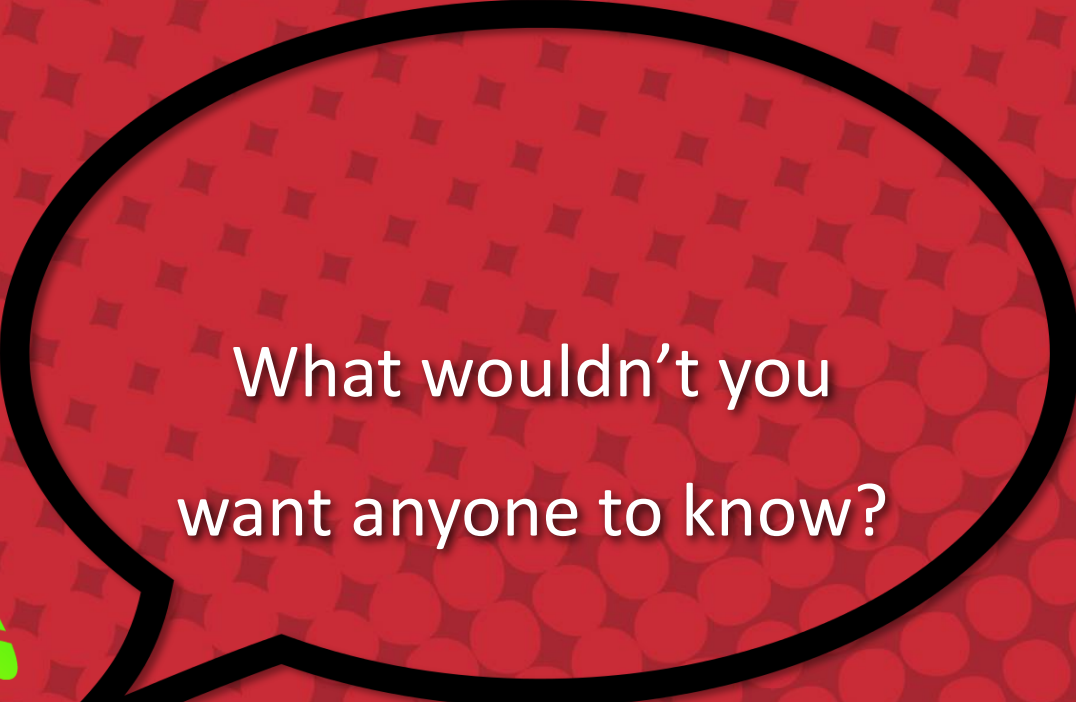
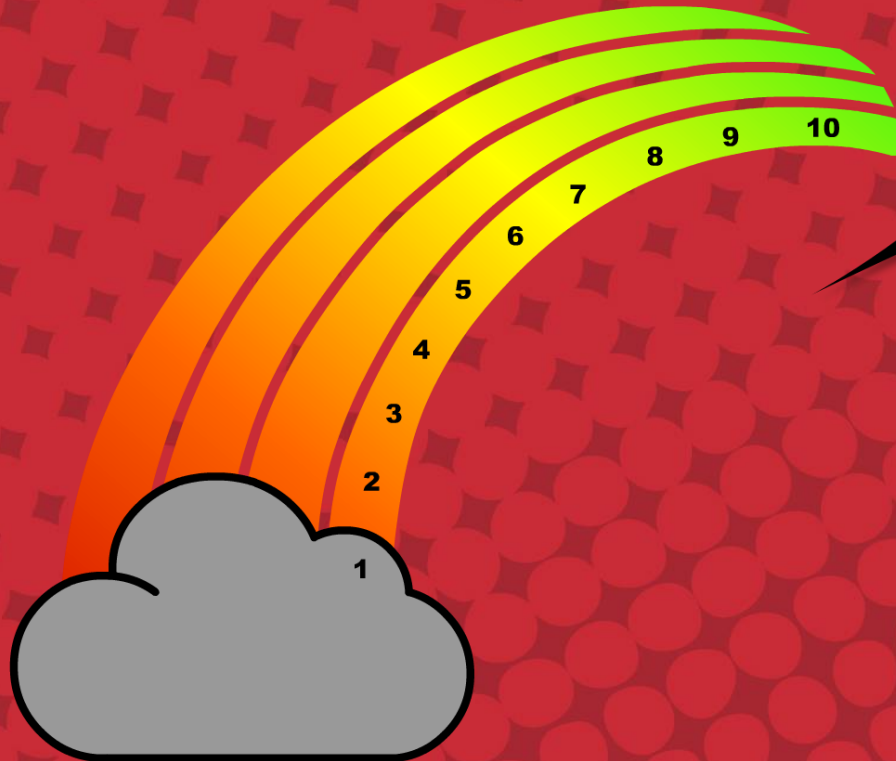




Part 2 – Anxiety

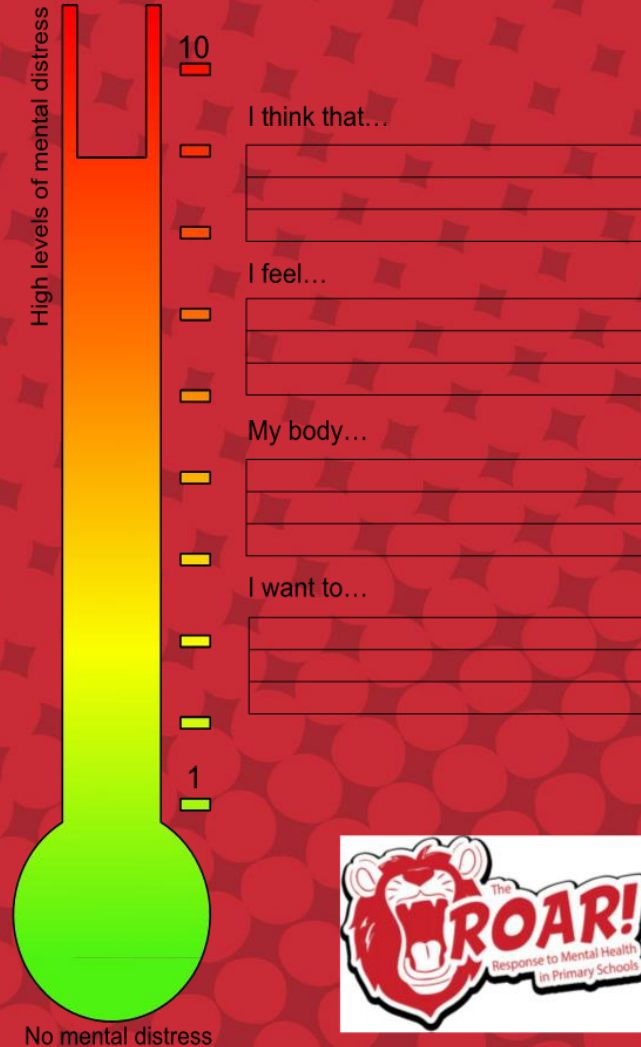


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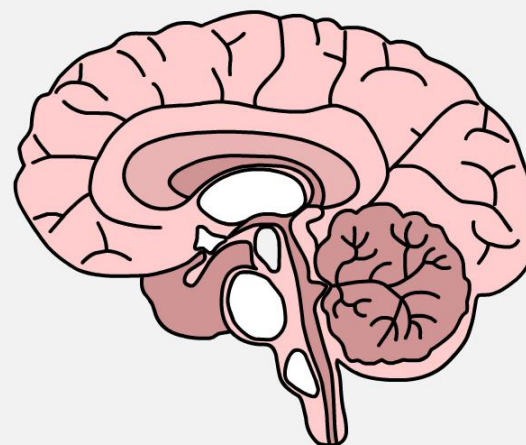
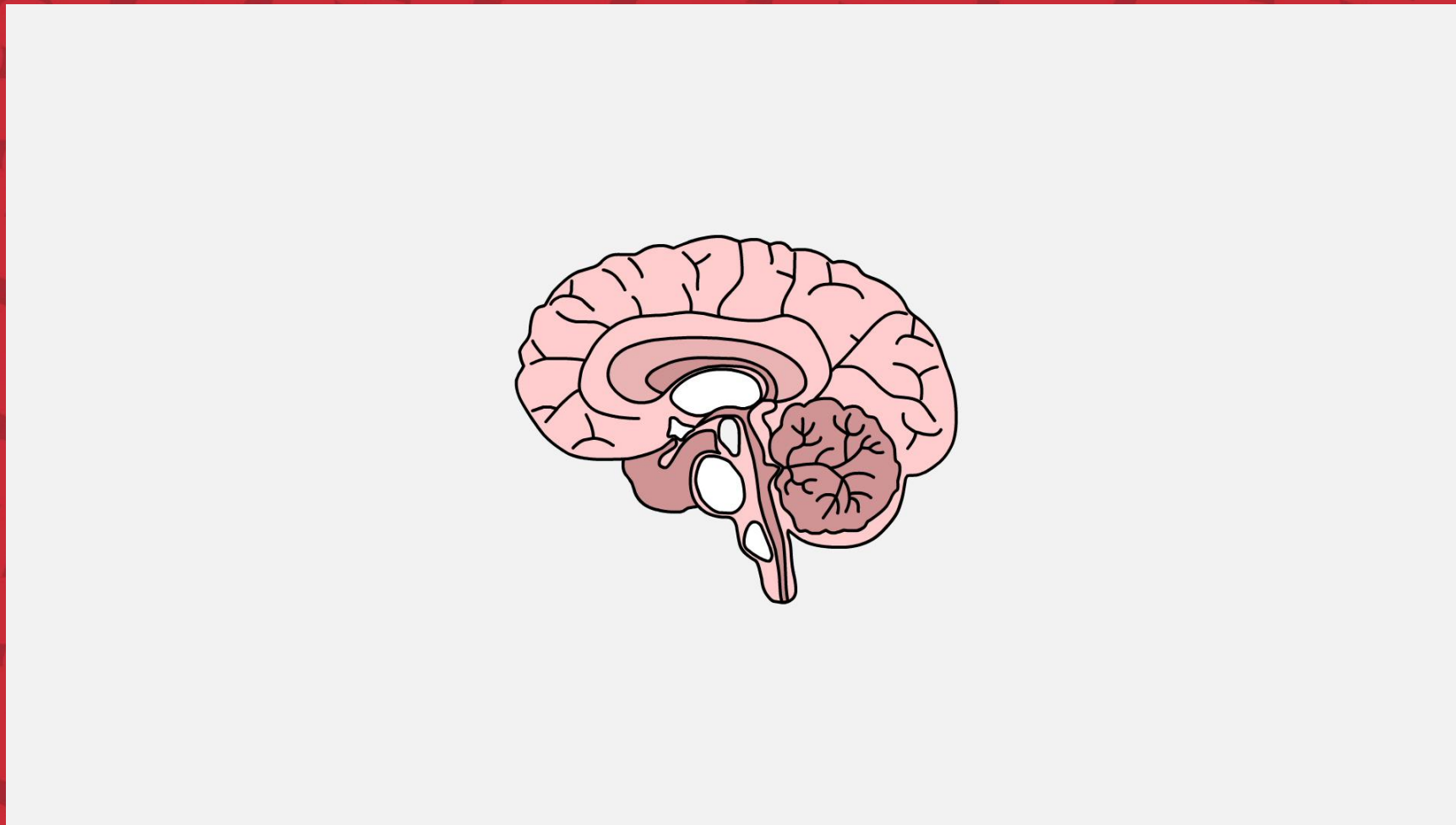


So how did you think...feel...act?





The Automatic Alarm





What is it?

Anxiety is a feeling of fear or panic. It's a natural response to danger that we all have built into us.



However, sometimes this response can trigger even when there is not actually danger present.

Adrenaline is pumped into our bloodstream to allow us to fight, flight or freeze in order to protect ourselves.





What is an anxiety condition?

Anxiety is a normal adaptive system that lets the body know when it's in danger.

However, anxiety becomes an issue, when it is out of proportion to the situation, and interferes with a person's ability to function.

(Child Mind Institute)

If children have been feeling very worried or anxious and this has been affecting their daily life they may have a diagnosable anxiety condition.





Why should we know about it?

- Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental health problems identified in children.
- A quarter of children with a diagnosed anxiety disorder have had more than 15 days absence from school per term.
- Kooth's findings show one of the key presenting issues from young people during lockdown have been anxiety .
- From the first lockdown and during the return to school in September 2020, there was an increase in reported anxiety and stress for some children who were worried about catching spreading COVID-19 with social media playing a factor in this also.





The Big Write





Spotting the signs and symptoms



I wanted to run out of the room. Next Friday when we do this again I'll pretend to be ill. I was hiding my work so that no one could see that I hadn't written anything.

I thought everyone was looking at me and thinking that I was stupid. I couldn't think of anything to write, my mind was blank. I'm rubbish at everything.

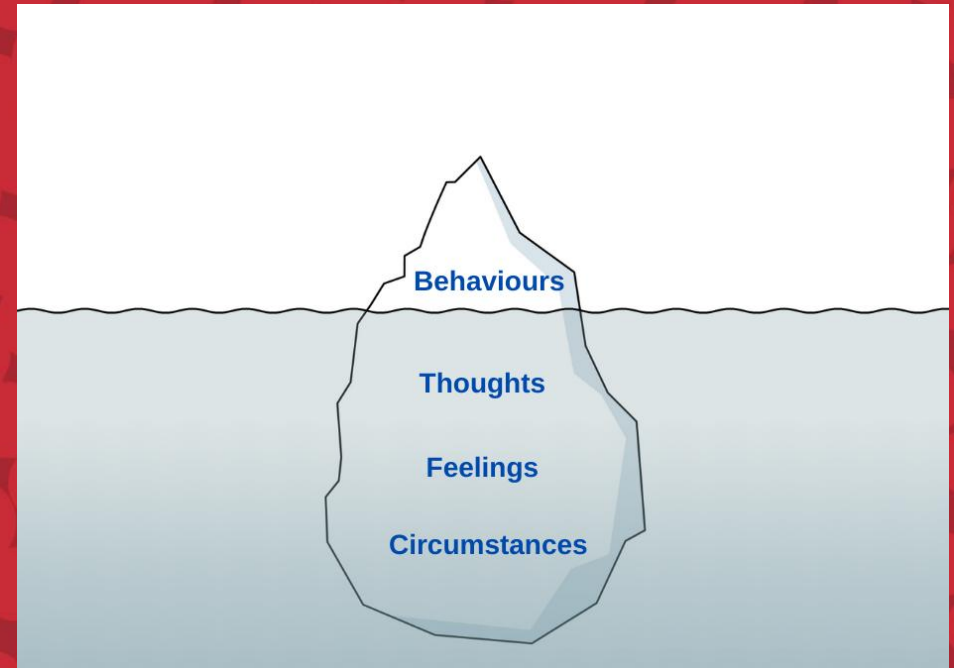
I had tummy pains, shaky legs and felt a bit dizzy. My heart was beating so fast and my muscles got really tight and sore. I felt really scared. After the test I felt really angry for no reason.





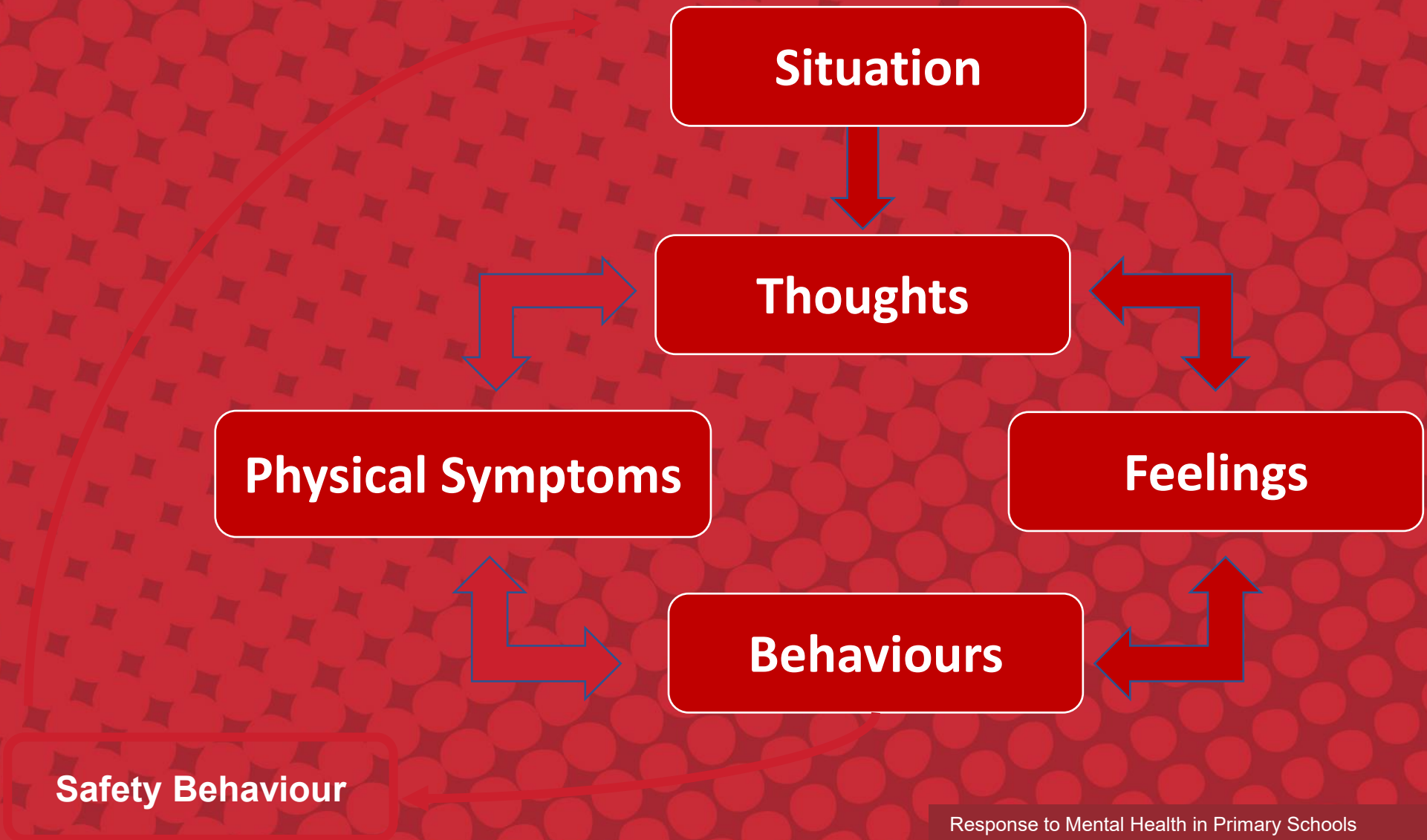
Anxious behaviours

- Avoidance
- List making
- Checking
- Withdrawal
- Scratching/biting self
- Fidgeting/pacing
- Angry outbursts
- Seeking reassurance
- Needing to be with certain people
- Rituals





The anxiety cycle





What is an open-ended question?

- How are you feeling, really?
- What's happened lately that might have made you feel this way?
- What do you do when you feel this way?
- How have you been feeling since?
- On the ROAR Thermometer, where do you think you would be?
- What things might be pushing you up the thermometer?
- What things have been helping you during this time? What things help to bring the temperature down?
- Who else have you spoken to about this?
- What did they suggest?
- What would you say to your best friend if they were in this situation?
- What's your biggest worry right now?
- If I pulled a big speech bubble out of your head, what thought would be in it?
- If you went to sleep tonight and had one wish, what would tomorrow look like?
- What things do you think we can do to help the situation?
- Who will you talk to if you need to talk to someone about this more?
- How do you feel now?

All about the Who,
What, Where, Why,
When





Resources

RELAXATION EXERCISES

A range of very simple techniques can be very effective when trying to encourage children to calm down and relax.

Breathing Exercises:

- Breathe slowly through the nose, hands on the tummy and eyes closed
- Breathe slowly and count from 1-5 (counting breath)
- Breathe out slowly as if blowing out the candles on a birthday cake
- Visualise a calming colour as you breathe out (colour breath)
- Visualise a calming place as you breathe out
- Say a word to yourself or short sentence ("I can keep calm")

Physical Activities:

- Sticky Hands – Pretend to have "sticky" hands, then press them together. Push hard for 20 seconds, you can count it out with the child. Now tell the child to slowly allow their hands to come apart and see if they can feel the stickiness. Repeat this sequence two or three times
- Tense and Relax – Have the child form his/her hands into fists and bring his/her shoulders to their ears. Count to five together and then relax. Repeat five times. Try using props such as "squeeze balls" to help exaggerate the motion

Sensory Play:

Sensory play has a calming effect by allowing the child to focus on one sense (often touch) and "block out" others. Make sure to have sensory materials such as play dough, sand, or water available at all times. Other ideas include:

Feeling Box

Put together a variety of different materials to touch, such as felt, leather, smooth stone, feather, fur, etc.

Listening Centre

Play some calming music with headphones or quiet instruments, such as a rain stick.

Visual Centre

Provide a dimly-lit area or box and have glow-in-the-dark stickers and toys that light up.

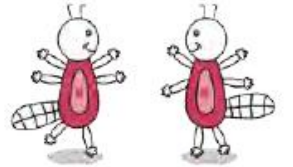
MY CALM-DOWN STRATEGY

When I feel



The place that I feel safe in is:

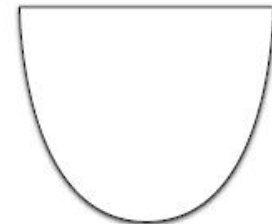
The people that I would like with me are:



The things that will help me to calm down are:



I will remember that I am:



When I have calmed down I will:





THE ROAR FEELING THERMOMETER



How strong is this feeling?

THE WORRY TREE

CAN I DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE THING I'M WORRYING ABOUT?



NO

YES

Let the worry go

Now?

Later?

Let's make a plan to solve this problem

Let the worry go





I THINK CARDS

I think that everything is my fault	I think that the worst thing is going to happen.	I think that I can't do things.
I think that people are thinking badly about me.	I think that I'm not as good as other people.	I think 'What if..'
I think things are bigger than they are.	I think that I have to do things a certain way or bad things will happen.	I blow things up out of proportion.



My EXPOSURE LADDER

The thing I am afraid of is...

.....



What steps could you take to try and work up to your fear?

.....



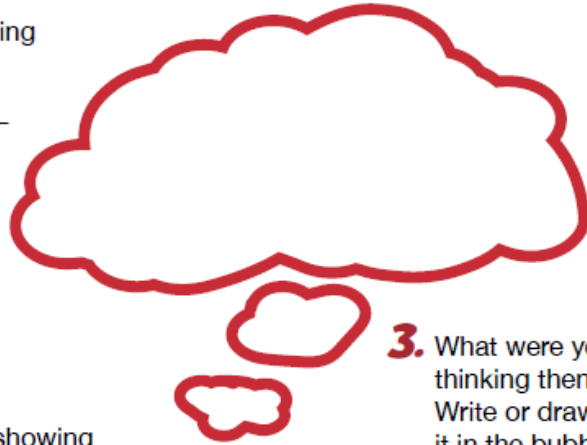
I will start by...

.....



SPOTTING THE BIG THOUGHT

1. I have been feeling



2. Draw a picture showing what you did when you started to feel like this

3. What were you thinking then? Write or draw it in the bubble



SPOTTING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

Ralph is trying to prepare for his SATS tests. He has found himself feeling a bit worried. Take a look at some of his thoughts below. Some of them are helpful thoughts and some are not. Cut them out and stick the helpful thoughts onto Ralph's thought bubble and the unhelpful ones onto the bin to try and help him to feel less worried.



Elephants aren't clever	I can't do this
What if the other elephants laugh at me?	I'll try my best
If I fail I can always try again	If I fail this I might never get a good job
I got nearly half of the answers wrong last time	I know I've been working hard
I think I'll ask for some help	This is going to be the worst thing ever
All the other elephants can do it, why am I not like them?	What if I forget everything?
I can do it	Everyone will look at me
The teacher thinks I'm stupid	I should get 100%
I enjoy a challenge	It's not the end of the world if I don't do well
I can't be bothered	I'll probably fail anyway





R

Recognise the signs and symptoms

O

Ask **Open** questions
(try to spot the **BIG** thought)

A

Access Support, Services & Self-care

R

Build **Resilience**



R

Recognise the signs and symptoms

- Children may appear very uptight and complain of muscle, head, and or tummy pains.
- They may withdraw from or avoid activities and struggle to concentrate.
- Look out for the fight, flight or freeze response. A child displaying high levels of anger may be experiencing anxiety.
- Recognising the child's safety behaviour (behaviour log to look for patterns of behaviour)
- If in doubt with panic attack symptoms call 999.





Ask **Open** questions
(try to spot the BIG thought)

- Try to spot the 'big thought' – use a cartoon bubble to ask the child what they are thinking.
- The picture emotion cards can be used to help children with limited language (p47).
- Try to avoid asking the child 'Why' they are feeling like this. Use the 'Spotting the BIG thought' worksheet to try and identify their thoughts.
- Use questions such as, 'So how did that make you feel?' when asking them how they are feeling, use the ROAR thermometer to gauge the level of their anxiety on a scale from 1 (not anxious) to 10 (very anxious).
- Help the child to identify what triggers their anxiety.





A

Access Support, Services & Self-care

- Work on a self-soothing plan and coping strategies (p37).
- Children can be referred to their GP or to one of the local CAMHS partnership services (p77).
- Programmes such as Coping Cat or Mighty Mo can be used with parents, carers or school staff to work on strategies to overcome anxiety.
www.cw.bc.ca/library/pdf/pamphlets/Mighty%20Moe1.pdf
- Use the worry tree worksheet and the thinking type cards to help children to identify some strategies for managing worry.
- Help them to find ways to expose themselves slowly to triggers rather than avoid them.
- Use deep breathing and relaxation techniques (p36) to help the child to calm down.



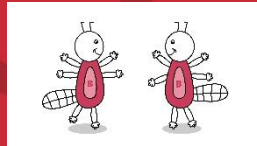


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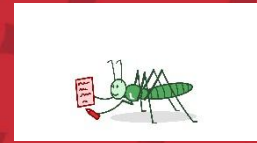
Build Resilience



Basics - Help the child to feel safe by placing them in small groups with children who will be supportive. Check their home situation is stable as children may be carrying parent's anxieties. Encourage and support them to access playtime. Fresh air and exercise is important for their well-being; this is one area that anxious children can struggle with.



Belonging - Give the child small responsibilities where they can help someone else or look after something in class. Help to nurture the child into a friendship group. Get them to think about things they have enjoyed or done well; anxious children tend to focus on the negative.



Learning - Make sure academic targets are broken down and are achievable. Help the child to plan so they aren't overwhelmed and feel they can complete tasks.



Coping - Try to help the child to see the positives in a situation - give them the facts. Make sure that they have their own calm-down strategy for times when they feel anxious.



Core-self - Remind the child what they are good at and how those skills will help them to cope.