

Managing worries and anxious feelings workbook

for secondary aged students



Aims and goals:

- To understand worry
- To be able to identify the different types of worries
- To learn strategies to better manage my worries
- To learn about relaxation and mindfulness

Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

This workbook can help you learn to take care of your mental health using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT can help you to develop strategies to break unhelpful behaviours that may be making you feel more anxious or sad.

CBT is a type of therapy that has been proven to help people of all ages to focus on how their thoughts and emotions can affect their behaviour.

Throughout the book there are exercises (where you see the pencil diagram) for you to complete.

If you feel at anytime that you need more help, please see the numbers at the back of this workbook or speak to your carer or another trusted adult.

If you are having any thoughts of hurting yourself please tell a safe adult immediately.

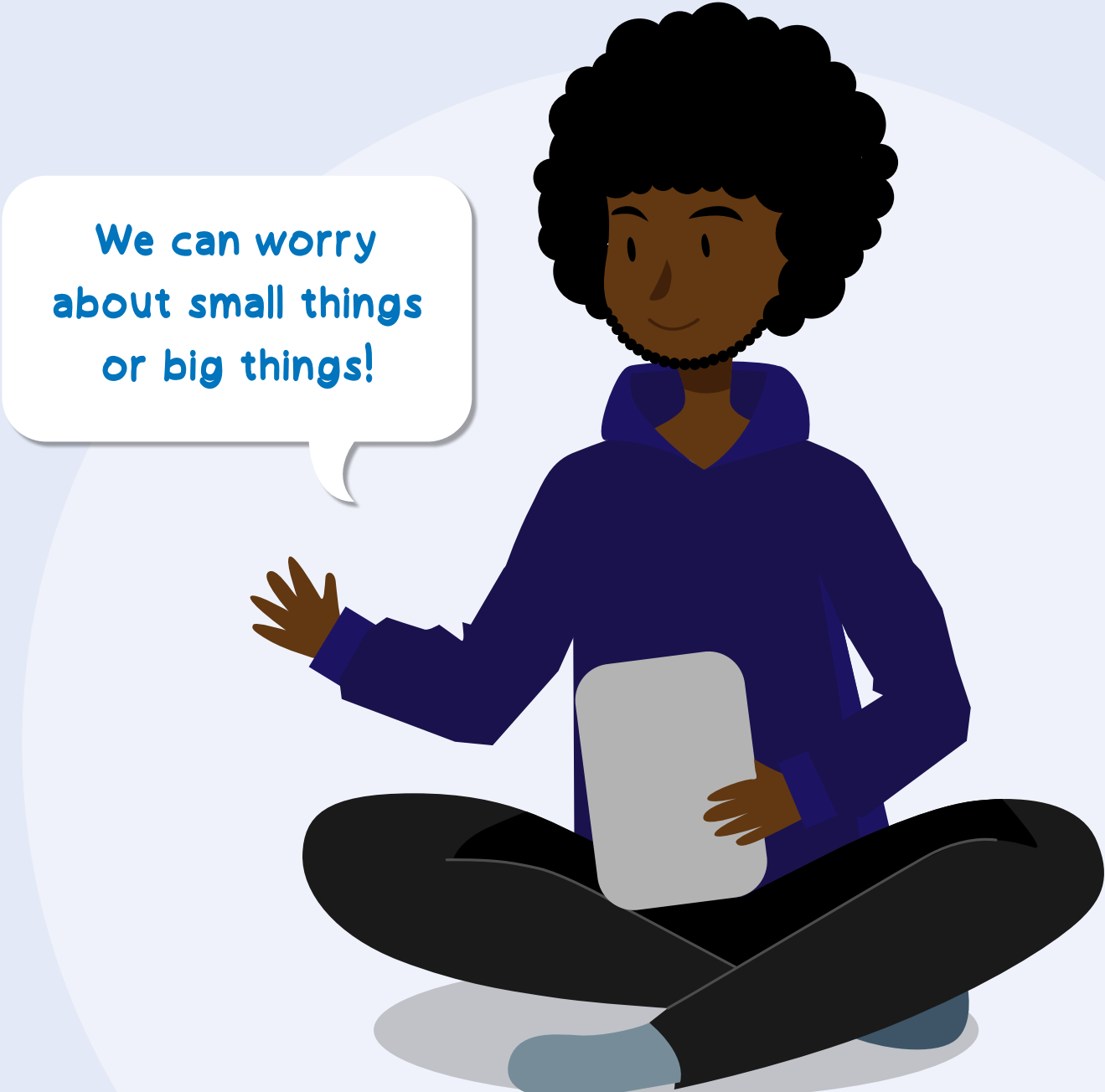


What is worry?

Worries are uncomfortable thoughts that get stuck in your head. Having worries is a normal part of life and everyone has them.

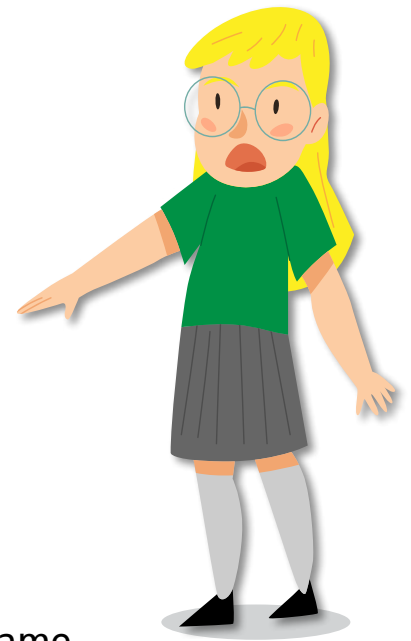
Worry can become difficult to manage and can affect our lives by making it difficult to do certain things, like going to school or leaving your parents.

We can worry about small things or big things! When worries start to impact your life often, this is when we need to do something to support them

An illustration of a person with dark skin and curly black hair, wearing a blue hoodie and black pants, sitting cross-legged on the floor. They are holding a white laptop. To their left is a white speech bubble with a blue border containing the text 'We can worry about small things or big things!'. The background is a light blue circle on a white background.

**We can worry
about small things
or big things!**

The Fight, Flight or Freeze response



Part of your brain is a bit like a Meerkat, always looking out for things that might hurt us or put us in danger. Anger is one of the body's ways of responding to danger.








When we feel like we are in danger, or we feel threatened, your 'Meerkat' brain sends messages to your body to stay and 'fight' the problem, to run away, 'flight' or to 'freeze' and hope the problem goes away.

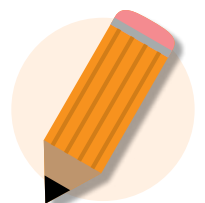
For example, if you were hiking in the woods and you came across a bear, there are three main things that your body would do:

Fight	Flight	Freeze
Try to make yourself look big and scary, shout and fight the bear	Run away from the bear as fast as you can	Become frozen to the spot with fear

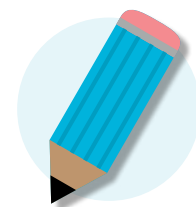
Here are some ways your body can feel when you are angry.

We call these physical sensations. Do you notice any of these in your body? Tick which ones apply to you...

-  Your face feeling hot and red
-  Feeling sick
-  Breathing faster
-  Heart beating faster
-  Tummy ache
-  Hot and sweaty
-  Headache

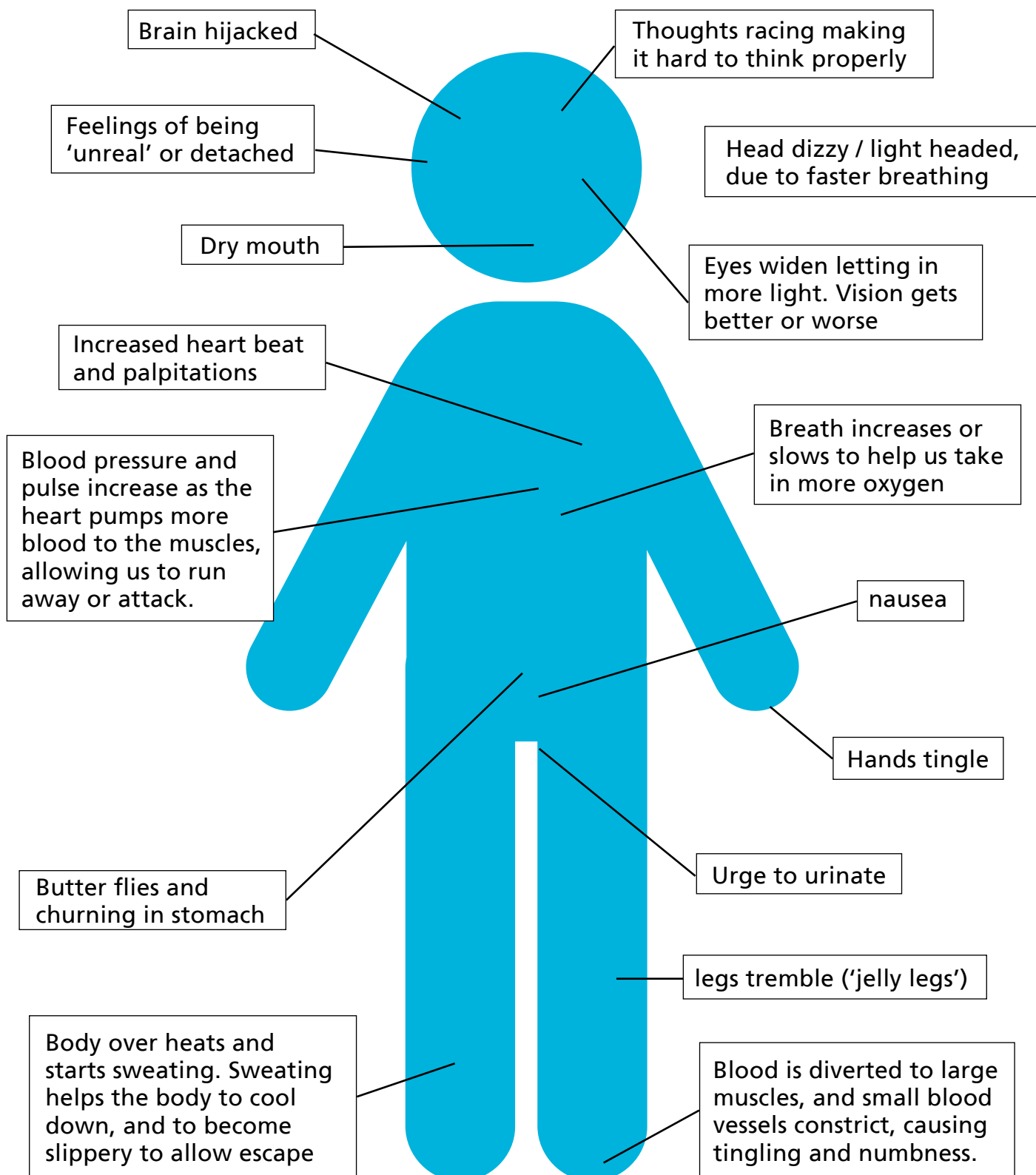


Our body's alarm system



When the brain perceives a threat, it activates the body's 'fight or flight' alarm system. We experience uncomfortable feelings because adrenaline is released and makes the bodies systems speed up, diverting blood towards the big muscles, preparing us to attack (anger) or escape (anxiety).

Here are some ways your body can feel when you are worried.

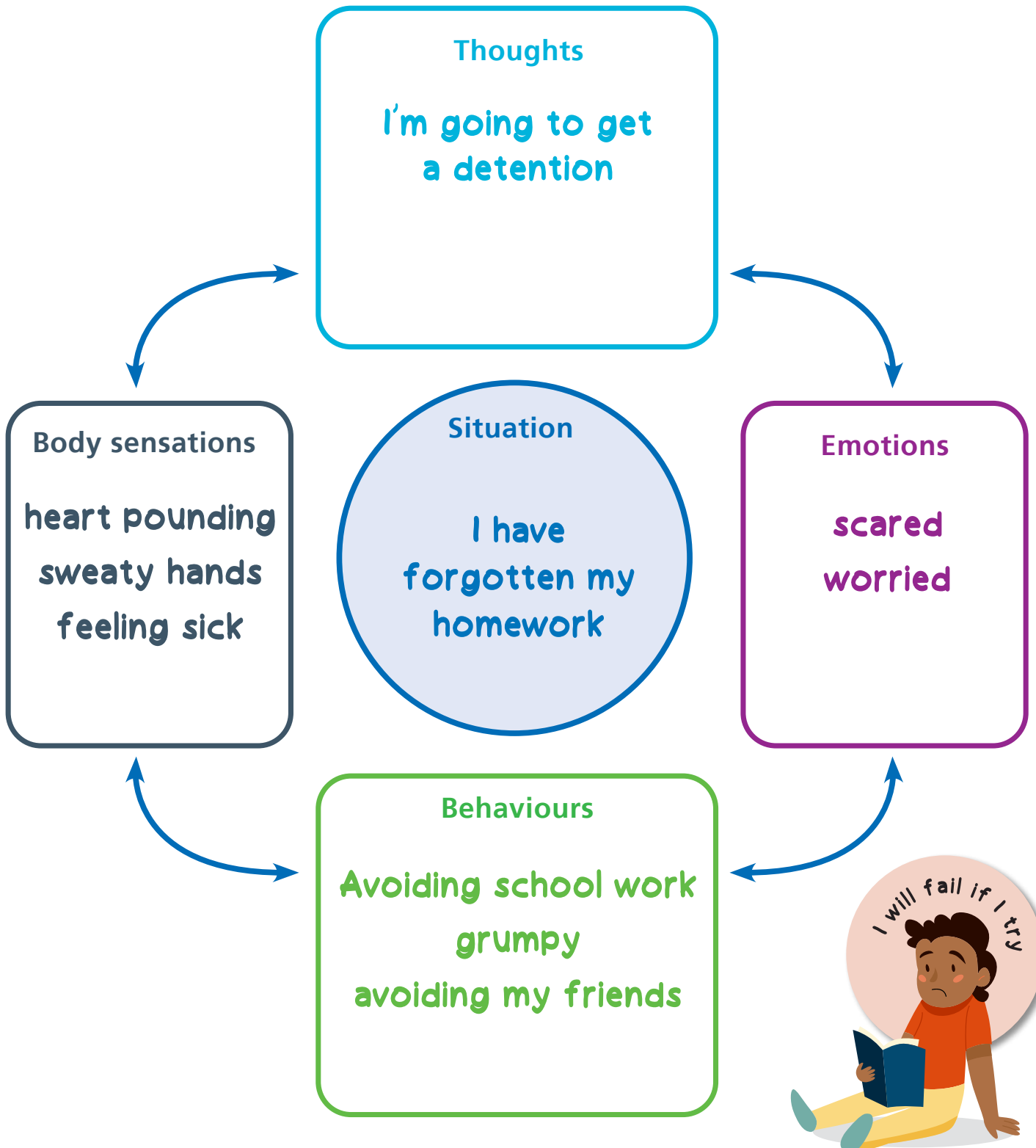


The 5 areas

The five areas show how our thoughts, feelings, behaviours and physical sensations link together. Using this method we can help you identify what is happening and where you may be able to make changes.

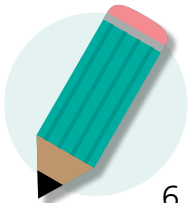
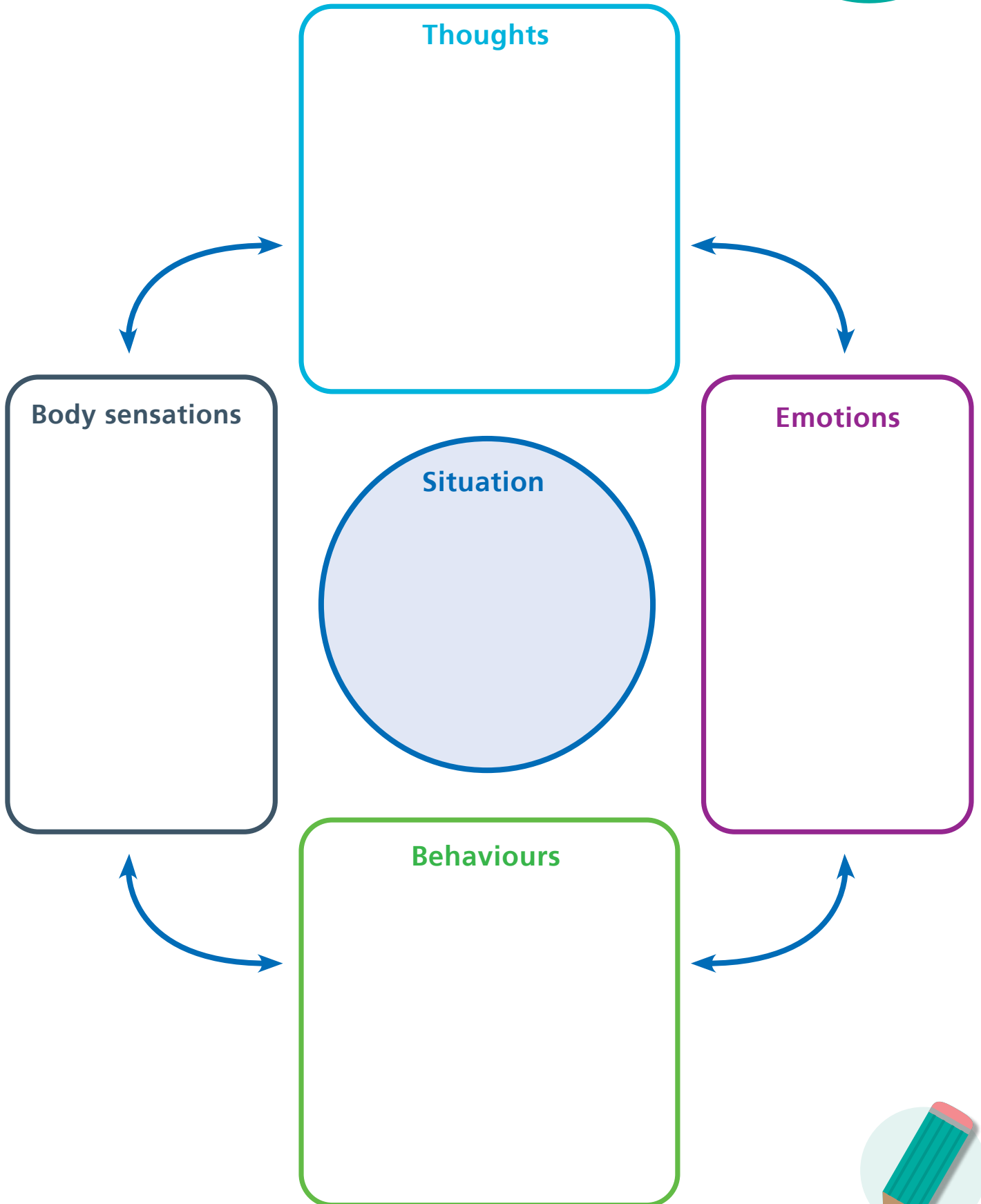
Here is an example:

These feelings and thoughts are normal when experiencing worry



The five areas can become a 'vicious cycle' so it's important to identify what is impacting on you and find a way to break the cycle, by either managing / challenging your thoughts or changing what you do (behaviours).

Try creating your 5 areas



My worries



Worrying is a normal process, we all worry at times, it is your body's way of saying something is wrong, and alerting you to a perceived danger. We all worry about different things! Write below some examples of what you worry about.

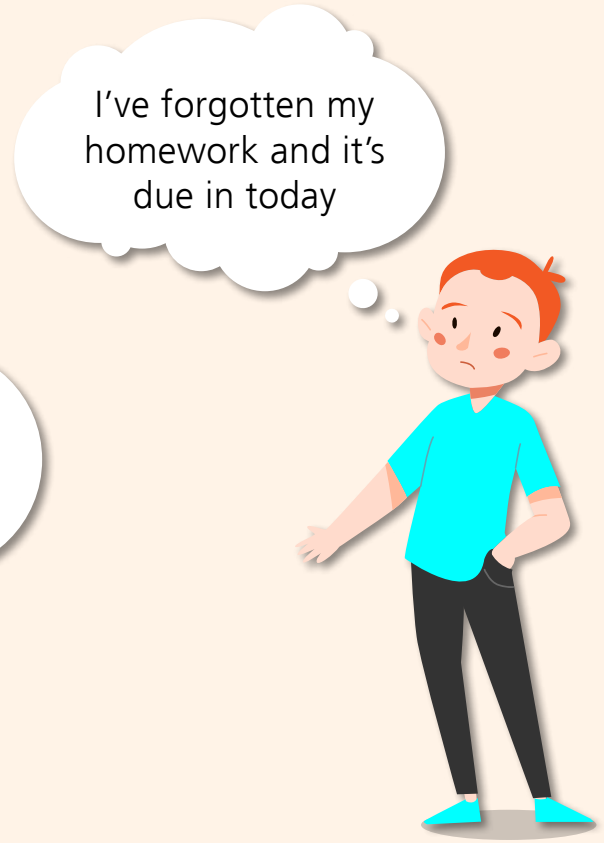


Types of worry

Here are two of the different types of worries we might have.

Here and now worries

These are worries that are often affecting you in the here and now and we can usually find a practical solution!



What if worries

This type of worry is often about things that may be well in the future and may not have a solution, no matter how hard you try to find one!



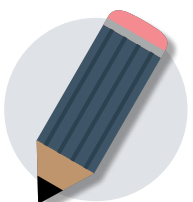
Worry sorting activity



Try and sort the worries on the next page into 'Here and Now' and 'What If' worries in the table below.

What if worries

Here and now worries



**I have an exam,
what if I fail?**

**I have forgotten
my lunch**

**I've fallen out
with my friend
and I want to
sort it out**

**I promised my
parents that I
would tidy my
room, but I don't
have time**

**What if people
laugh when I walk
past them at the
school gates?**

**What if I
get really ill?**

**I have been invited
to a party and I
don't know many
people. What if no
one likes me?**

**I am stuck on
my homework
and don't know
where to start**

**What if my
friends fall out
with me?**

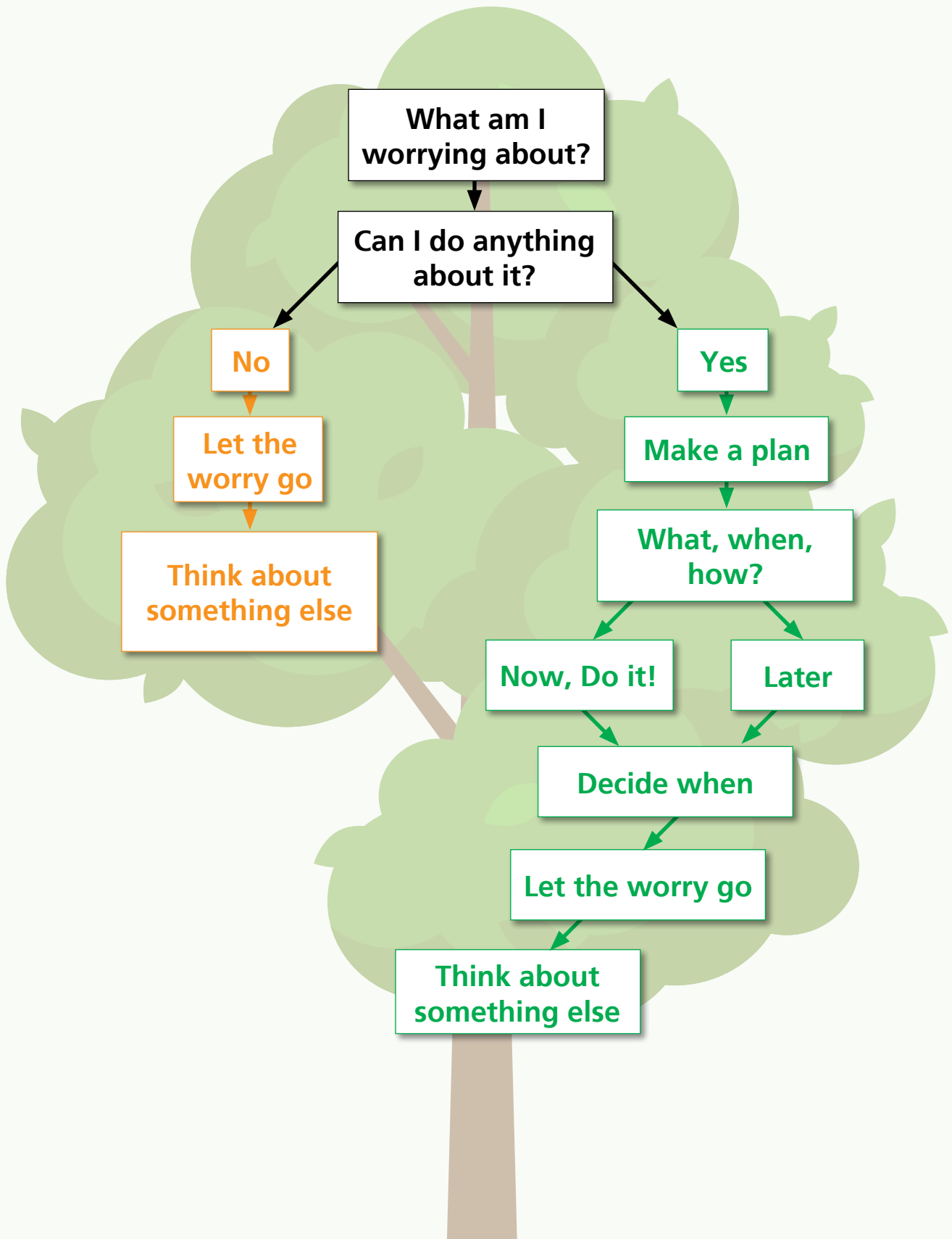
**My earphones
have stopped
working, so I can't
listen to my music**



Worry tree



The worry tree can help you decide the best way to deal with your worry. Why not give it a try?



Keeping a log of my worries

It is useful to capture your worries as they come up. Doing this helps you to classify if your worries are Here and Now or What If worries, and use the Worry Tree to establish the best way forward for managing your worries.

When a worry pops into your head, write it down and place it into a safe place, like a diary or a worry app, and leave it until worry time.



After you've written it down, take your mind off of it by refocusing. There are some ideas later in this book

7 steps to Problem solving



There are seven steps to help you to try and solve your here and now worries. Why not give it a go below.

1. Identify the worry you want to focus on

Choose one of the 'Here and Now' worries that you want to try and problem solve.

2. Identify Solutions

Identify as many potential solutions as possible. At this stage nothing should be rejected, no matter how ridiculous some solutions may seem.

3. Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each solution

Make a note of the main advantages and disadvantages of each solution. This may include the possibility of being able to undertake the solution, the resources you have and how you feel about carrying it out.

4. Select a solution

Now choose one of your solutions to try out.

5. Develop a plan

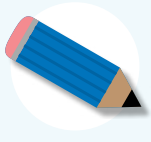
The solution you have chosen may require careful planning. Try to stick to the 'Four Ws' (what, where, when, with whom.)

6. Do it! Put your plan into action

7. Evaluation. How did it go? What could you do differently?

Maybe it worked a little or not at all. The advantage of problem solving is that other options always exist. If the plan worked then continue to use it, if not then pick another solution to try.

Problem solving does not work for all worries, but there are other methods we can try!



My worry diary

We can also use a worry diary to track our worries throughout the day. This can help us to understand what makes us worried. Try filling it out yourself below

Date and Time	What was happening at the time?	What was I worried about?	How big was my worry? 0 - 10 (0 is teeny and 10 is huge)	Is it a What if or a Here and Now worry?

Worry time

When you find yourself worrying about What If worries a lot, it is helpful to reduce the amount of time you spend on worries and instead allocate a specific time to concentrate on them.

This allows you to be more in control of your day. There are four steps to carry out and, as with any skill, practice makes perfect.

1

Plan your time to worry

Pick a time of the day that you will let yourself worry for around 15 to 20 minutes. Make sure there are no distractions during this time.

2

Write down and keep a log of your worries

Keep track of the things that you are worrying about during the day by writing them down so you can think about them later.

3

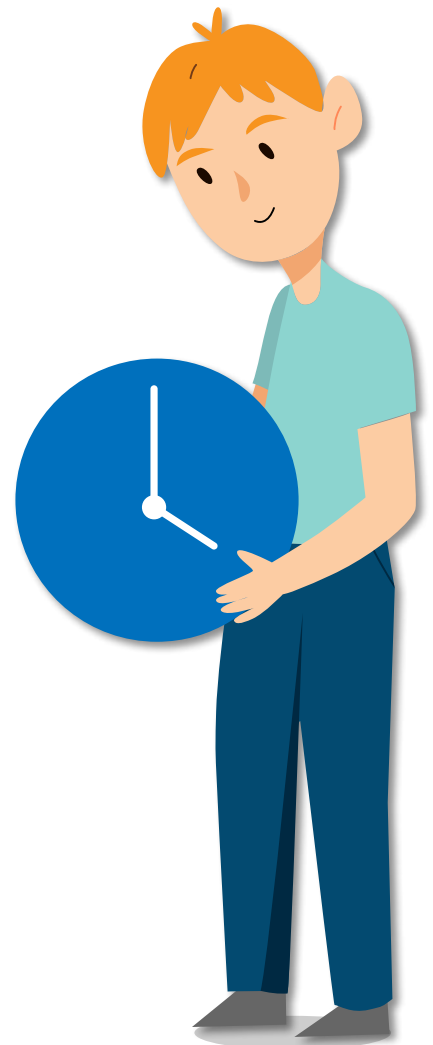
Refocus your mind

Once you have written down your worry it is important to try not to think about it. Try to distract yourself by doing something you enjoy or something that will keep you busy.

4

Take your worries to worry time!

Now you can let yourself worry! Read your list of worries and see how you feel about them now. Are you as worried about them as you were when you wrote them down?



What would someone else say?
Is this fact or opinion?
What is a different way of looking at this?



Refocusing

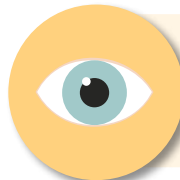
When your mind wanders on to negative thoughts and worries, bring yourself back to the present.

Accept that you are having bad thoughts, try to challenge them (what would someone I trust say? What's another way of looking at this? Is this fact or my opinion?) and then concentrate on other things.

You can do this by distracting yourself. Here are some ideas how you can do that.

Grounding

Grounding is an exercise to focus on your senses. Can you name five things you can see, four things you can hear, three things you can feel, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste?



5 things I can see



4 things I can hear



3 things I can touch



2 things I can smell



1 thing I can taste

Fun to
do with
friends

a b c d

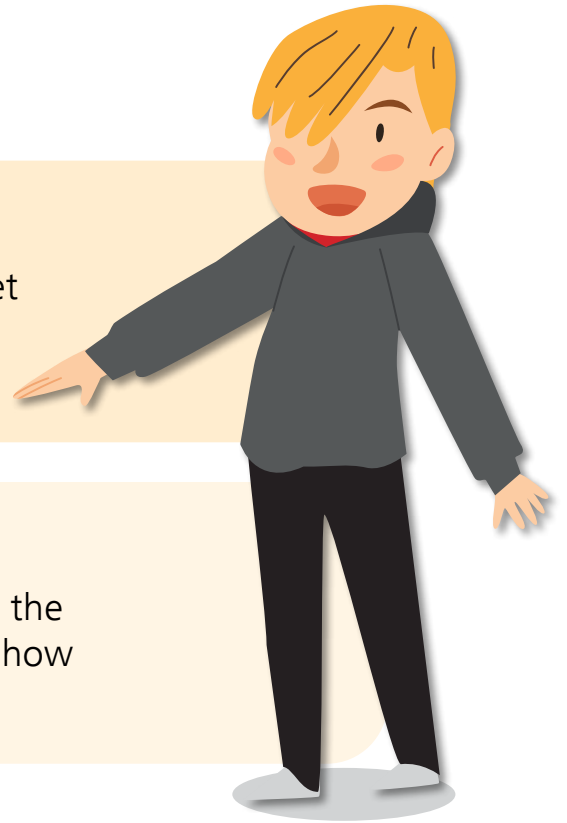
Letters game

Go through the alphabet and name countries, animals, and food!

1 2 3 4

Counting game

Pick a number, add it to the number before and see how far you get!



Other things you could try

Have a relaxing bath

Try cooking or baking

Message your best friend

Watch your favourite movie or TV show

Listen to music

Doodling or drawing on paper

Play a game

Do some exercise; go for a walk, go outside, walk your dog

Write in a journal or write a letter

Read a book



Positivity Journal



Another thing you could try is writing a positivity journal, this could be in a notebook or on an app. Why not start yourself off by filling in the journal questions below:

Two compliments to myself

1.
.....
2.
.....

Three good things that have happened to me this week:



1.
2.
3.

Who made you feel good this week?



Five things I am grateful for

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



What was challenging this week?



Have you reached any goals?



A memory to remember

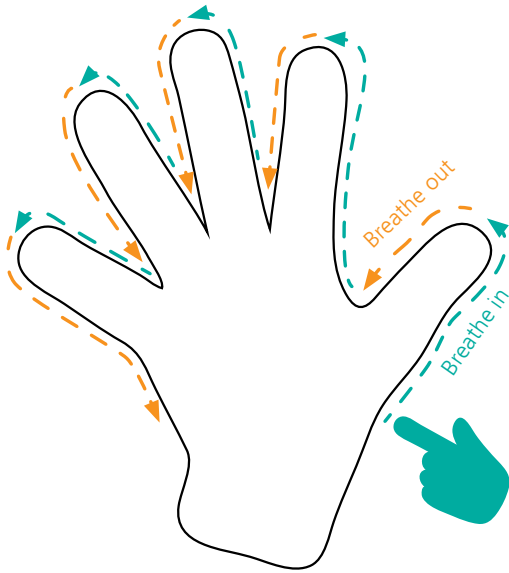


Things I can do to refocus my mind

Create a list of things you can do to refocus your mind and bring you back to the here and now following your allocated time to worry.

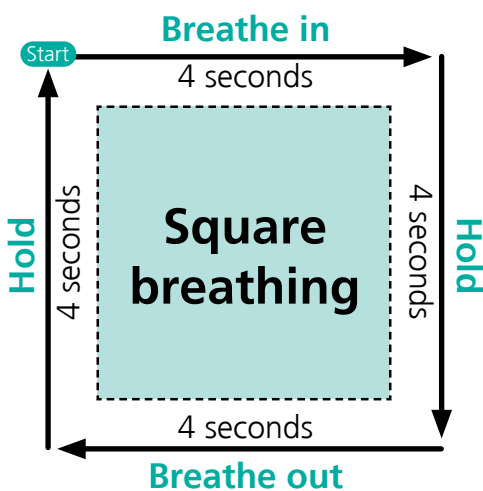
Relaxation

We can use relaxation methods to help manage our body sensations and our worries.. Here are a few methods to try:



Finger breathing

- Step 1:** Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star. Have the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand.
- Step 2:** Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb.
- Step 3:** Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down.
- Step 4:** Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.



Square breathing

- Step 1:** Starting at the top left hand corner of the square, sit upright and slowly inhale through your nose for a slow count of four. Pay attention to the feeling of the air filling your lungs.
- Step 2:** Hold your breath for another slow count of four.
- Step 3:** Exhale slowly and deeply through your mouth to the count of four. Feel the air leave your lungs.
- Step 4:** Hold your breath for the same slow count of four before repeating this process until you feel calm.

Muscle relaxation

Ask an adult or friend to help you by reading the following script.

1 Please begin by sitting back comfortably or lie down.
Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.) Breathe in again through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth again (pause for 4 seconds.) Keep breathing like this, imagining any worried thoughts or tightness in your body floating away as you breathe out.

2 Now, we're going to start by focussing on our feet. Tense your feet by curling your toes up like fists. Hold on to that tense feeling (pause for 5 seconds) and now slowly let go, imagining all the tightness in your toes slipping away from your body.

Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.)

3 Next we're moving to your lower legs and calves. Maybe there's some tightness in your calves, do your legs feel heavy or sluggish? Tense your lower legs now, tensing the calves (pause for 5 seconds) and slowly let go. Now, your upper legs. Squeeze your thighs together (pause for 5 seconds) and now slowly let go.

Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.)

4 This time, we're moving on to your tummy area. Tense your stomach by sucking in your tummy (pause for 5 seconds) and now slowly release and let go.

Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.)

5 Moving up, we're going to your shoulders. The shoulders are one of the places that we can hold lots of tension, so really push those shoulders up as high as you can to your ears (pause for 5 seconds) and slowly let go.

Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.)

6

From your shoulders move on to your arms and hands. Tense up your arms and make your hands into fists, squeezing tight (pause for 5 seconds) and now release, letting your arms go limp and letting go of any tightness.

Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.)

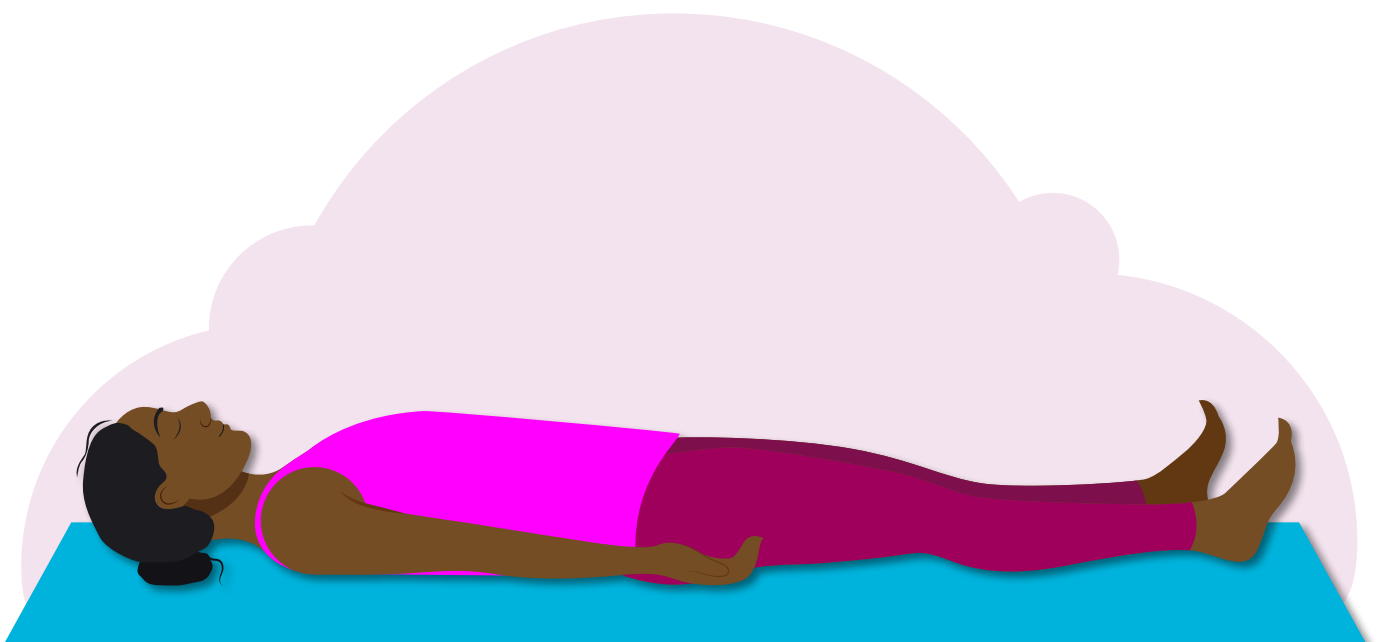
7

Finally, your face. Keeping those eyes closed, scrunch up your face as much as you can and hold it there (pause for 5 seconds.) Now let go slowly and imagine any tightness in your face leaving you.

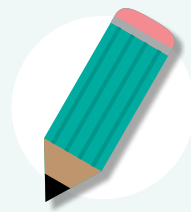
Take a deep breath in through your nose (pause for 4 seconds) and out through your mouth (pause for 4 seconds.)

8

Now, when you're ready, slowly open your eyes.

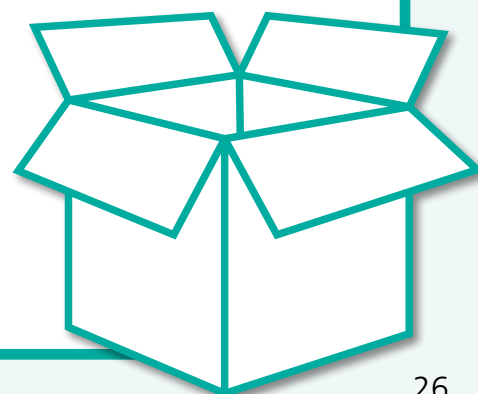


The Self soothe box



A self soothe box is a useful tool to use when you are feeling a variety of emotions including sadness and worry. It is personal to each individual and can be kept throughout their life and continuously updated.

Draw and write down the things that you might put in your self soothe box to help keep you calm, don't forget to think about your five senses; see, hear, smell, taste and touch.



Keeping well

Everyone is different, so it's important to think about what helps you stay healthy and well.

Fill in the boxes below to remind you of what you have learnt, in the future.

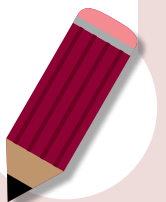
You have worked hard to make changes to get where you are.

What have I learned about worry?

What do I need to keep doing?

What times ahead might be difficult for me?

What are the early warning signs I'm struggling or that my worries are becoming overwhelming?



Useful websites and numbers



Do you need urgent help with your mental health?



Call **111** and select a mental health option

HOPELINE247
0800 068 41 41

Are you, or is a young person you know, not coping with life?

For confidential suicide prevention advice contact **HOPELINE247**.

Call: **0800 068 41 41**
Text: **07860 039 961**

www.papyrus-uk.org

THE MIX
Essential support for under 25s

Essential support for under 25s. Get advice about relationships, drugs, mental health, money and jobs.

0808 808 4994

4pm to 11pm Monday to Friday

One to one chat and message, visit www.themix.org.uk

 **LISTENING EAR**
someone to talk to

A charity to help those who've been bereaved, suffered loss or experienced separation.

0151 488 6648

www.listening-ear.co.uk

kooth

www.kooth.com

SAMARITANS

116 123

childline

0800 1111

Additional info

We have other workbooks available. Please ask your local mental health support team.

We really appreciate your feedback to help us improve our service for you. Please fill out a short survey once you have completed this workbook.