



Impact Education®

Edgewood Primary School

Anxiety: what it is and how to help

The running order:

- What is anxiety and what causes it?
- When is it a problem...and when is it not?
- How can anxiety affect a child?
- What can support an anxious child?
- Some 'in the moment' strategies

What is anxiety and what causes it?



- Anticipating potential threats
- Adrenalin
- Cortisol

What's the difference between being anxious and being scared?



Fight, flight and freeze

FIGHT

- Arguments with friends, siblings, parents or teachers.
- Aggressive when someone tries to help.
- Loses temper easily.
- Acts out.

FLIGHT

- Avoids school work or homework.
- Scrolling online.
- Spending time in room/isolating themselves.
- Excessive gaming.

FREEZE

- Staring at a blank page or re-reading the same page over and over.
- Mind goes blank.
- Holding breath.

When is it a problem...and when is it not?



- What can you remember about the times when you felt good? What were you doing? Who were you with? Where were you?
- What is one thing you are going to build into your days going forward to boost your mood?

- What can you remember about the times when you felt low? What were you doing? Who were you with? Where were you?
- What boundaries do you want to create to limit these things?

How can anxiety affect a child?

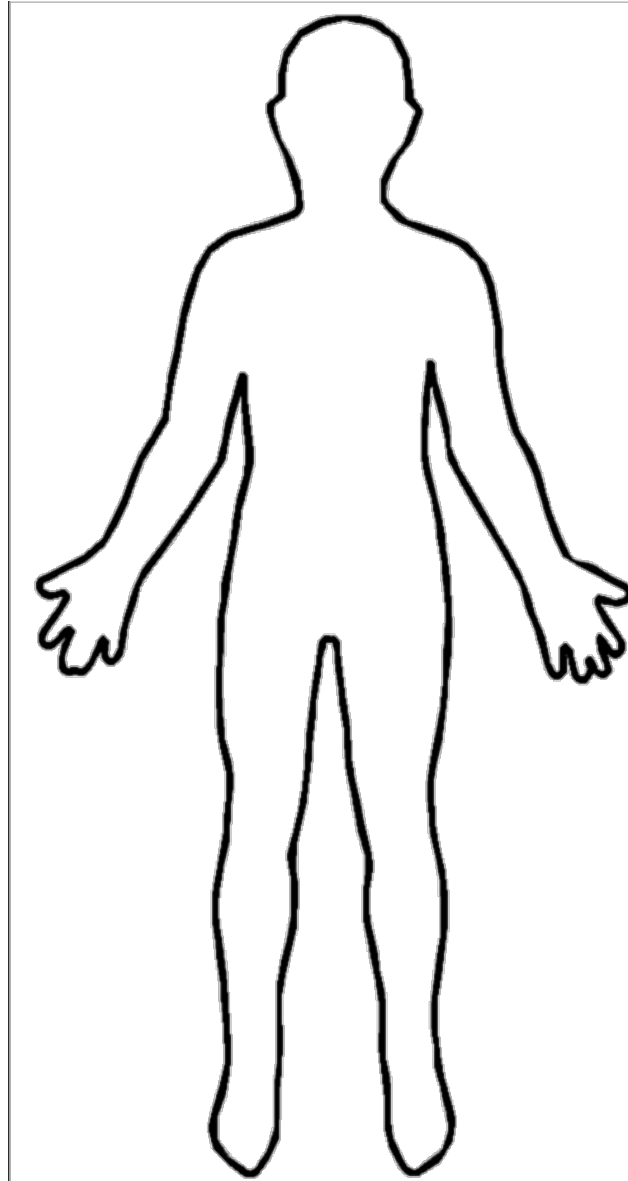
Wooshing sound in ears

Tight chest/hard to take a big breath

Heart pounding

Clammy hands

Shaking knees



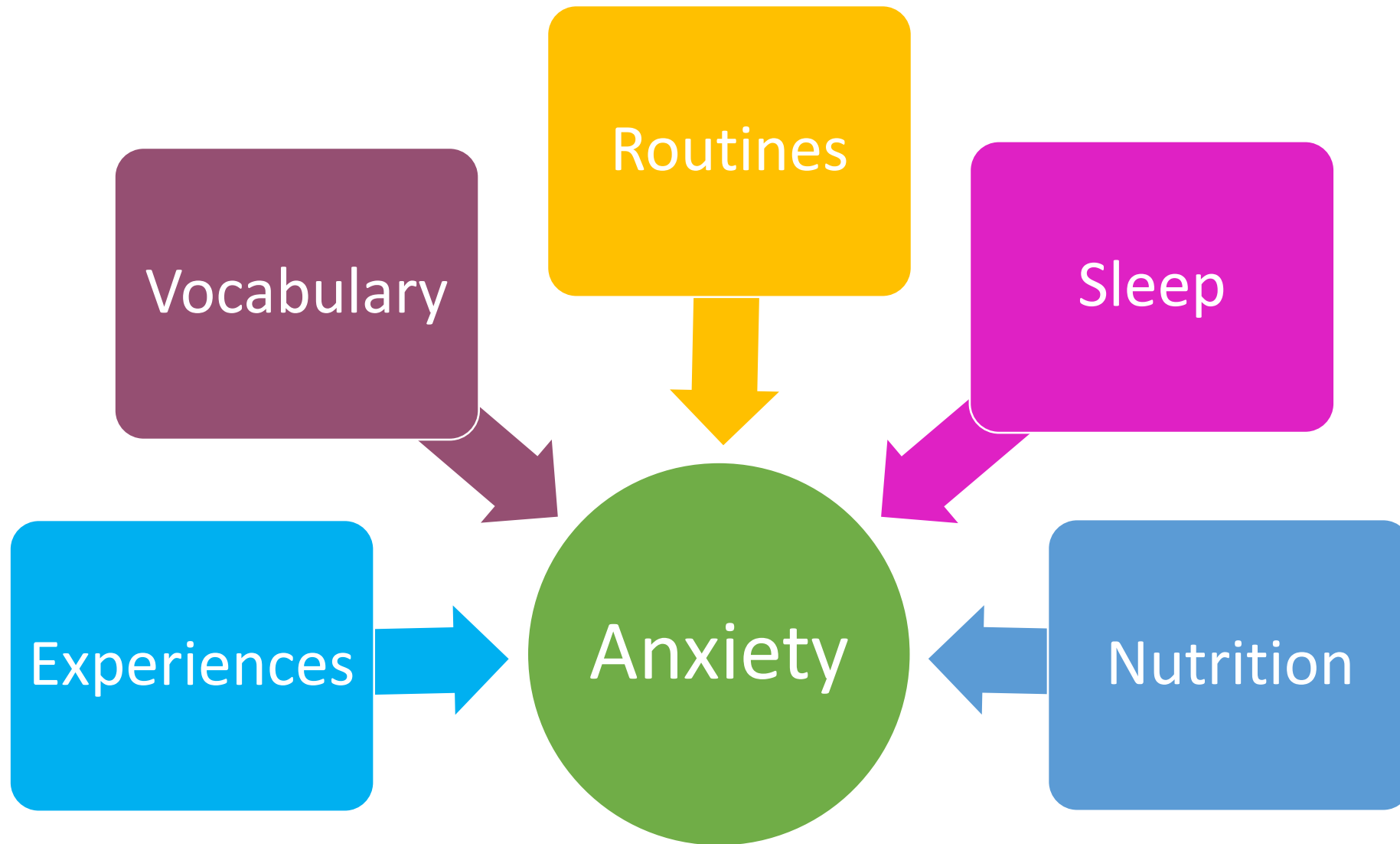
Hot, flushed cheeks

Tight throat,/rash on neck

Heavy, sick feeling/fluttering feeling in stomach

Trembling/feeling cold/goosebumps

What can support an anxious child?



We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Michael Rosen

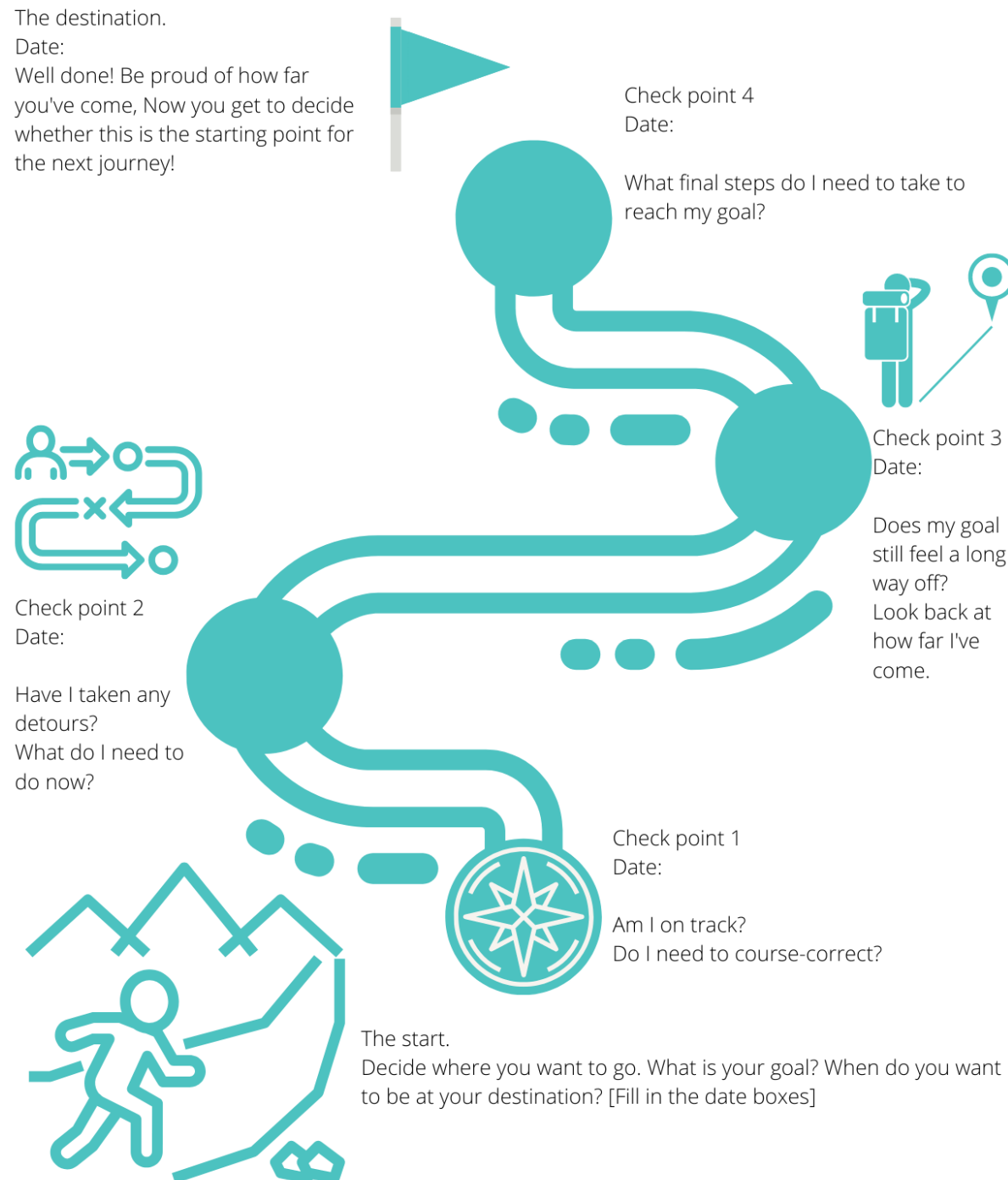
Helen Oxenbury



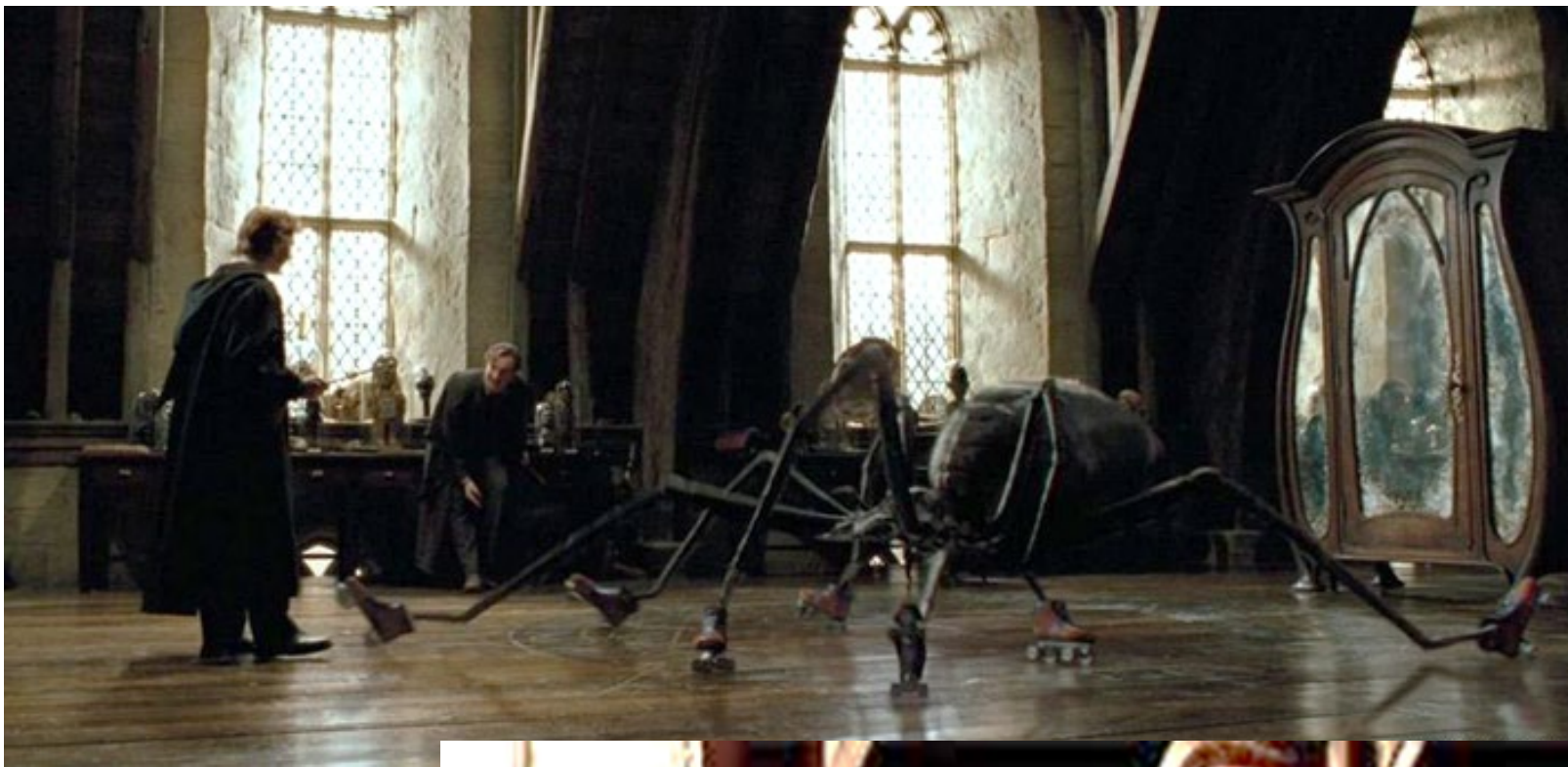
1. Go through it!
2. Avoid the temptation to rescue
3. Help them to tolerate the discomfort

- Bank of evidence – self efficacy
- Graded exposure
- Do things together

Experiences

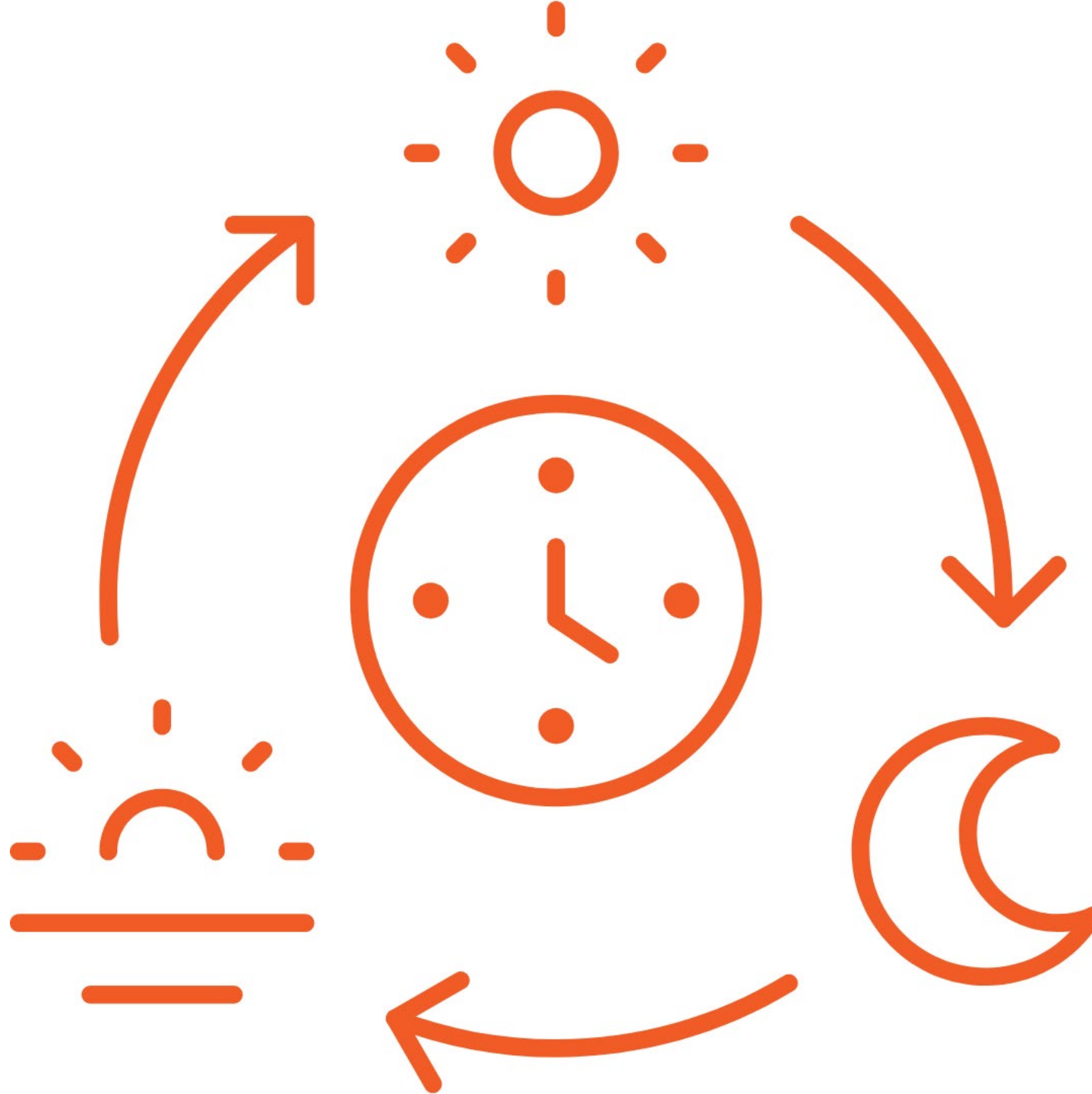


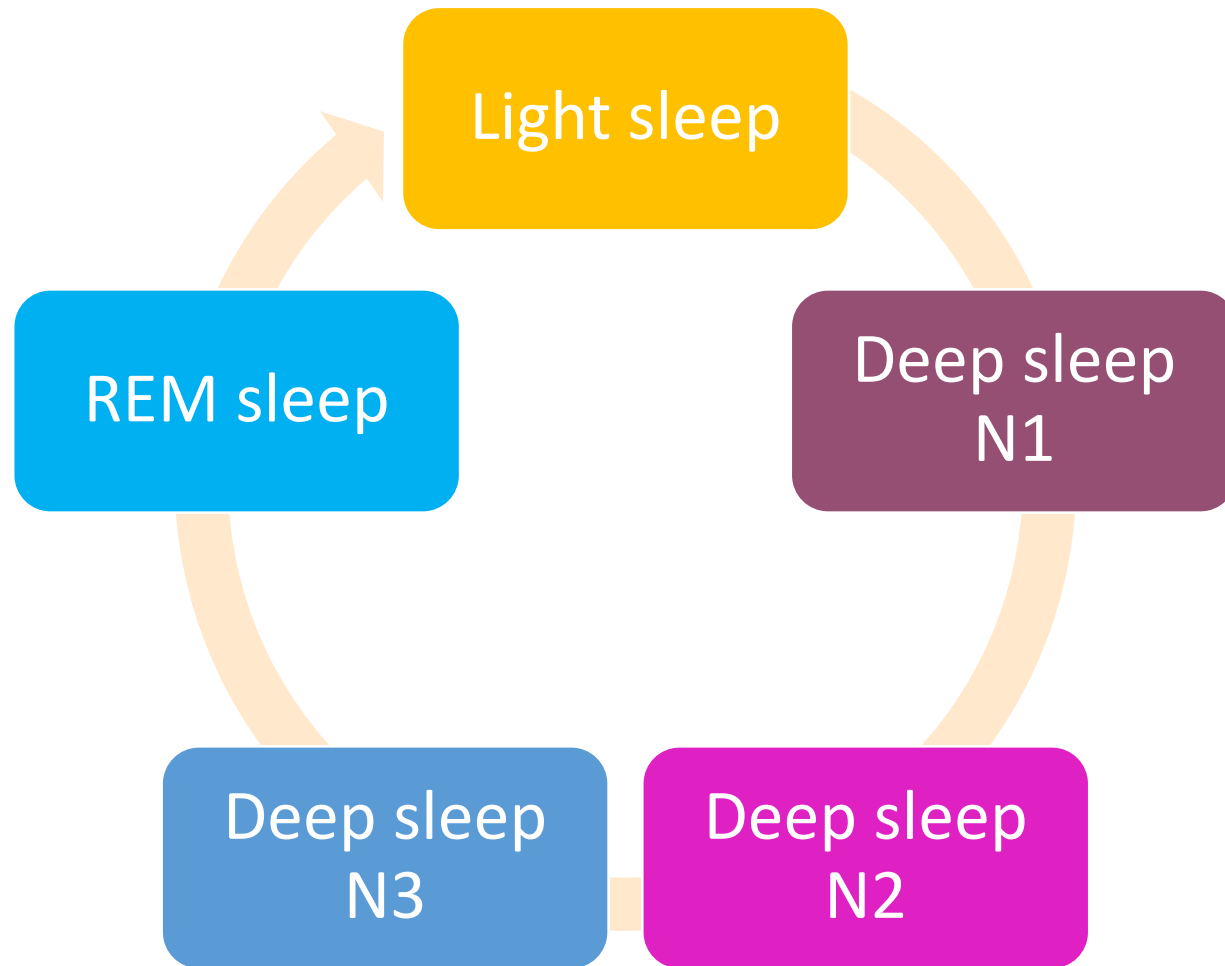
Vocabulary



- The words we use are often more important than we realise.
- They can reinforce, or even create, thoughts, beliefs, anxieties and fears.
- Help your child develop some standard responses to anxiety's 'voice'.
- If your child becomes anxious, listen carefully to the words they repeatedly use, and help them to reframe their language.
- Challenge the 'what ifs'
- Ask questions to help them figure things out for themselves
- Give some time for non-demanding talk

Routines





Sleep

Alpha

Theta

Delta

We need between 4-5 of these cycles a night to remain healthy

Regular routines are important!

Teenagers often only get 2-3 of these cycles!

What?

- We don't know for sure!
- We spend 1/3 of our lives sleeping
- Our brain works differently
- Attitudes to sleep have changed

Why?

- Recuperate and heal
- Consolidate memories
- Improves immune system
- Helps thinking
- Helps us to learn
- Supports good mental health
- Brain cleaning
- Regulates weight

Sleep

Teens who get an average of 5 hours tend to struggle with:

- Poor judgement
- Poor memory
- Impulsiveness
- Poor creativity
- Increased sustained stress
- 50% more chance of being obese
- Increased likelihood of depression or other mental illness

Sleep

Primary school age: 10-11 hours sleep

Teens: 9-10 hours

Less than this affects mood and learning

Linked to anxiety - but children don't need to worry about getting enough sleep, the body will sort itself out!

Rest is key

Pre-sleep time is normal – and can be enjoyable!

- *Have regular bed and wake up times*
- *Make the bedroom for sleeping & dark and cool*
- *Avoid fatty/spicy foods, heavy meals & caffeine before bed*
- *Turn technology off & reduce lights 30 min before bed*
- *Have somewhere to put worries*
- *Breathing exercises, lavender oil & bedtime story!*

WHAT YOU NEED	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO FIND IT
PROTEIN	Satisfies hunger & helps mental alertness	Chicken, soy products/fish
B VITAMINS	Regain energy after stressful time	Bananas, leafy greens, nuts, seeds
VITAMIN C	Largest store in body in adrenal glands	Oranges, tomatoes, leafy greens, kiwi, broccoli
MAGNESIUM	Relaxes muscles and reduces anxiety	Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, peanuts, leafy greens, oats, brown rice, beans – can also be absorbed through skin!
OILY FISH	Omega 3 chains important for healthy brain functioning	Mackerel, sardines, salmon

THE STRESS BUCKET

- Each one varies in size depending on current context/past experience
- When it's full we're no longer coping
- What kind of things fill the bucket each day?



FIVE STEPS TO MENTAL WELLBEING

- **Connect**

- **Be active**

- **Keep learning**

- **Give to others**

- **Be mindful**

This is what the NHS recommends based on evidence and research.

We can improve our wellbeing by building these five steps into our day-to-day lives.

Consider the balance of these 5 areas.

How to create Psychological Safety:

- 1. Remove blame**
- 2. See mistakes as learning**
- 3. Show humility by owning up to mistakes**

Some 'in the moment' strategies

- Mental health spot checks
- Match feelings to tools
- Comic strip conversations
- Breathing techniques
- Having a go-to list or 'toolkit'
- Strength reminders
- The smallest step
- Rating the levels



Tools You Can Use:

Exercise
Relaxation
Awareness
Social time
New perspectives
Sensory
Interests

Never underestimate the power of the little things.