

Great Minds Together

# Coping with Anxiety Workbook



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Table of Contents

This workbook contains activities and ideas that are focused on strategies to support anxiety and low mood. You can use this workbook as often as you like as a guide. There is no right or wrong way of using this workbook and please feel free to use your own ideas as well.

## Introduction

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- What Can I Say To Help?
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*Scan here for an audio guide*

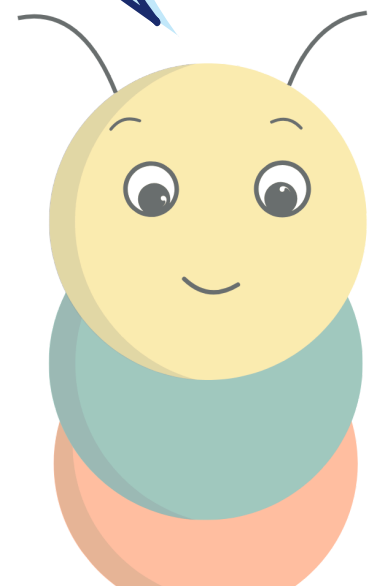
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*If you see a QR code like the one above, you can scan this for an audio/visual guide*

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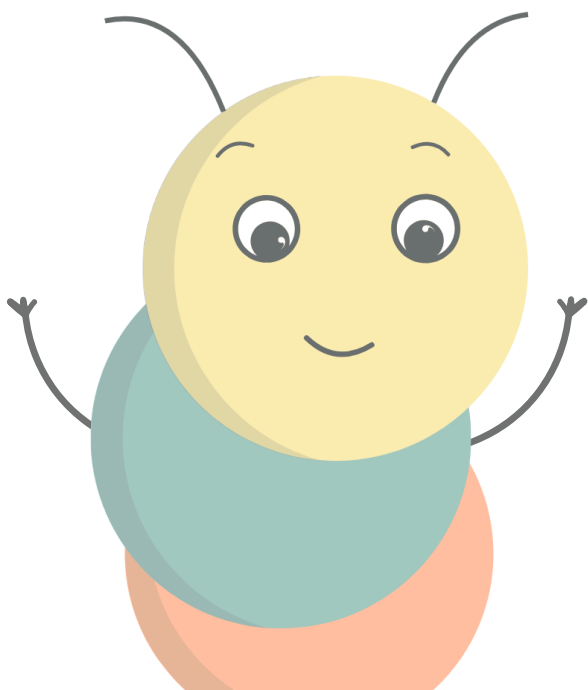
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***You've got  
this!***

# What Is Anxiety?

Anxiety is when you feel scared, worried or panicky about something.

It's a normal, human feeling and your body's natural response to stress or danger. Anyone can experience anxiety, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or faith.

We all feel anxious from time to time. But the feeling usually passes once we feel safe or solve the problem that was causing the anxiety.

All sorts of things can cause anxiety. There's no 'right' or 'wrong' reason to feel anxious. Sometimes it has a clear trigger, but other times it can feel like it comes out of nowhere. Some people might feel it in specific situations. Others might feel it more generally. The cause of your anxiety can also change over time.

Everyone reacts differently to stress. We often sort the responses into 3 categories; **fight, flight or freeze**. This response is an instinct and not always something you can control. You might also find you won't always react the same way. Something will make you want to run away, such as being chased by a lion, but other times you might fight, such as an argument with someone else. After the stressful situation has calmed down, it's possible you won't be able to recall every part of the interaction as the heightened hormone levels can affect short-term memory.



*Scan here for an  
audio guide*



# What Can I Say to Help?

## What can I say to help a child or young person with anxiety?

It can be tricky at times to know the right thing to say to the child or young person you are supporting with anxiety. Below is a list of some examples of things you can say to help:

- “It’s okay to feel scared.”
- “Tell me about how you feel”
- “Words can be hard sometimes, can you draw how you are feeling?”
- “I am here to listen to you”
- “What do you want to tell your worry?”
- “Which calming strategy do you want to use today?”
- “This feeling will pass, let’s see what we can do to help it go away quickly”



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audio guide*

# Fight, Flight and Freeze

**Fight:** - If your brain perceives a stressor as something you can overpower or overcome, it will prepare your body for a fight response.

This doesn't always mean physical, it could also be with words. Sometimes this response can turn to the urge to protect rather than fight. Signs of the fight response in your body are :

- tightened jaw or fists
- clenched teeth
- a desire to strike out physically or verbally
- raised voice
- feelings of nausea
- knots in the stomach
- erratic behaviour
- flushed cheeks
- crying in anger

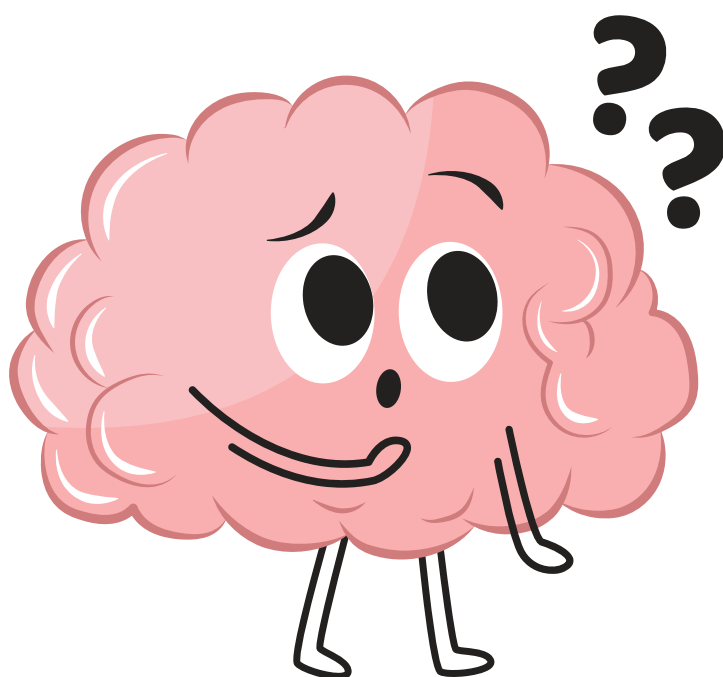
**Flight:** - Your brain recognises the stressor as something you can't overcome but you can avoid. It floods your body with adrenaline in preparation to run away from the situation - this could be physically moving away or procrastinating about something. Signs of the flight response in your body are:

- feelings of anxiety
- shallow breathing
- darting eyes
- differences when focusing
- restless movements in the limbs
- fidgeting
- feeling trapped
- feeling tense
- feelings of restlessness

# Fight, Flight and Freeze

**Freeze:-** The freeze response happens when your brain doesn't think you can avoid or overcome a stressor. Often feeling scared can lead to a freeze response; it's a similar reaction to when animals 'play dead' when they are threatened. You feel unable to communicate or react and sometimes you can disassociate - this is where you 'zone out' in order to avoid the stressor completely.

- feeling cold or numb
- physical stiffness
- arms and legs feel heavy
- decreased heart rate
- restricted breathing
- holding your breath
- feeling a sense of dread or foreboding
- pale skin
- disassociation
- blank expression



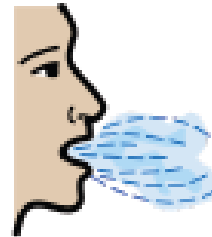
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## Social Stories

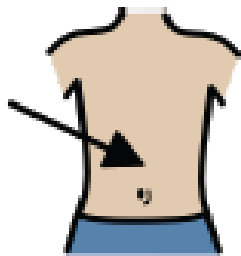
### How anxiety can feel:



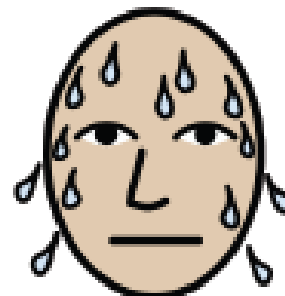
Anxiety can feel different in every person's body.



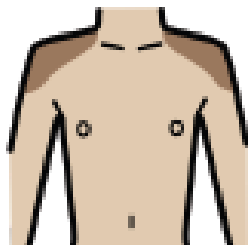
Some people may experience heavier or faster breathing.



Others may feel like they have butterflies or a wiggly belly.



Some people can become hot and sweaty.



We may have pain in our neck or shoulders if we tense our body.



These are just some ways our body can tell us we are anxious.

# Social Stories

## Anxiety Management:



Anxiety can be different for each person so what helps one person may be different to others.



5,4,3,2,1 method. 5 things you see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.



Mindfulness meditation can help calm the mind and body by slowing down our thoughts.



Listening to music or white noise can make you feel relaxed and block out unwelcome thoughts or noises.



Drawing your calm place & mindfulness colouring



You have to find what works for you and this can be anything that makes you feel calm and happy.

## School Transition:



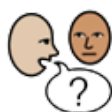
When we move class or school this can give us butterflies



These butterflies may mean we are feeling anxious or worried about this change.



We will be able to prepare for this change before it happens



If we have any questions we can ask or write these down



Our teachers and parents can help if we are worried



We can get visuals and photos of the new class/school so we know what to expect.

# All About Me

## My Selfie



My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I live in \_\_\_\_\_

## My favorites

Food \_\_\_\_\_

Color \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Animal \_\_\_\_\_

Season \_\_\_\_\_

## Four words that describe me

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

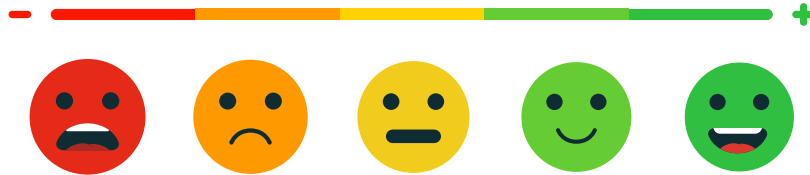
3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

## Fun facts about me

# Feelings Check-in

How am I feeling today?



(examples: happy, sad, confused, anxious, angry, silly)

Why do you think you feel this way?

When I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_ I can:

*(Tick the ones you think could help)*

- Share my feelings with someone I trust
- Use positive affirmations
- Focus on the present moment using mindfulness
- Relax by doing things which make me feel calm
- Exercise to burn off excess energy
- Do an activity that makes me happy
- Crafts like colouring, painting or drawing
- Write my feelings down in a diary or journal
- Practice some breathing exercises
- Take a break to rest my body and mind

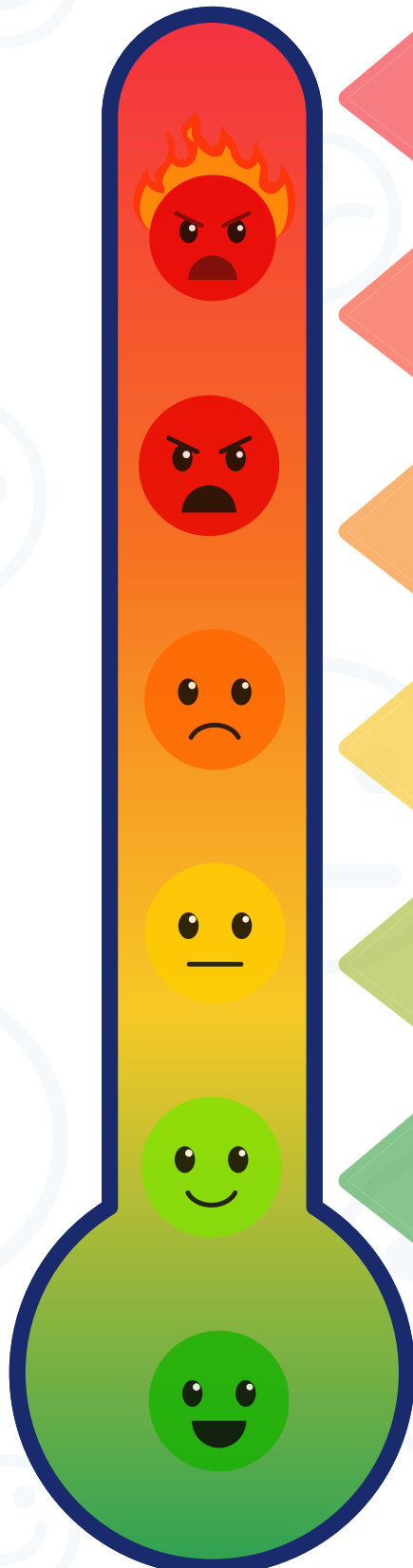


*Is there anything else you think might help?*

# Feelings Thermometer

How are you feeling right now?

What strategies can you use to help yourself?



I am furious  
I want to scream and kick things  
I need space

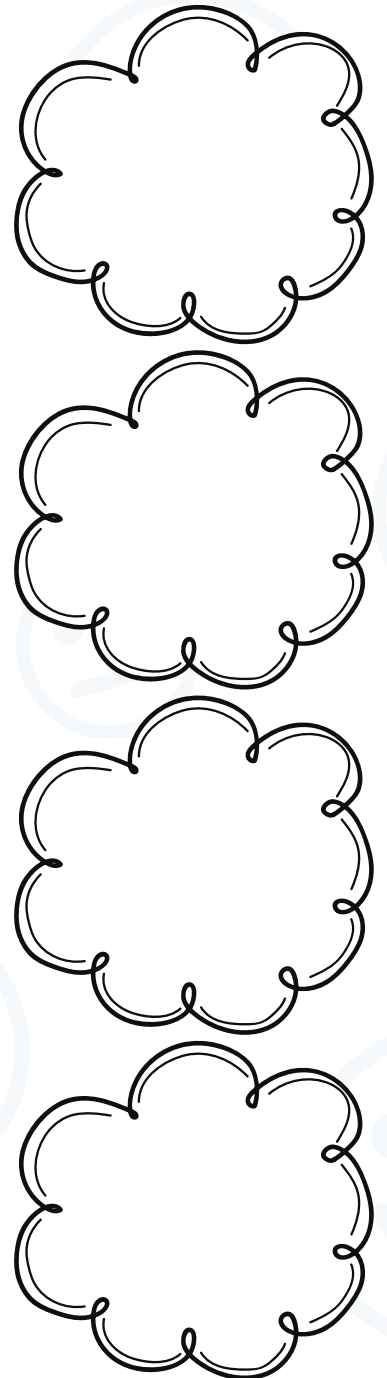
I am angry  
Everything irritates me  
I don't want to talk to anyone

I am irritated  
I feel like I'm about to get mad  
I am trying to control myself

I am sad  
I feel like I could cry at any time  
I need comfort

I am OK  
I feel a little anxious and worries

I am happy  
I feel positive and optimistic  
I smile and feel like chatting

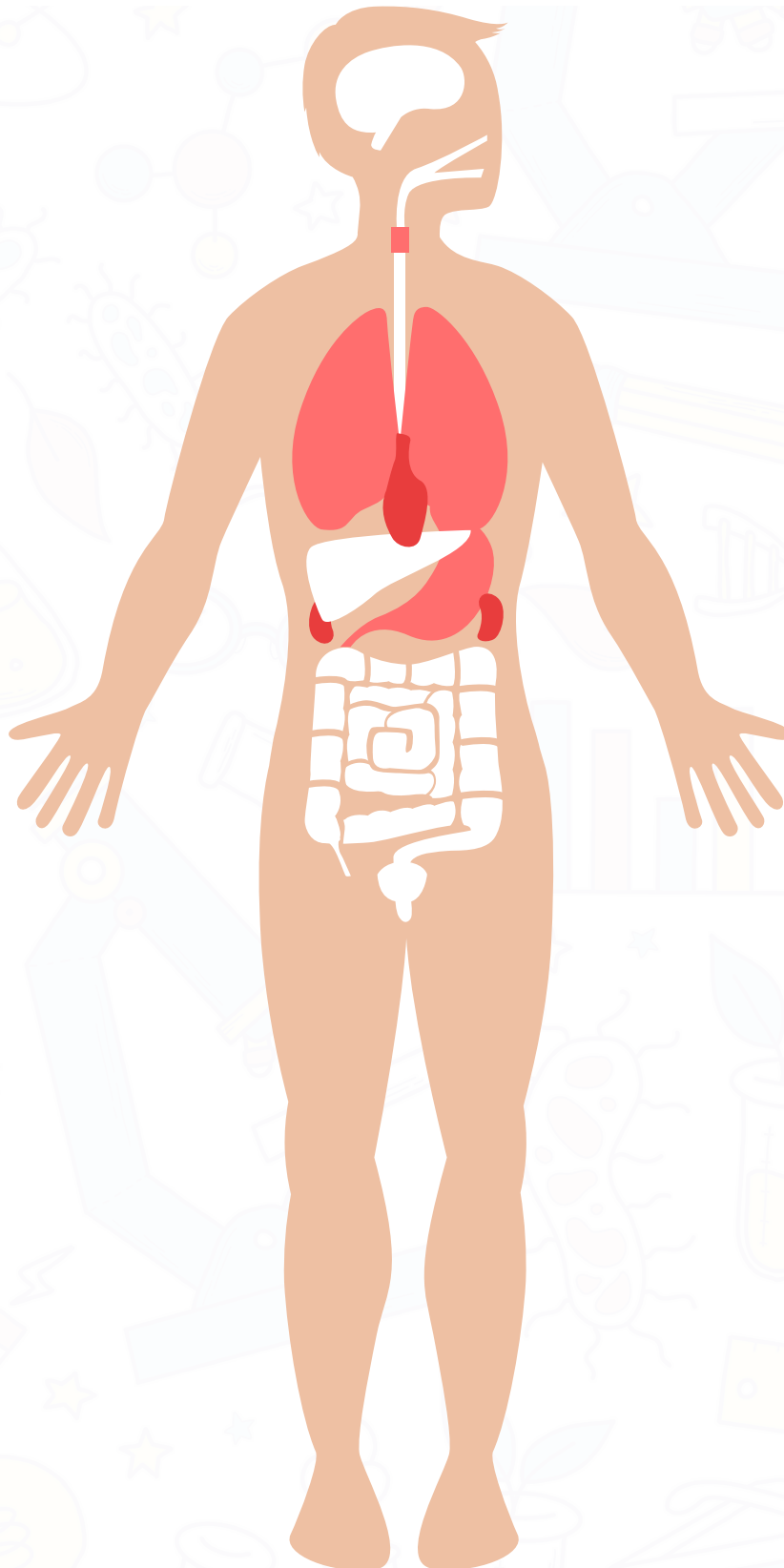


*If you feel yourself entering the red, orange or yellow zones, you can use one of your strategies to help self regulation*



## Body Map

When you feel anxious, what changes do you notice within your body? Using the picture below you can write how you feel. If you prefer, you could colour in the bits of the body where you feel a change in different colours.



# Body Map - Explained

Changes in our body happen when we feel anxious because our body releases a hormone called adrenaline. When you're scared or stressed suddenly, adrenaline is quickly sent into your body - this triggers our fight or flight response. Here are some explanations for the changes that can happen within our bodies:

## Dizziness and Brain Fog

Less blood goes to our heads because we don't need to think - our reactions are quick and natural

## Dry mouth

We don't want to eat anything so we don't make saliva

## Heart racing

Our hearts beat faster to pump more blood to our muscles to give them extra oxygen

## Lump in your Throat

Your muscles tighten to be ready to either fight or run. (This includes our throat muscles)

## Butterflies in Your Tummy

Our bodies give less blood to our tummies and more to our arms and legs so we can move quicker

## Faster breathing than usual

Your breathing speeds up to give more oxygen to your muscles

## Needing the Toilet

Our stomach muscles tighten, this makes them press on your bladder and/or bowels, making you need to go to the toilet

## Tingles in Your Hands

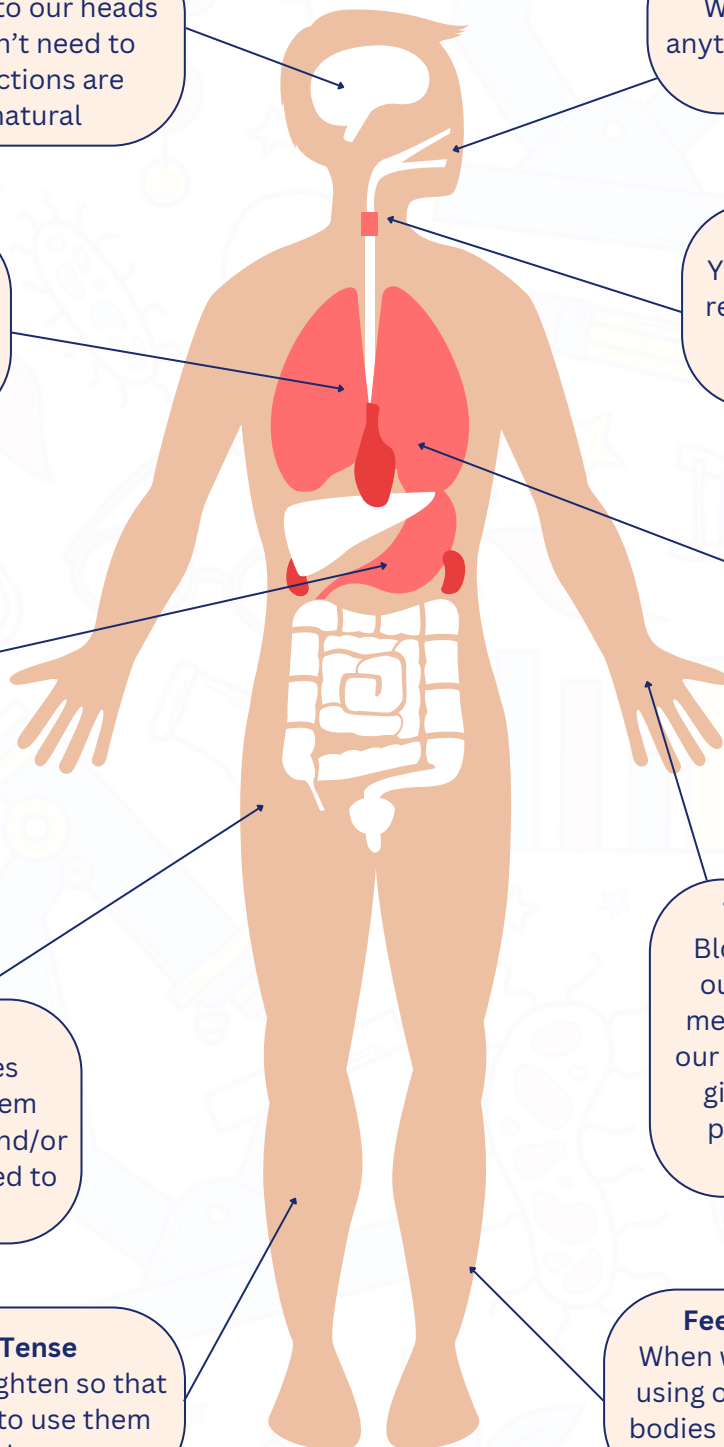
Blood flow is prioritised to our larger muscles, which means there is less blood in our smaller muscles. This can give you the sensation of pins and needles in your hands

## Feeling Tense

Our muscles tighten so that we are ready to use them quickly.

## Feeling Sweaty

When we get hot from using our muscles, our bodies release sweat to cool us down



# Screen Time Log

Are you having more than 2 hours per day of screen time? You can use this log to track how many hours you are spending in front of a screen over a week.

Monday: \_\_\_\_\_

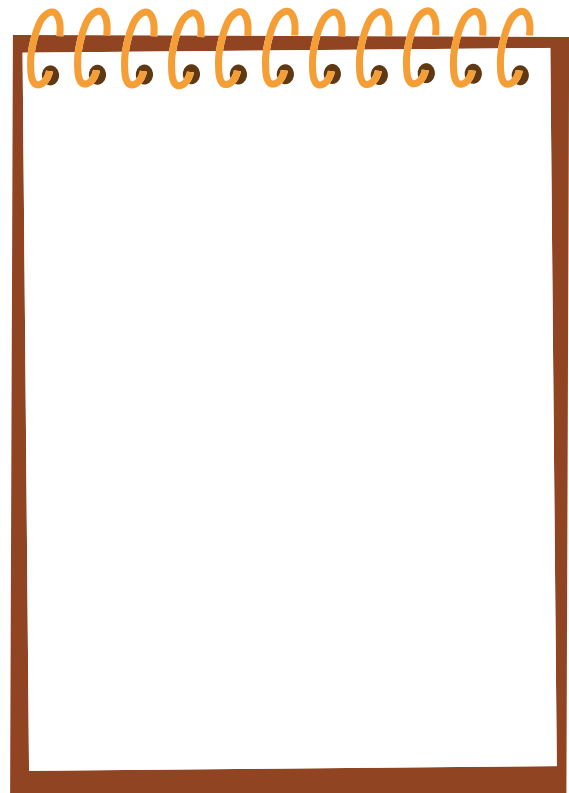
Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_

Friday: \_\_\_\_\_

*What can you do to chop  
your screen time down  
and replace it with  
healthier activities?*



# What's Below the Surface?

90% of an iceberg is hidden underneath the surface of the water. Emotions are a lot like that too. What looks like anxiety or anger on the outside may be something totally different below the surface. Fill in the blank box's below to show what your iceberg looks like.

What people see

What people don't see

Unseen challenges

Difficult feelings

Unmet needs

*If you're having trouble focusing, try breaking tasks into smaller steps. Take brain and movement breaks and don't feel worried to share your feelings with someone you trust if you are feeling overwhelmed.*

# Anxiety Preparation

When you identify a situation which can cause you to feel anxious, it can be really helpful to be prepared. Before you step into the situation you could prepare some things to say or do to help with self-regulation.

**What is the situation?**

**Why might I get anxious?**

**How have I handled the situation before?**

**How can I prepare?**

**How will I know if I'm feeling triggered?**

**What coping skills can I use?**

# My Support System

List below the people who are there to support you and why they made the list. For example are they a good listener? Do they make you laugh?

Name	Why are they special to me?

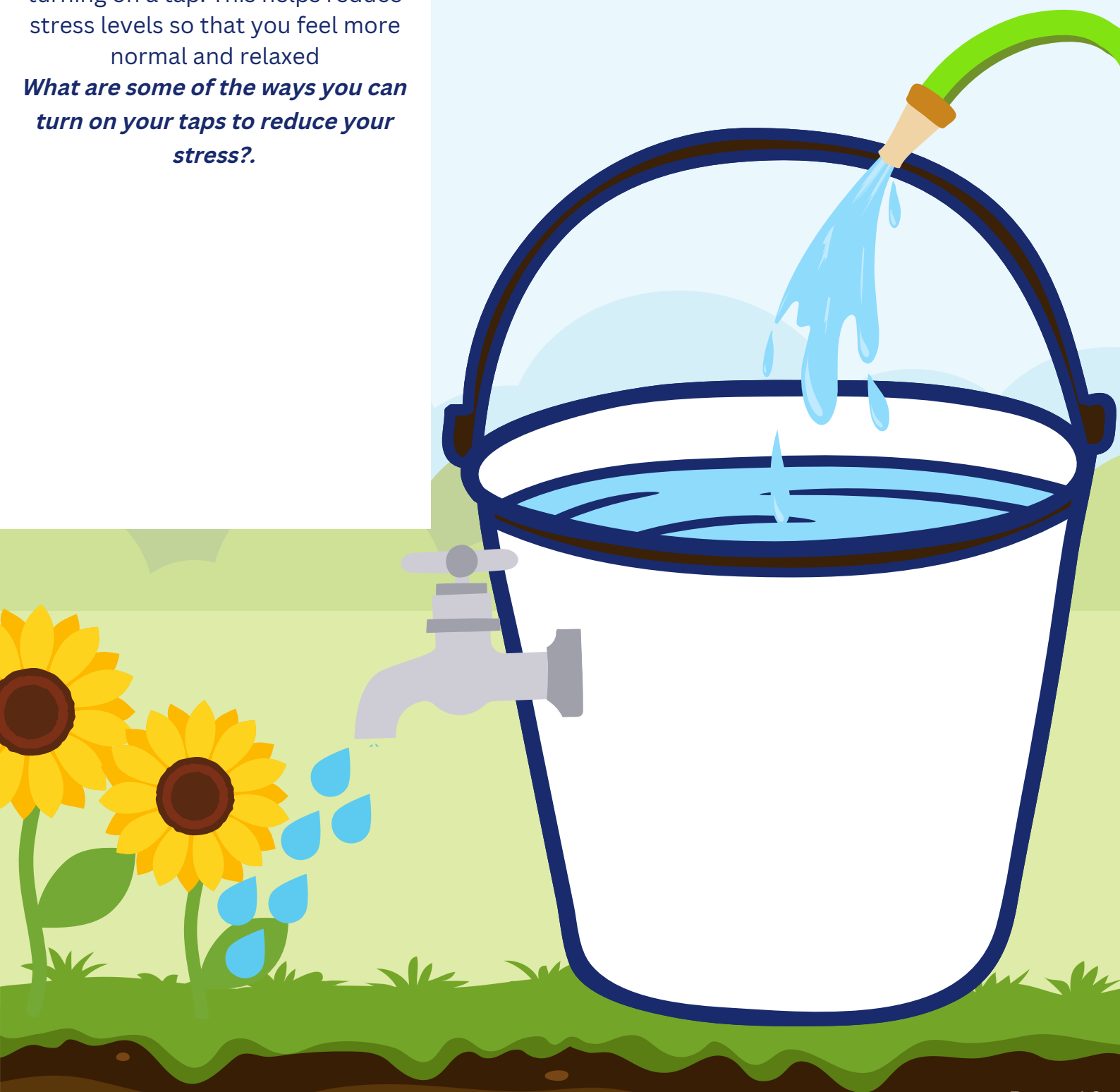
# My Stress Bucket

If your stress bucket gets too full or overflows, it can lead to unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

***What are the stresses in your life that flow into your stress bucket? (You can write or draw them on the bucket)***

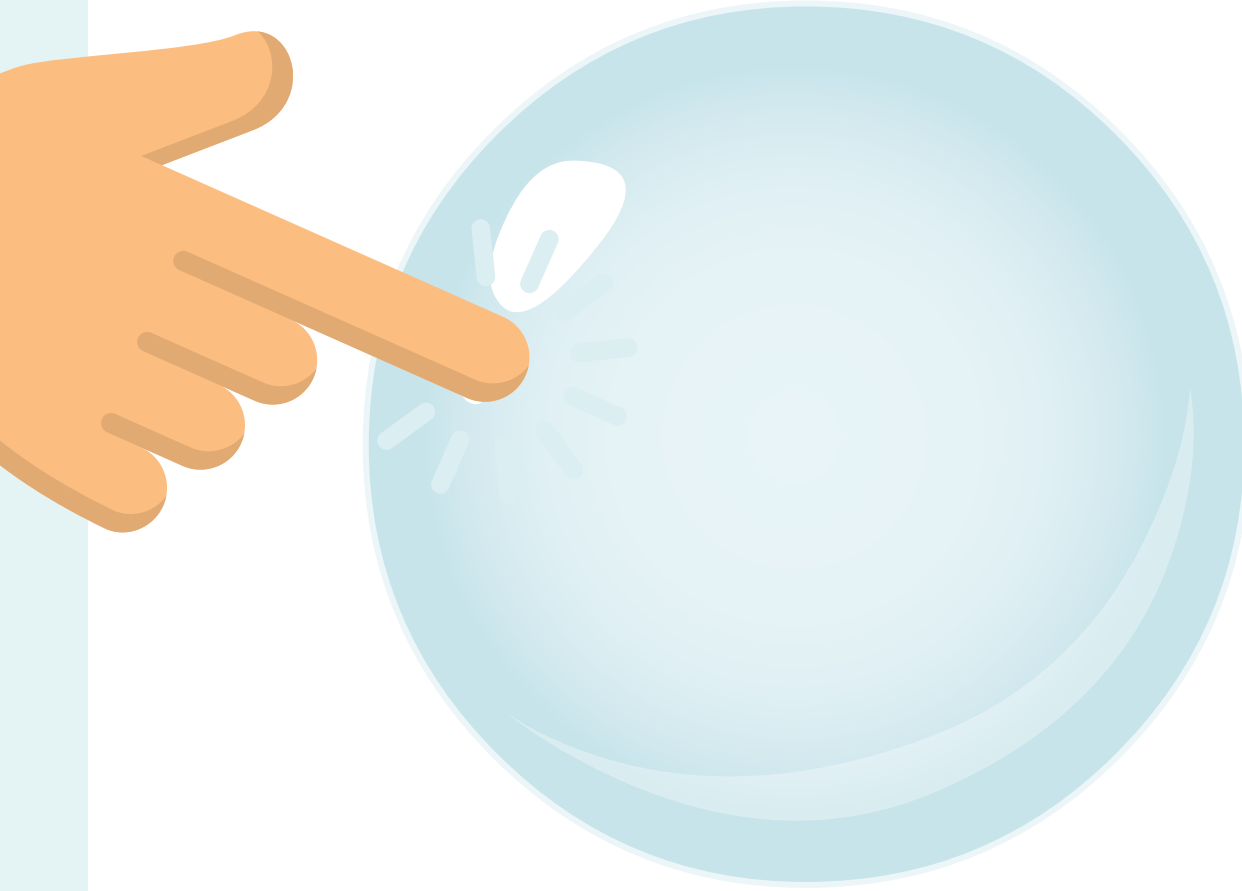
To help feel better, you can empty some stress from your bucket by turning on a tap. This helps reduce stress levels so that you feel more normal and relaxed

***What are some of the ways you can turn on your taps to reduce your stress?.***



# Worry Bubble

In the big bubble, draw or write something which has been worrying you



What would make this worry feel a little smaller?

POP IT! Pop your bubble to let the worry go. Say something nice to yourself as you do it. Then write down a happy thought to replace the worry



# My Focus Plan

Movement break	Pause and breathe	Break the task into small steps
<p><b><i>Movement ideas:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 minute dance off</li> <li>• 20 jumping jacks</li> </ul> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Breathing/ Calming techniques I can use:</b></p> <p>1- 5,4,3,21</p> <p>2- Star breathing</p> <p>3- _____</p> <p>4- _____</p> <p>5- _____</p>	<p><b>BIG task:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Small steps:</b></p> <p>1- _____</p> <p>2- _____</p> <p>3- _____</p> <p>4- _____</p>

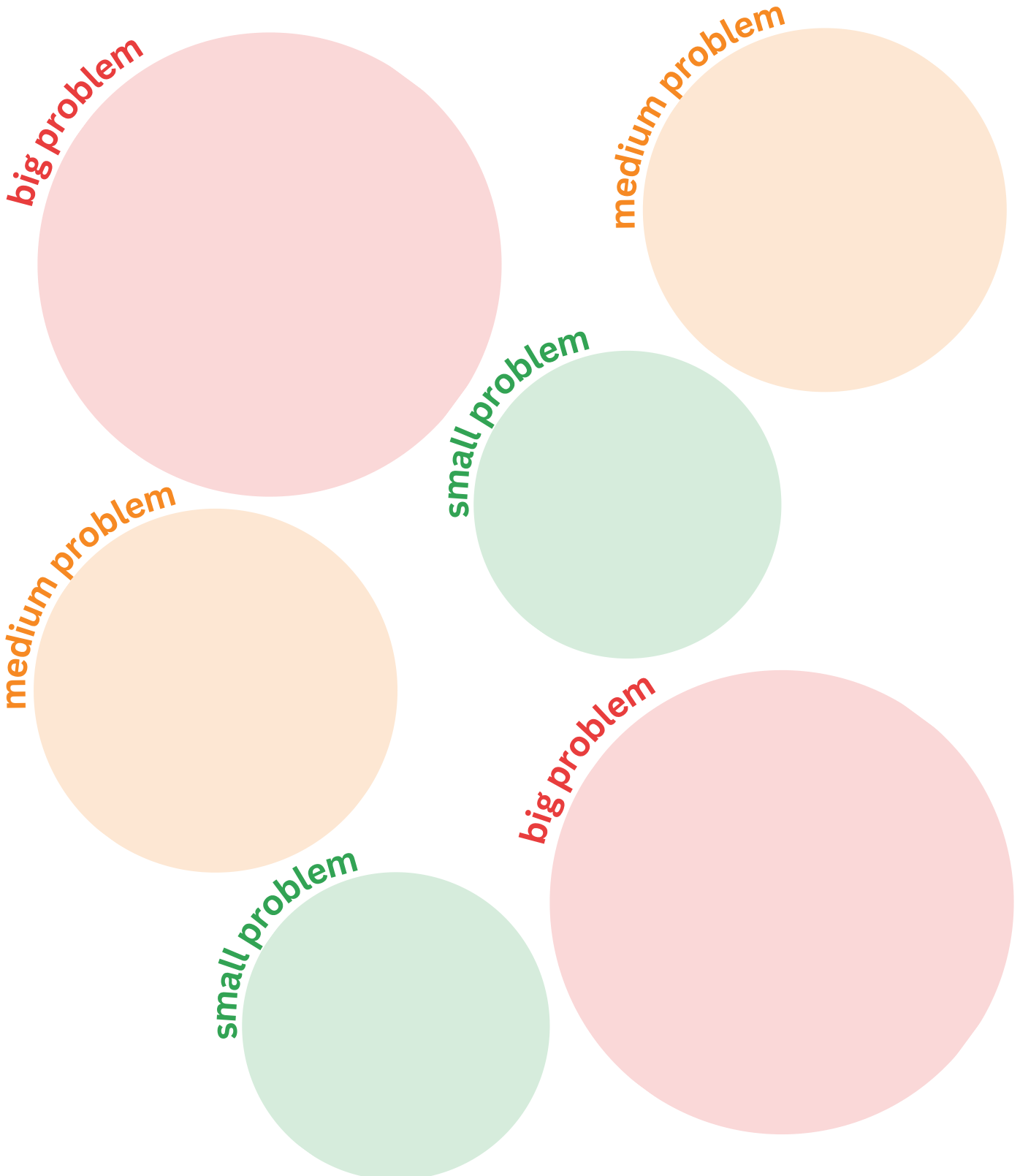


***Keep going  
you've got this!***

Celebrate every small finish	Ask for help if you get stuck
<p><b><i>My mini celebrations:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mini dance party</li> <li>• pat myself on the back</li> </ul> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>People and things that can help me:</b></p> <p>1- _____</p> <p>2- _____</p> <p>3- _____</p> <p>4- _____</p> <p>5- _____</p>

# Big and Small Problems

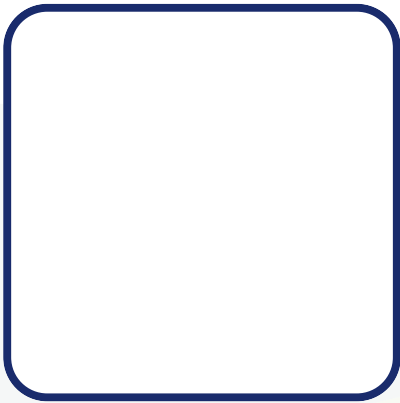
Not all problems are the same. Think about the things which are currently on your mind. Can you rank them in how 'big' a problem they are? Doing this can help you prioritise what order to approach your worries.



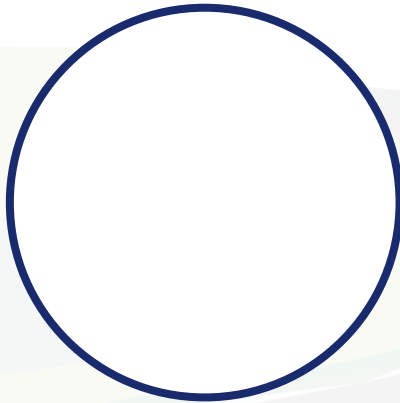
# Anxiety Map

Think about a situation that makes you feel anxious. Use this map to plan out your 'route' feeling more regulated.

How might you behave?



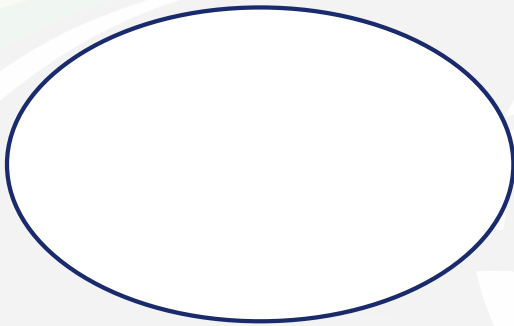
What might your face look like when you feel anxious?



What might you say?



What happens in your body?



What is your anxiety trying to tell you?



How do you manage your anxiety?

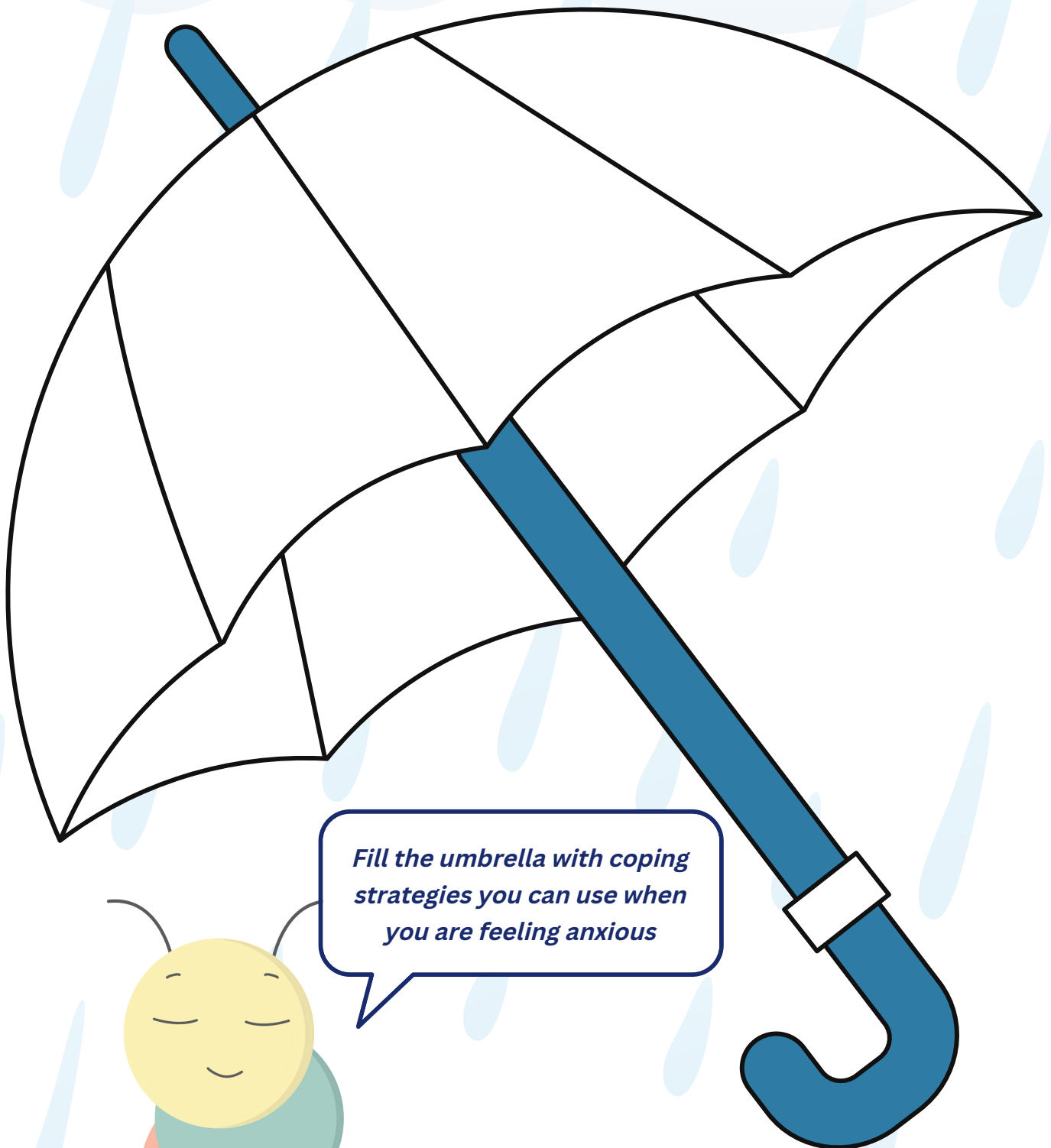


What might help when you are feeling anxious?



# Coping Skills Umbrella

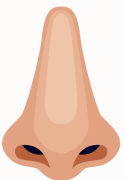
By using coping skills we change the way we experience stress. While this won't change the amount of stressors in our lives (which is often out of our control - like the weather), it will change how we respond to and experience stress and worry. The coping skills umbrella provides a visual representation of how coping skills can reduce negative impacts of stressors in our lives and help us to manage the worries of day-to-day life.



# 5 , 4 , 3 , 2 , 1

5,4,3,2,1 is a calming technique which takes you through all 5 senses, it can be used to help you through difficult or stressful situations.

Take a deep breath before you begin: Then write down 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste



Scan here for an audio guide



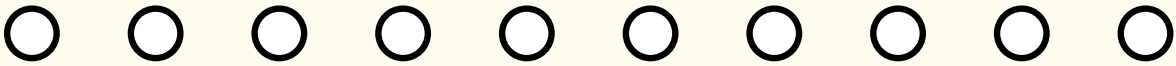
# Mindfulness Meditation



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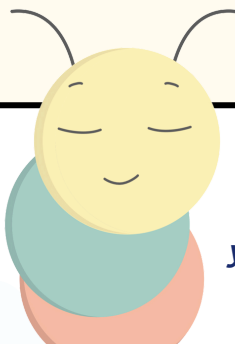
Meditation is a great tool to keep your anxious thoughts and feelings at bay. During mindfulness meditation you will focus mostly on your breathing and how to use this as a tool to ground yourself and be focused on the present. It's absolutely normal for your mind to wander whilst you are meditating but by refocusing on your breathing you can gently bring yourself back into the present.

## How to Meditate:



*(it may be best if you allow someone to read the instructions aloud to you so that you can concentrate)*

- Take between 15 - 30 minutes to work on your meditation.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor - you may want to use a cushion for support
- Try to keep your back straight but don't make yourself uncomfortable
- Relax your neck allowing your chin to drop slightly
- Pick a point across the room to focus on or close your eyes
- If you are in a chair place your feet flat on the ground, if you are sat on the floor cross your legs
- Let your arms fall naturally to your sides, with your palms resting on your thighs
- If you become uncomfortable you can adjust yourself accordingly
- Now focus on your breathing, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Notice the sensation of air as it passes through your nose and mouth, think of the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe in and out



*Continue doing this for as long as you feel comfortable. At first you may feel silly but the more you practise the, more comfortable you will feel with meditation.*

# My Happy Place

Inside each one of us is a happy place. This is a space where we are most comfortable and feel safe, respected and loved. Use this sheet to help you describe your happy place.



Scan here for an audio guide

**I can smell...**

**I can see...**

**I can hear...**

**I can taste...**

**I can touch/feel...**



*Next time you are feeling low or anxious you can use your description to visualise the happy place inside you. It can help you feel calmer and more grounded.*

# Star Breathing

Practice the star breathing method below, start off by breathing in and then follow the instructions around the star until you are back at the beginning. How do you feel afterwards?

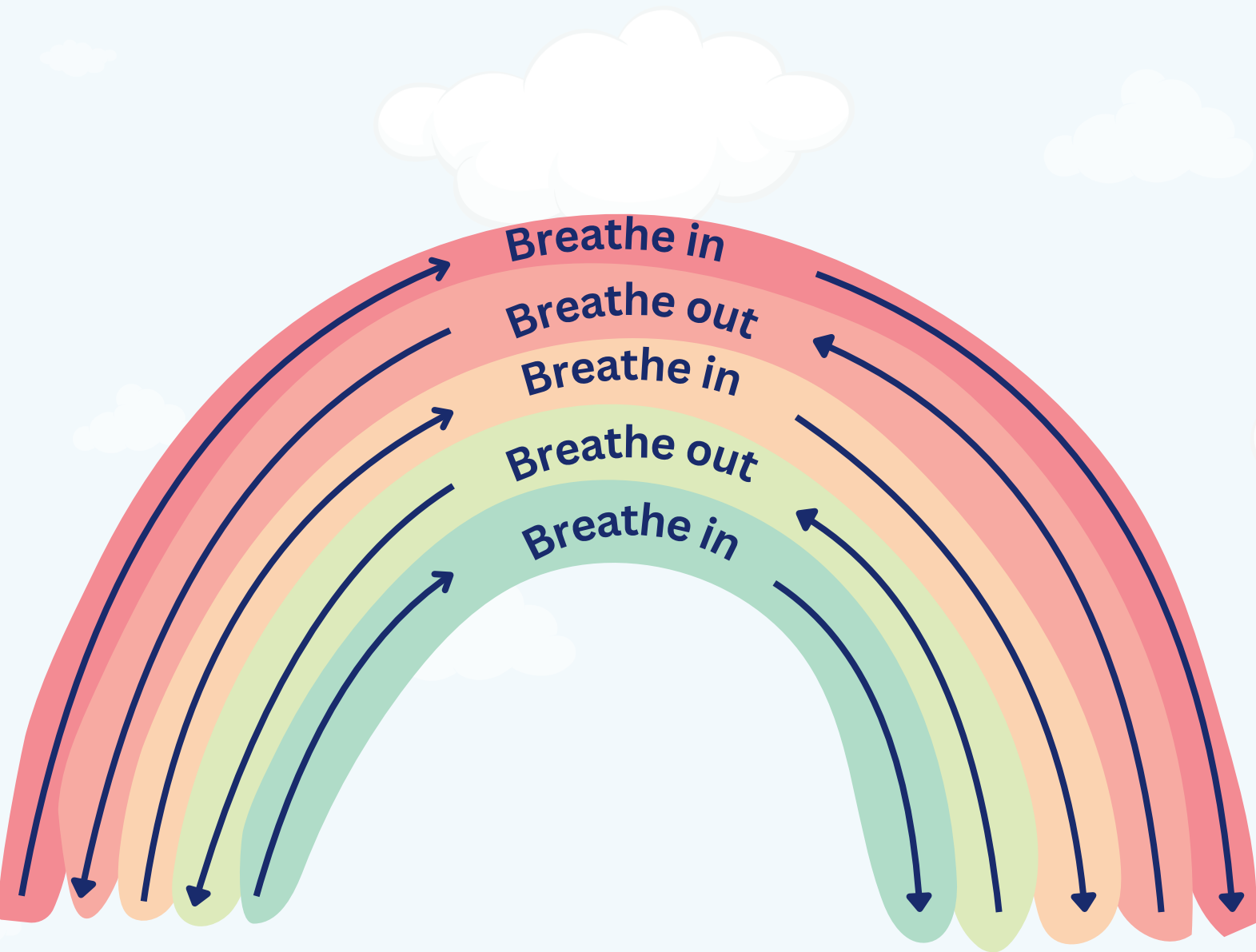


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# Rainbow Breathing

Practice the rainbow breathing method below, start off by breathing in and then follow the instructions up the rainbow until you are back at the top.  
How do you feel afterwards?



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audio guide

## Balloon Belly Breath

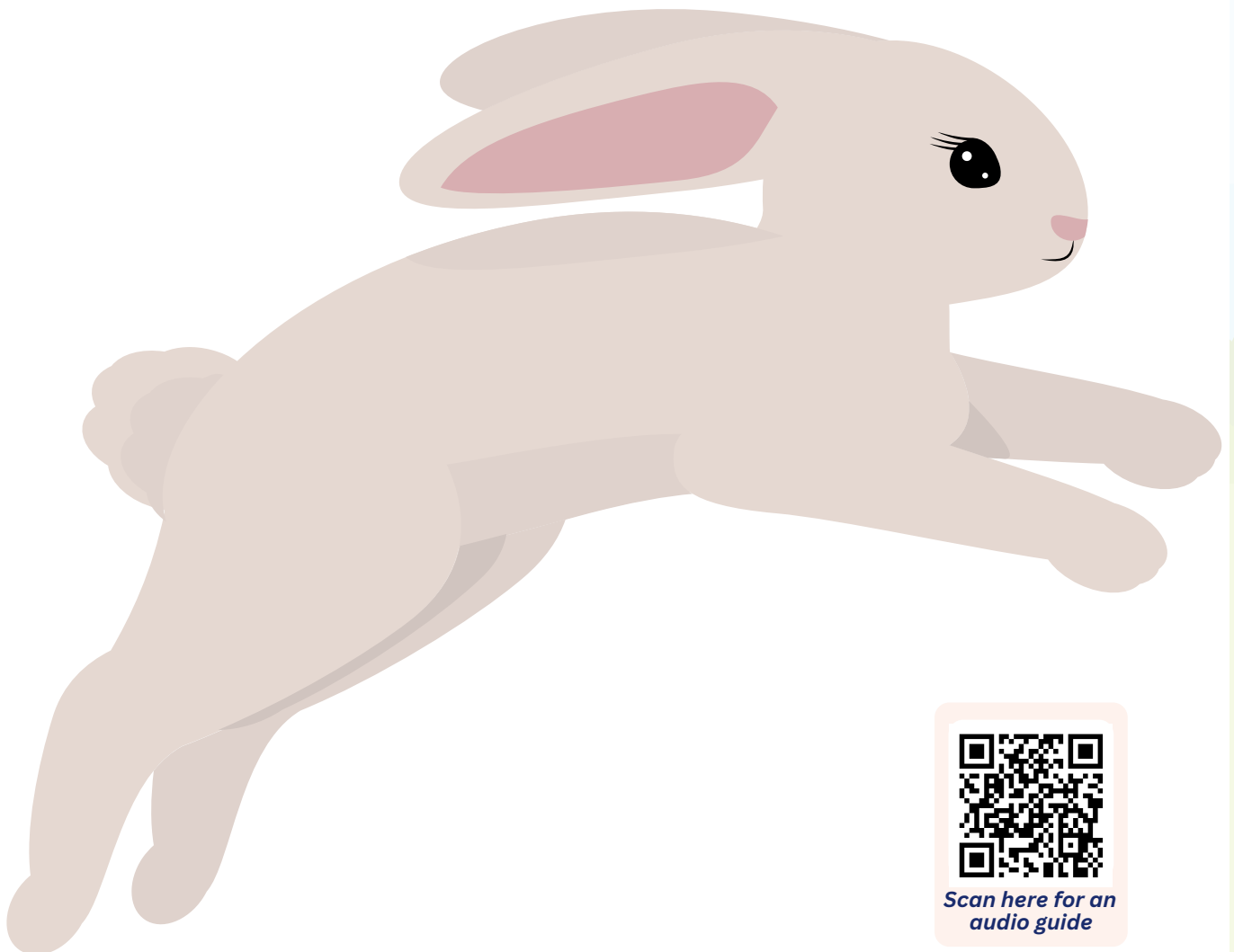
1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. Take a couple of natural breaths.
3. Breathe in and blow out your tummy. Your belly is like a balloon filling with air.
4. As you breathe out, your belly will go back down as there's no air left.
5. Repeat, being careful not to push your belly out too much.




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audio guide

## Hopping Bunny Breath

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. Take a couple of natural breaths and sit up tall.
3. When you breathe in, inhale through your nose in three short sniffs. Imagine a bunny hopping along.
4. Breathe all of the air out.
5. Breathe in again with your bunny breaths.
6. Breathe out and repeat



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**Great Minds Together**

**Fidget & Friends**

***Certificate of Achievement***

Awarded to:

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***For successfully completing Great  
Mind Together's  
Anxiety Workbook***