



Dorset
Mental
Health
Support
Team in
Schools



Dorset HealthCare
University
NHS Foundation Trust



Anxiety Information for Parents/Carers



Mental Health Support
Team (MHST) in Schools



What Is Anxiety?

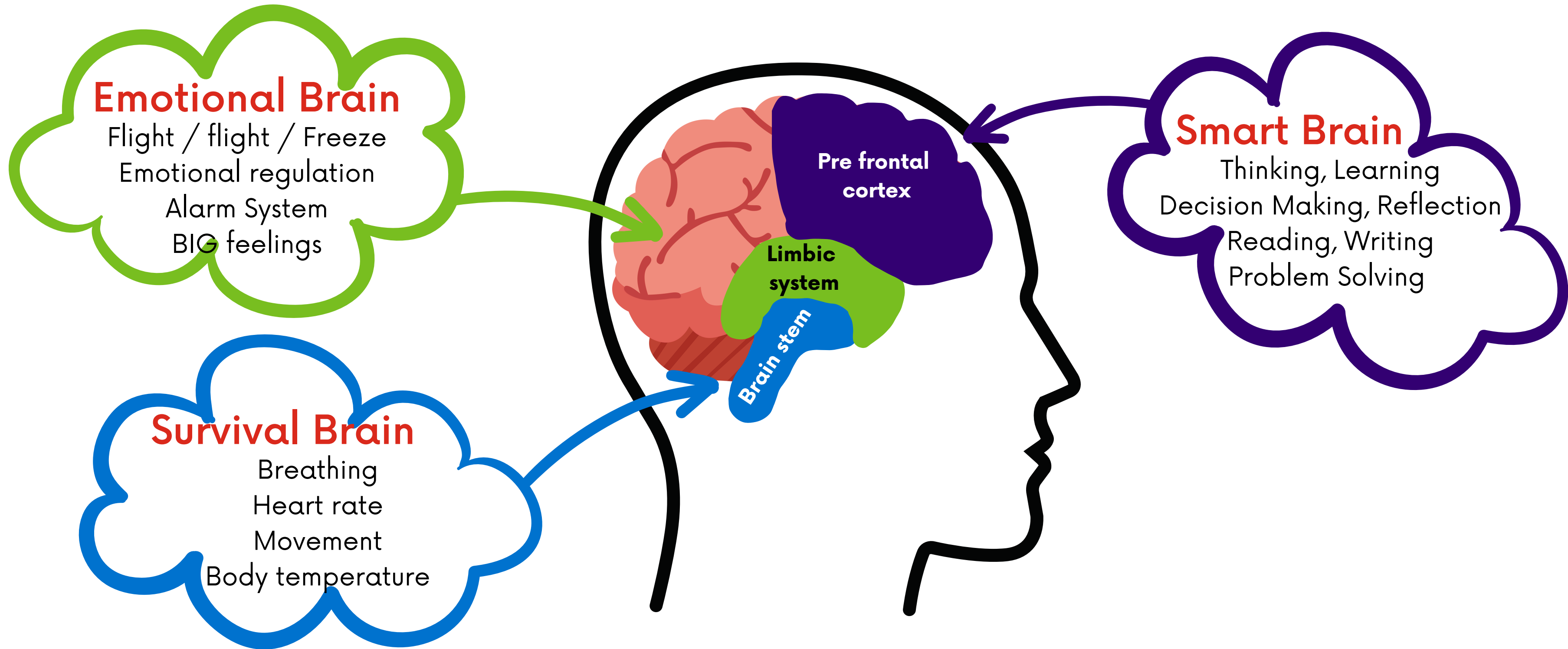


Anxiety is an emotion characterised by feelings or tension, worried thoughts and physical changes.

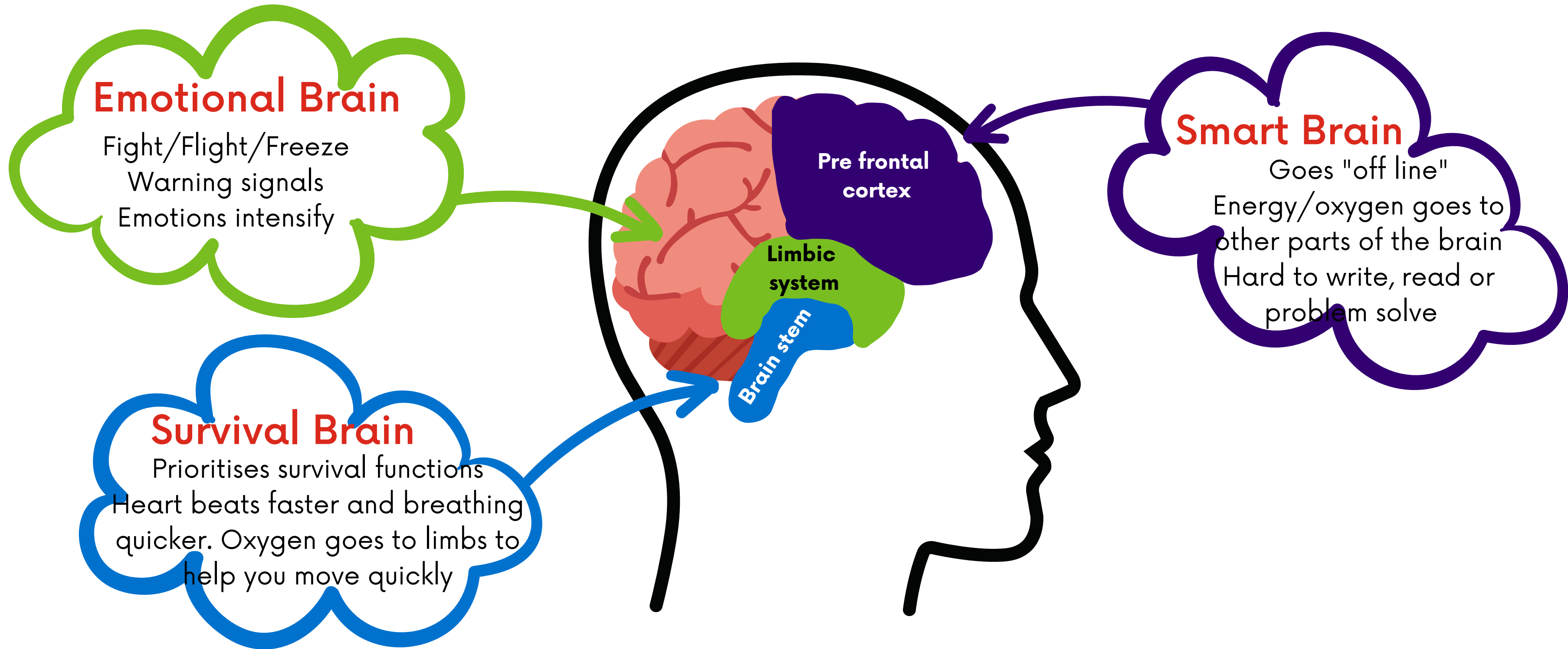
Everyone feels anxiety some of the time and is normal.

A small amount of anxiety is a good thing as it can help us to prepare for something, like going on stage for example. However too much anxiety can affect peoples lives in a negative way.

What Is Anxiety?



What Is Anxiety?



Something bad
will happen.

Worst case
Scenario.

Overestimating threat

Anxiety =

**Underestimating ability
to cope**

I won't
manage.

I won't be
able to
cope.

Fight, Flight, Freeze



Fight reactions:
aggressive, irritable,
controlling, yelling,
demanding, kicking, hitting,
offended, angry.



Flight reactions:
procrastination, anxious,
hard to pay attention,
fidgeting, restlessness,
panicked, overwhelmed,
hyperactive, unfocussed.



Freeze reactions:
zoned out, depressed/numb,
shutting down, isolates self,
difficulty completing tasks,
verbally unresponsive,
feeling stuck, unable to
move, mind goes blank.

A vertical green bar on the left side of the slide contains five semi-circular shapes in a row. From top to bottom, the colors are blue, orange, purple, blue, and orange.

What do we see commonly?

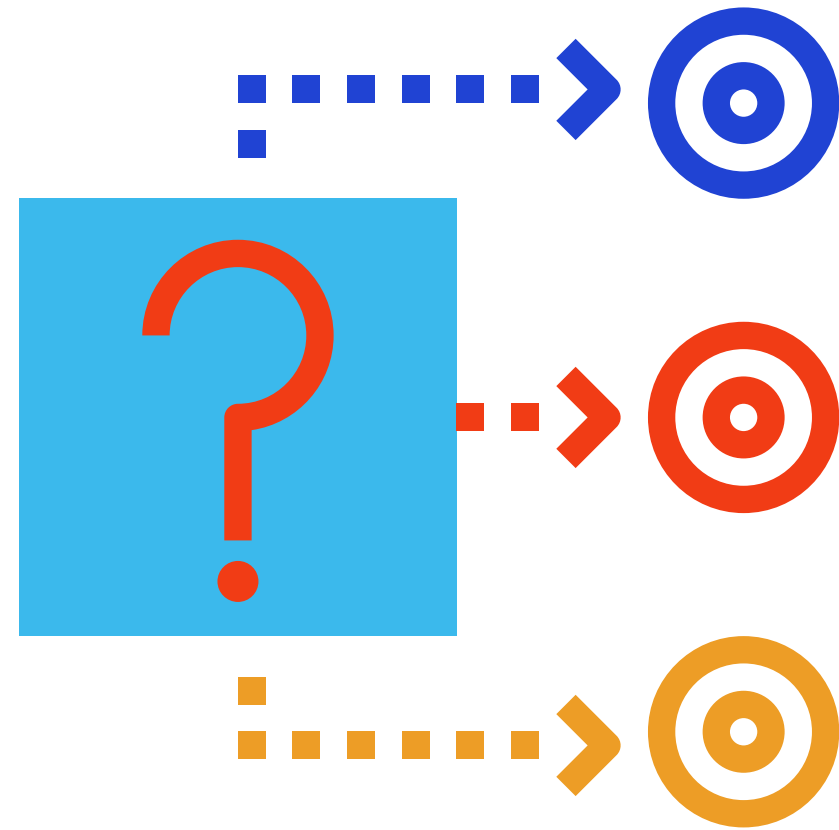
Behaviours

- Not wanting to go to school
- Difficulty separating from parent/carer
- Avoiding participation in class
- Seeking reassurance for worries
- Only being able to face fears with certain comforts (e.g. teddy or friend)

Physical symptoms

- Feeling sick
- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Butterflies
- Racing heart
- Trouble breathing
- Shaky/Clammy
- Tearful

Causes of anxiety



Where does it come from?

- Genetic
- Adverse childhood experience
- Learning from example
- Learning from other's reactions
- Missed learning opportunities

What is the impact ?

- Family life
- Social life
- School life and education
- Mood

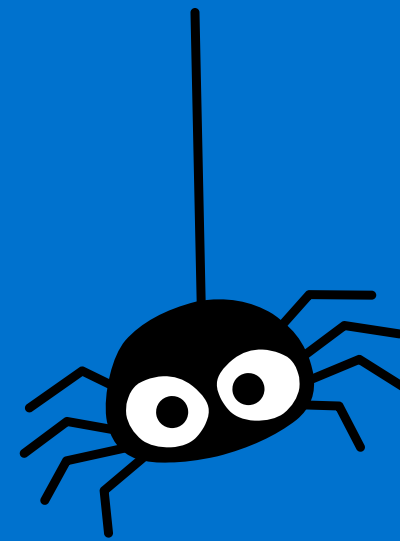
Anxiety is
different
for everyone

Different types of Anxiety in children

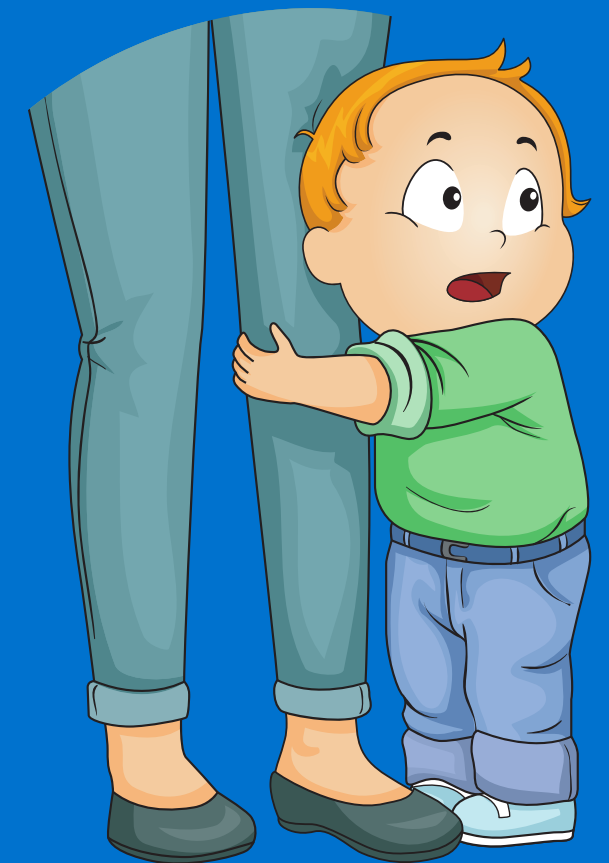
Generalised
Anxiety



Specific
Phobia



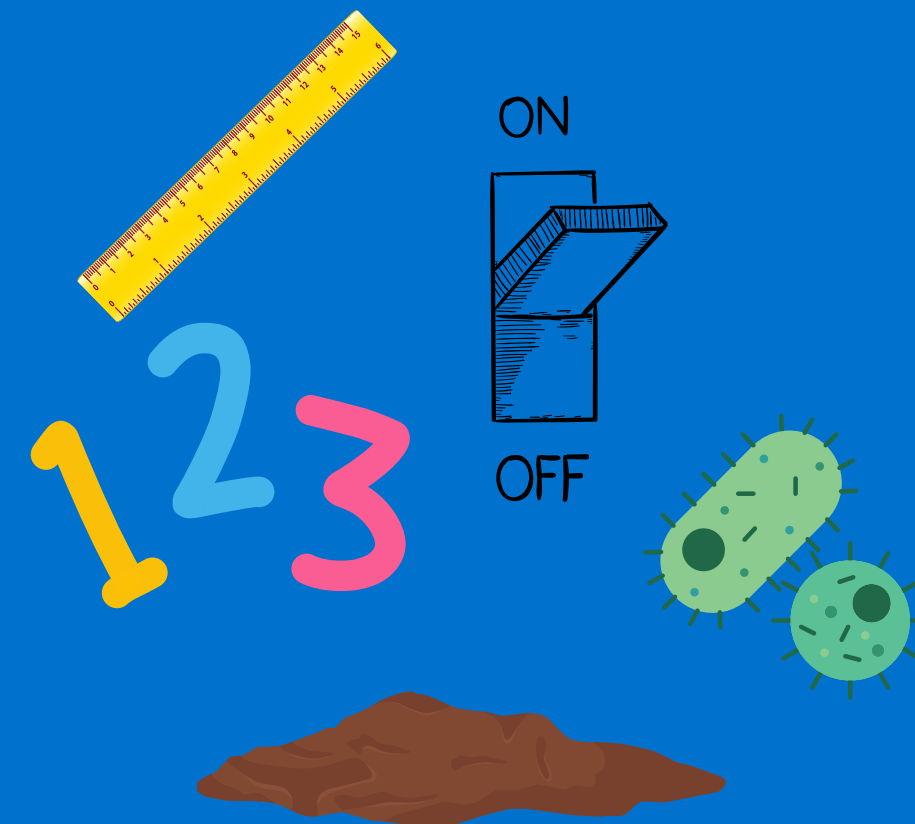
Separation
Anxiety



Social
Anxiety



OCD



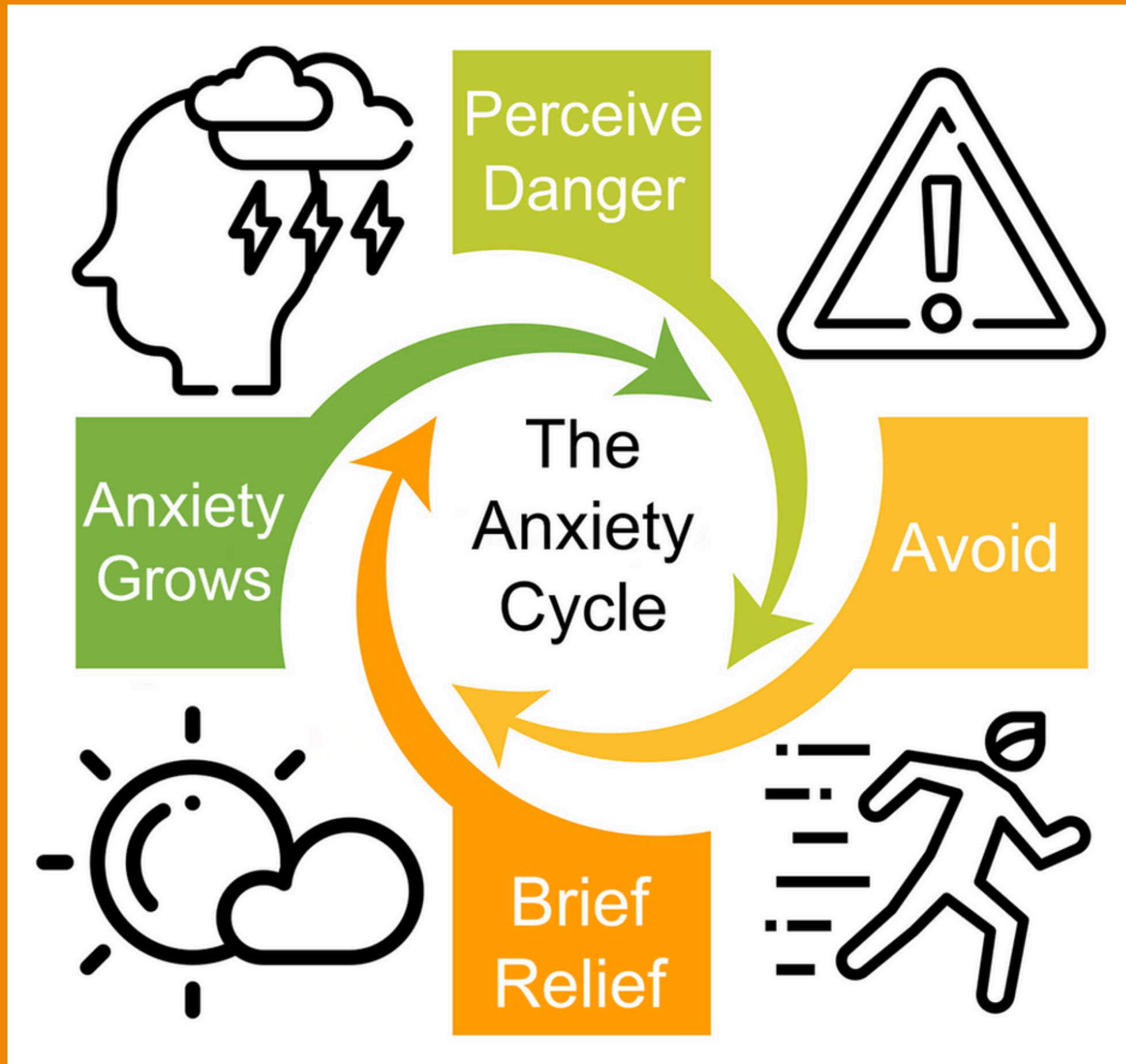
What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy?



What maintains anxiety in children?

- Avoidance seeking
- Safety seeking
- Reassurance seeking





Avoidance

Behaviour

Does not put her hand up when she has a question and doesn't get the help she needs

Thoughts

"People will think I'm stupid if I ask a question."

Situation

needing to ask a question in class but afraid to put her hand up

Emotions

Anxious/worried
Scared

Physical feelings

Shakey
Nauseous
Heart beats fast



As a result - Feels more uncomfortable and disengaged from the lesson,
Repeat next lesson

Safety seeking

Behaviour

Wait until brother is going upstairs every time before starting to walk upstairs

Thoughts

"The monster will get me"

Situation

Need to get something from upstairs

Emotions

Anxious/worried
Scared

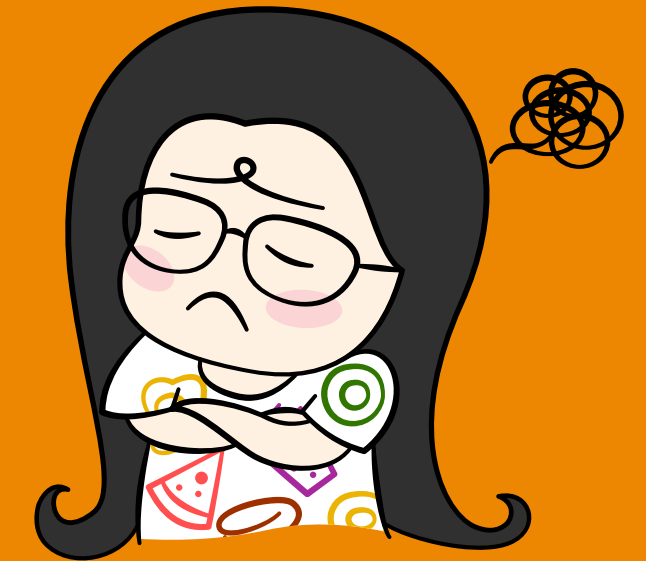
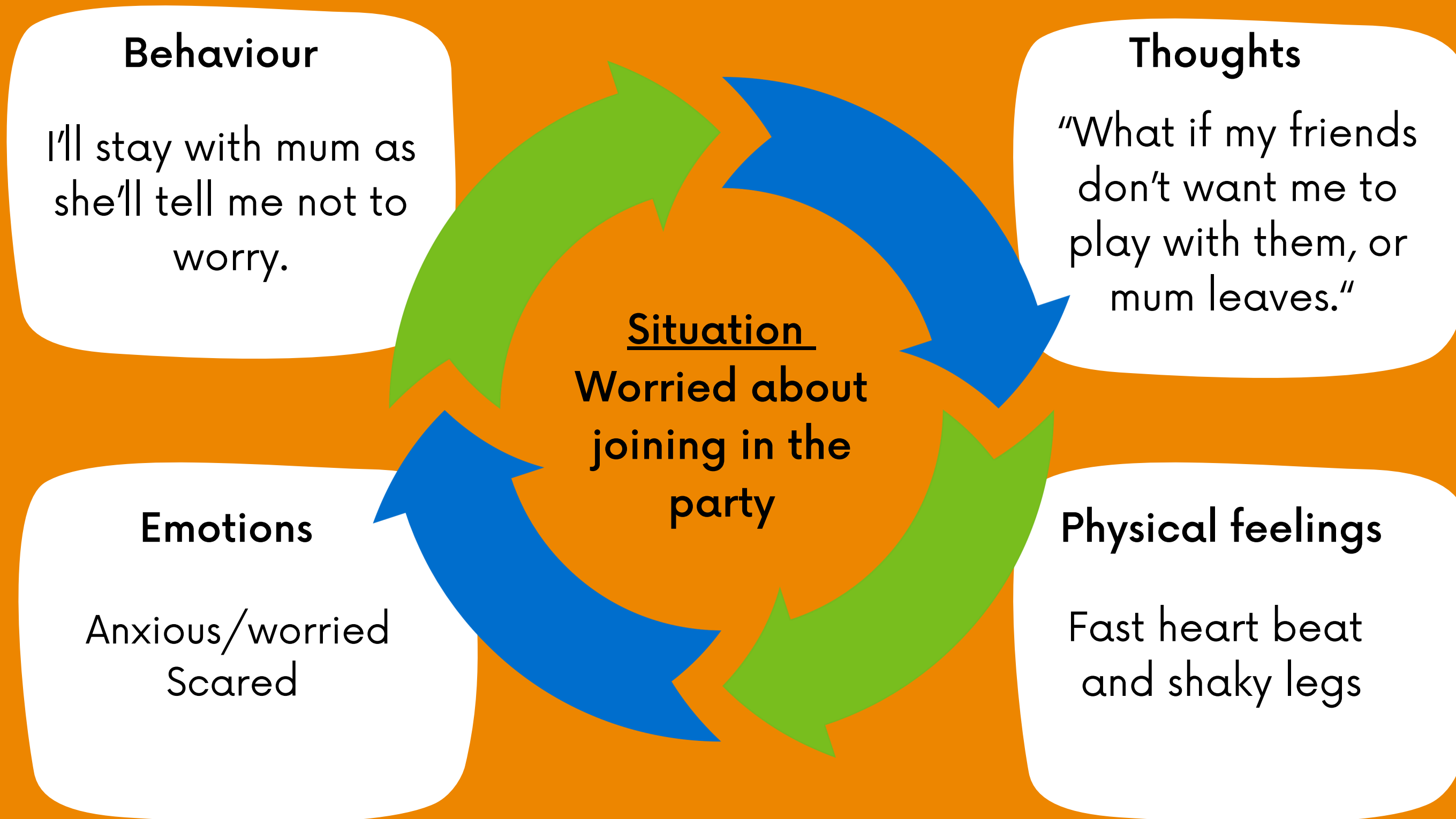
Physical feelings

Shakey
Butterflies



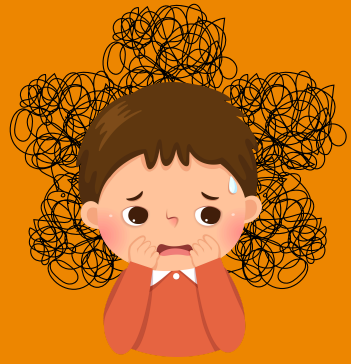
As a result -
Continues to feel scared, will only go upstairs when someone else is up there

Reassurance seeking

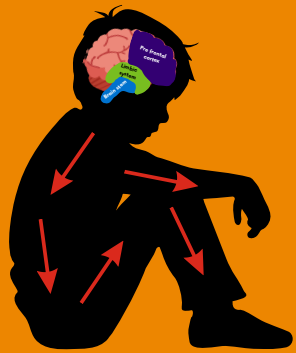


As a result - When reassurance is frequently met child will seek this more and may experience heightened anxiety when this is not given

As a result...



Our anxious thinking confirms the fear. Overestimated how bad something is going to be, which keeps our beliefs going.
“It’s raining so my day will be bad!” “I can’t cope!” “I’m going to fail my test!”



We use our body reactions as evidence to confirm the anxious thoughts. Reduces confidence in coping. Avoidance increases.



Avoidance keeps fears going (short term relief). We never find out if bad things happen. We don't develop coping skills. Safety behaviours increase.

What can we do to help?



General principles to help your child

- Normalise and validate emotions
- Give helpful reassurance
- Model good coping strategies
- Encourage independence



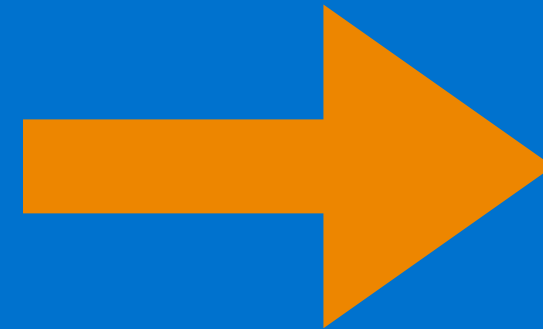
Use of language

Instead of:

You'll be fine, don't worry"

"Don't worry I'm here"

"Just stay close to me and you'll be fine."

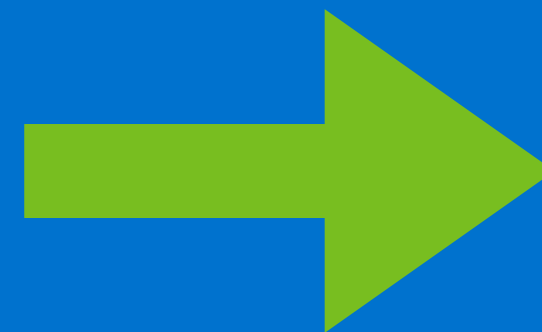


- Over reassurance
- Reduces opportunities for new learning

Try:

"Go on, have a go, you'll be great".

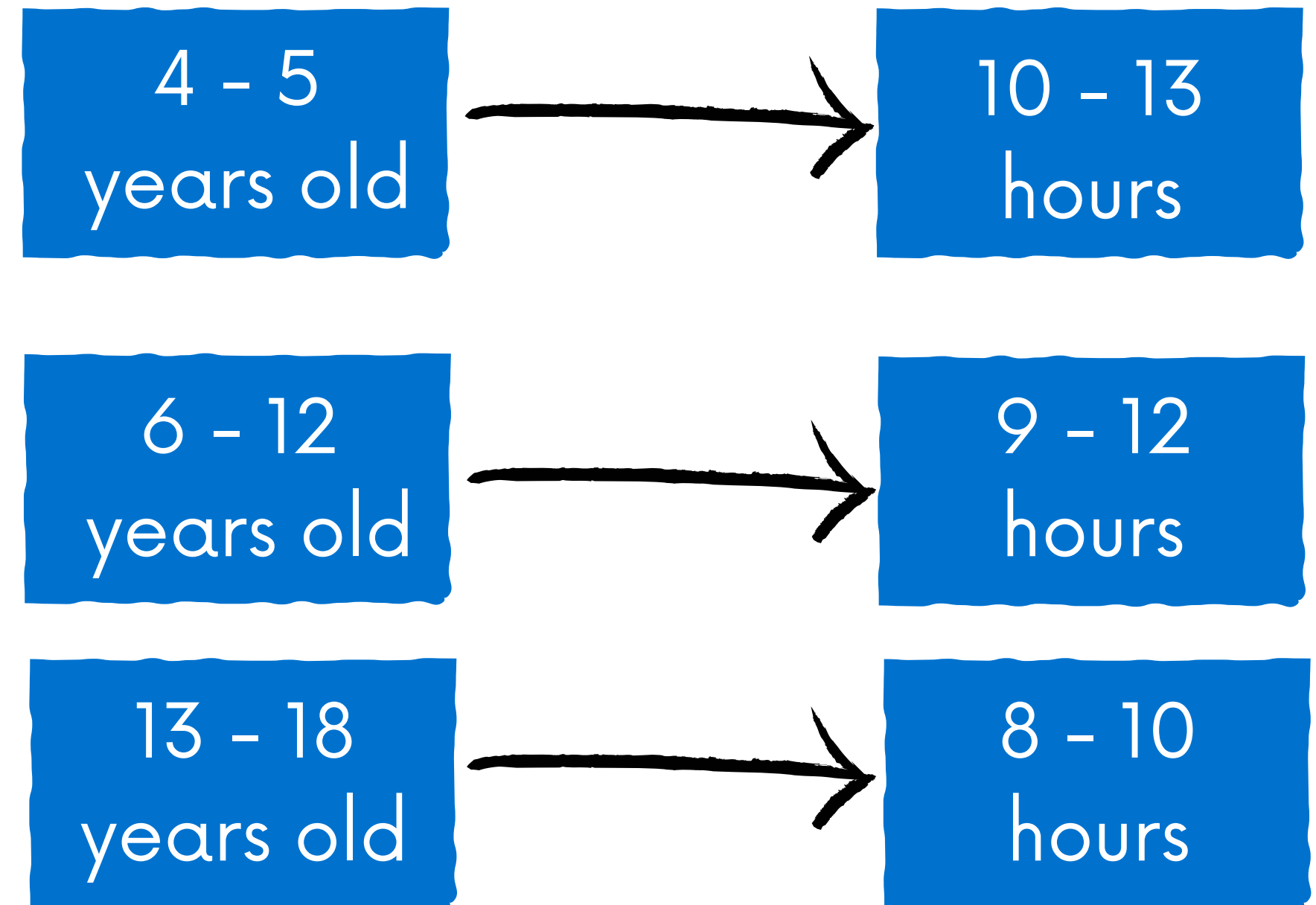
"I was so proud when you had a go last time, so go and have another try"



- Reassurance that promotes opportunities for new learning.

Create good sleep habits

- Create a bedtime routine.
- Relaxing activity before bedtime.
- Bedroom environment.
- Avoid screen time.



Worry Time

Whenever your child has a worry, they write it down on a piece of paper, fold it up and put it into the box. Regularly, you take the pieces of paper out and see if they still have the worry. If they do, talk about it with them!

If they don't, you can ask your child to throw them in the bin (as a symbol of the worry being over).

Plan a time every day for worry time between 10-15 minutes.



Catch the worries and classify them using the worry tree

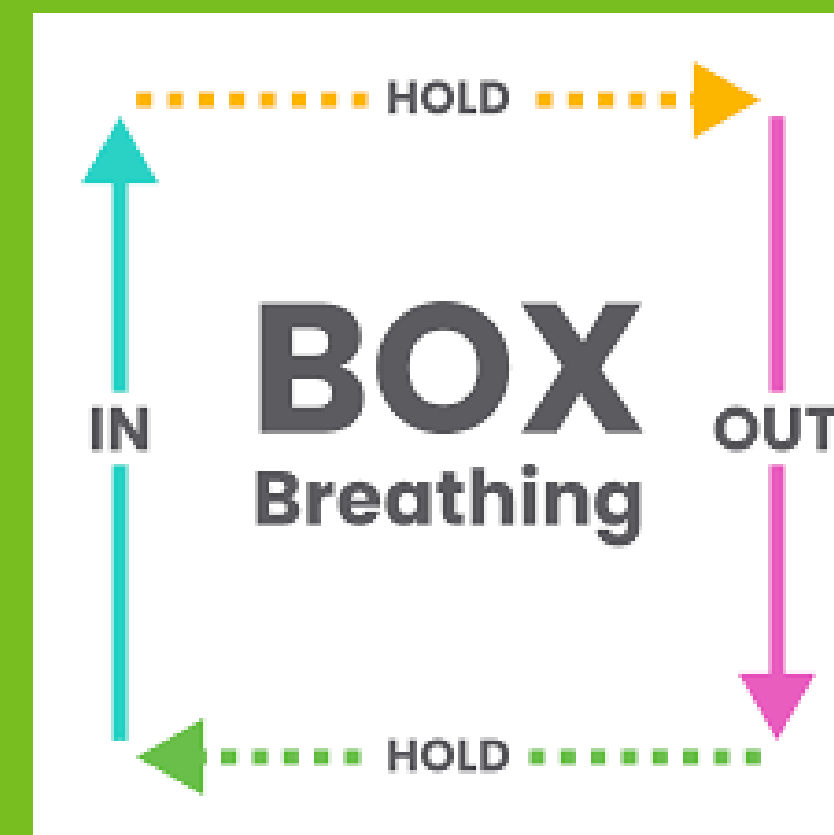
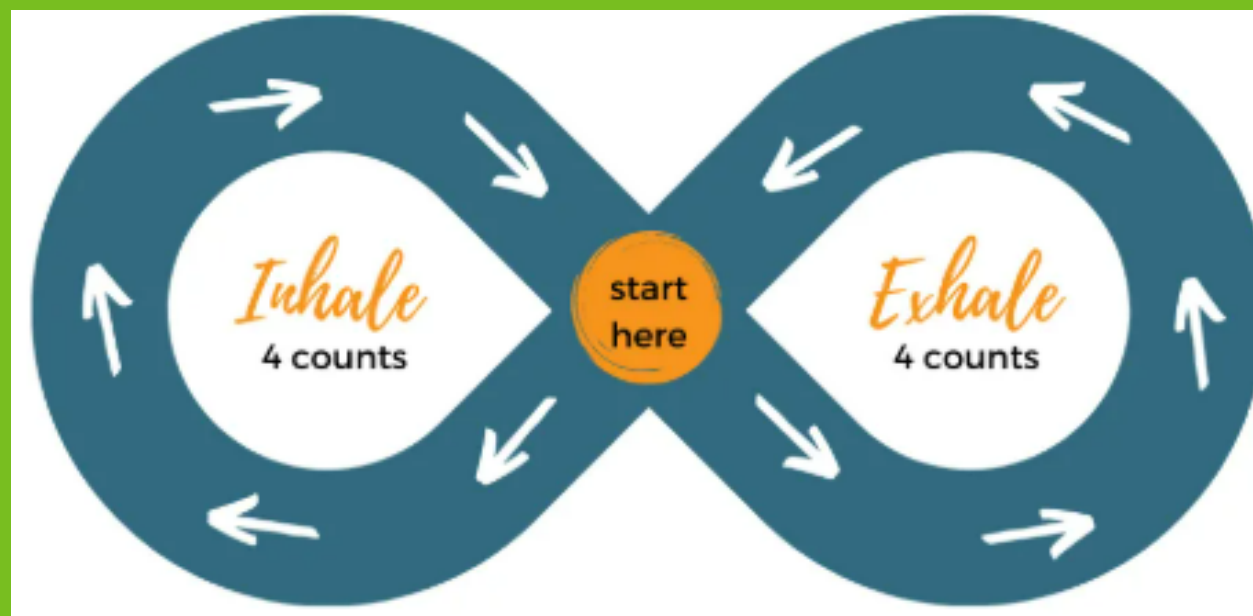


"Let it go" by using breathing techniques



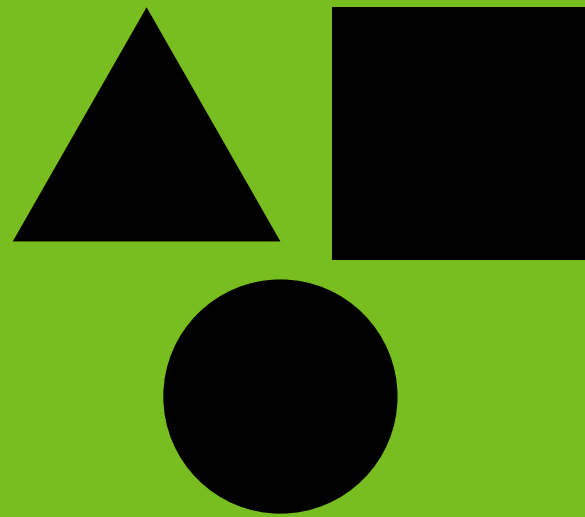
Hot Chocolate Breath

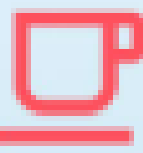
1. Hold your hands out in front of you and pretend you are holding a mug of yummy hot chocolate
2. Take a long, slow breath in through your nose. Imagine you are smelling the hot chocolate.
3. Slowly breathe out through your mouth & pretend you are cooling down the hot chocolate.



"Let it go" by using grounding techniques

Colours and shapes



	5 Things You Can See
	4 Things You Can Touch
	3 Things You Can Hear
	2 Things You Can Smell
	1 Thing You Can Taste

Categories

Choose a theme. Spend 30 seconds naming things to do with the theme.

Do something you
enjoy

Use problem solving to deal with real/practical problems

Practical Problem solving

What is the problem?

What can you do?
Think of solutions both 'silly' and sensible.

Examine each solution you listed above.
What good and bad things might happen if you did each one?

What is the most likely idea to help?

Do you need someone else to help you?
If so who?

MAKE A PLAN

DHC.MHSTEAM.NORTHDORSET@NHS.NET

Make a Plan

What do I need to do?

1

2

3

4 ...or more

Can I do it now?

YES..... do it

NO..... When?

Great job! Remember if it didn't work, then go back to your list of solutions and try another one.

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Challenging anxious thoughts and expectations

Prediction - What do you think will happen?

Experiment - Make a plan, problem-solve and give it a go!

Review - Did their prediction become true? Did they cope better than expected? Do you need to take a step back and plan a less challenging experiment first?

Prediction

Ultimate Goal

Ultimate Reward

Step-by-step plan to help your child overcome their worries

Prediction

Ultimate Goal

Ultimate Reward

Predictions

Steps

Rewards

Predictions

Steps

Rewards

Be upstairs on my own for 30 minutes

A friend sleeping over and then going to the park

Be upstairs on my own for 20 minutes

Go swimming

Be upstairs on my own for 10 minutes

bake a cake

Be upstairs on my own for 5 minutes

Go on Fortnite with Dad

Be upstairs on my own for 2 minutes

Go on a cycle ride

Be upstairs on my own for 1 minutes

Watch a movie

Go to the top of the stairs on my own

Go for a walk with Mum

Go half way up the stairs on my own

Watch a movie

Go to the 5th step of the stairs on my own

Have more screen time

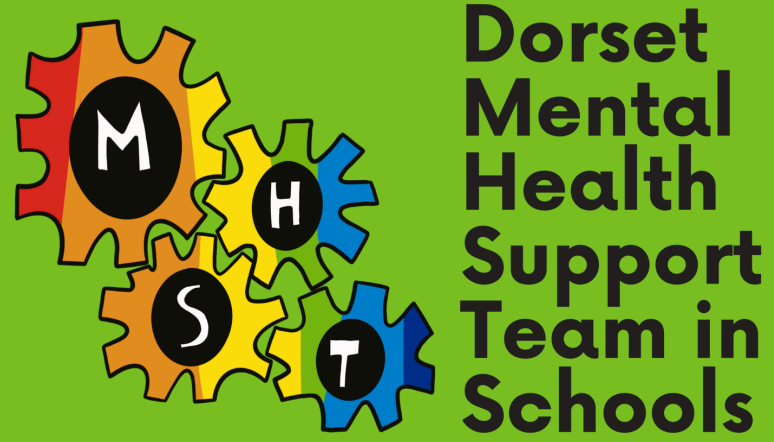
Go to the 3rd step of the stairs on my own

Go to bed later

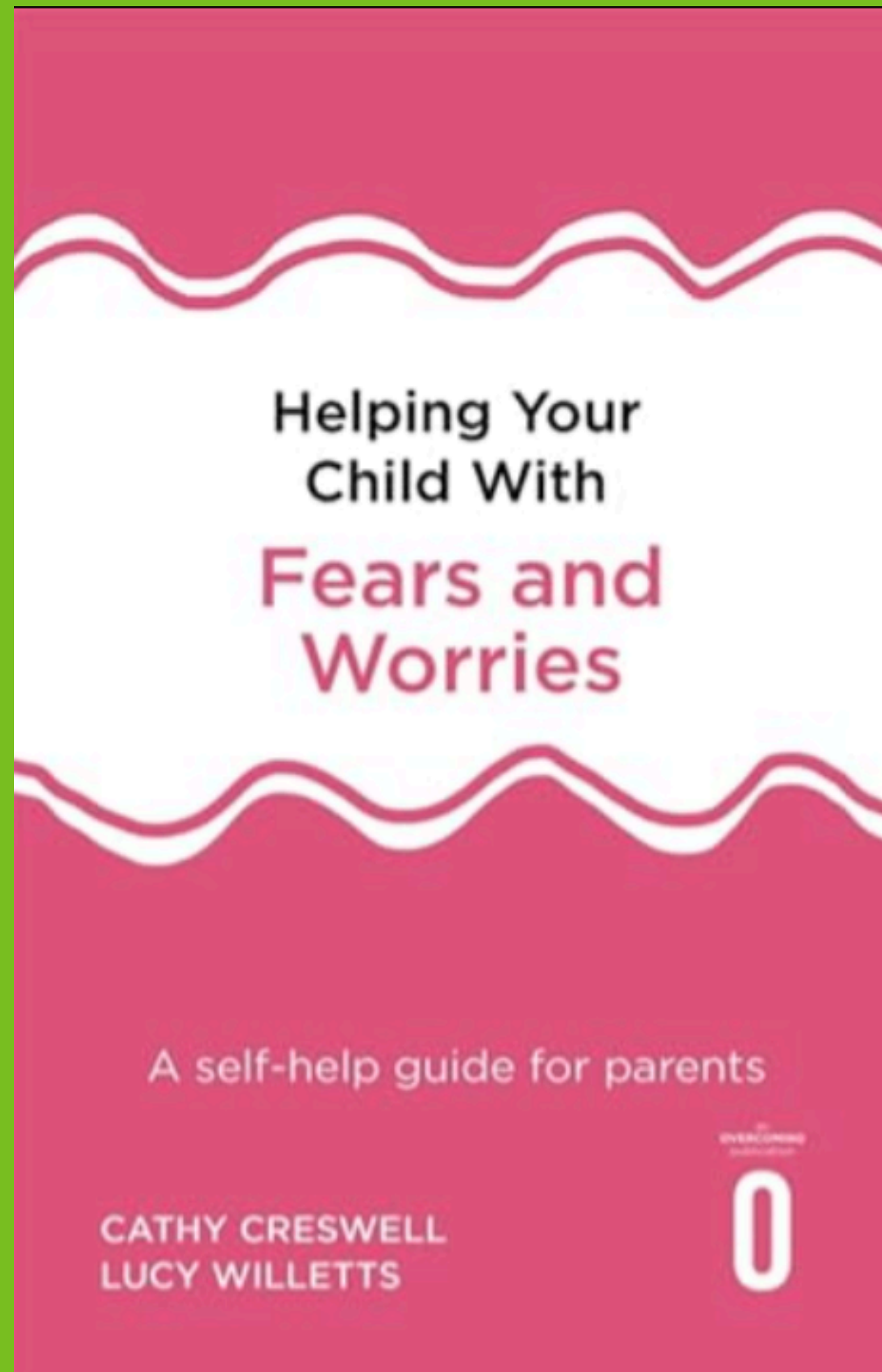
I'll feel a bit shaky







There is an audiobook version of the book which can be bought/ is included with Spotify premium if you already use this platform.



Amazon or other shops sell this book.

The book can usually be found in a local library.

Further support



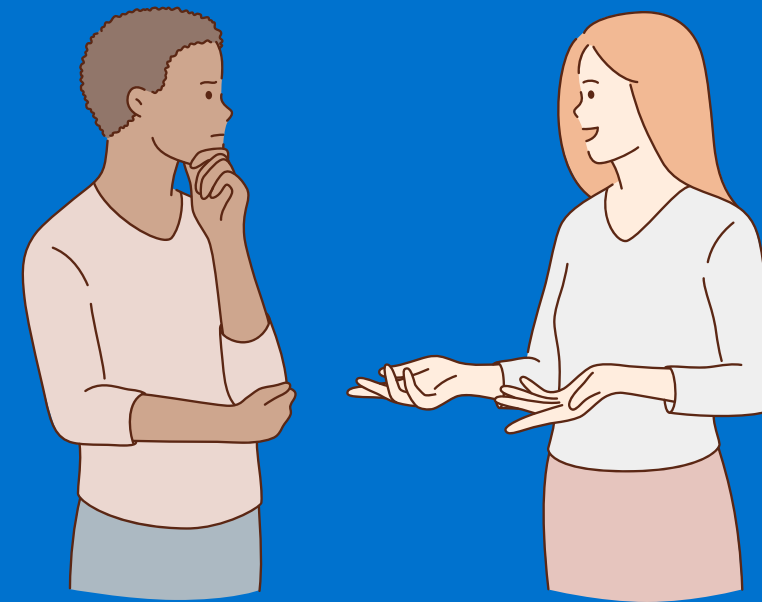
ParentLine 5-19
Confidential text messaging advice service for parents and carers of children aged 5-19.

Message us for confidential advice on

07312 263131

to chat with a member of the School Nursing team

ChatHealth



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GP

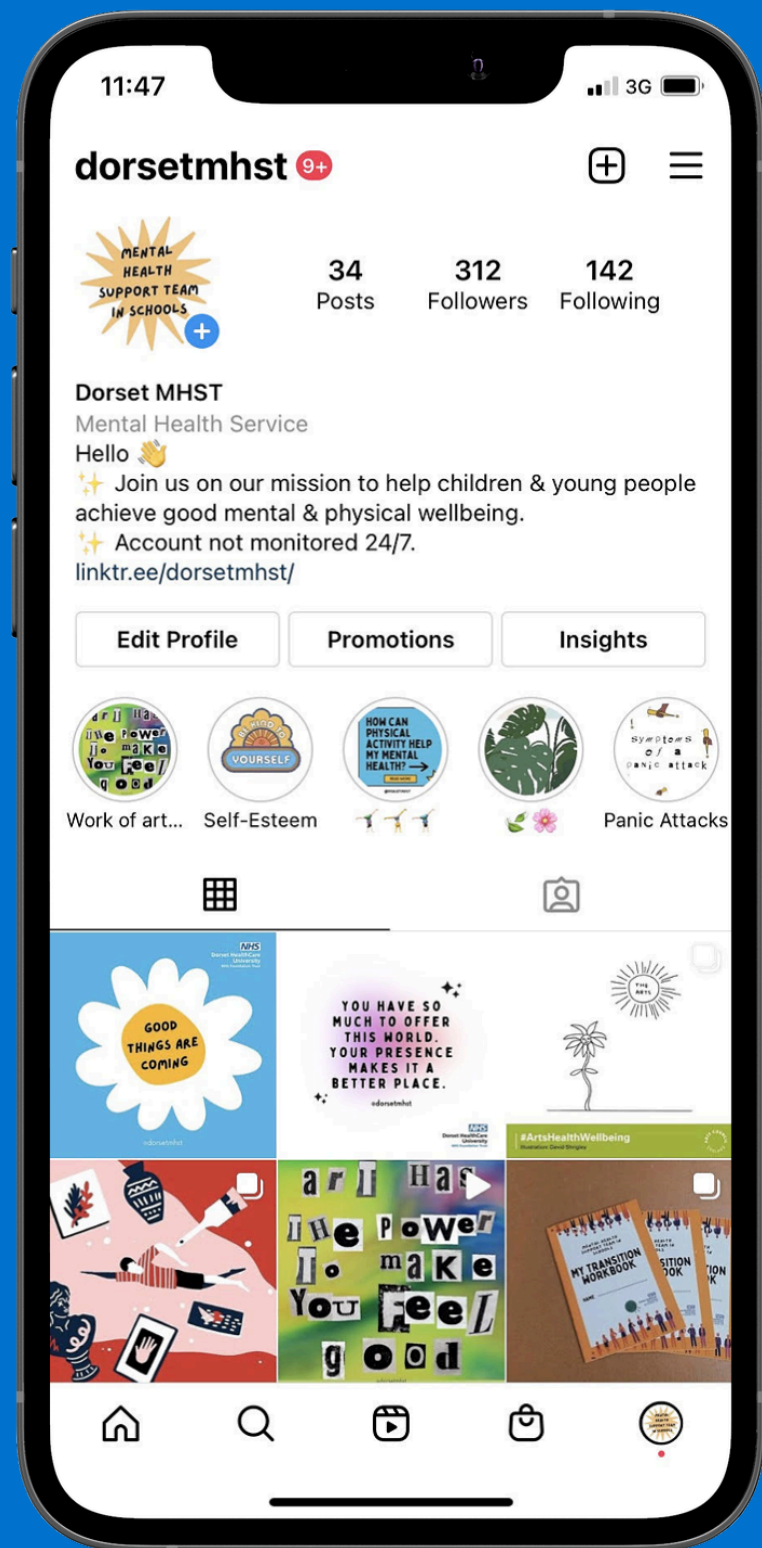
steps2wellbeing
Southampton & Dorset

YOUNG MINDS
The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing



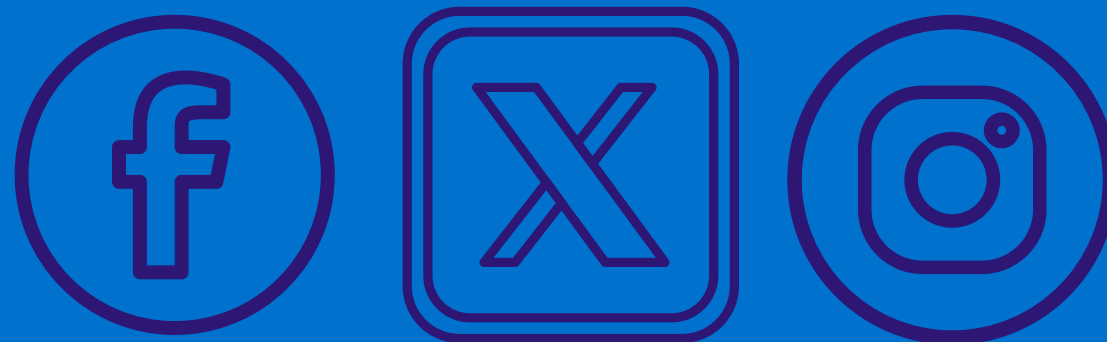


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