

# Session Agreement



# Session Structure



Part 1: Understanding  
Anxiety



Part 2: Supporting  
Anxiety



Resources



Evaluation

SESSION DELIVERY – 1 HOUR 15



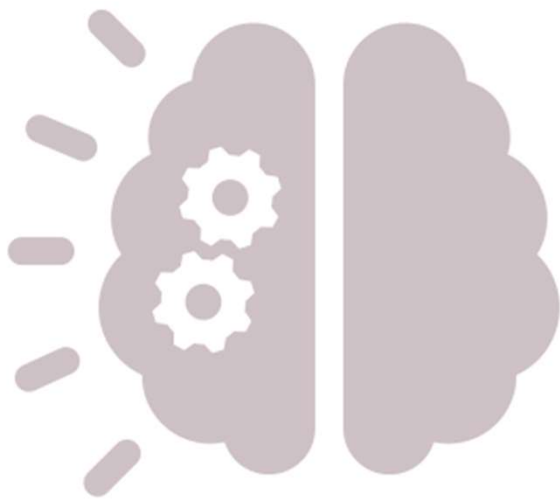
Northorpe Hall  
Child & Family Trust



## Session Aims:

- ✓ To develop an understanding of anxiety and the triggers and symptoms associated with it
- ✓ To explore how to effectively support a child exhibiting symptoms of anxiety

# PART 1



## UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY AND THE TRIGGERS AND SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH IT



# What is Anxiety?

- On your table, come up with a definition of anxiety and write on your whiteboard.
- Feedback.





# What is Anxiety?

**Anxiety** is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with **anxiety** disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry.

APA (American Psychological Association)



# Types of Anxiety Disorder

- Separation anxiety
- Social anxiety
- Agoraphobia
- Specific phobias
- Generalised anxiety
- Panic disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder





# Anxiety: A Summary

- Anxiety is a ***normal*** feeling
- Occurs in times of stress or challenge
- Body produces stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol
- Fight, flight or freeze reaction
- Can be useful in preparing for new or challenging situations
- Irrational fears
- Redistribution of blood: away from head and stomach to muscle groups
- Can cause physical symptoms or lead to panic attacks



# Worry v Anxiety

- We tend to feel worry in our heads, and anxiety in our bodies
- Worry tends to be specific, anxiety more general
- Worry can be more verbally focused while anxiety includes verbal thoughts and mental/physical affects
- Worry can trigger problem solving behaviour, anxiety does not (unless aware)
- Worry creates mild distress, anxiety more severe
- Worry is caused by realistic concerns whilst anxiety often irrational
- Worry tends to be controllable, anxiety much less so
- Worry can be a temporary state, anxiety often lingers
- Worry doesn't impact our day-to-day functioning, anxiety does
- Worry is considered a "normative" psychological state, whilst unnecessary anxiety is not



# Prevalence:

**3.3%** or about **290,000** children and young people have an anxiety disorder.

Of which:

- **2.2%** or about **96,000** children (5-10) have an anxiety disorder
- **4.4%** or about **195,000** young people (11-16) have an anxiety disorder

In the UK, **1 in 6 CYP** will experience an anxiety condition at some point in their lives.

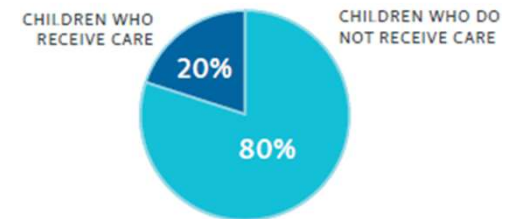
Courtesy of:  
[Young Minds.org.uk](http://YoungMinds.org.uk)

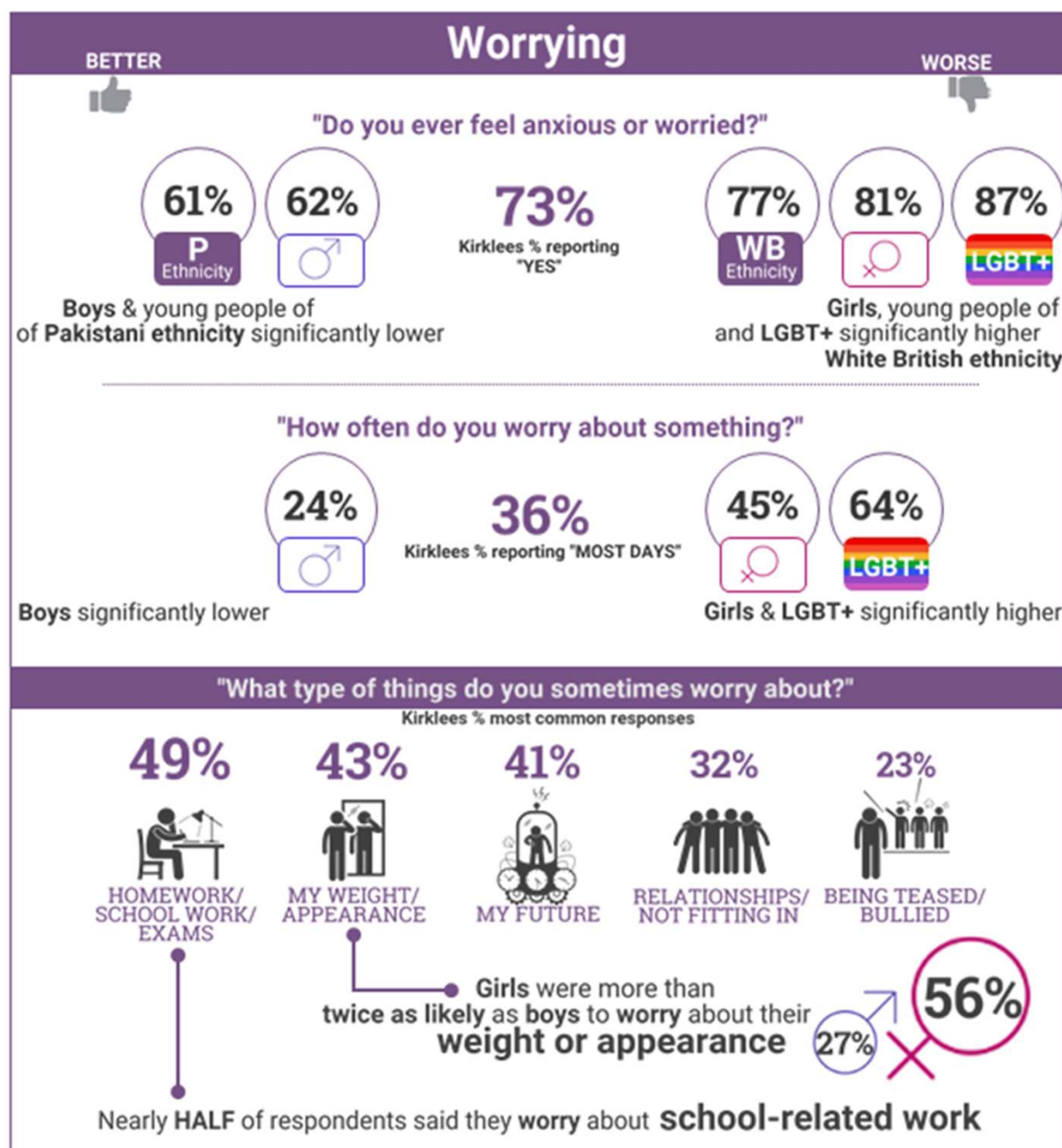
Separation anxiety is the most common anxiety disorder in children younger than 12. (NHS Scotland, 2020)

**1 in 6 children and young people (aged between 5-16) have a probable mental health disorder (NHS Digital, 2021)**

44% of those with an emotional disorder were behind in their overall intellectual development (ONS, 2005)

At some point, anxiety affects 30% of children and adolescents, yet 80% never get help (Child Mind Institute, 2018)

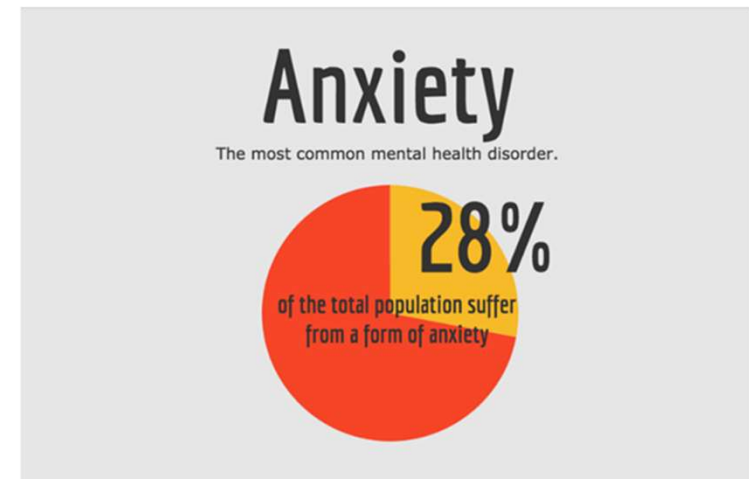






# Who Does Anxiety Impact?

- Everyone!
- All children experience anxiety
- Part of their natural development
- Helps them cope with some new situations and challenges
- Some children more anxious than others
- Can affect education
- Can affect friendships and social development
- Can impact on everyday functioning

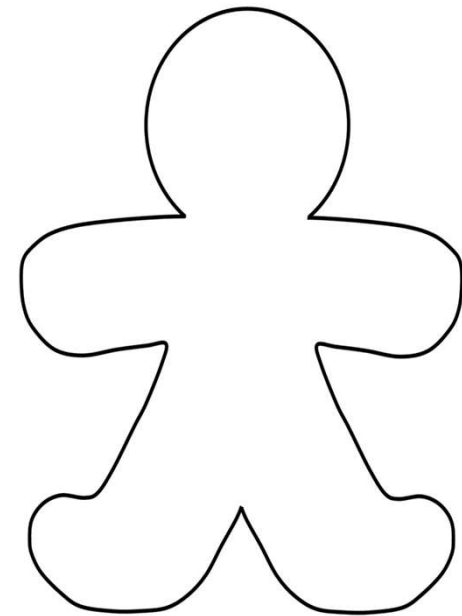




## Table Task: 5 Minutes

On the outside of the template, write down what may **trigger** anxiety.

On the inside of the template, write down what **symptoms** may occur.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed

# Triggers and Symptoms

## Triggers

- School / homework
- Expectations
- Bullying
- Confrontation
- Lack of sleep
- Social media
- Social gatherings
- Uncertainty
- Relationships / not fitting in
- Family / finance / housing / stress
- Appearance and / or weight
- Uncertainty
- Significant life changes
- Traumatic events
- Phobias
- Diagnosed / undiagnosed learning difficulties or neurodevelopmental conditions

## Symptoms

- Feeling sick, dizzy or faint
- Upset tummy / stomach ache
- Increased heart rate / racing heart
- Sweaty / sweaty palms / feeling hot
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability /snapping
- Restlessness
- Feeling nervous / on edge
- Change in appetite
- Body pumps blood to limbs
- Feeling overwhelmed or full of dread
- Low appetite
- Tearful
- Dry mouth
- Trouble sleeping



# Other Factors

- Family traits
- Personality
- Stressful childhoods
- Frequent house or school moves
- Transition
- Parental separation
- Bereavement
- Physical illness
- Conflict or discord at home



We need to try and change how we react when we have worrying thoughts.

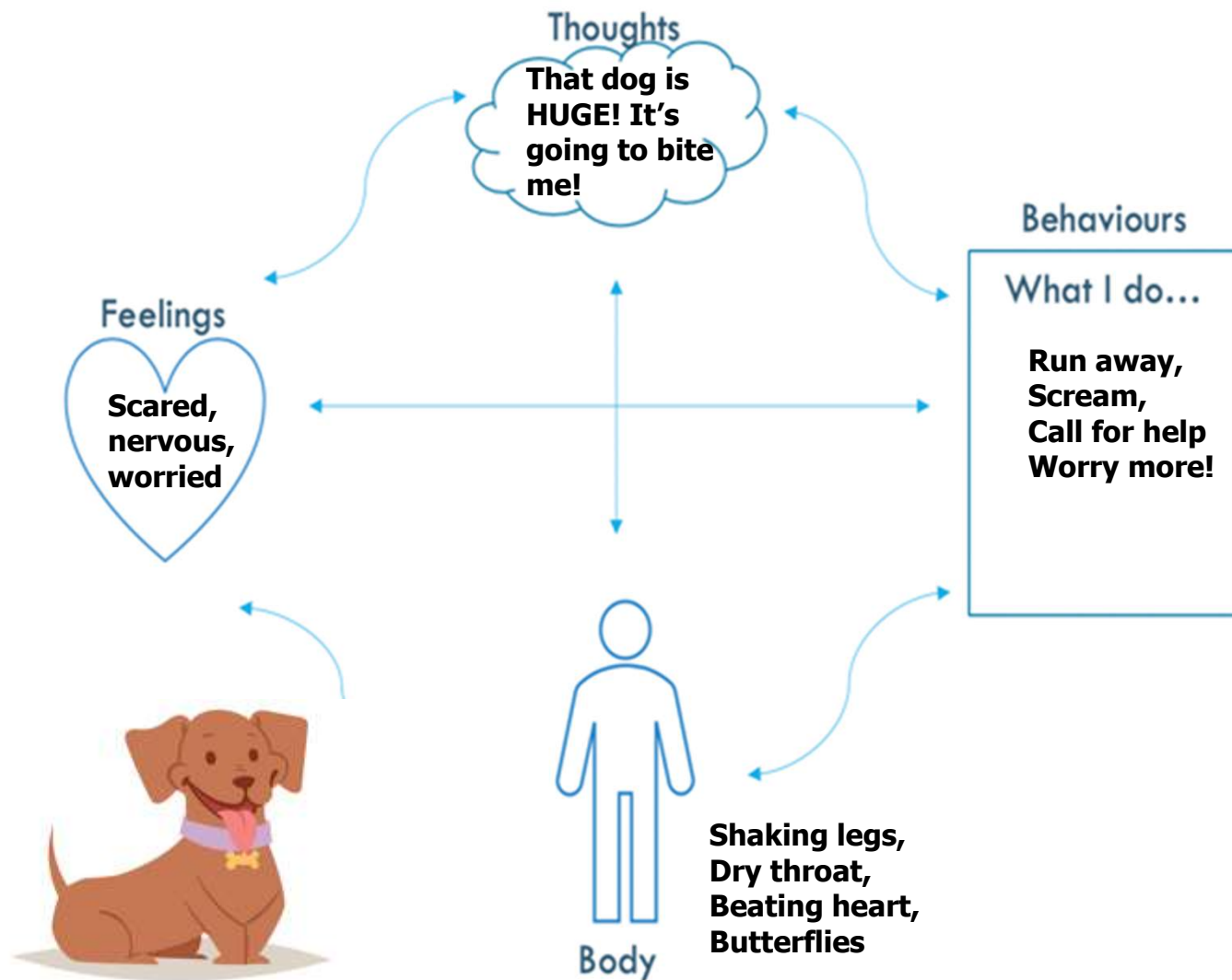


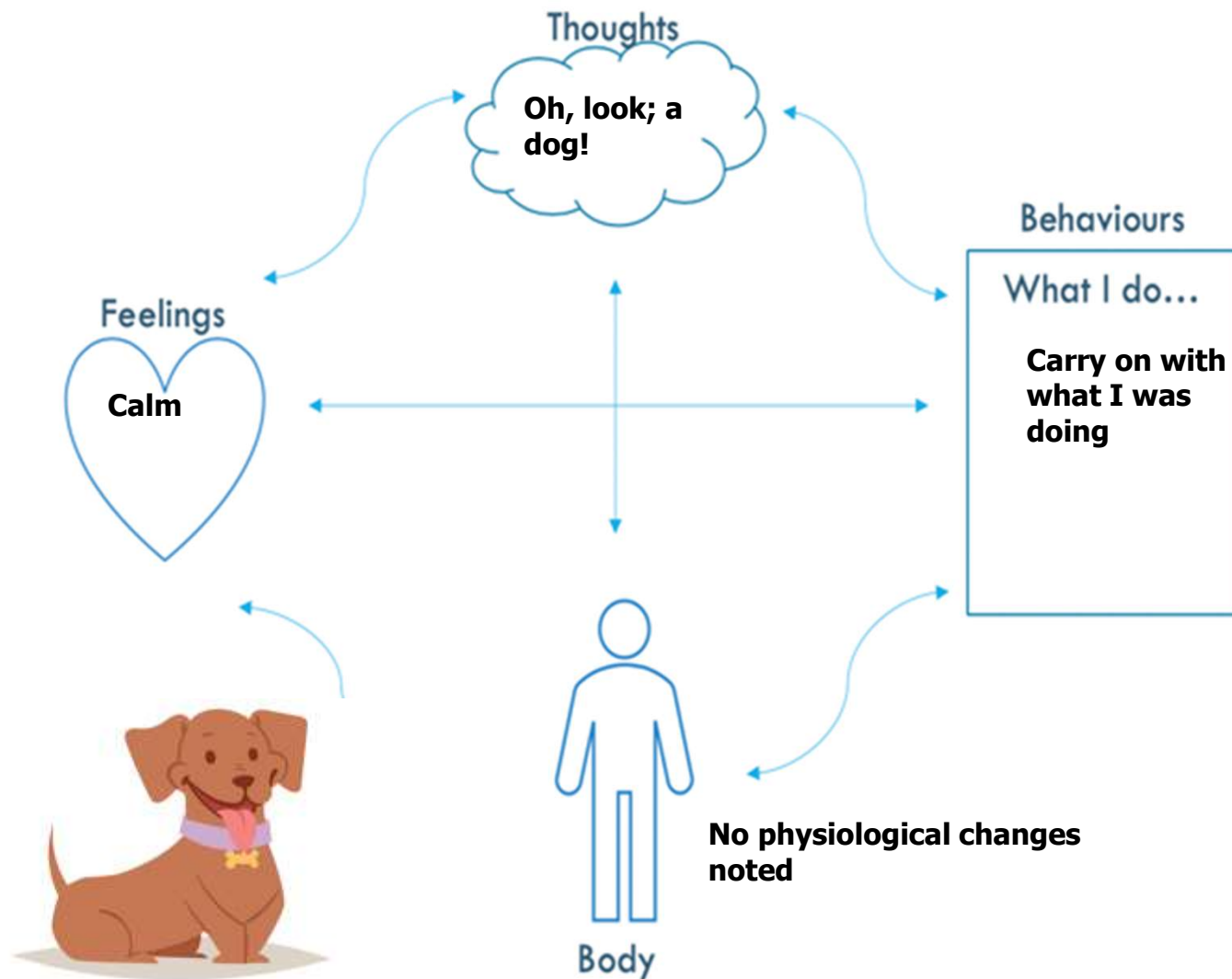
Let's imagine, for example, a child who is terrified of dogs.



We're going to compare them with someone who isn't at all frightened by dogs

# Thoughts and Behaviours









Both characters experienced the same thing, seeing a dog.



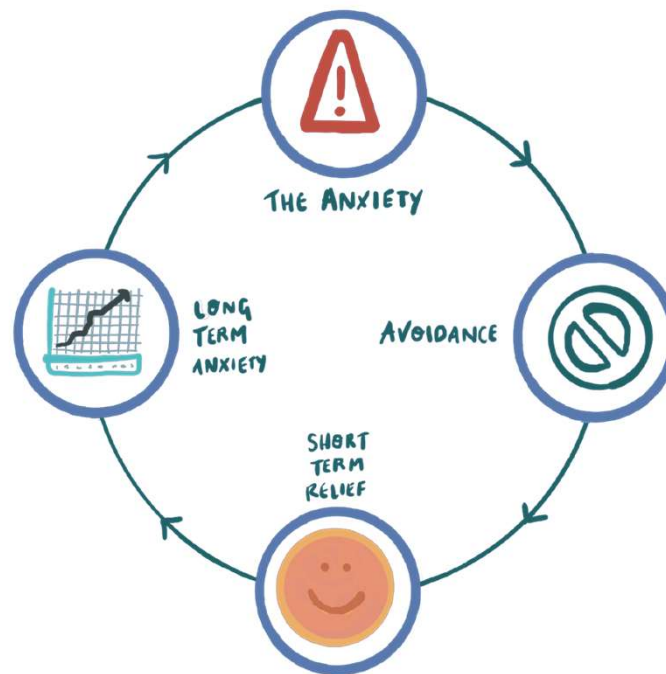
But both of their thoughts were different!



They then behaved in a different way and felt differently.



# Anxiety Cycle



# PART 2



TO EXPLORE HOW TO  
EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT  
A CHILD EXHIBITING  
SYMPTOMS OF  
ANXIETY

## What can school staff do to support a child or young person who experiences anxiety?

The best way to help young people dealing with anxiety is to find ways to face feared situations. Help plan ways for them to test out their fears gradually and set specific goals (e.g. speaking in class once a week).

Stay calm but supportive and try not to get drawn into their emotions. It helps if you are supportive but stay practical. Normalise talking about feelings of worry and anxiousness and what happens to the body when this happens.

Listen and provide reassurance. Instead of telling the child that nothing bad will happen, ask things like 'what has happened in this situation before?' This can help them to begin to challenge any negative thoughts.

## What can school staff do to support a child or young person who experiences anxiety?

Help the young person think through what they learned about their fears and about themselves (e.g., did their worry come true? did they cope?). Teachers can help pupils to rate their anxiety levels on a scale of 1-10, and notice that when they face their feared situation repeatedly the anxiety level goes down.

Praise and reward small (and big) successes when they face their fears. It can help them remain positive.

Use distraction techniques to take their mind away from the anxiety.



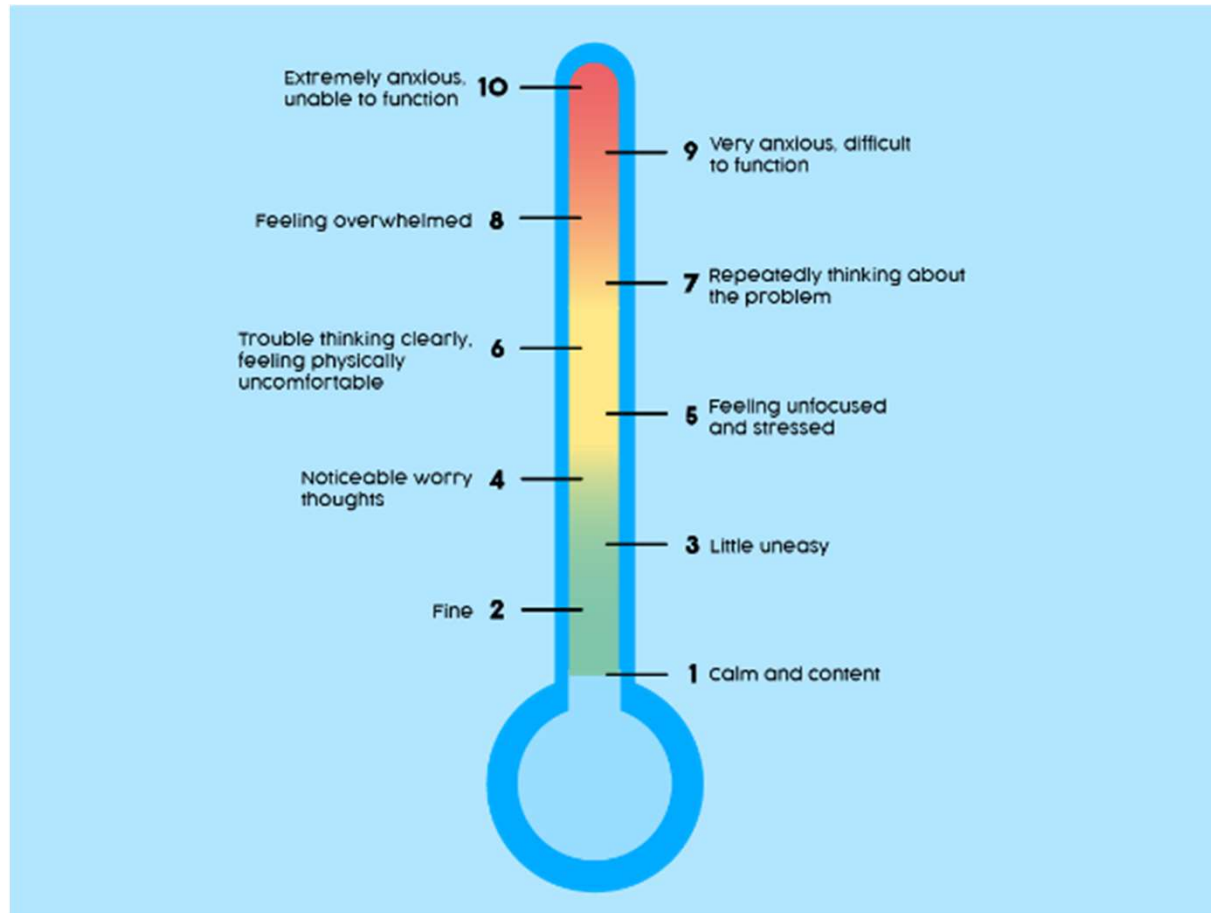
# Resources: Worry Boxes





# Resources: Anxiety

## Thermometer



# Resources: Worry Monsters



**Create a model of  
your worry monster**



# Resources: Wellness Way



# Resources: Just Dance



# Resources: Mindful Breathing





# Resources: Mindfulness Exercises

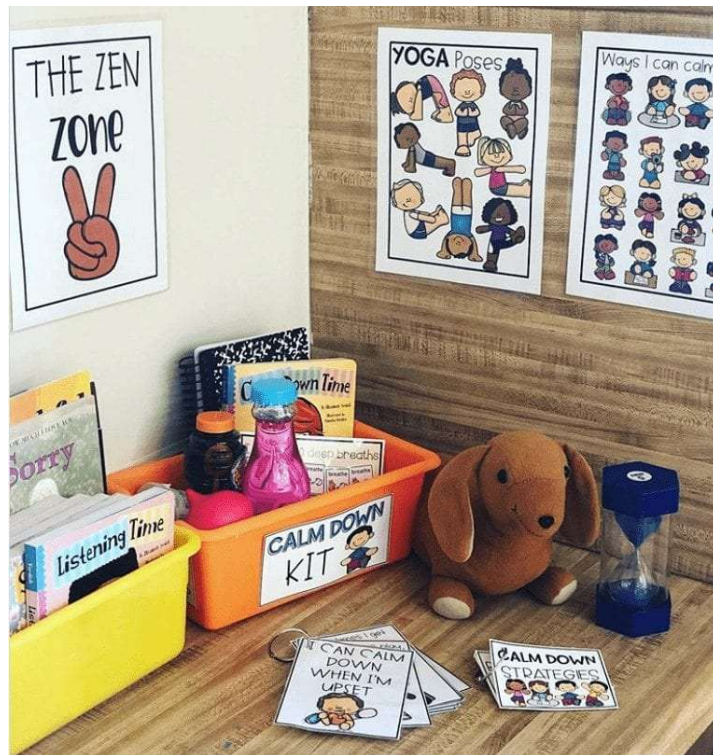
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
<p>COUNTING BREATHS</p> <p>1-2-3</p>	 <p>ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE</p>	 <p>USING THE SENSES</p>	<p>COLOUR BREATHING</p> 	 <p>BIRTHDAY CAKE BREATHING</p>
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
<p>FEATHER BREATHING</p> 	 <p>FINGER COUNTING</p>	<p>SLIMY HANDS</p> 	<p>RISE AND FALL</p> 	<p>RELAXING MUSCLES</p> 



# Resources: Fiction Books



# Create a Safe Space





# Whole Class Strategies

- ✓ Take a break and go outside
- ✓ Use creative play / role play to find solutions
- ✓ Use gratitude cards / boards / post-its
- ✓ Visualisation exercises
- ✓ Relaxation exercises
- ✓ 5 senses



# Small Group or 1:1 Strategies

- ✓ Walk and talk
- ✓ Self soothe boxes
- ✓ Elsa Anxiety and Worries Intervention



# Feedback Forms

Please complete the feedback forms that are on your table.



Many thanks for your time 😊