



timetotalk
WEST BERKSHIRE

LITTLE HEATH ANXIETY (EXAM STRESS) Thursday 7th March 2024

KATE ADAMS
DEPUTY CLINICAL LEAD

**However you are feeling...
you are not alone.**

We are a charity that delivers an emotional and psychological support service for young people aged 11-25 and parents connected to West Berkshire.





timetotalk
WEST BERKSHIRE

WHO ARE WE?

- ❖ Charity established in 1985
- ❖ Promote mental and emotional wellbeing in children and young people aged 11-25 in West Berkshire
- ❖ One to one counselling:
- ❖ 6,000+ One to one counselling sessions in 2021
- ❖ BACP accredited
- ❖ Presentations, workshops, assemblies



Stress/Anxiety/Nervousness

- ❖ Pounding heartbeat
- ❖ Feeling faint/dizzy
- ❖ Sweating
- ❖ Nausea (feeling sick)
- ❖ Chest pains
- ❖ Feeling unable to breathe
- ❖ Shaky limbs
- ❖ Tense muscles
- ❖ Tense/nervous
- ❖ Short tempered
- ❖ Sense of dread
- ❖ Busy crowded mind
- ❖ Negative thoughts
- ❖ Feeling restless
- ❖ Feeling numb



THE ANXIETY/STRESS/NERVES PARADOX

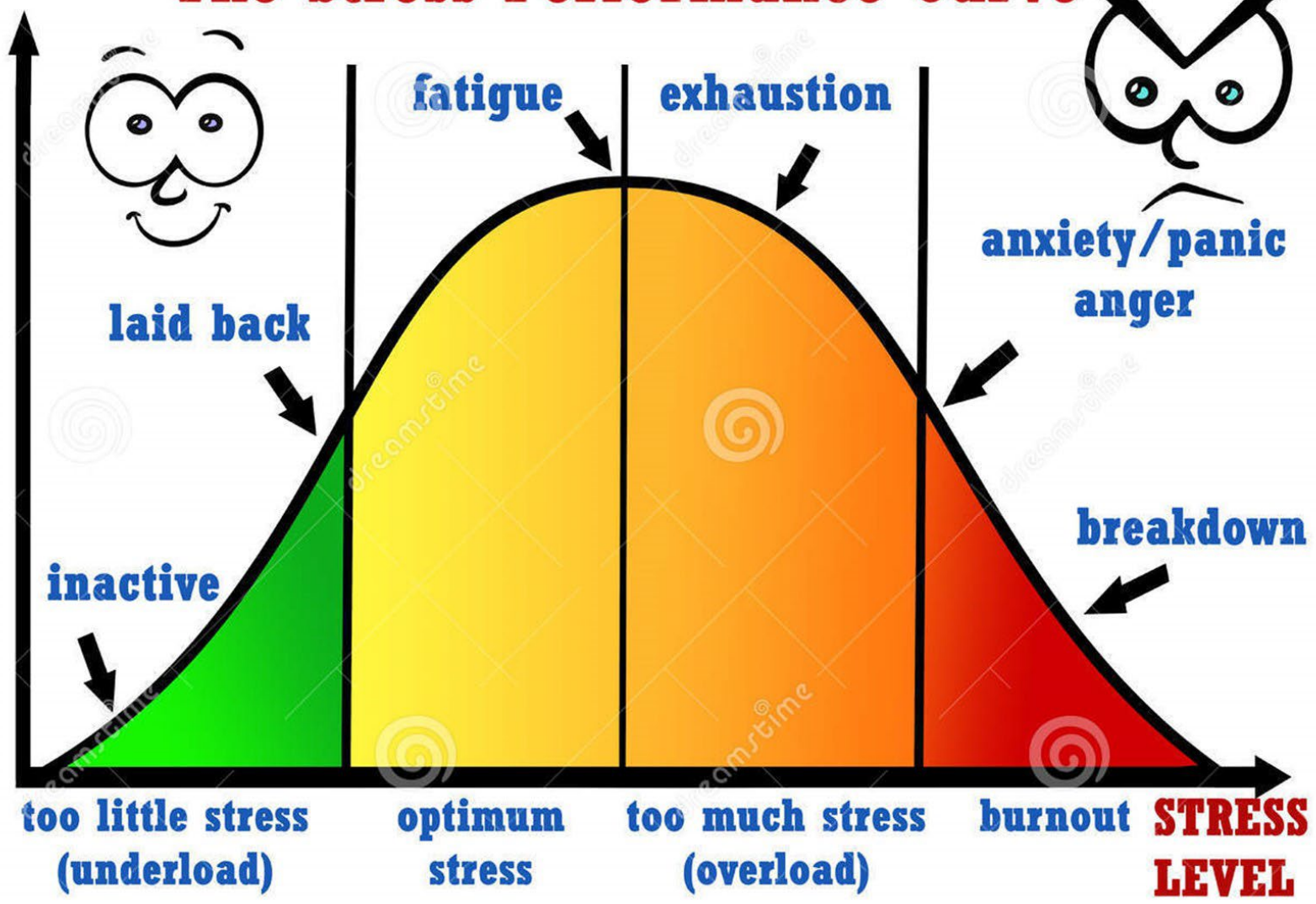


Makes us feel rubbish!

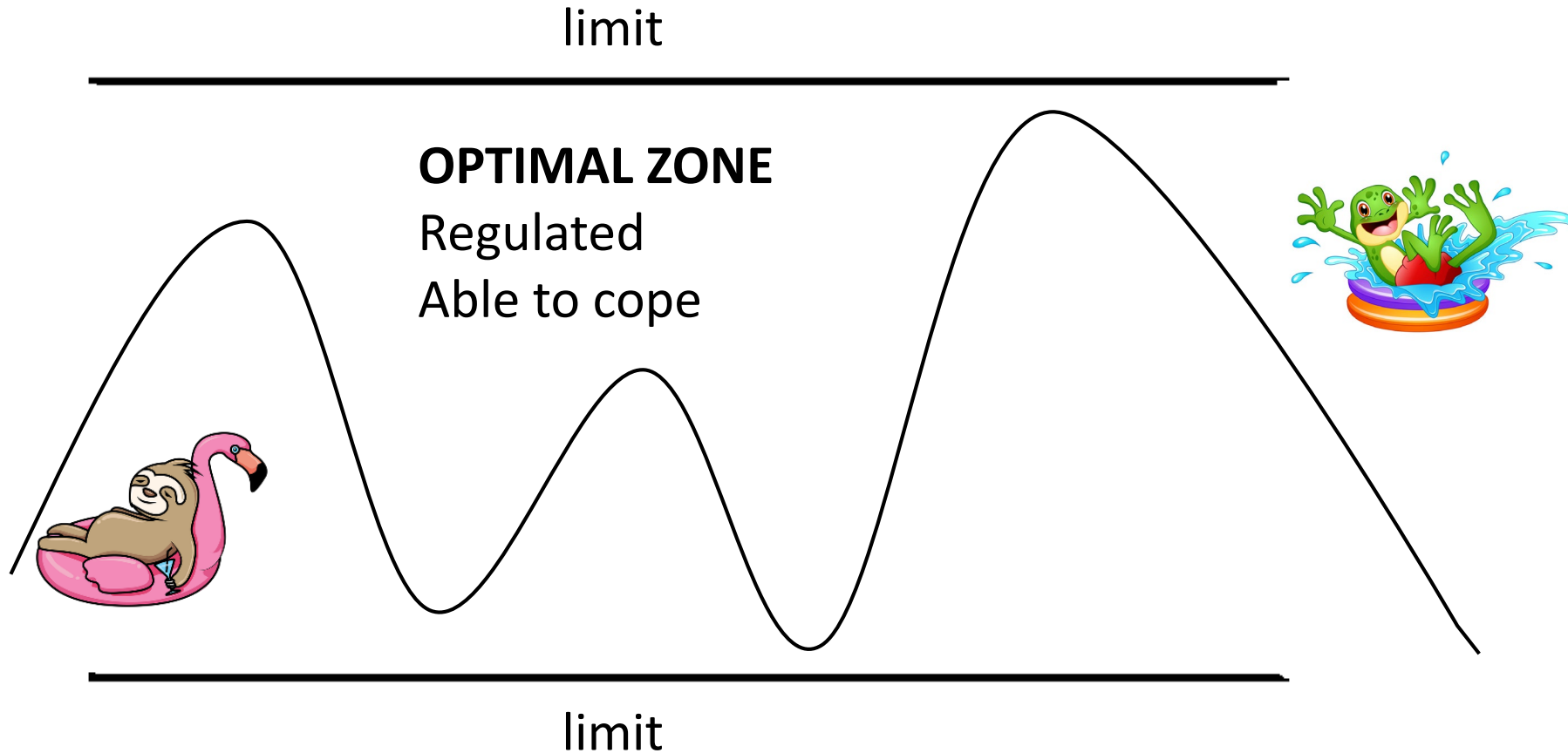
BUT.....

- ❖ Focuses attention
- ❖ Extra strength/energy
- ❖ Determination to succeed
- ❖ Provides learning opportunities
- ❖ Can be felt in enjoyable situations

The Stress Performance Curve



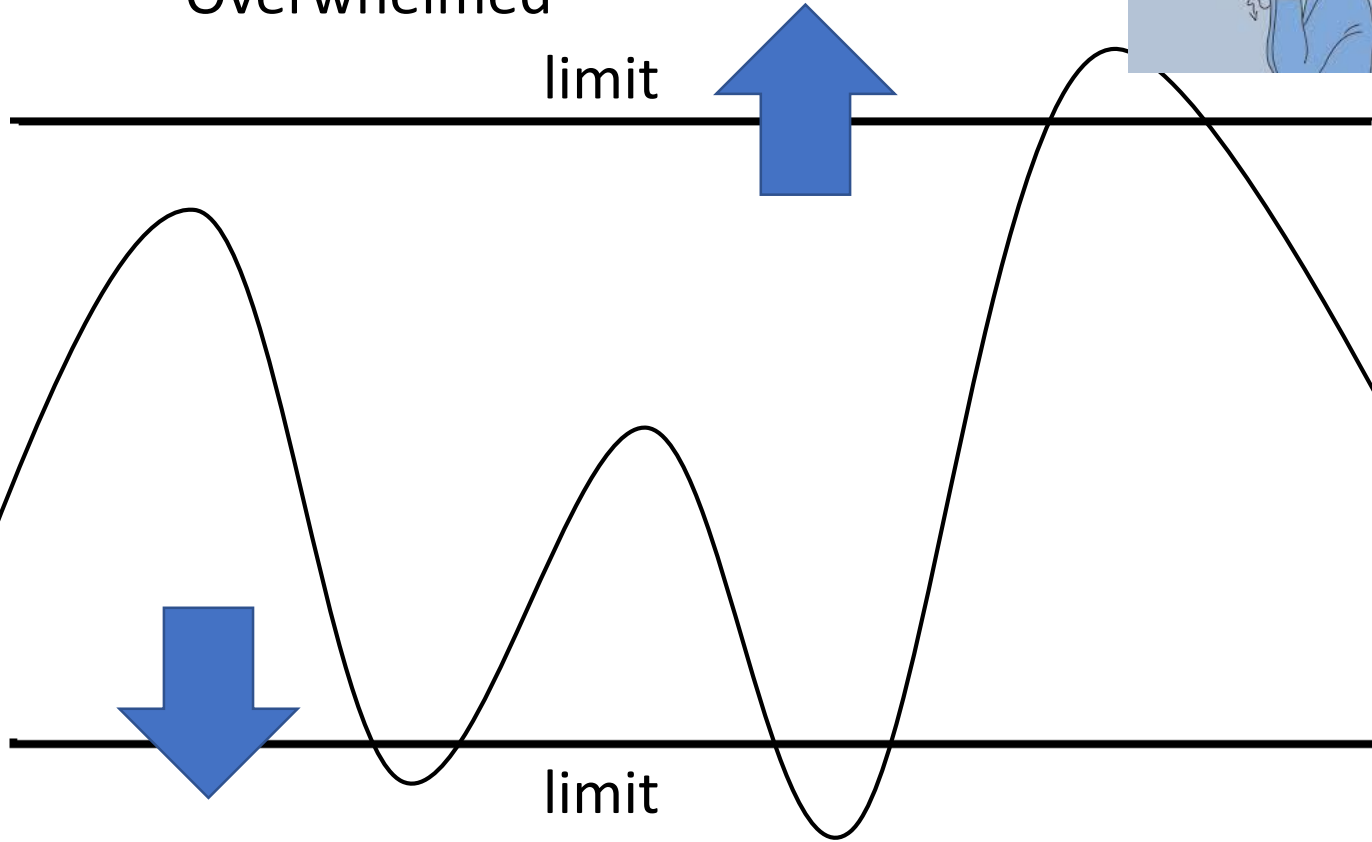
“WINDOW OF TOLERANCE”*



*Dan Siegel

UNREGULATED ZONE

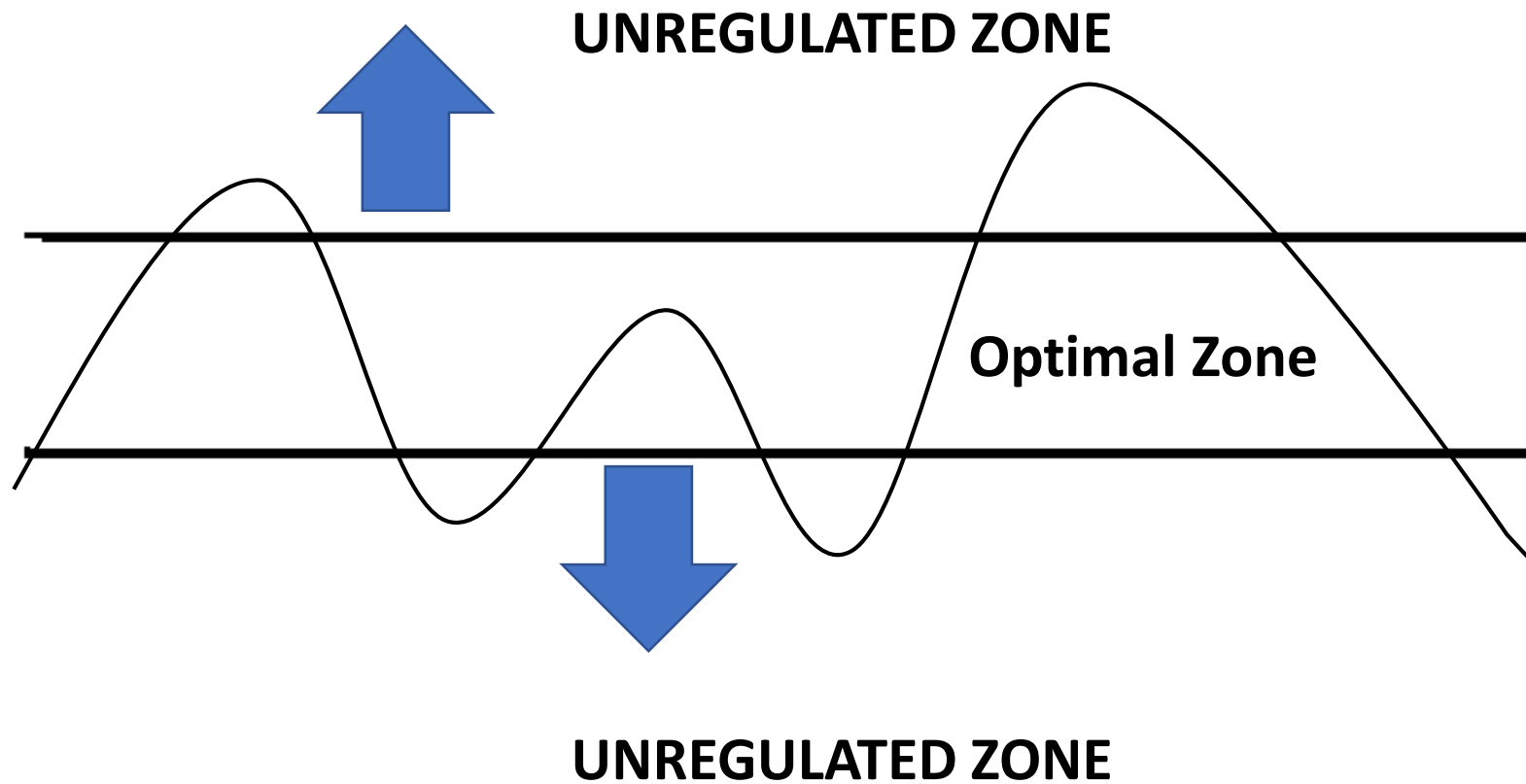
Less able/unable to Cope
Overwhelmed



UNREGULATED ZONE

Less able/Unable to Cope
Overwhelmed





Prefrontal Cortex

- ❖ Allows us to think before we act
- ❖ Decision-making
- ❖ Control over emotions & body
- ❖ Focus/Concentration
- ❖ Empathy
- ❖ Self Awareness

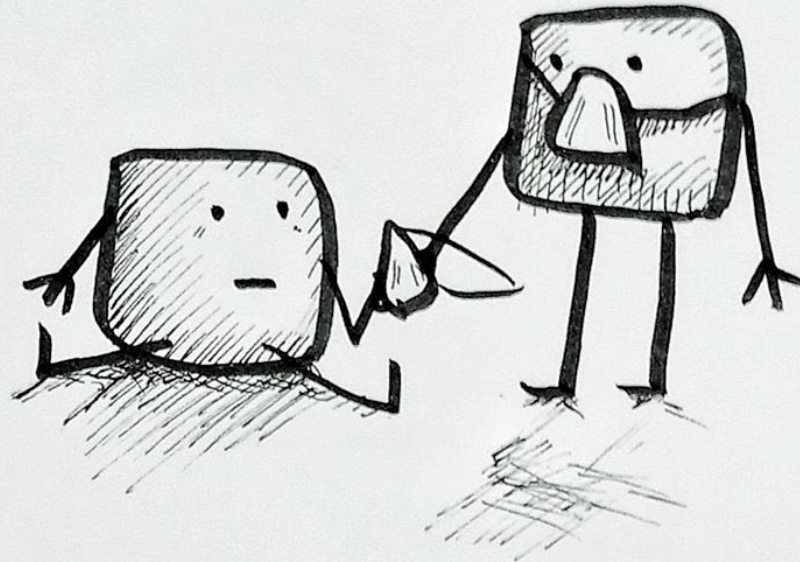


Limbic System

- ❖ Allows us to act before we think
- ❖ Fight/flight/freeze response
- ❖ Emotional reactions
- ❖ Bodily functions

What is happening in the brain?

put your own
oxygen mask
on first



ANXIOUSLITTLEMONSTERS

SUPPORTING A YOUNG PERSON

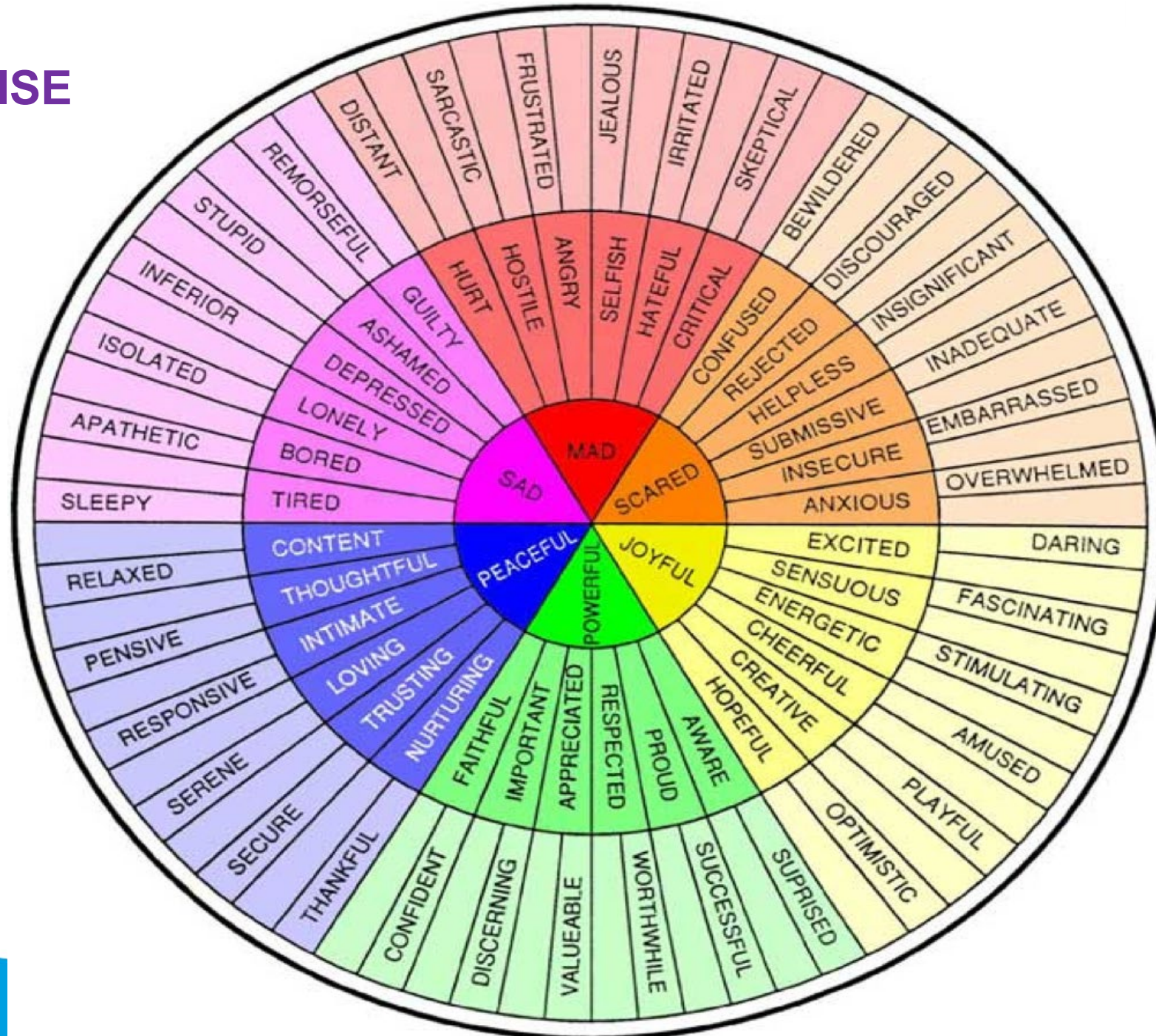
The 4 r's

- ❖ Recognise
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Regulate
- ❖ Respond/Reason



RECOGNISE

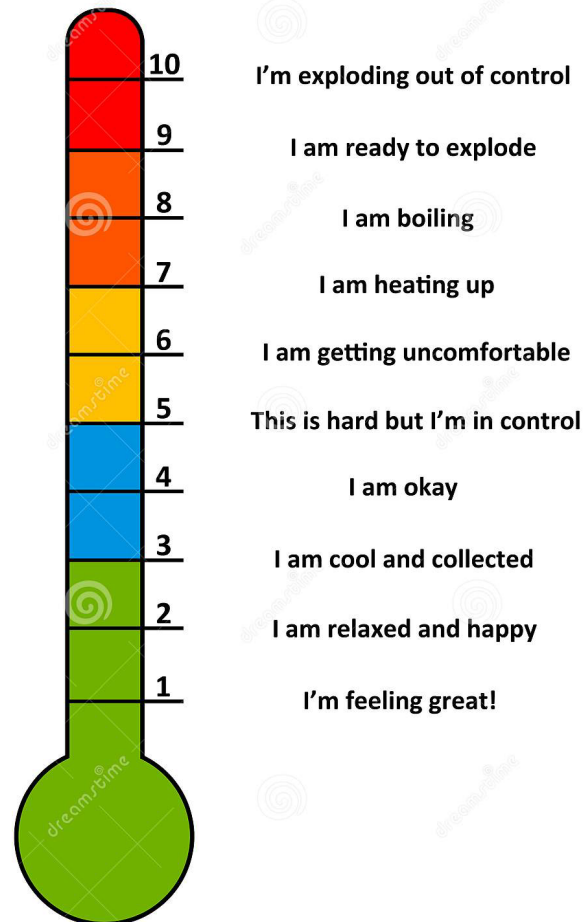
WHAT?



RECOGNISE

HOW MUCH?

Feelings thermometer





RESPECT



THE POWER OF LISTENING

ALL FEELINGS ARE VALID AND HAVE WORTH

RESPECT

INSTEAD OF.....

TRY.....



You were doing so well, don't spoil it now

Big sighs/eye rolls

Why didn't you.....?

That's what happens when....

You don't know you're born

It's just your hormones

If I'd had your chances

But you can do this so just get on with it

In my day.....

Don't worry, it will be fine...

Come on, don't cry...

You seem.....

I see

Mmmm...

Oh?

Go on....

That sounds.....

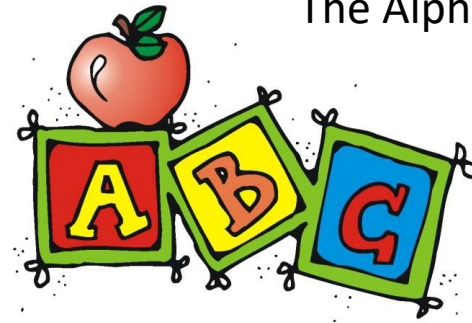
I'm hearing that.....

You wish that.....

REGULATE: Getting Back Into The Window Of Tolerance



- ❖ 5 – things I can see
- ❖ 4 – things I can hear
- ❖ 3 – things I can feel
- ❖ 2 - things I can smell
- ❖ 1 – a thing I like to taste



The Alphabet game

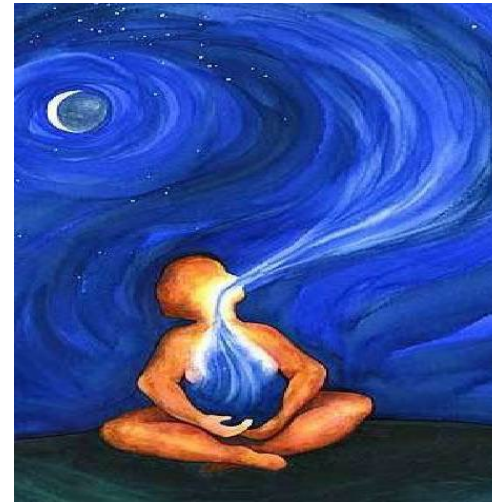
Reframing



Use your senses



Visualisation



AND BREATHE.....



- **STEP AWAY**
- **TAKE A BREATH**
- **OBSERVE**
- **PERSPECTIVE**
- **PROCEED**

STEP AWAY

Find a space, either physically or mentally imagine a safe space.



TAKE A BREATH

Taking just 5 deep breaths has been shown to help regulate emotions and calm the brain

OBSERVE

Take a moment to observe what is happening for you.

Where are you feeling tense, uncomfortable?

Are you tired, hungry, thirsty?

Do you need a hug, some alone time, a distraction?

PERSPECTIVE

Is this fact or opinion?

See the situation as an outside observer.

Is there another way of looking at it?

What would someone else see and make of it?

What advice would I give to someone else?



Proceed (with caution)

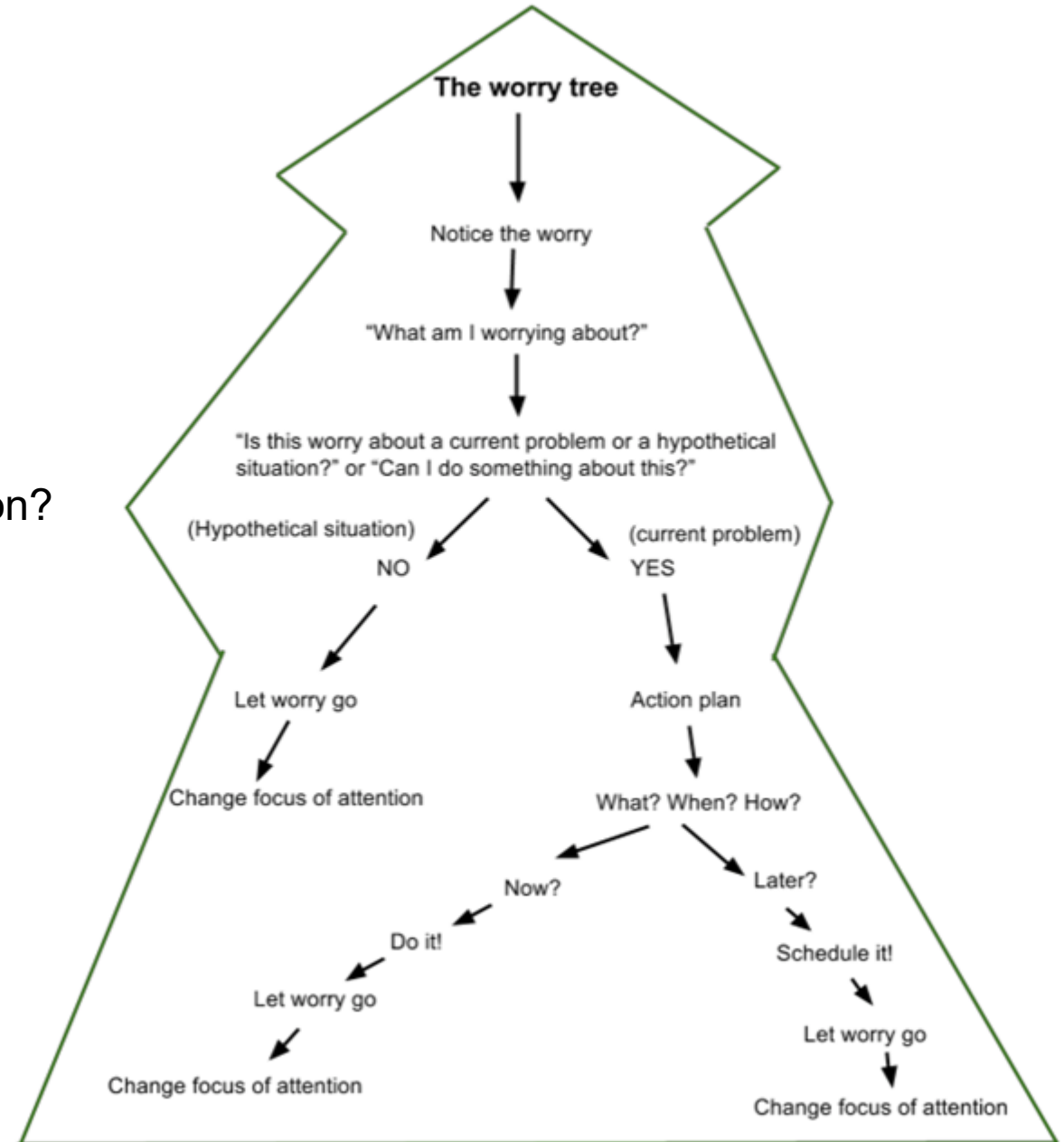
You might want to react right away but do you really need to? Take some time to think through your options – use the worry tree if useful

THE WORRY TREE

REASSURING BUT NOT DISMISSIVE

COLLABORATIVE BUT BOUNDARIED

- ❖ What is the worry/anxiety/fear?
- ❖ Is it a current problem or a hypothetical situation?
- ❖ Where is the evidence?
- ❖ What else might happen?
- ❖ What could we do?
- ❖ What has worked before?
- ❖ When could we do it?



PLANNING

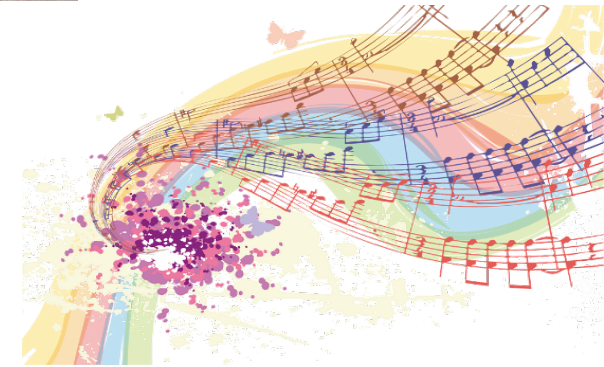
❖ SMART

- ❖ **S** – Specific
- ❖ **M** – Measurable
- ❖ **A** – Achievable
- ❖ **R** – Realistic
- ❖ **T** - Timed

❖ CLEAR

- ❖ **C** – Compassionate
- ❖ **L** – Listen
- ❖ **E** – Empathy
- ❖ **A** – Adaptable
- ❖ **R** - Reward

REGULATE: Widening the Window of Tolerance



A COMPASSIONATE APPROACH

This isn't going to be easy but
I've done tough stuff before so
let's give it a go!

One step at a time!



I've got a lot going on at the moment
– not surprising I feel rough!

.....and that's ok!

I've got this.

I'm can't do it yet but I will give it my best shot!

I'm not perfect but I am good enough!

ANXIETY COPING STATEMENTS



I ALLOW MYSELF TO SLOW DOWN MY BREATH.

FIGHTING THIS FEELING WON'T HELP. I'LL RELAX & ALLOW IT TO PASS.

I TUNE IN TO MY BODY & RELEASE TENSION FROM MY MUSCLES.

WHEN I RELAX & SIT WITH THIS FEELING I LEARN TO FACE MY FEARS.

I AM OKAY. MY ANXIETY IS NOT ALWAYS RATIONAL.

I CHOOSE TO SLOW DOWN & BREATHE.

I'M STRONGER THAN I GIVE MYSELF CREDIT FOR. I ALWAYS SURVIVE THIS.

I STAY PRESENT & GROUND MYSELF IN THIS MOMENT.

I DON'T HAVE TO GET CARRIED AWAY WITH MY THOUGHTS. I FOCUS ON MY BREATH & THIS MOMENT.

ANXIETY IS NORMAL. IT TELLS ME IT'S TIME TO USE MY COPING STRATEGIES.

@journey-to-wellness-

MAKE IT PERSONAL

AND PRACTISE!



SUPPORTED ONLINE PROGRAMME



❖ Modules available for CYP

Resilience

Purpose
Self
Connections
Body
Mind
Moving Forward
Challenging Times
Money Worries
Sleep Difficulties
Anger
management
Relaxation
Employment
support
Grief and Loss

Low Mood & Anxiety

Noticing Feelings
Boosting Behaviour
Spotting Thoughts
Challenging Thoughts
Bringing It All Together
Managing Study & Exam Stress
Sleeping Better
Getting on With Your Family
Friends and Social Groups
My Self-Esteem and I
Relaxation
Grief & Loss
Anger Management

Positive Body Image

Media and Culture
Self Esteem
Body image
Food and Mood
Thinking straight
Moving forward
Challenging times
Money worries
Grief and Loss

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

❖ ONLINE MODULES

- ❖ Supporting an Anxious Child (5-11 years)
- ❖ Supporting an Anxious Teen (12-18 years)

Parenting Positively
Changing Anxiety
Problem-Solving
Changing Thoughts
Facing Fears
Creating a Plan
Moving Forward
Relaxation
Sleep Difficulties
Grief & Loss



❖ ONE TO ONE COUNSELLING



Remember to take
care of yourself.
You can't pour from
an empty cup.