

Understanding & Responding to Anxiety and Behaviour Linked to Mental Health .

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Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team

Nottinghamshire County Council



Before we begin

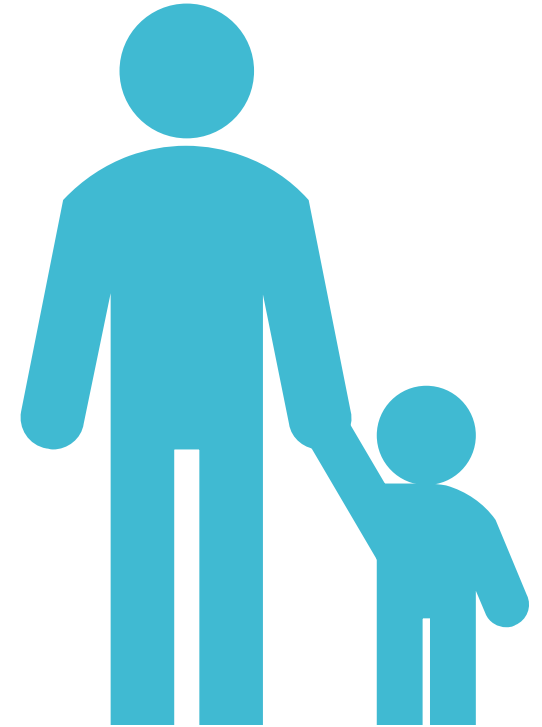
We are not behaviour specialists or experts

We work at the prevention end of the spectrum

Our knowledge is rooted in our own experiences of parenting as well as the latest research

We don't have all the answers

We will signpost to sources of help and support



Today's Session

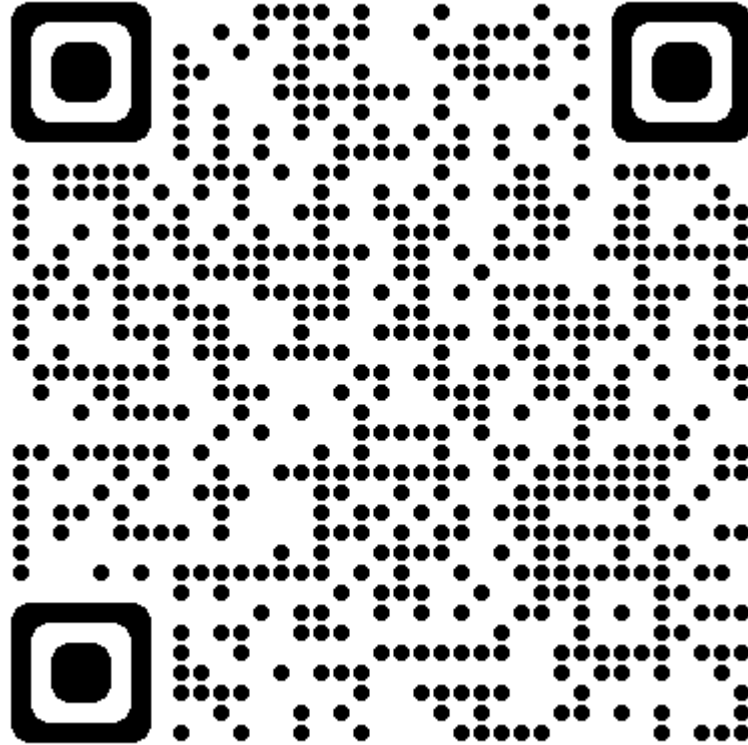
- ❑ Theory and research (...a little)
- ❑ The context for the presenting behaviours
- ❑ Practical tools and opportunities for reflection
- ❑ Collaborative problem solving
- ❑ Sources of help and support
- ❑ Opportunities to make connections

Today's Session

What are your best hopes for the workshop?

Why are you here? (if you are comfortable with sharing)

Have a look at
the padlet –
what might
you want to
know more
about?

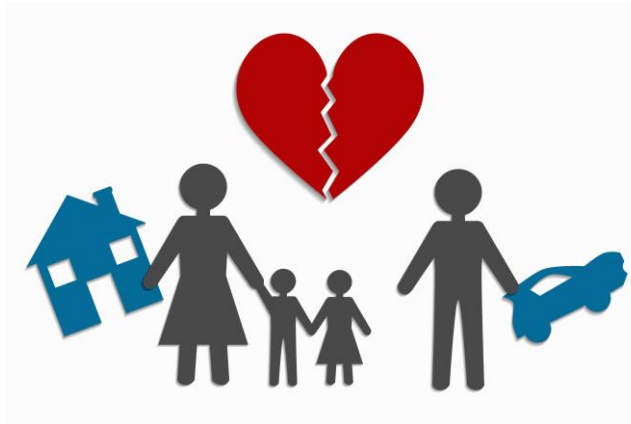


[Arnold View \(padlet.com\)](https://padlet.com/ArnoldView)

Shared activity

What things
make your
child anxious?

What things
make you
anxious?



Where are
we today...
why does
the context
matter?



Definitions



Anxiety can both be a state and a trait- i.e., some of us feel anxious mainly in response to certain situations; some of us are naturally more predisposed to anxiety than others

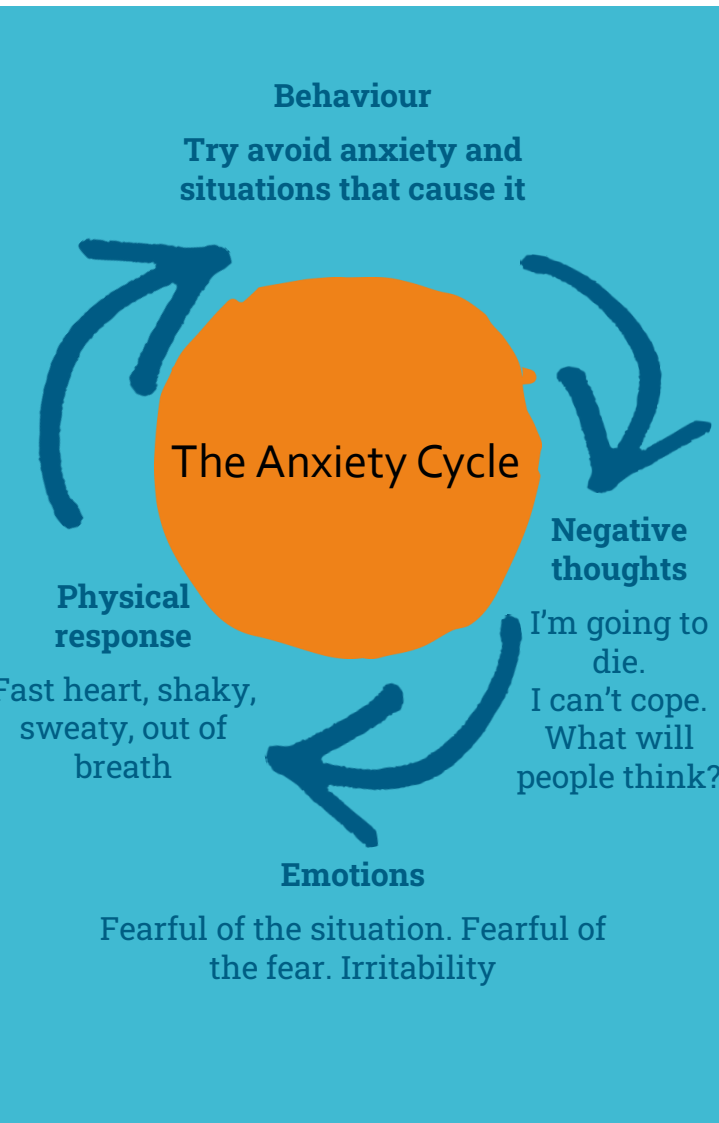


Generalised anxiety disorder- "is a condition of excessive worry about everyday issues and situations." Lasts longer than 6 months. John Hopkins Medicine



For all types- an intolerance for uncertainty is an important contributory factor

Symptoms of anxiety



Thoughts

I'll never get it done, it's the end of the world if..., everyone will think I'm useless etc.

Physical

Sweating, trembling, palpitations, dry mouth, churning stomach

Feelings

Dread, fear, panic

Behaviour

Impatience, easily distracted, restlessness, agitated, sleep difficulties
Avoidance of anxiety provoking situations

Fear of the fear

What's
underneath the
anxiety and
behaviour?

What is the
unmet need?

How can you
address it?



Activity: Describe what happens when you feel ANXIETY & EXCITEMENT



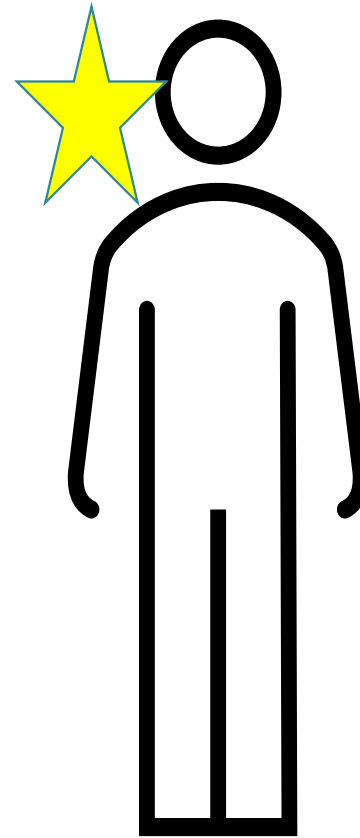
Draw an outline of a human body



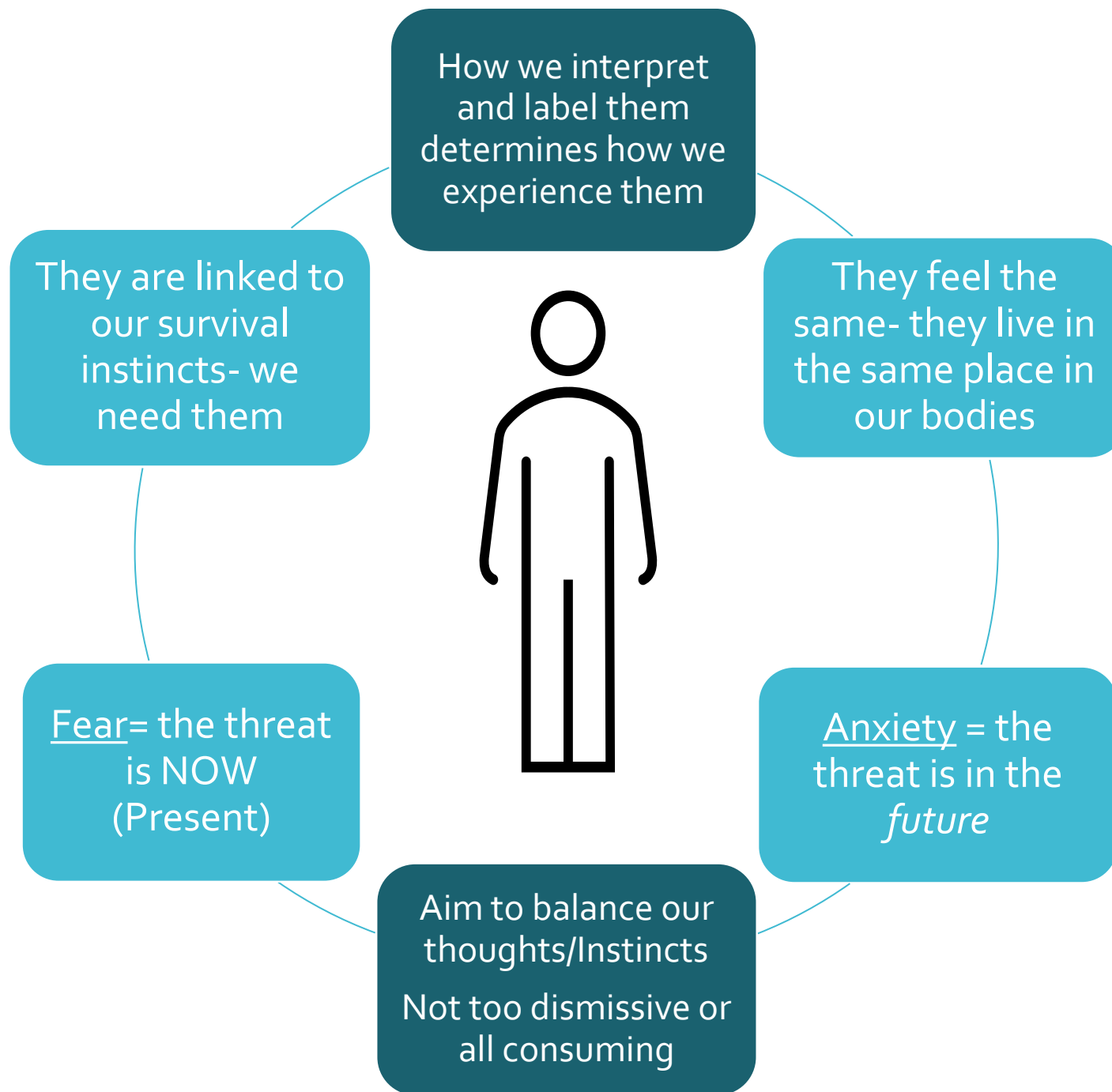
In one colour- mark and label the parts of the body where anxiety & fear live



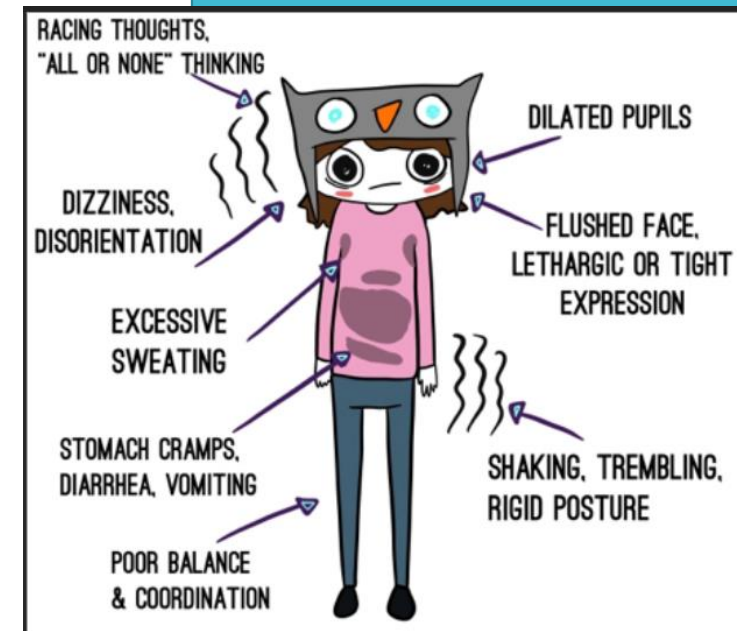
In another colour- mark and label the parts of the body where excitement and anticipation live

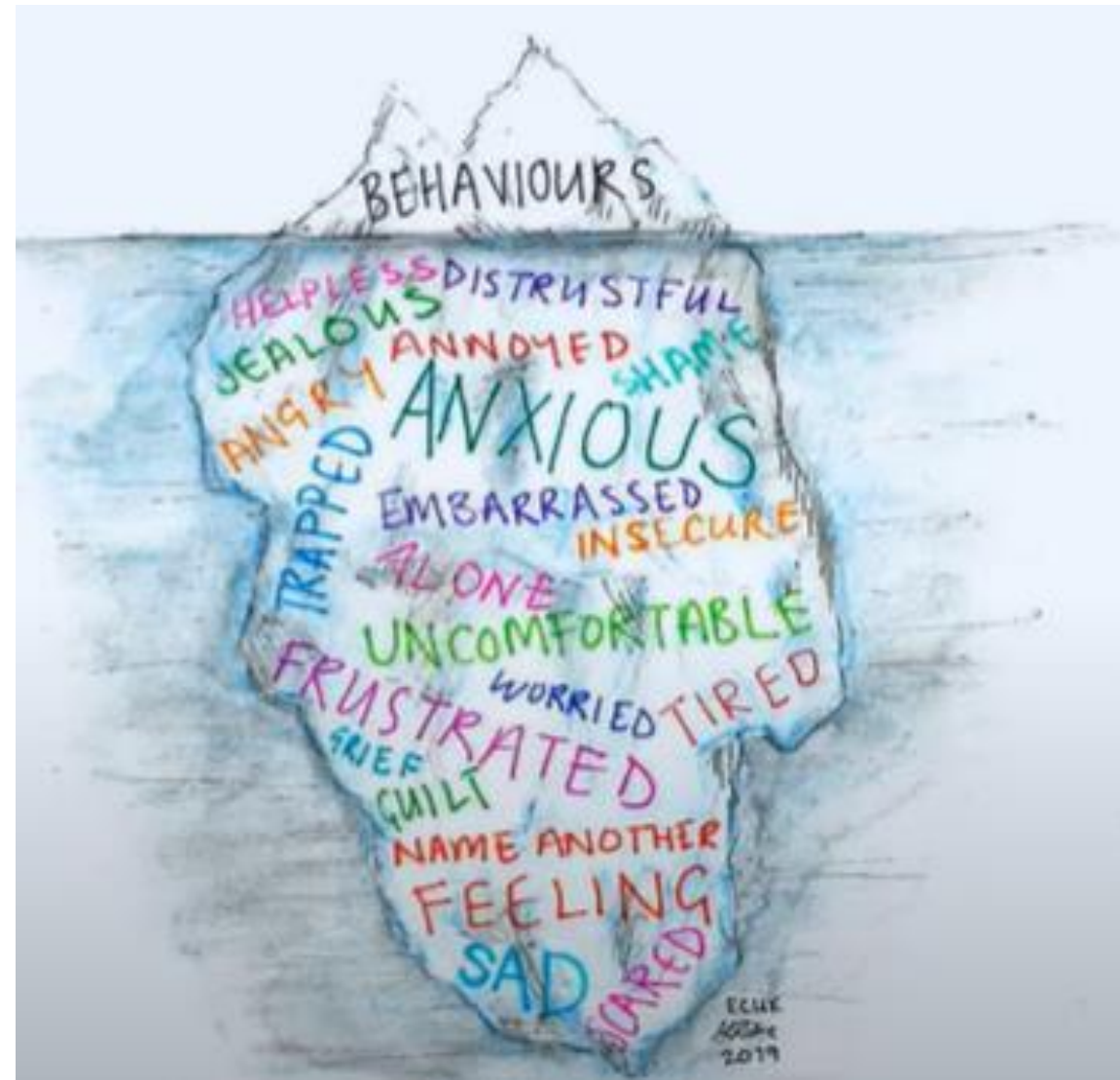


Shared activity
Relationship
between
anxiety &
excitement-
what the
research tells
us



Reframing the body's signals and our internal narrative





Things children say/do:

Behaviours/thoughts are a communication of our emotions

Identifying the emotions behind the behaviour helps us find the solution to the problem/ address the pattern of behaviour

Through our relationships with others, we learn to understand our experiences and regulate our emotions

I can't be bothered,
you can't make me.

Withdraw/ Sulk
/ Shut down

Anxiety about
attending
school

I feel sick, my
tummy/head aches, I
don't feel like I can...

Sob/ Lash out/
Meltdown

Don't leave me, I can't
sleep/eat/play without
my...

Sleep walk/talk

Cling/ Control

Just leave me alone,
get out of my room, I
hate you/them.

Scream/Shout/
Swear

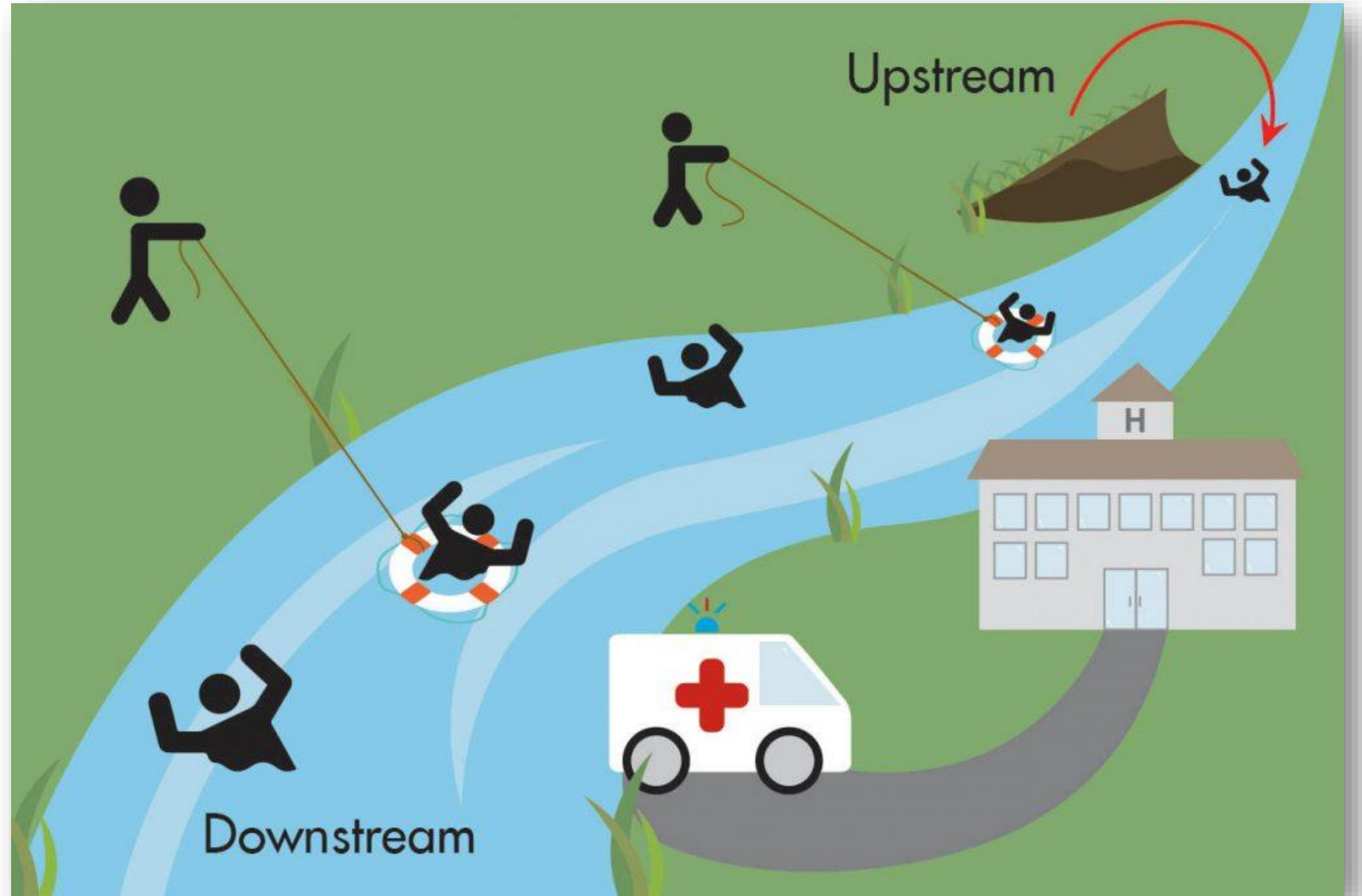
Blame/
Aggravate

I'm going to kill myself.
I'm leaving and I'm
never coming back.

The brain
science behind
anxiety (and
behaviours)
and managing
it
effectively.....



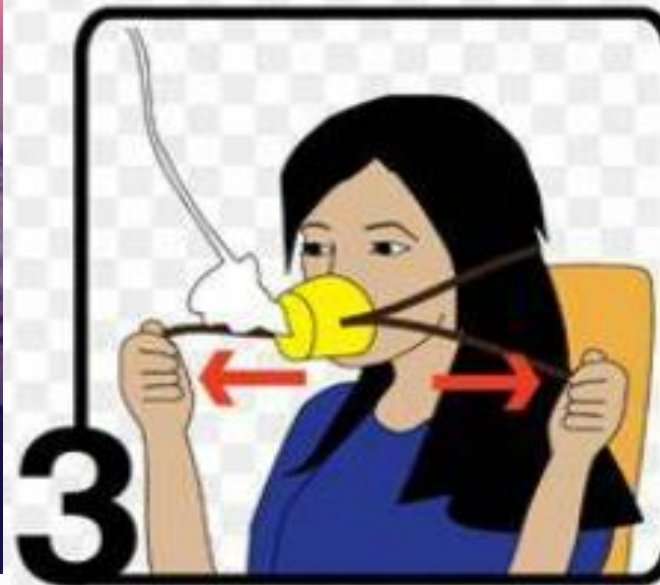
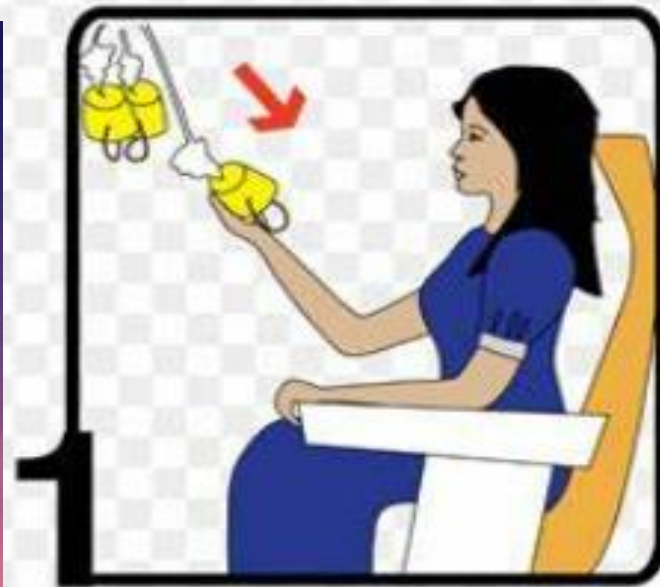
Rescue or
empower?
Teaching &
practicing self-
awareness and
self-care



God, grant me
the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
the courage to change
the things I can,
and the wisdom
to know the difference.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Handklopp



The 5c's and the 3 R's

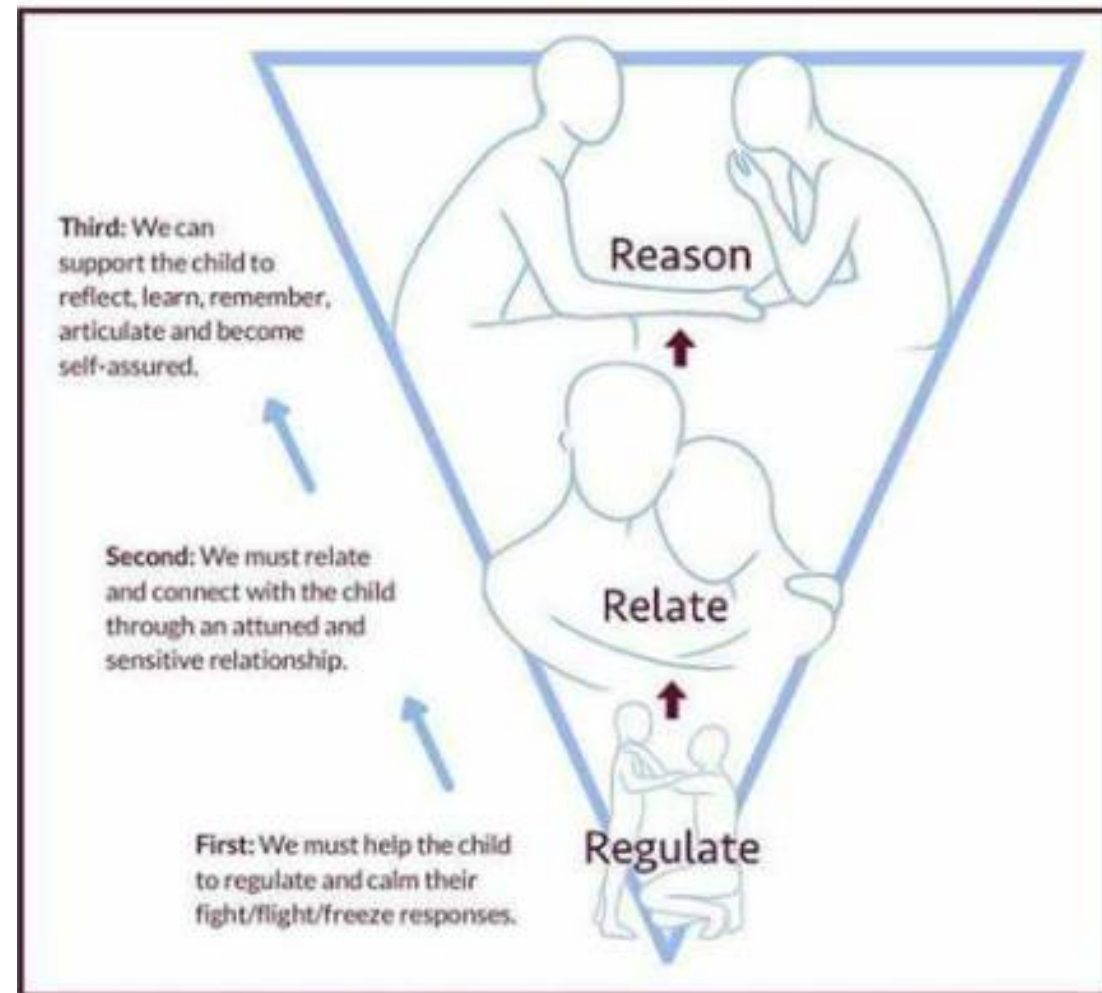
Calm
Communication
Consistency
Compassion
Connection

I can help you to think of a different way to cope

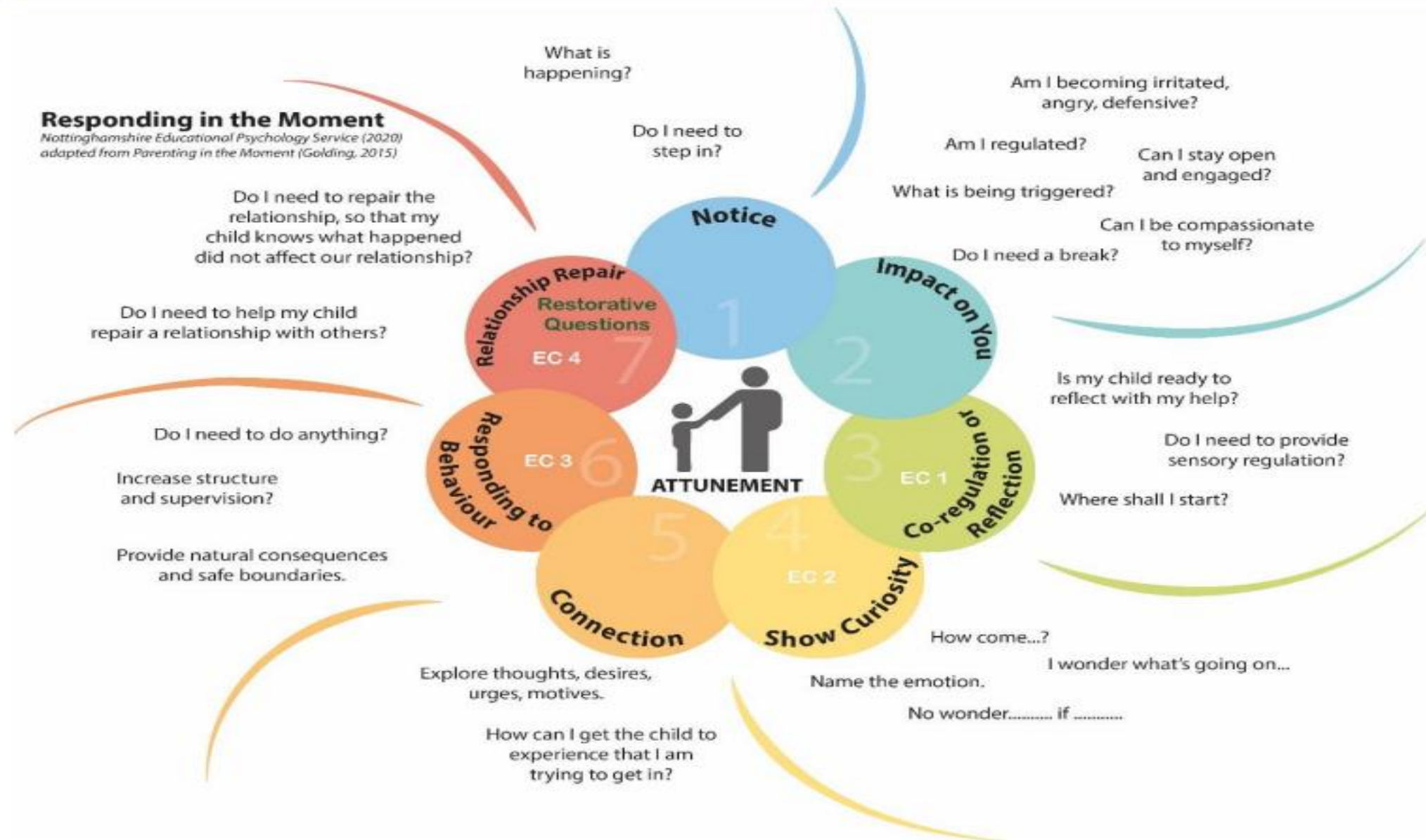
Can you remember what we said before?

Let's see if we can think together about new ways to do this

Can you think of a different way to deal with your feelings?



RESPONDING IN THE MOMENT



Describe a scenario you regularly face/the situations you find most challenging



Consider what emotions might be triggered for you/your child in this situation



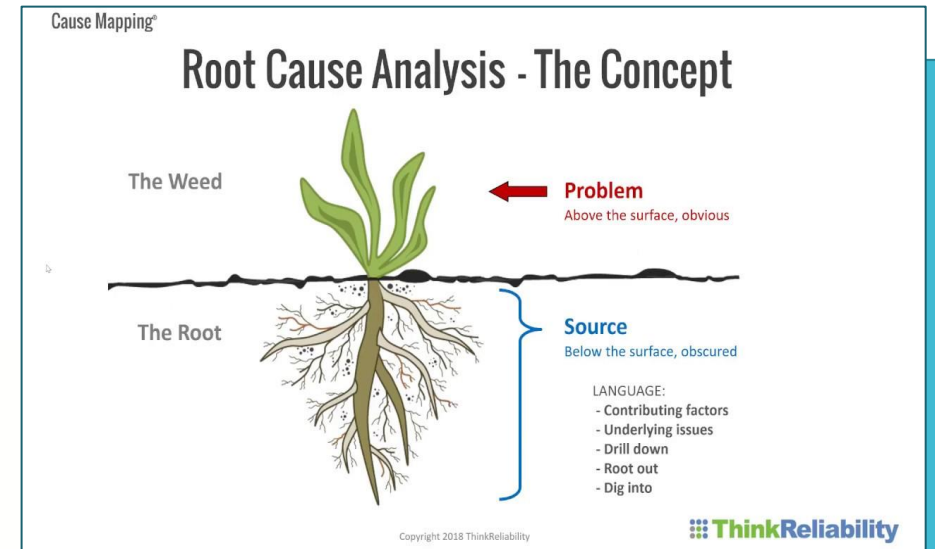
Consider what your usual response is and how effective it is



Thinking about what we have discussed already, as a group try to practise a range of 'coping' or 'calming' strategies you could employ which might be more effective. What might you say/do?



If in your trial conversations, you hit a barrier to finding a solution- note them down for wider discussion.



Let's help each other out

Shared Activity

Take Time ...

To make sure you NOTICE (identify and name the emotions)

To CONNECT (people and places = joy)

To use your INSIGHT (what do I know works)

WAIT AND BREATHE (when your own anxiety/emotions are rising)

To REFLECT (why am I/why is my child feeling this way and what can I/ can't I control)

For YOURSELF- (do the things you enjoy and which enrich your life, sleep, learn to relax, pay attention to what you eat, get active, have fun)

To RECOGNISE when you need help and support and ASK and ACCEPT it when required



Tell us your
feedback

TETC Team Evaluation - 2024-2025



The more you try
to control something,
the more it controls
you. Free yourself and
let things take their own
natural course.

- Leon Brown



Contacts

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What is on the
padlet?



<https://padlet.com/tetc/anxiety-parent-workshop-ffxab2lxt8q7w3ao>

The importance of Sleep



Sleep well

How to get the best rest



DO SOMETHING RELAXING BEFORE YOU SLEEP



Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together
Thomas Dekker

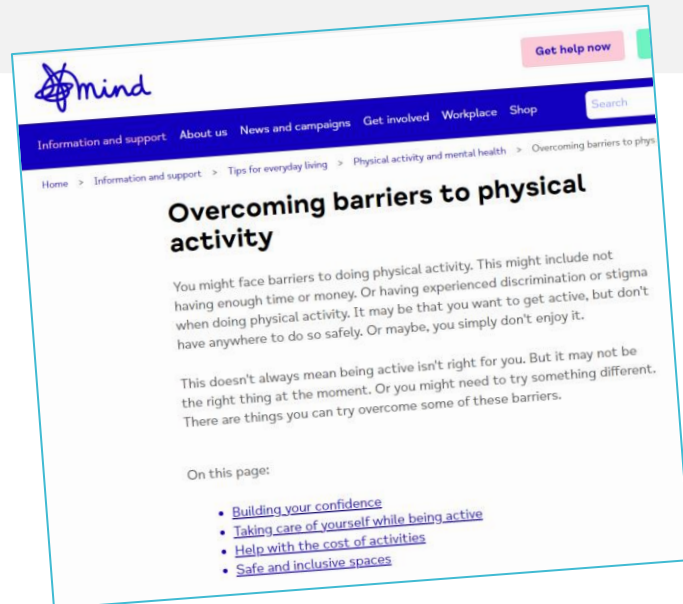
Explore more at: www.liggywebb.com



Be active for your mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS (www.nhs.uk)



Physical activity and mental health | Mental Health Foundation



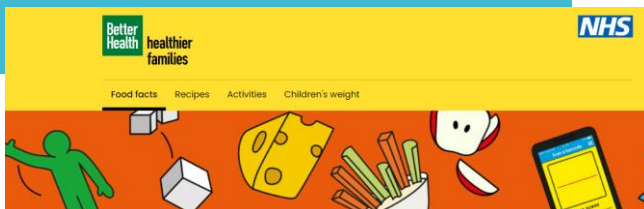
Physical activity releases feel good hormones, it also helps us sleep. It is recommended children spend 1 hour a day exercising.

How are diet and mental health linked?

The relationship between our diet and our mental health is complex. However, research shows a link between what we eat and how we feel.

Eating well can help you feel better. You don't have to make big changes to your diet, but see if you can try some of these tips.

- Eat regularly. This can stop your blood sugar level from dropping, which can make you feel tired and bad-tempered.
- Stay hydrated. Even mild dehydration can affect your mood, energy level and ability to concentrate.
- Eat the right balance of fats. Your brain needs healthy fats to keep working well. They're found in things such as olive oil, rapeseed oil, nuts, seeds, oily fish, avocados, milk and eggs. Avoid trans fats – often found in processed or packaged foods – as they can be bad for your mood and your heart health.
- Include more whole grains, fruits and vegetables in your diet. They contain the vitamins and minerals your brain and body need to stay well.
- Include some protein with every meal. It contains an amino acid that your brain uses to help regulate your mood.
- Look after your gut health. Your gut can reflect how you're feeling: it can speed up or slow down if you're stressed. Healthy food for your gut includes fruit, vegetables, beans and probiotics.
- Be aware of how caffeine can affect your mood. It can cause sleep problems, especially if you drink it close to bedtime, and some people find it makes them irritable and anxious too. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks and chocolate.



[The Eatwell Guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Healthier food swaps - Food facts - Healthier Families - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

The online world.



[Screen time and wellbeing | Parent Zone | At the heart of digital family life](#)

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**internet
matters.org**

[Parental controls & privacy settings guides | Internet Matters](#)



*Regular breaks



*Ensure it isn't affecting sleeping/eating



* Set boundaries and explain why (not just about time but what is being accessed).

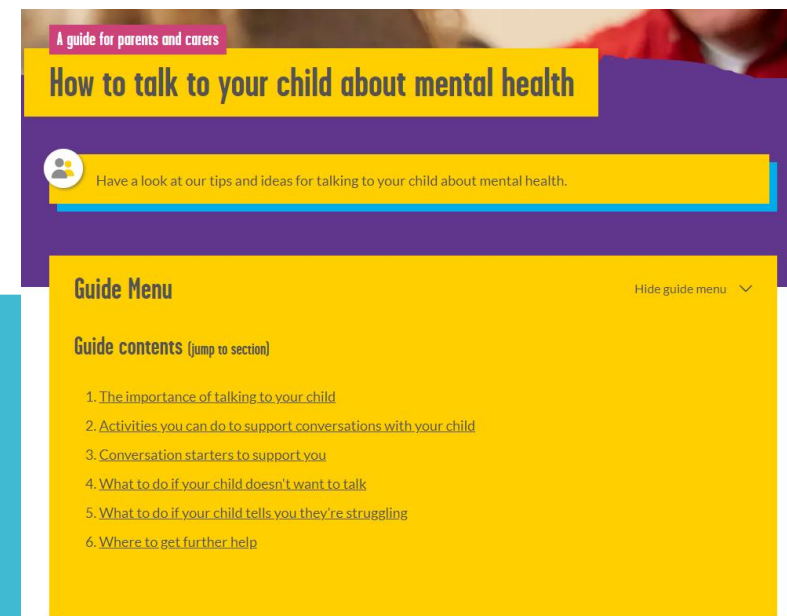
Conversation & Connection

How to Talk to Your Child about Mental Health | YoungMinds

.....you can't fix everything when your child is struggling, you can make them feel seen and understood – and this in itself can make them feel more able to cope.....

Talking about how they are, asking what was the best part of their day as part of everyday family life – this shows your child that you're interested in them and want to listen. It also supports them to practise thinking and talking about their feelings, helping them to get to know themselves and what they need.

...your child doesn't need you to always get it right - they just need to know you're there.



It is often easier to have these conversations whilst doing another activity

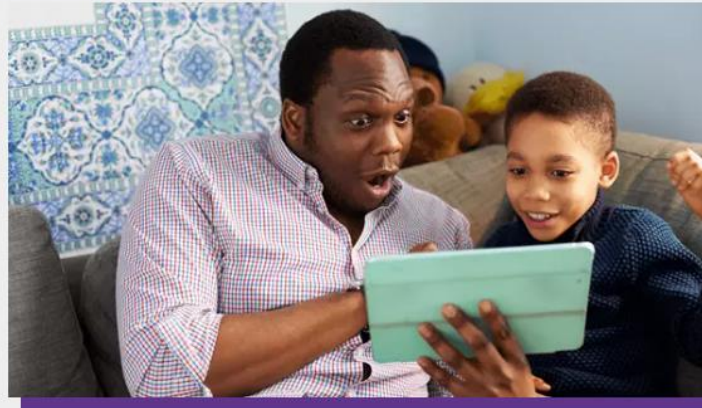
Activities you can do to support conversations with your child

Lots of children and young people find it easier to talk while doing an activity. This takes the pressure off because they don't have to sit still or make eye contact all the time, and because it makes pauses and silences more comfortable.

Having something to do with their hands, or something practical to focus on, can also make it easier for some children and young people to reflect or think more clearly.

Rather than feeling like a 'big chat', the conversation can start more naturally while you're both doing something you enjoy.

Try picking one of our activity ideas and giving it a go.



💡 20-minute activities for younger children



🕒 Longer activities for younger children



💡 20-minute activities for teenagers



🕒 Longer activities for teenagers



What activities could you be doing whilst holding these conversations?

The ZONES of Regulation®

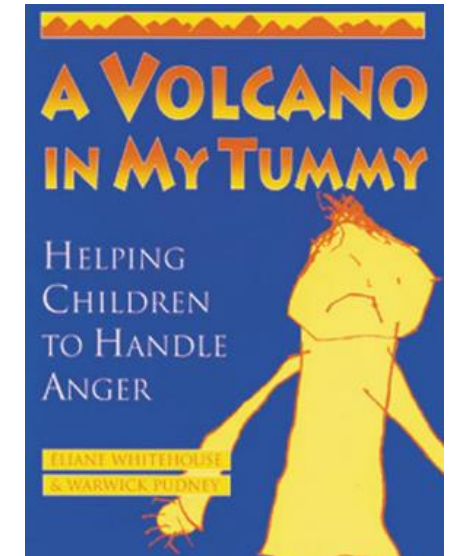
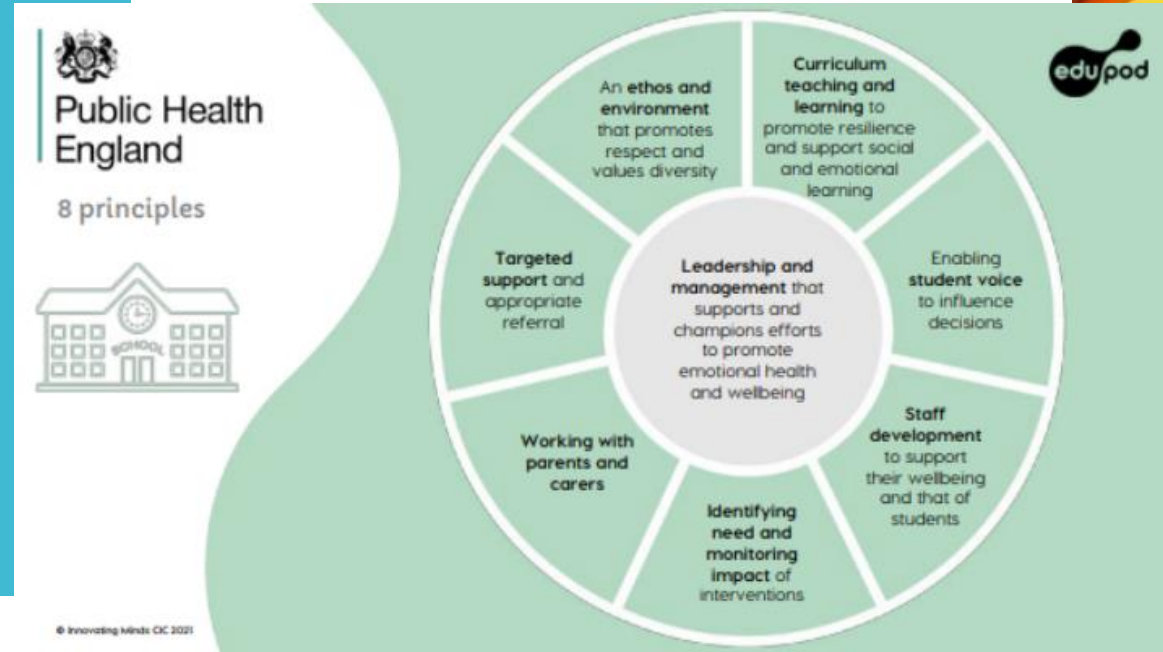
| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | | |
| BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly | GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn | YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control | RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control |



co-regulation



School's approach



Other helpful tools and ideas

The more time that can be spent
outdoors, the better!

