

# Trafford Thrive in Education

## **ANXIETY TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOL STAFF**



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# WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a **normal emotion** that everyone feels at some point in their life. It can be difficult to control and **can impact our lives by making it difficult to do certain things**. While it can feel horrible and uncomfortable, it isn't harmful. It is a normal response and can be very helpful and appropriate when we are really under threat.

## The Fight, Flight or Freeze response



Watch the video:

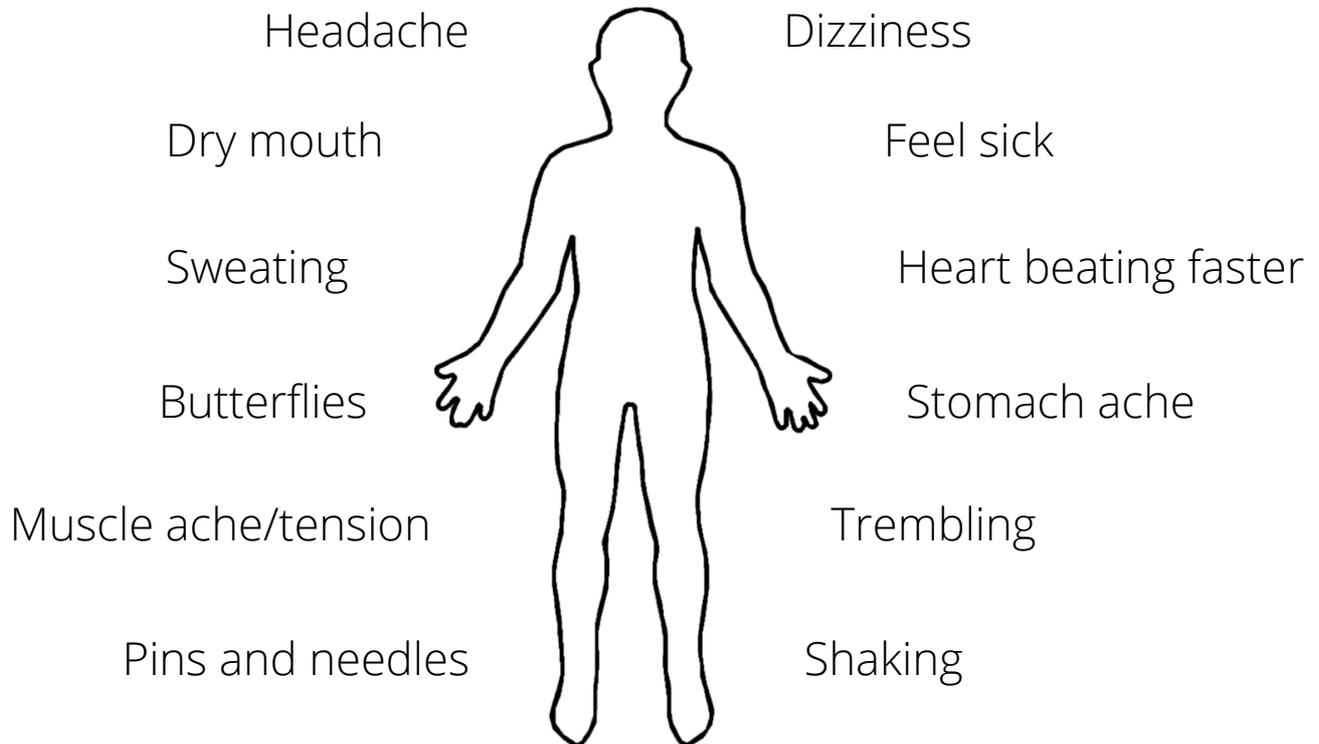
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpolpKTWrp4>



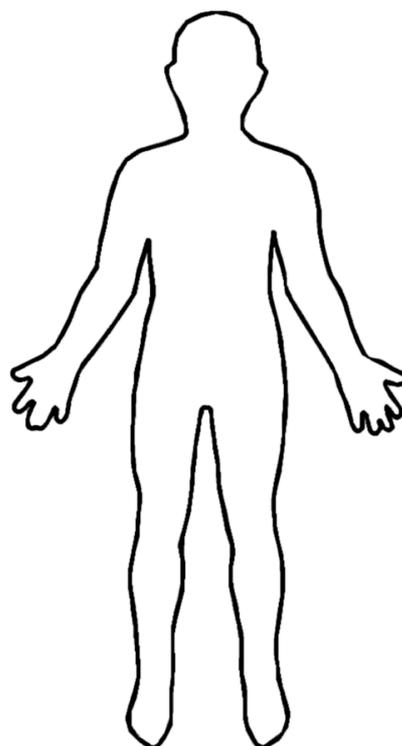
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# PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

When the 'Fight, Flight or Freeze' response kicks in, we might notice some of the following symptoms:



How do you experience the 'Fight, Flight or Freeze' response?



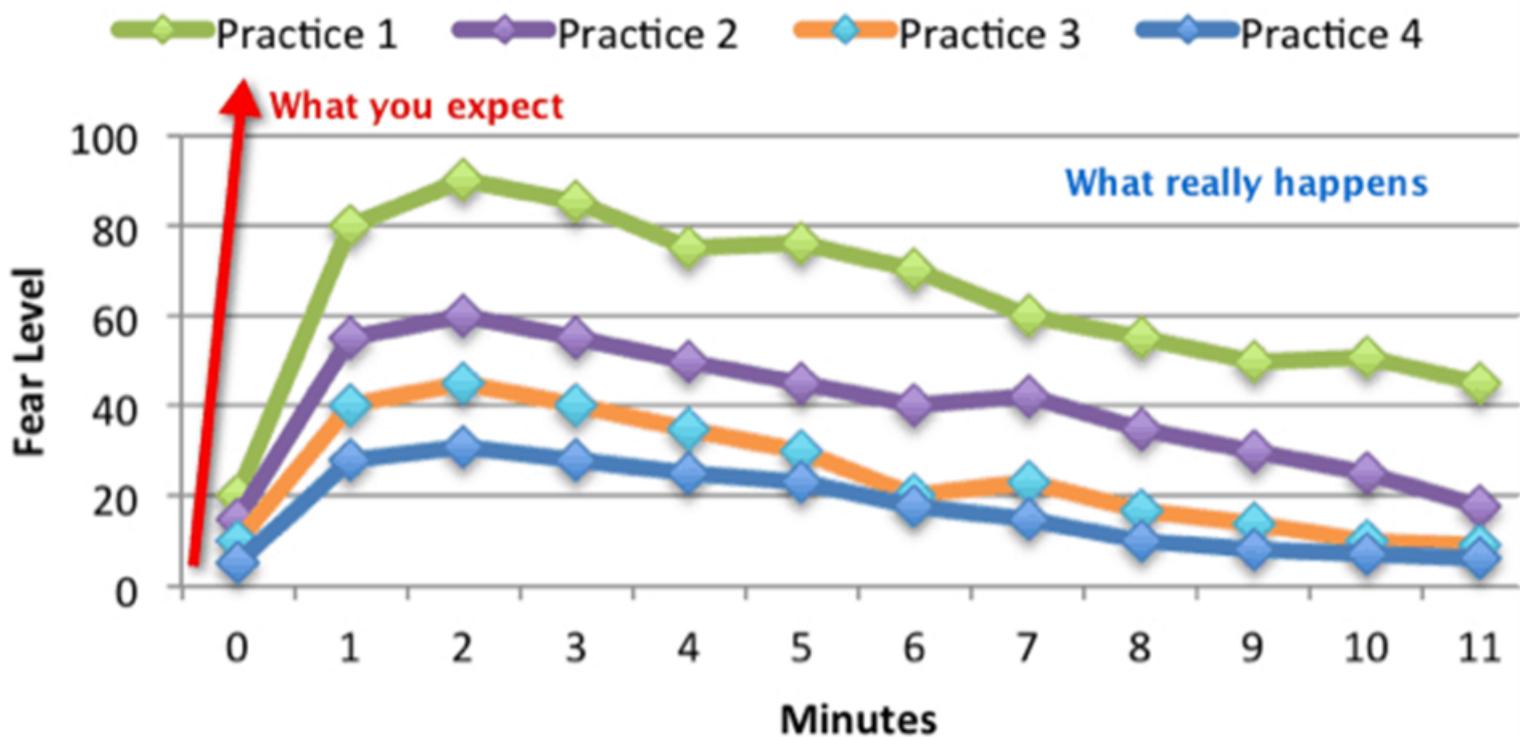
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# HABITUATION

Getting used to things

The more you do it, the easier it becomes

## Fear Level Over Time



Can you think of a time you tried something new? How did you feel before it? During it? After it? How did you feel when you tried it again? How do you feel about doing it now?



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# WORRY TREE

Notice the problem



What am I worrying about?



Is there something that I could do about this worry?

*Ask yourself: Has it already happened or is it 100% going to happen?*



**Yes**

**(Problem worry)**



**Use problem solving to  
find a solution**

1. Write it down
2. Think of all the ideas you can to solve the problem
3. Choose the best solution
4. Make a plan of action to put your solution in place



**Focus your attention  
away from the worry**

To do this you could:

- Focus on what you're doing
- Do something different
- Use the 5,4,3,2,1 technique
- Use breathing techniques
- Muscle relaxation



**No**

**(Hypothetical worry)**



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# SORTING WORRIES



Use the worry tree to sort the worries from your worry chain

<b>Hypothetical worries</b> Things you're worried about that aren't something that you can do anything about because they have not actually happened yet.	<b>Problem worries</b> Worries that are a problem now and are about things that either have happened or will 100% happen.



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# PROBLEM SOLVING FLOWCHART



## Step 1: What is the Problem?

Be as specific as possible.



## Step 2: Solutions

Think about different solutions to the problem.



## Step 3: Pros and Cons

Identify strengths and weaknesses of each solution. Is it likely to work? Is it practical?



## Step 4: Select a Solution

Looking at the pros and cons, which is the best and most practical solution?



## Step 5: Plan Solution

**What** – What solution have you picked for the problem?  
What steps do you need to do to make it happen?

**Who** – Is there anyone that can help you with it?

**When** – What day and what time?

**Where** – Where are you acting on your solution?

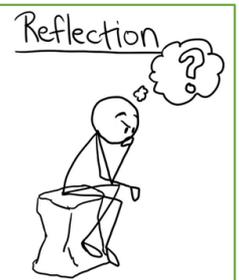


## Step 6: Do it!



## Step 7: Reflect

How did it go? If it didn't work, is there another solution that you could try?



# PROBLEM SOLVING

What is the problem? .....

.....

Potential Solutions	Advantages	Disadvantages	List from best to worse	What steps do I need to take?

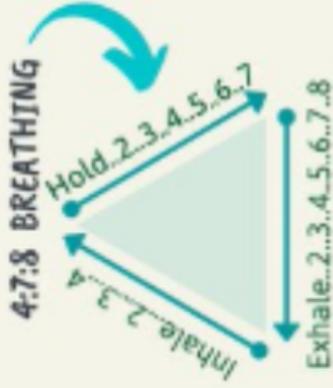
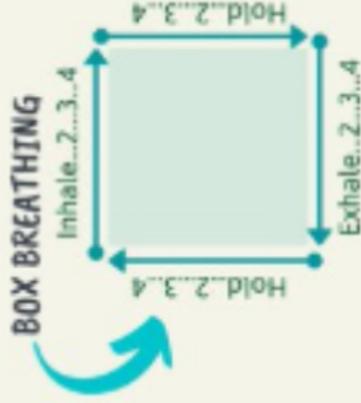
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## Breathing



Breath control is a natural tranquilizer as it helps slow down our heart rate.

Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. When you breathe, your belly should expand, your chest should remain still.



## Grounding



Grounding brings you back to the present, allowing your mind to calm and focus on what it is important for you.

Use these exercises to help you ground in the present moment.

- 5 Things that you can
- 4 Things that you can
- 3 Things that you can
- 2 Things that you can
- 1 Things that you can

### ROOM SEARCH

Find everything in the room that fits one category. For example:

Find everything that's green

Find all of the squares in the room

Count the in the room

## Relaxation



By relaxing our body we can release the accumulated tension in our muscles.

One way to do this is to tense and relax all the muscles in your body one by one:

**TENSE FOR 5 SECONDS** **PAUSE FOR 10 SECONDS**

1. Raise your eyebrows
2. Clench your eyelids
3. Open your mouth wide
4. Raise your shoulders
5. Take a deep breath
6. Clench your fists
7. Pull in your tummy
8. Tighten your buttocks
9. Pull your toes upwards
10. Curl your toes

# Stress bucket

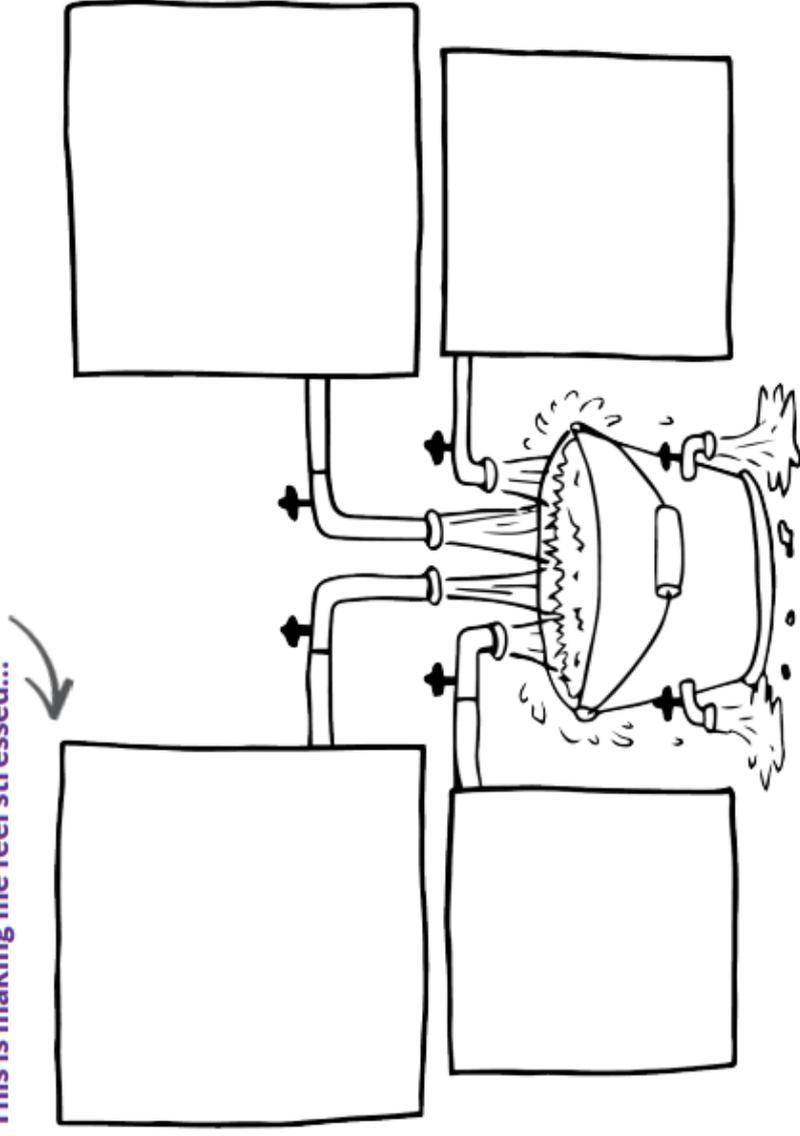
It is normal to feel stress at times. Some stress can be good, but too much can cause you to feel anxious or depressed, which might affect your sleeping, eating habits and general wellbeing.

When your pupils feel worried, the stress bucket is a visual way for them to communicate this, and this can help you develop strategies that best support the needs of each pupil in your class.

## Instructions:

1. Above the bucket are taps and the things that cause you stress. Using the boxes, draw or write the things that are making you worry. It might be too much homework, friendship issues, back-to-school anxiety.
2. The below taps are the things that help you release stress. Using these boxes, write or draw the things that help you manage this feeling. It could be talking to friends, exercise or spending time with pets.
3. If your pupils find it helpful to discuss their stress bucket, encourage them to form small groups to complete the activity together.

This is making me feel stressed...



But this is what helps me...