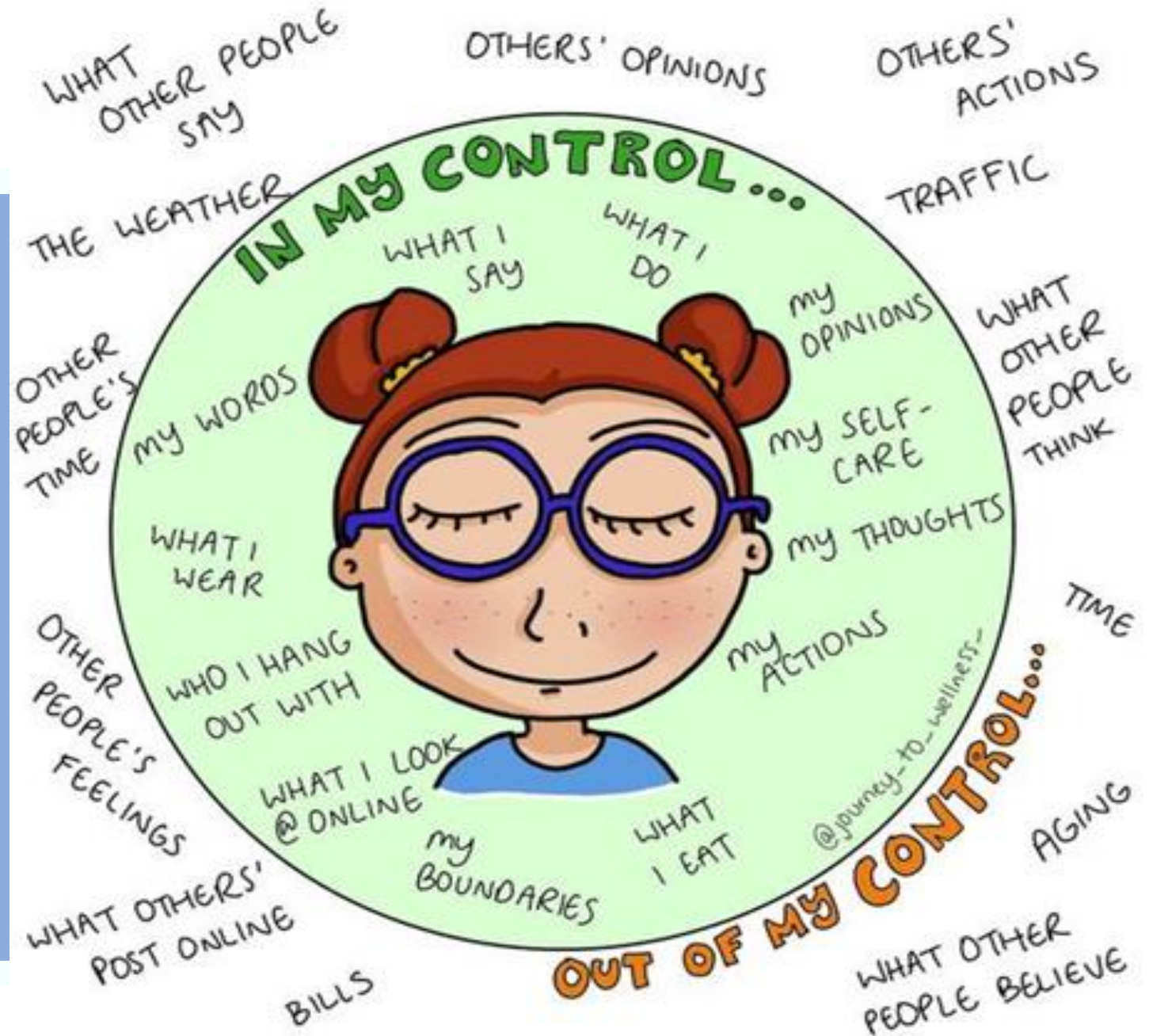
With practice, you'll contain your worrying to just  
15 minutes each day rather than allow your  
worries to invade all your time.



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

## North Herts

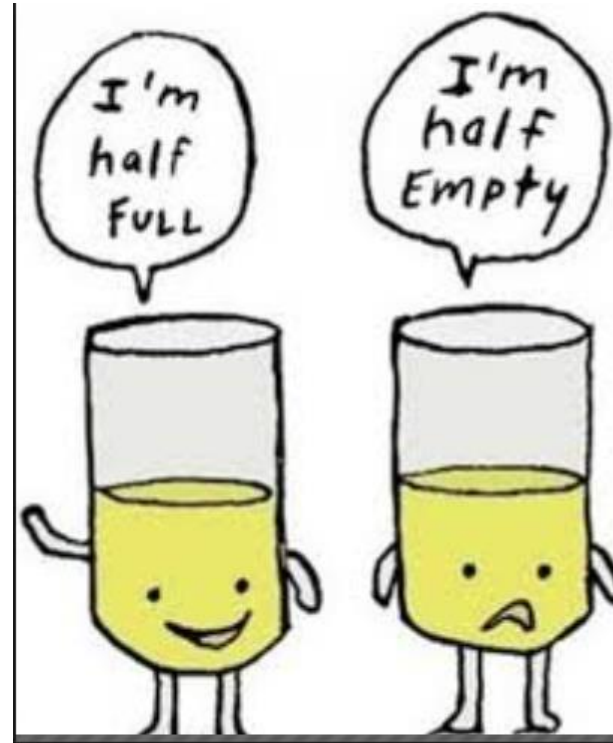
- Make a list of all your current worries
- Draw yourself in the middle
- On the inside of all the things you can control
- On the outside of all the things you can't control
- Focus and dedicate your time and energy on the things you can control



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts

## Helpful vs unhelpful thinking

It is important to break the patterns of unhelpful thinking.



## Reframe the what ifs

what if i fail?

what if i excel?

what if i go and have a terrible time?

what if i'll have the time of my life?

what if none of this is worth it?

what if i can create my own purpose?

what if they'll hate me?

what if they'll be my new friends?

what if i'll never be good enough?

what if i already am?

what if i never achieve this goal?

what if trying my best is good enough?

@crazyheadcomics





# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts



Please remember our anxious thinking styles are like glasses and we can take them off.



## SPOTTING COMMON 'UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES'

-  **CATASTROPHISING** - Blowing things out of proportion.
-  **LABELLING** - Assigning labels or name calling (self + others).
-  **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS** - predicting the outcome.
-  **MIND READING** - Imagining we know what others are thinking.
-  **FILTERING** - Ignoring the good things + paying attention to the bad.

# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

## North Herts

### Challenge unhelpful thinking: Separate facts from opinions!



#### Fact

*Evidence-based*

- Clown
- Painted face
- Colourful
- Circus performer
- Smiling

#### Opinion

*Varies, personal view*

- Funny
- Weird hair
- Scary
- Happy
- Ugly





# Relaxation and mindfulness

## TYPES OF MEDITATION

Visualisations

Mindfulness Meditation

Sound Healing

Movement Meditation

Guided Meditation

Mantra Meditation



## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

@psychologistrebeccam

1. TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS TO RELAX.
2. BREATHE IN. TENSE THE MUSCLES OF YOUR FEET.
3. BREATHE OUT. RELEASE THE TENSION IN YOUR FEET.
4. BREATHE IN. TENSE YOUR CALF MUSCLES.
5. BREATHE OUT. RELEASE THE TENSION IN YOUR CALVES.
6. WORK YOUR WAY UP YOUR BODY. TENSE EACH MUSCLE GROUP. THIS INCLUDES YOUR LEGS, CHEST, FINGERS, ARMS, NECK & FACE.



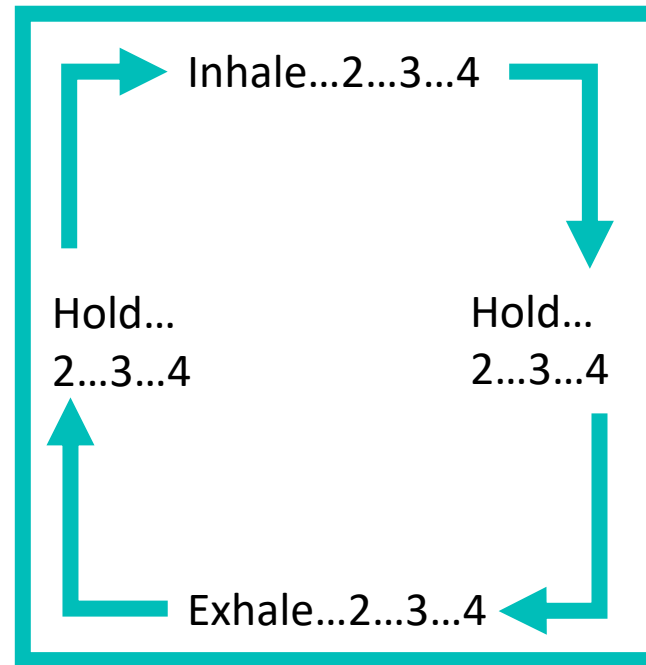
# Grounding techniques

## 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 

## Square breathing



Coping Skill of the Week

## Rainbow Grounding

Look around you.  
Go through the rainbow  
and name items of each  
color.

When you feel  
overwhelmed, grounding  
helps you focus on the  
present moment.

**Suggest some self-soothing activities**  
**Eating well**  
**Lots of sleep**  
**Physical activities**  
**Hobbies and interests**  
**Opportunities to be sociable**





## **Useful resources**

- [Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk) (information and support)
- [Getselfhelp.co.uk](https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk) (general self help)
- [Annafreud.org](https://www.annafreud.org) self care (self-care tips)
- [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) (general mental health advice)
- YoungMinds (free confidential online and telephone support)
- MindEd for families (online e-portal offering advice about children and young people mental health)
- Royal College of Psychiatrists (mental health information leaflets)

## If your child requires urgent / medical attention

- Calm harm app – strategies to manage self harm
- If you are concerned about any immediate harm
- If a young person is in crisis outside of our working hours (Monday to Friday 9-5), you should call SPA on 0800 6444 101.
- If a young person has taken an overdose or requires urgent medical treatment, they should attend A&E.
- You can call 111 for advice and direction regarding physical symptoms and guidance on whether to attend A&E.

**Mental Health Support Teams in Schools**  
**North Herts**

**Do you have any questions?**



# Mental Health Support Teams in Schools North Herts

Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) use code 1304 0617

Mentimeter

## Instructions

Go to  
[www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

Enter the code  
**1304 0617**



Or use QR code

👍



**Mental Health Support Teams in Schools**  
**North Herts**

**THANK  
YOU!**