



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?

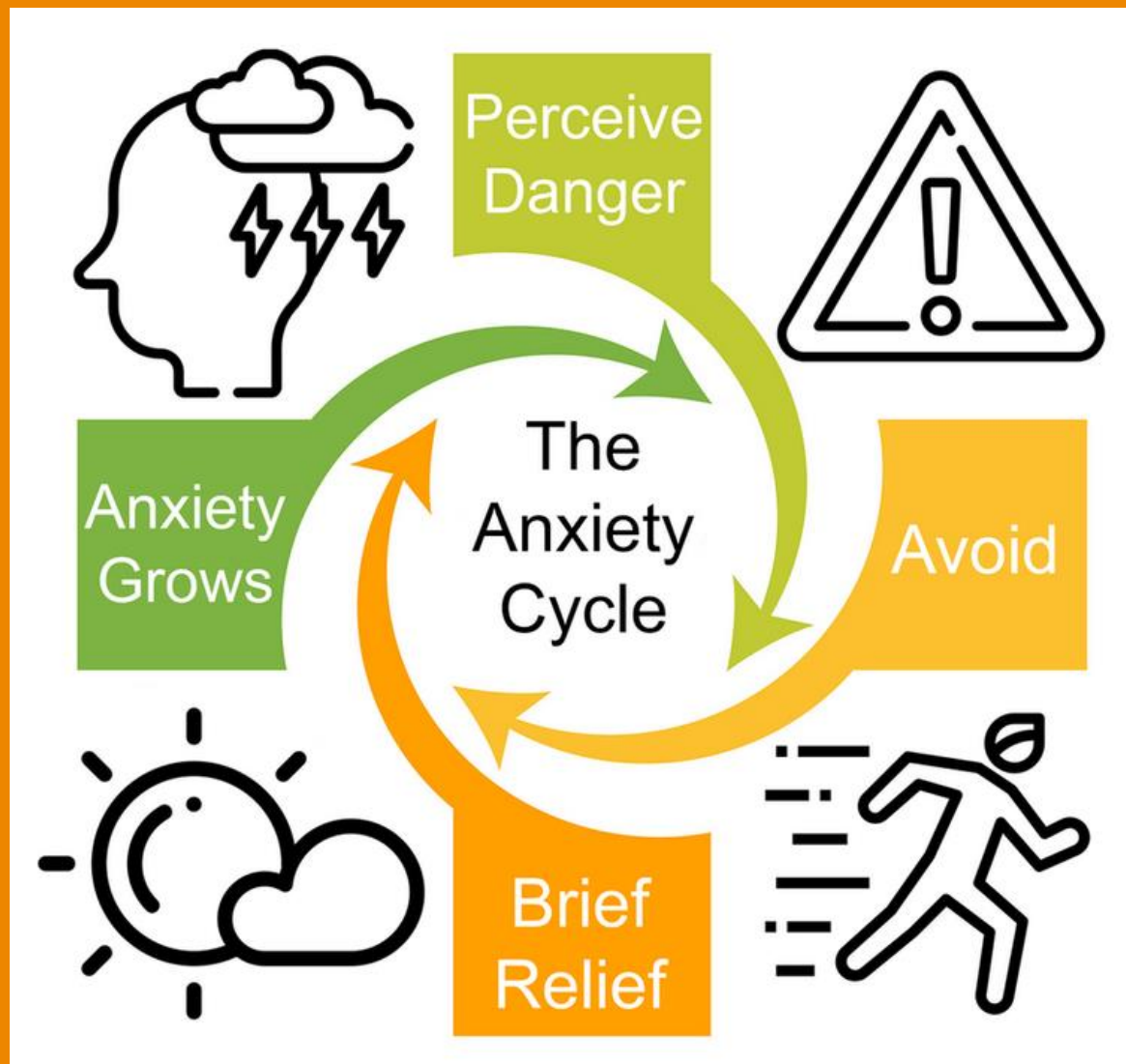


Anxiety is normal.

Everyone feels anxiety some of the time. A small amount of anxiety is a good thing as it can help us prepare our bodies for danger.

It helps us get things done (like study for a big exam) and it helps our memory and focus.

Too much anxiety means you can't think properly and can make you worry about things that aren't real.



$$\text{Anxiety} = \frac{\text{Overestimating threat}}{\text{underestimating ability to cope}}$$

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.



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

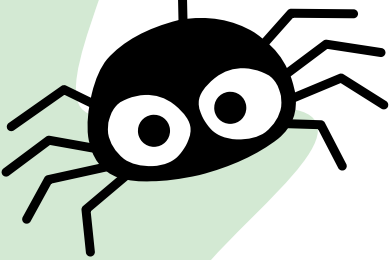
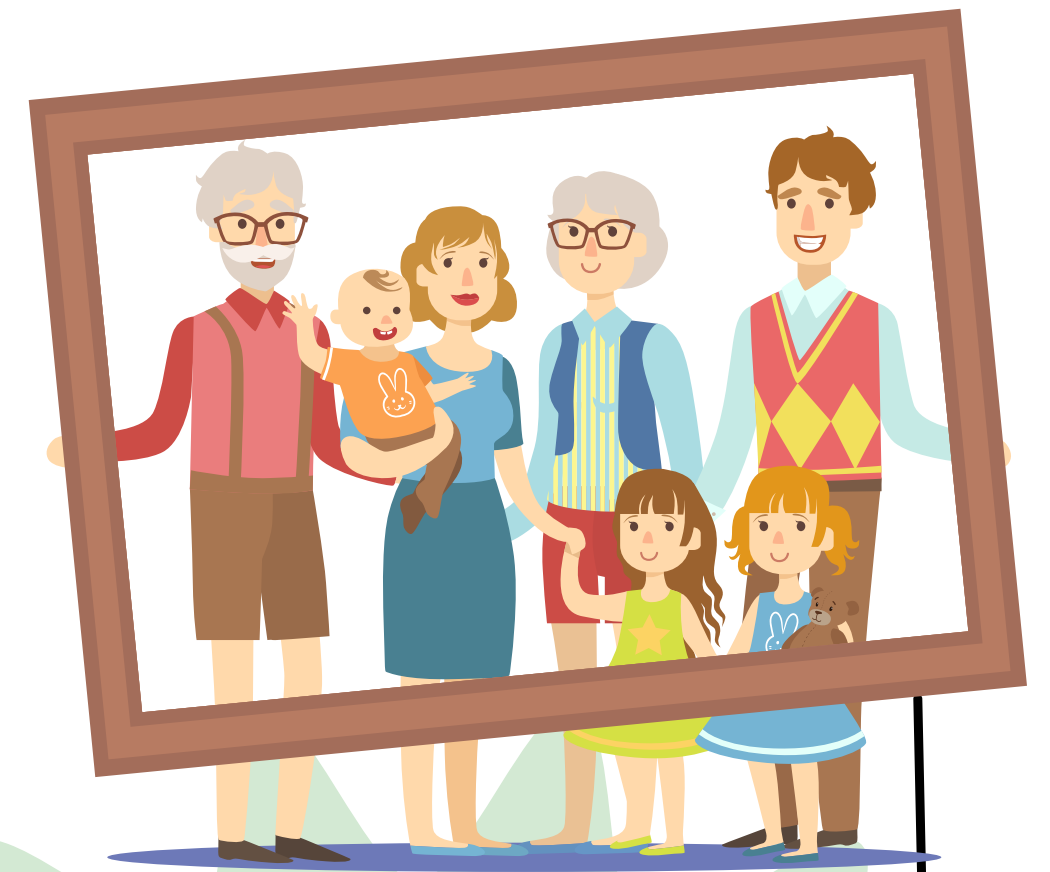
Causes of anxiety

Where does it come from?

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

What is the impact ?

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



Anxiety is different
for everyone

Different types of Anxiety in children

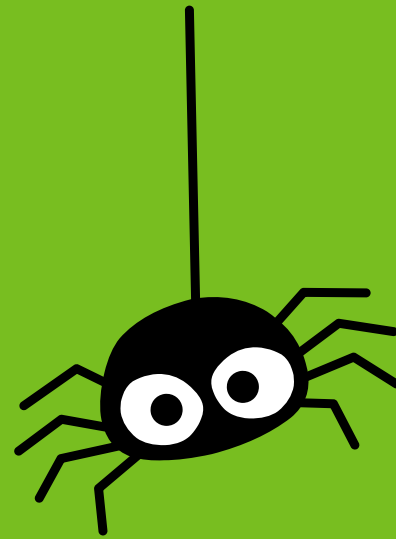
Generalised Anxiety



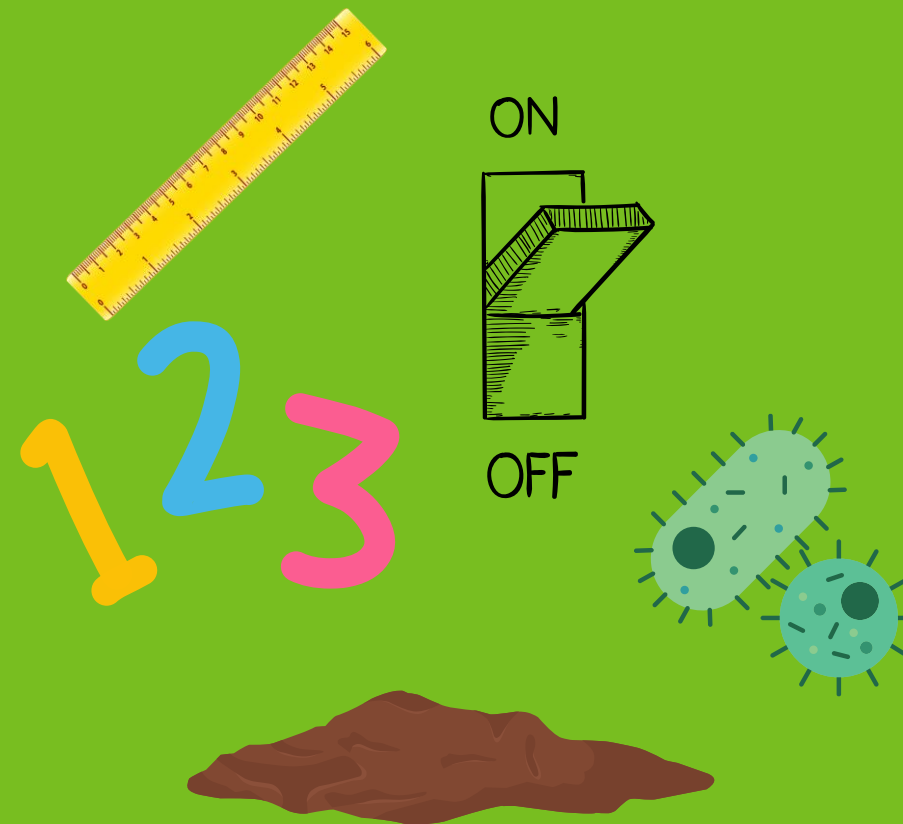
Social Anxiety



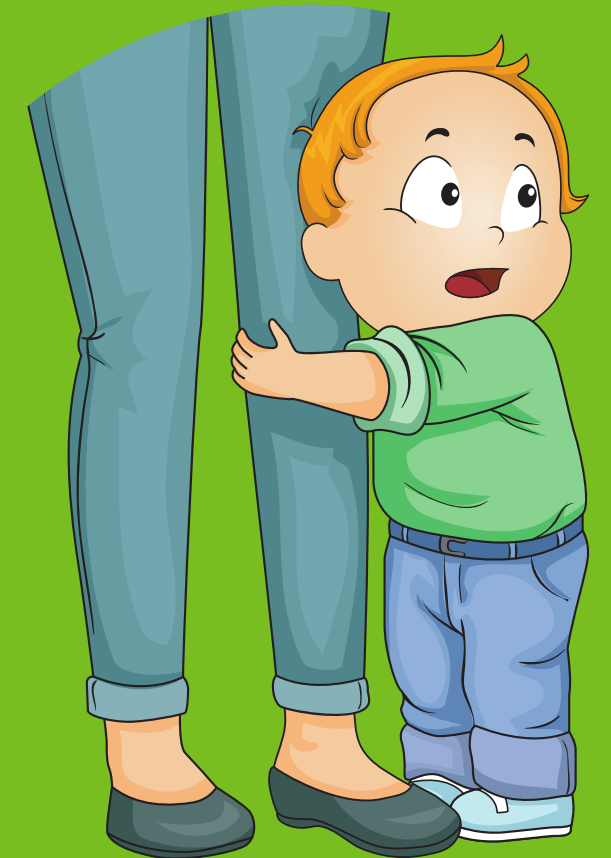
Specific Phobia



OCD



Separation Anxiety

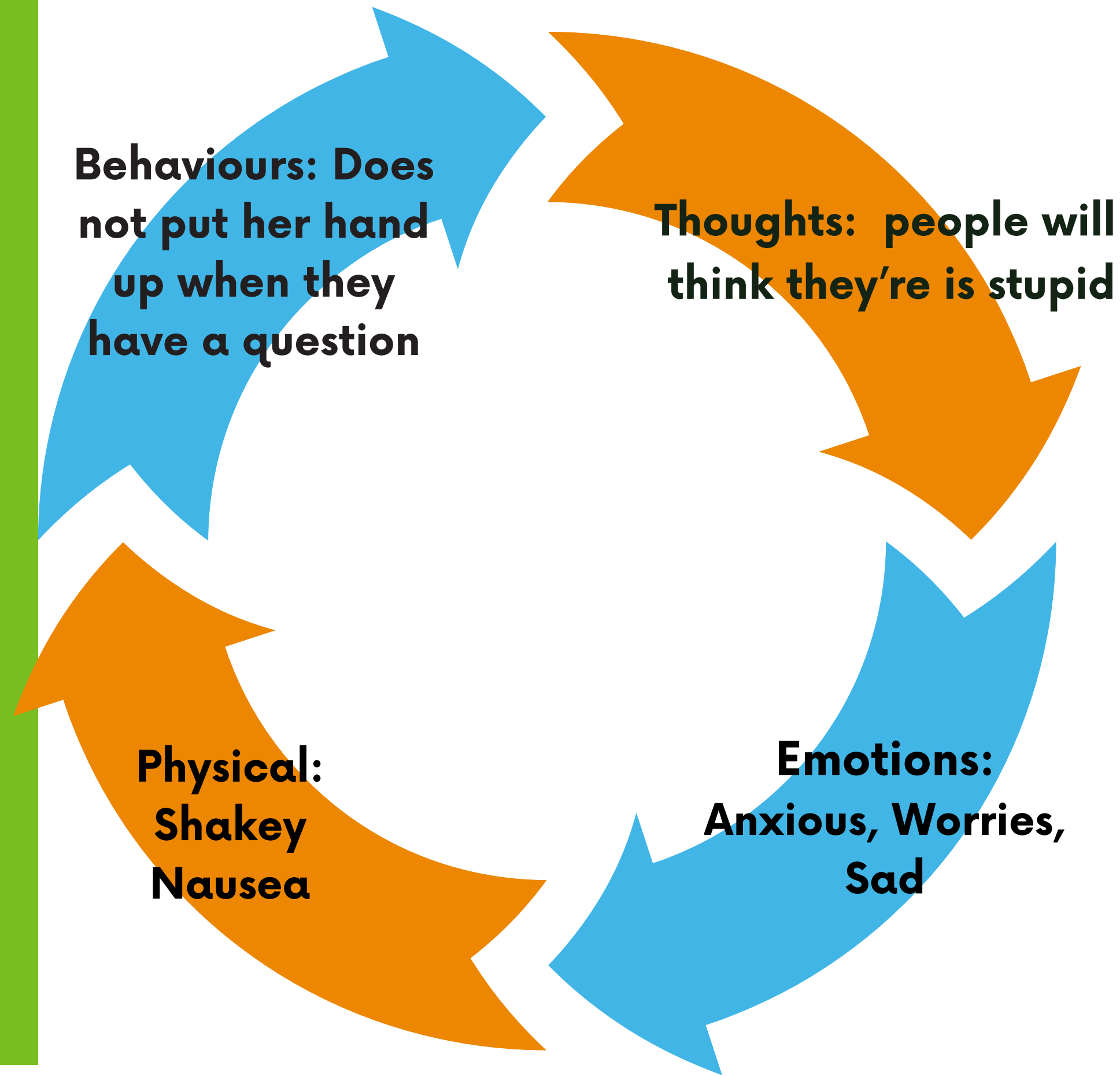


What maintains anxiety in children?

- Avoidance seeking
- Safety seeking
- Reassurance seeking



Avoidance: Asking Questions 's in class



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

Safety: Needs to get a jumper from upstairs

Behaviours: Waits for sibling to go upstairs first then follows

Thoughts: I can't go alone, the monster is going to get me

Physical:
Shakey
Butterflies
Cold

Emotions:
Anxious, Scared



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

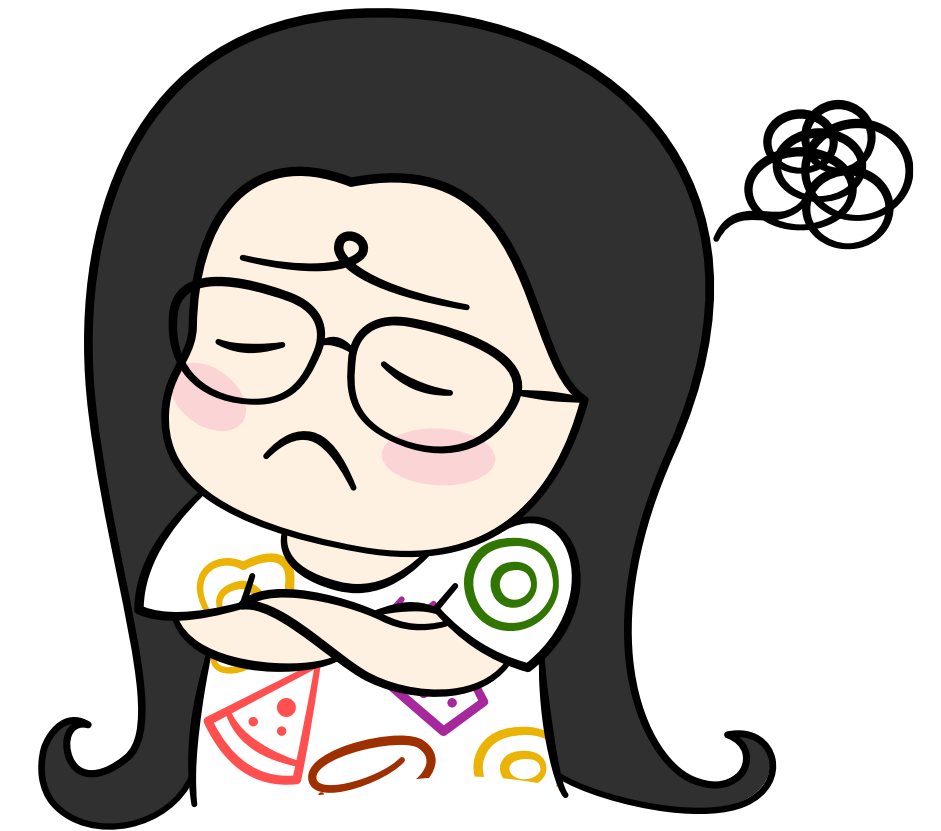
Reassurance: Worry about if the door is locked

Behaviours:
Repeatedly asks mum
if the door was
locked, asks to go
back and check

Thoughts: The door
isn't locked,
someone's going to
go in a scare the cat

Physical:
Shakey
Fast heart

Emotions:
Anxious, Scared,
Upset



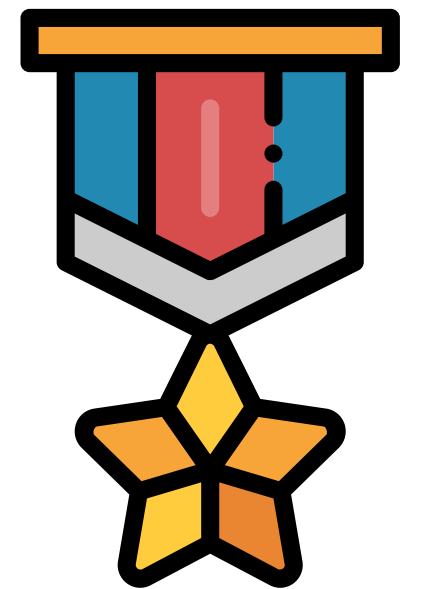
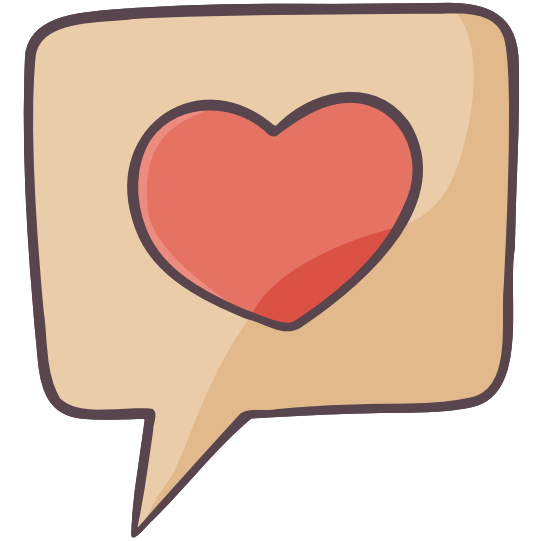
As a result - When
Reassurance is frequently
met child will seek this more
and may experience
heightened anxiety when
this is not given

What can we do?



What can we do?

- Model good coping strategies yourself
- Practice Breathing and grounding techniques before anxiety-provoking situations
- Practice and demonstrate positive self-talk
- Positive reinforcement to encourage bravery
- Encourage independence



Normalise, Validate, Reassure

I really think you can do it. I was so proud when you asked a question in class

I think you should see how it goes. I feel confident that you can do it but if it does not go well we have an idea of what to work on next.

Go on, have a go, you have done it before and it went really well

YOU
CAN DO
IT



Worry Time

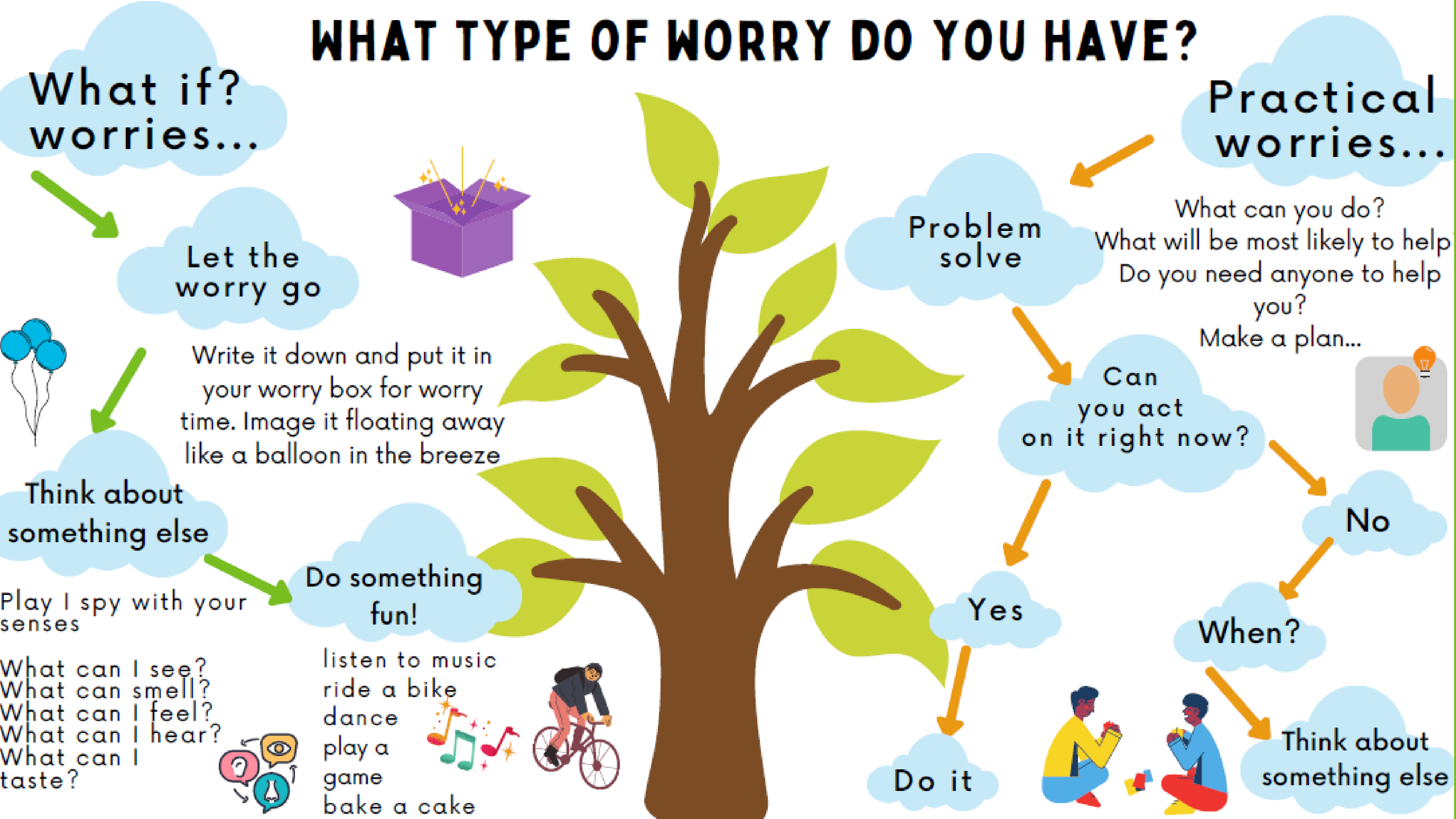
- A physical way to get rid of worries.
- A set time everyday (not before bed time)
- Around 10-15 minutes
- Write down/talk about worries



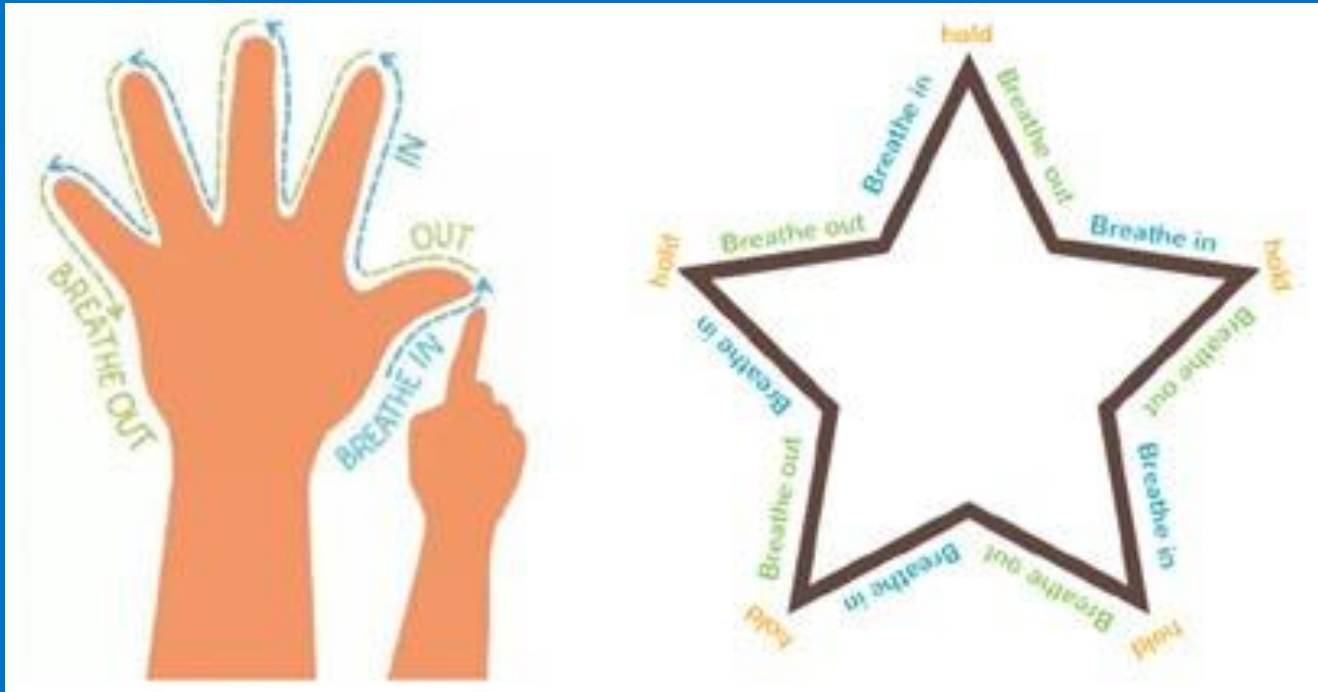
Steps:

- Write down worries and put them into Worry box.
- Remind them that there is time for them to worry later and focus on the present.
- Set a time for worrying with your child (e.g., 15 minutes before dinner).
- Talk through the worries with your child during Worry Time.
- Refocus attention after worry time.
- Repeat

WHAT TYPE OF WORRY DO YOU HAVE?

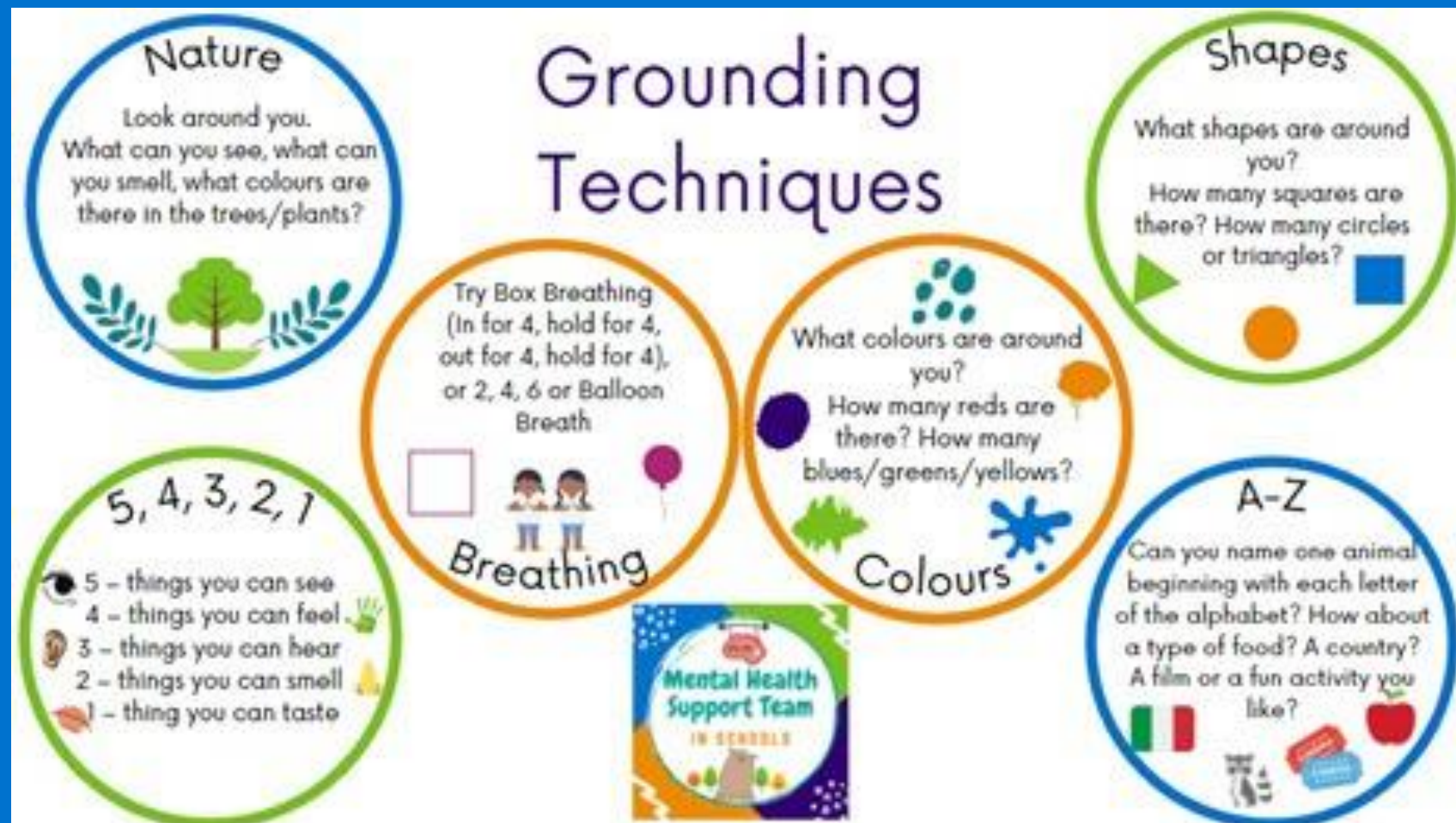


Everyday Tools – Relaxation & Breathing & Grounding



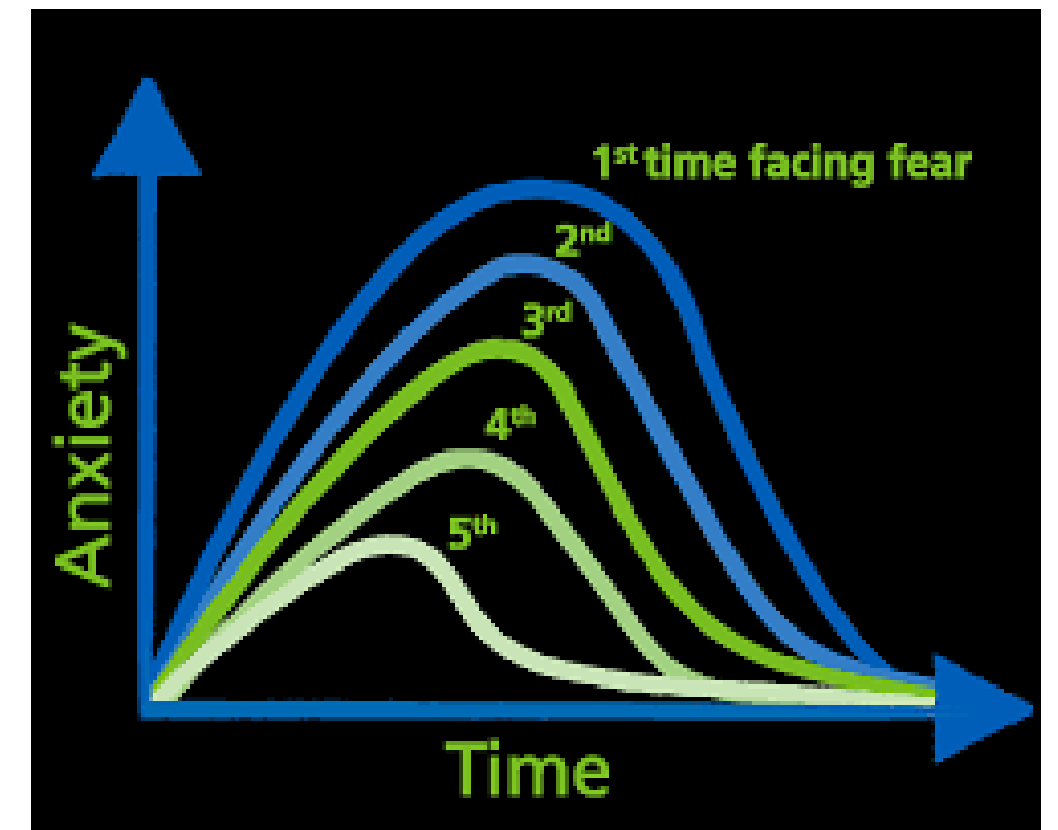
Hot Chocolate Breath

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.

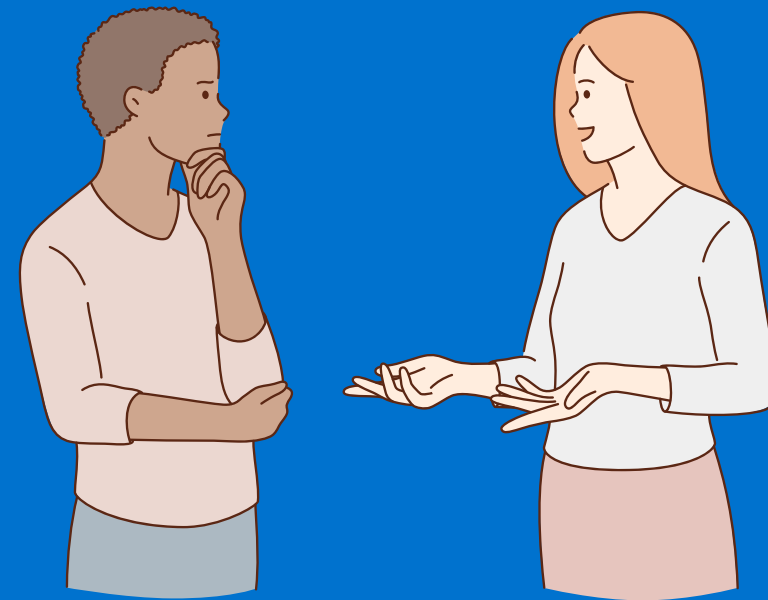




Step by Step exposure



Further support



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steps2wellbeing
Southampton & Dorset

GP

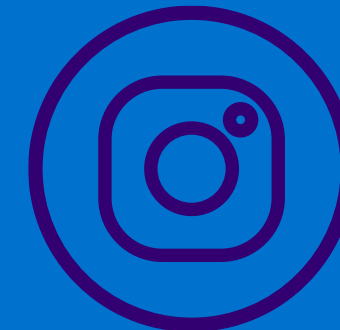


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