

Zones of Regulation

What are the zones of regulation?

The Zones are a way to help children have a better understanding of how they are feeling and what they can do to move around in the zones so that they can feel better.

There are 4 colours: green, blue, yellow and red. The aim is to help children be more aware and independent in controlling their emotions, reactions, and improve their problem-solving skills.

Blue



Sad
Tired
Bored
Poorly
Little energy
Moving slowly

Green



Calm
Happy
Focused
Good to go
Ready to learn

Yellow



Excited
Anxious
Worried
Frustrated
Silly/wiggly

Red



Mean
Angry
Yelling/hitting
Out of control
Needs space to calm
down

Have a conversation with your student about situations that put them in these zones.

What do they notice in their bodies?

Deep Belly Breathing

When to use the skill

This skill can be helpful when children start to feel angry, frustrated or too excited. When they are in the yellow or red zone, their breathing may change, becoming more rapid and shallow. They may notice their heart is beating faster than usual.

“Practice using this skill with children when they are feeling calm. That will make it easier for them to use when they need it.”

This skill can increase or decrease energy levels.

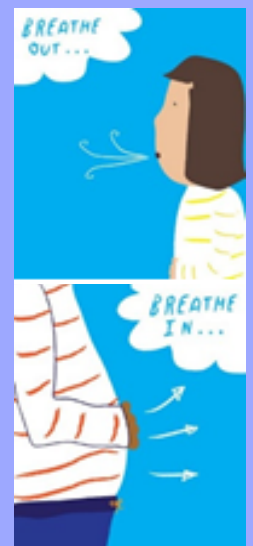
Connect your mind and body

Use when in the yellow or red zone.

Both adults and children can use this skill

Step by Step

1. Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach.
2. Take a deep breath in slowly through your nose for 7 seconds; both your hands should rise gently as you breathe.
3. Hold the breath for 2 seconds.
4. Release the breath slowly for 11 seconds.
5. Repeat until you feel calm



Body Scan

When to use the skill

The body scan can help children be more aware of their body. Use this skill to focus their attention on different areas of their body. It also gives them a chance to stop and calm down.



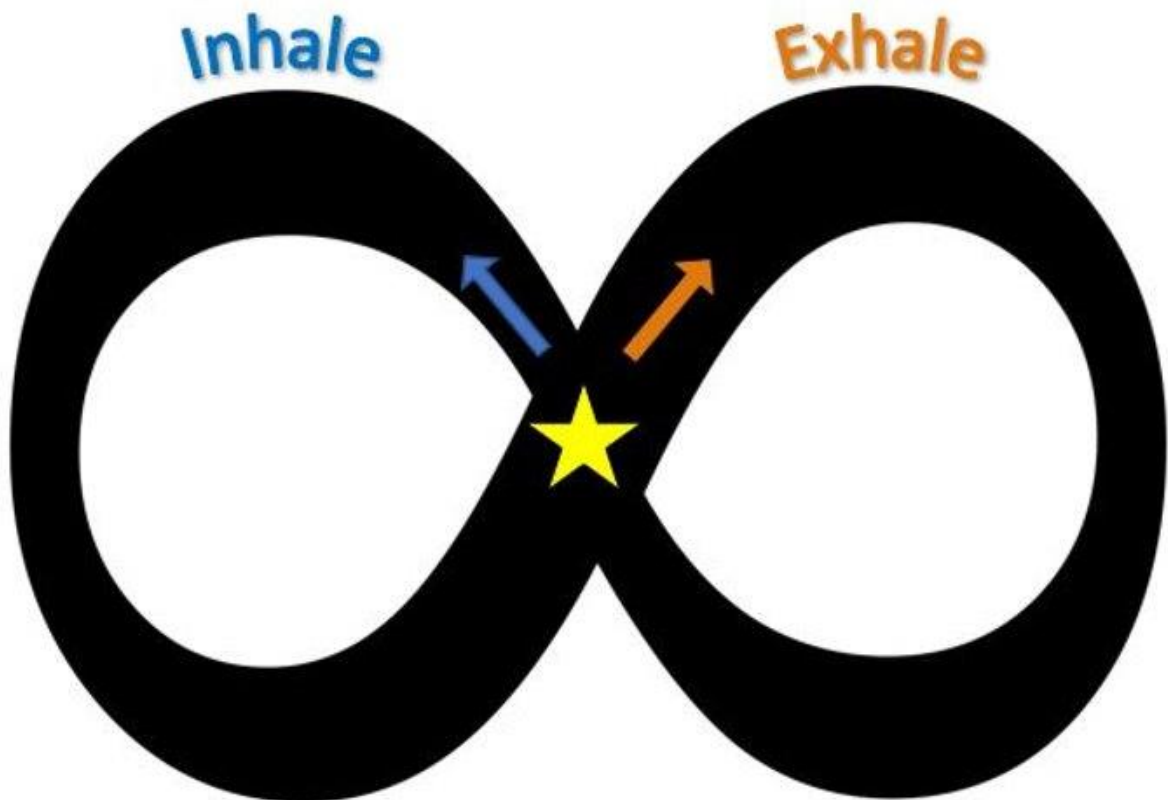
Click the above image for a body scan video.

1. Sit in a comfortable position, and bring attention to your body. Close your eyes if that's comfortable for you. Take a few deep breaths
2. Bring your attention to the top of your head. What do you feel? As you breathe, try to relax your head.
3. Bring your attention to your neck and throat. Let them be soft and relaxed. Soften your jaw. Let your facial muscles relax. Smile gently and softly.
4. Notice your back against your chair. Bring your attention to your stomach area. If your stomach is tense, let it soften. Take a breath.
5. Notice your hands. Are your hands tense? See if you can allow them to soften. Notice your arms. Let your shoulders relax.
6. Bring your attention to your legs and your feet. Feel your feet touching the ground and making a connection with it.
7. Now notice your whole body present. Take one more breath. When you're ready, you can open your eyes.

Lazy 8 Breathing

When to use the skill

Lazy 8 breathing is a good skill to help when children have either too much energy or too little energy. It can also help distract children from any worries.



1. Trace your finger in the air in the shape of the number 8 on its side
2. You can trace the picture above with your finger too if it helps
3. Breathe in (inhale) while your finger is going around one side
4. Breathe out (exhale) while your finger goes around the other side
5. Try to breathe in and out for the same amount of time on both sides

Chair Push-Up

When to use the skill

This skill can be used when children are in any one of the zones. It can help them to move from blue to green and it can help to move from red/yellow to green.

“Get your child to practice the skill more than once to see if they find it helpful.”

This skill can increase or decrease energy levels.

Even small lifts is enough

You can try this sitting on the floor with your legs crossed

Both adults and children can use this skill

Step by Step

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Push your bottom up from the seat of the chair with flat palms (not too far or you might hurt yourself).
3. Hold this for 5-10 seconds.
4. Sit back down on the chair.
5. Repeat until you feel a change.



Body skills

Finger Pull

Link your fingers together and pull them apart. You should be able to feel a stretch along your arms and across your back.



Palm Push

Face your palms together. Push them firmly together and hold for 10 seconds.

Release and repeat the motion. Where can you feel your body tensing?



Hand and Arm Massage

Press the palm on your other hand using your thumb do this 5-10 times and repeat on the other hand.

Massage your arms with your other hand. You can either do this at the same time or one at a time.



Yoga Stretch

When to use the skill

Stretching can be a great way to bring energy into the body when children are feeling tired. It can also help calm children if they are feeling worried or too excited.



Click the above image for a yoga stretch video.

1. Bring your feet hip width apart. Take a second to stand nice and tall. Squeeze your shoulders up to your ears on an inhale, then drop them on an exhale. Repeat 3x.
2. Nod your head up and down repeatedly. Then shake your head in a no motion, giving your neck a chance to stretch.
3. Place your palms together and raise your hands up towards the sky. Breathe in and stretch to one side. As you breathe out move to the other side.
4. Balance on one leg and stand up tall. Hold the pose for 3 breaths. Try again on the other leg.
5. Place your hands on your hips and lift your chest out proud. Breathe 3 deep breaths and notice how your body feels.

Tense & Relax Exercise

When to use the skill

This exercise can be useful to relax the body. Sometimes our muscles can be tense when we are feeling stressed or worried. By tensing certain body parts on purpose and relaxing them, you are intentionally relaxing your muscles.

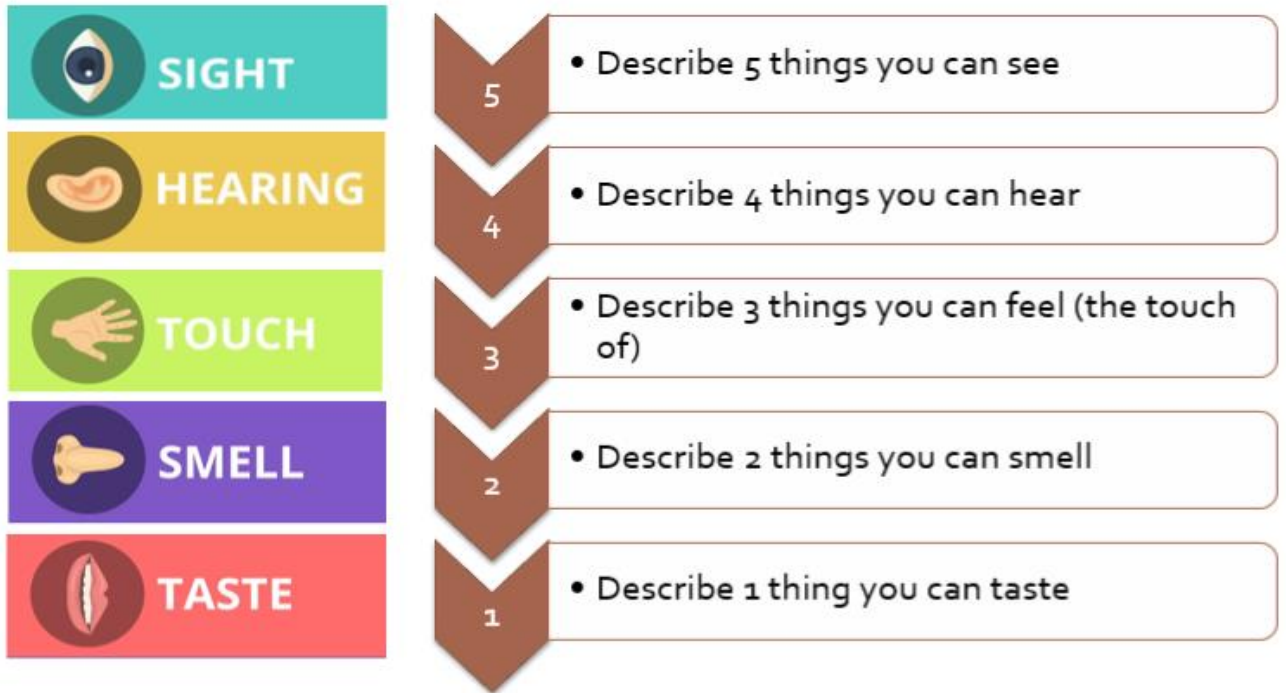







[Click the above image for a video.](#)

1. Hunch your shoulders up in a shrug and squeeze the muscles in your back for 10 seconds. Squeeze as hard as you can without hurting yourself. Then drop your shoulders and relax.
2. Screw up your faces for 10 seconds. Relax your facial muscles.
3. Now for 10 seconds squeeze your hands into fists as tight as you can but remember not to hurt yourself. Release and relax.
4. Lastly, squeeze your feet up into balls and hold it for 10 more seconds. Release and relax.
5. Notice how your whole body is feeling after you have tensed and relaxed it.

5 Senses Activity

Follow the steps below. Children can do this in their heads or they can describe out loud with you or a friend. It can help to count each thing on their hand as they go.



 SIGHT	5	• Describe 5 things you can see
 HEARING	4	• Describe 4 things you can hear
 TOUCH	3	• Describe 3 things you can feel (the touch of)
 SMELL	2	• Describe 2 things you can smell
 TASTE	1	• Describe 1 thing you can taste

How does this work?

The 5 senses activity is known as a grounding exercise. Grounding exercises are great at reducing panic, anxiety, or any strong emotion because they bring your attention into the present moment. Provided you are not in actual danger, this lets your survival brain (amygdala) know that you are safe. It can also provide a distraction from worried thoughts about the past or future.

Calming Images: Your Safe Space

If the children have already thought about their calming image, you can go straight to the script below to guide them through the exercise. If not, you can start by inviting them to imagine a special place in their mind where they know they will be completely relaxed, completely safe, and completely happy.

Let them know that it can be a real place, somewhere they have happy memories of, or a place they are imagining – or a mix of the two. It's their special place so they can decide what it's like!



Script:

1. Sitting up straight in your chairs, get your body comfortable and gently close your eyes.
2. Slowly take three deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. (*pause*)
3. Imagine you are in this place. This calm, happy place.
4. Try to picture it as clearly as possible - What can you see around you? What colours and textures can you see? Is there anyone else there?
5. What is the light like? Can you hear anything? Is it quiet or loud? The sounds make you feel relaxed and happy.
6. What can you feel? Can you feel the sun on your skin or a light breeze or the feeling of soft sand or fresh cool grass under your toes?
7. Can you smell anything nice and relaxing in this special place where you feel completely calm, happy and safe?
8. Take a moment to look and imagine as much detail as possible so it feels real.
9. (wait a minute or two, then ask them to open their eyes)

Using Distractions

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that feel difficult, but we cannot do much to change them at the time - like waiting for the bus when you're late to school. It's stressful but there's not much you can do about it. Stressing out will not change anything so in these situations we can use distractions until the wave of big feelings passes a bit.



Examples!

- Listening to music
- Talking about something else
- Naming an animal for every letter of the alphabet
- Go for a walk in nature
- Watch TV or read a book

Choose a distraction that is tricky enough that you have to concentrate but not so tricky as to stress you out.

While you are doing this your Thinking Brain has time to reconnect and your body has time to calm, so you can start to feel more calm and in control.

Helpful Thoughts

Thoughts are not facts!

...But they do affect how we feel and behave – if we think we are a failure it makes us feel sad and less likely to try again.

The good news is we can challenge and change these unhelpful thoughts into ones that make us feel better and more confident!

Follow the steps below:

CATCH IT

Notice it's one of those pesky unhelpful worry thoughts again

CHECK IT

Take a step back – Am I sure things are actually as bad as I feel they are? How big is my problem?

CHALLENGE IT

Is there any evidence this thought might not be 100% true?
Could there be another way of looking at this?

CHANGE IT

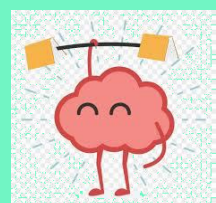
What is a more helpful way of thinking about this?

Here are some examples of more helpful thoughts:

Remember your strengths!

Praise yourself for trying and having a go

Remind yourself of your achievements



Check How Big Your Problem Is

Use this skill to support children to gain perspective on their problems and to notice that just because we have a big feeling it does not mean that the problem itself is big. Losing a game can feel like the end of the world and that is normal. If we practice noticing it is not a big problem we can use our calming skills to regulate our emotions so that we do not react in a big way.

5

Emergency

You definitely need help from a grownup (fire, someone is hurt and needs to go to the hospital, a car accident, danger).



4

Gigantic problem

You can change with a lot of help (getting lost, hitting, kicking, or punching a friend, throwing or breaking things, bullying).



3

Big problem

You can change with some help (someone is mean to you or takes something that is yours, a minor accident, needing help calming down).



2

Medium problem

You can change with a little help (feeling sick, tired, or hungry, someone bothering you, being afraid, needing help).



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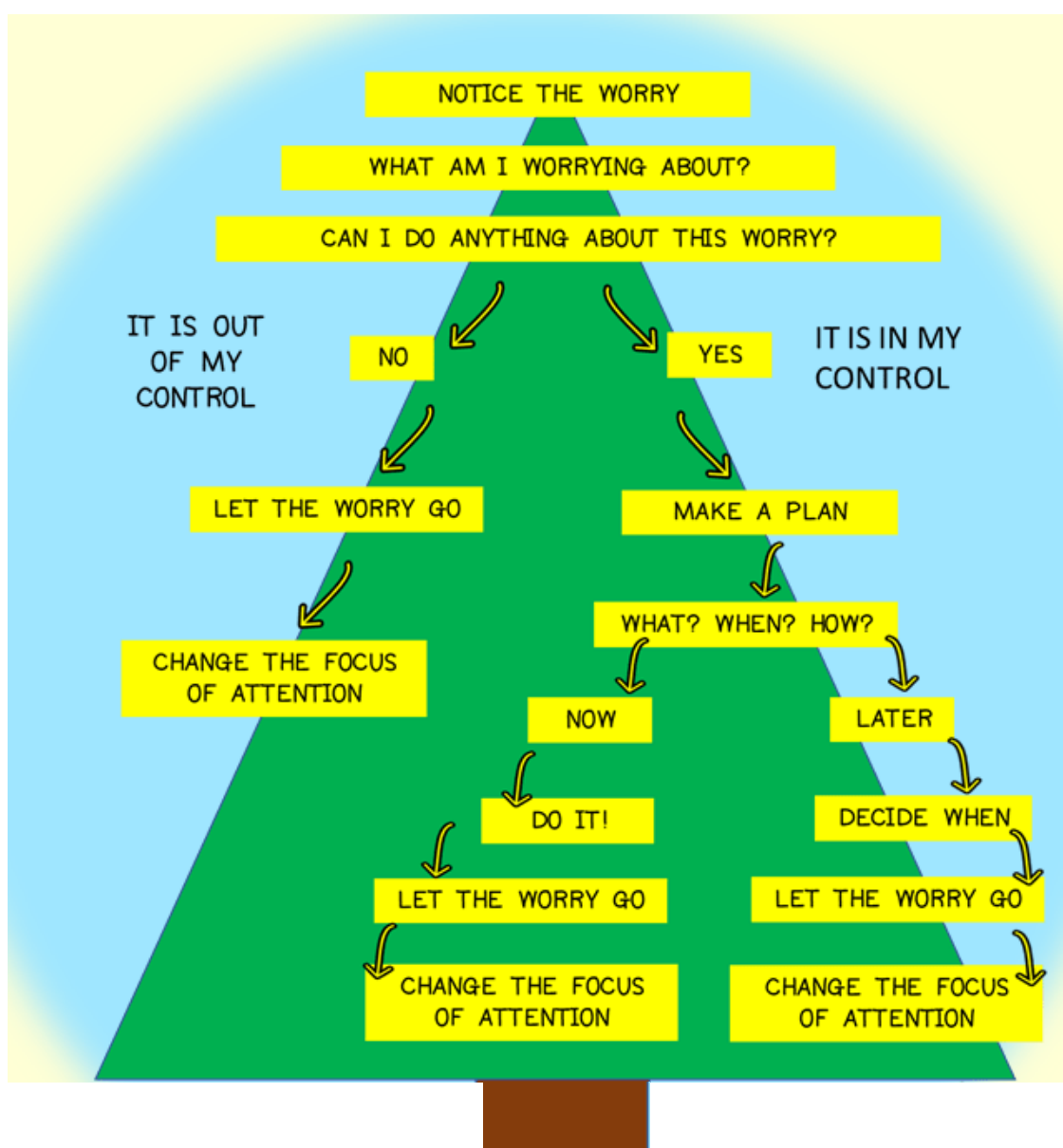
Little problem

You can change with a little reminder (not being line leader, not winning a game, not taking turns, making a mess).

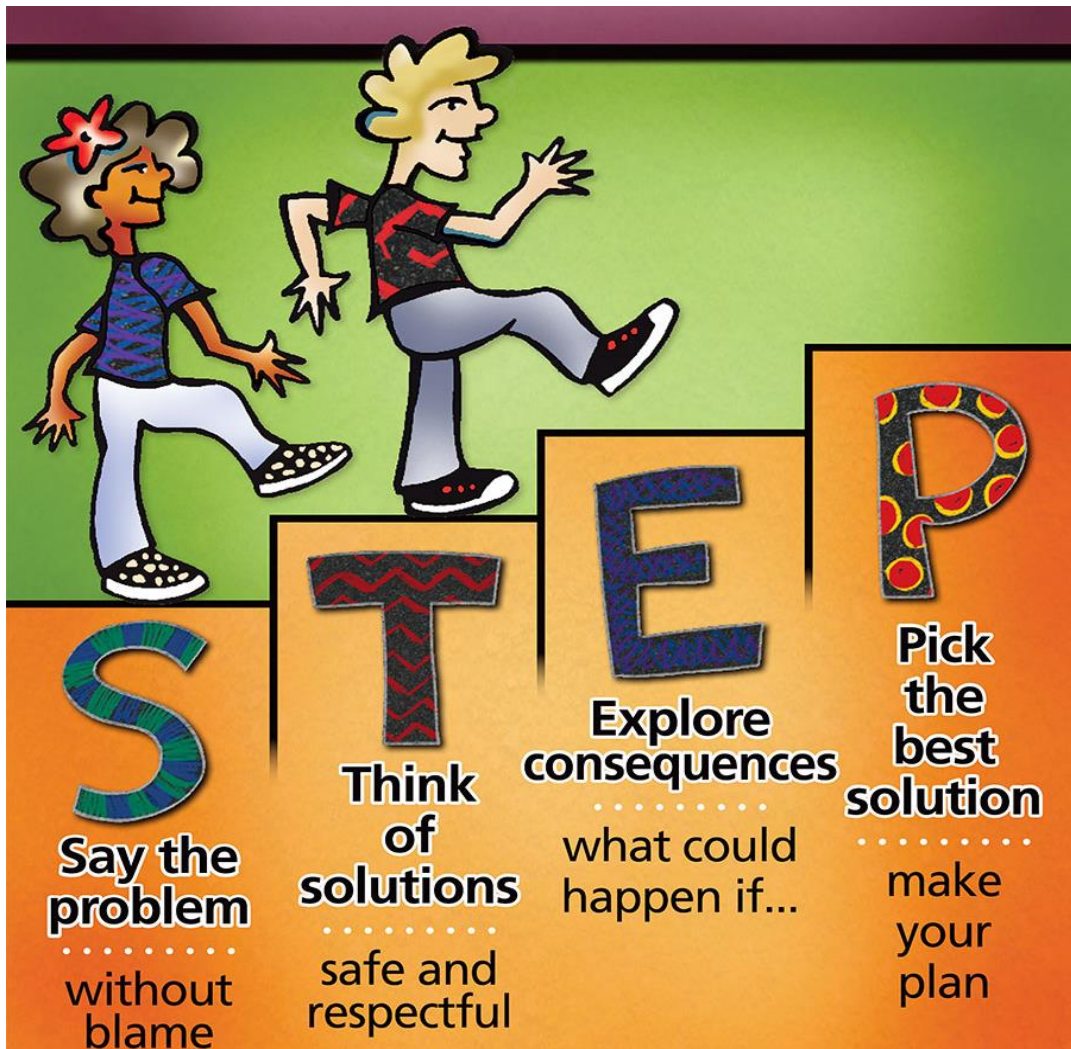


Worry Decision Tree

The worry tree can help you speak to the children about their worrying thoughts. It uses a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) technique to help people notice and challenge their worries. It can also help you create an action plan to help manage the child's worries. You can encourage them to use their other Brain Buddy skills to help them to let their worries go.



Problem Solving



Top Tip!

The best solution is not always the first one that pops into your head – especially if you have flipped your lid and your Guard Dog Survival Brain is in charge. We know our Thinking Brain is best at thinking through consequences, thinking how what we do might affect others and solving problems.

To solve problems well we need our Thinking Brain to be ‘online’ and connected. This means we might need to use our Body Clues and try to calm down using one of our Brain Buddies Skills before we can do effective problem solving.

MyMindTV Videos

Hammersmith, Fulham, Ealing and Hounslow Mind have their own website/tv channel called my-mind.tv

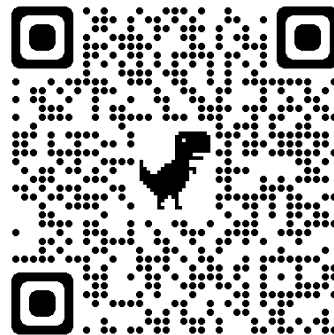
You can find lots of different resources and strategies to use for free

Partner agencies can contribute to the channel

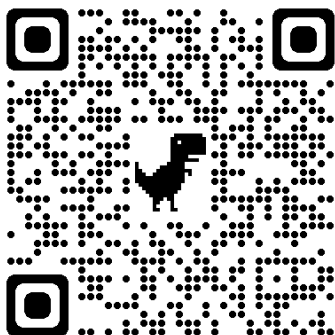
What is Anxiety?



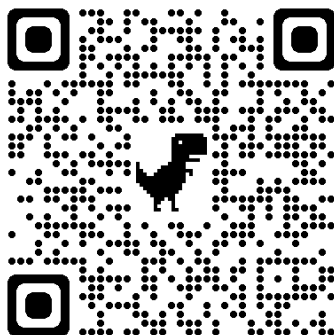
Zones of Regulation



Deep Breathing



Distractions and Five Ways to Wellbeing



For blog posts, and to learn more about the support we offer, Visit our website: www.hfehmind.org.uk

Signposting

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) at HFEH Mind is an early intervention service, providing support to prevent escalation of mental health difficulties.

1:1 Support For Children

We provide 6 – 8 weekly CBT based guided self-help sessions to support children aged 8 and over to manage feelings of sadness or worry.

1:1 Support For Parents/Carers

We also provide 6 – 8 weekly CBT based guided self-help sessions to support and empower parents/carers to manage their child's anxiety or behaviours.

Click the link below to complete a referral:

[Mental Health Support Team Online Referral Form](#)

Telephone Drop In

We provide a telephone drop in service where you can speak to one of our team about a child's mental health and wellbeing. This service is available to parent/carers and school staff.

Please note, this is not a counselling service

Click the link below to schedule a call:

[Mental Health Support Team Telephone Drop In Service](#)

Further support for children



Hub of Hope



The Hub of Hope is the UK's leading mental health support database. It is provided by national mental health charity, Chasing the Stigma, and brings local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support and services together in one place for the first time.

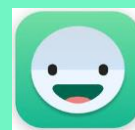
Self-Care Apps



Calm
Calm is a mediation app



Headspace
Headspace is a mediation app



Daylio
Daylio is a self care bullet journal