

managing your child's worries

**A 3 session guide for
parents/families**

Session 1

Faye North
@IHeartCBT

www.iheartcbt.com

Information for Parents/Families

The resources and strategies detailed in these booklets are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT is evidence based which is why we use it to help children and young people who are struggling with anxiety/worry – we know it can work.

These three booklets are made up of three sessions which aim to help you to help your child with their worries. It involves working openly and collaboratively with your child and needs a commitment to use the strategies repeatedly and consistently. By doing this, you can help your child to feel better.

Every child is different, and the amount of time it takes for these strategies to help with your child's worries will be different for everyone. What is important is that you stick to it. By making these strategies part of everyday life, you can start to see big, positive changes.

It is recommended that you complete a session (booklet) each **week** with your child. This gives you chance to spread tasks over several days rather than trying to do it all at once.

Using these Booklets

The first part of each booklet provides an overview of the session including what you should do for each activity, how to spread each activity over several days and some top tips for getting the most out of each task.

The main part of each booklet is made up of the resources you will need in order to carry out each activity with your child. All activities are based on CBT strategies which are evidence based and help children to better manage their worries.

Further Help

Remember!

You are never alone in supporting your child with their mental health and if you feel they need specialist support you can make a referral to your GP or directly to your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Session One: Overview

When	What to do	Top Tips
Day 1	Read the information about the fight or flight response on the 'What is Anxiety?' sheet.	Make sure you have a good understanding of this before discussing it with your child.
Day 2	Read through the 'What is Anxiety?' sheet with your child.	Ask open questions such as: How does this relate to your feelings? Where/when do you feel this way? What symptoms of anxiety do you notice?
Day 2/3	Complete the 'My Symptoms of Anxiety' sheet together.	Use the example page if you get stuck.
Day 3	Together, create a Fight or Flight poster aimed at teaching other children about this.	There is space in this booklet to make a poster but you and your child can be as creative as you want. You might want to use some big paper and paints or create a digital poster. It's up to you and your child how you do it.
Day 4	Practise breathing techniques together using the 'Breathing Techniques' sheet.	Help your child to choose the technique they like best and practise this when they are calm. This helps them to be prepared to use this when they feel worried/anxious. When they do feel anxious, calmly encourage them to use their breathing technique and praise them for doing so.
Day 5	Complete the 'What did you learn this week?' section.	Either do this together or complete the parts separately before discussing afterwards.

What is Anxiety?

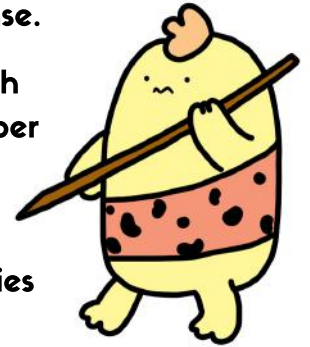
The Fight or Flight Response

Anxiety is a **normal** emotion that everyone feels at some point in their life. This is because of something in our brains called the **Fight or Flight** response.

Humans developed this response as cave men because it was a much more dangerous time to live back then (think running away from saber tooth tigers and hunting for food).

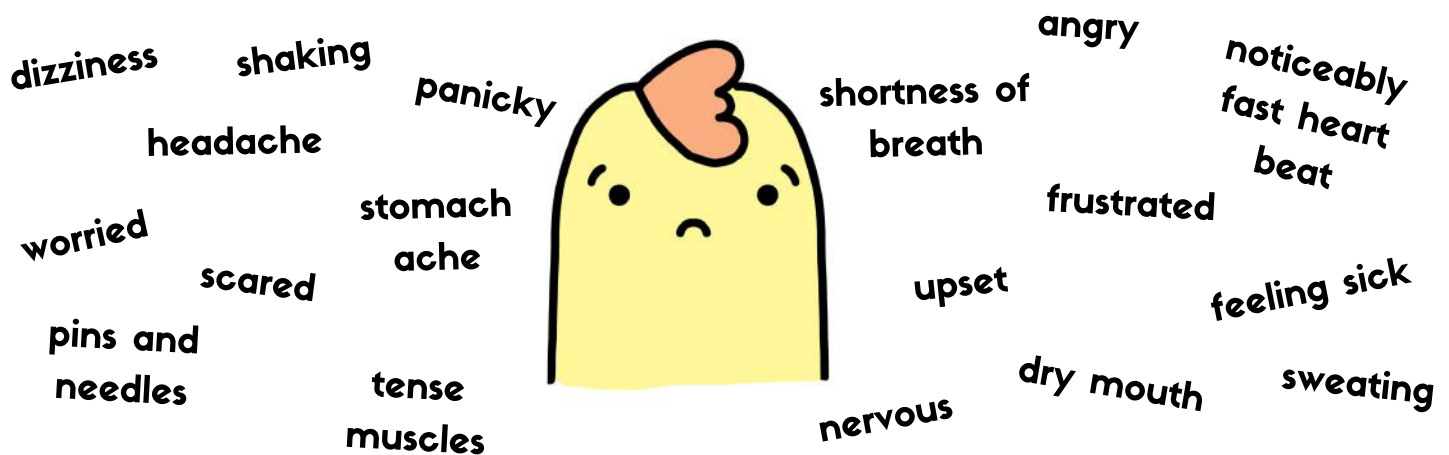


The Fight or Flight response meant that cave men's bodies went into survival mode whenever their brains sensed danger. This meant their heart rate and blood pressure would increase so they had a better chance of running away (flight) or fighting the danger (fight).



Symptoms of Anxiety

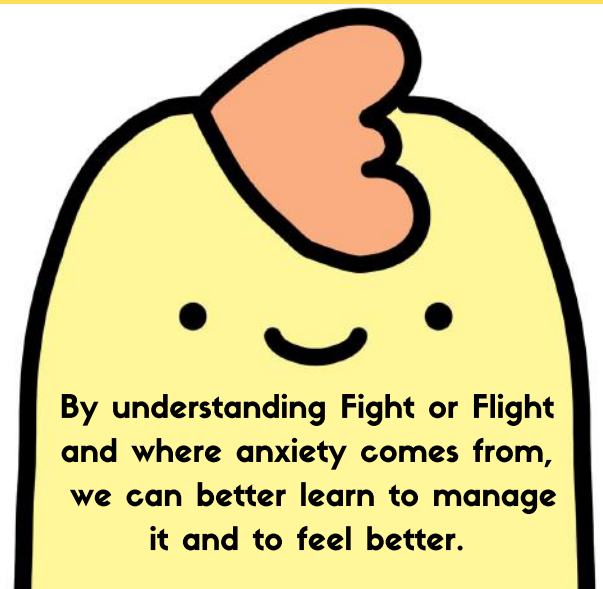
When the Fight or Flight response kicks in and our heart rate and blood pressure increases, we might notice some of the following symptoms.



It's like a Smoke Alarm



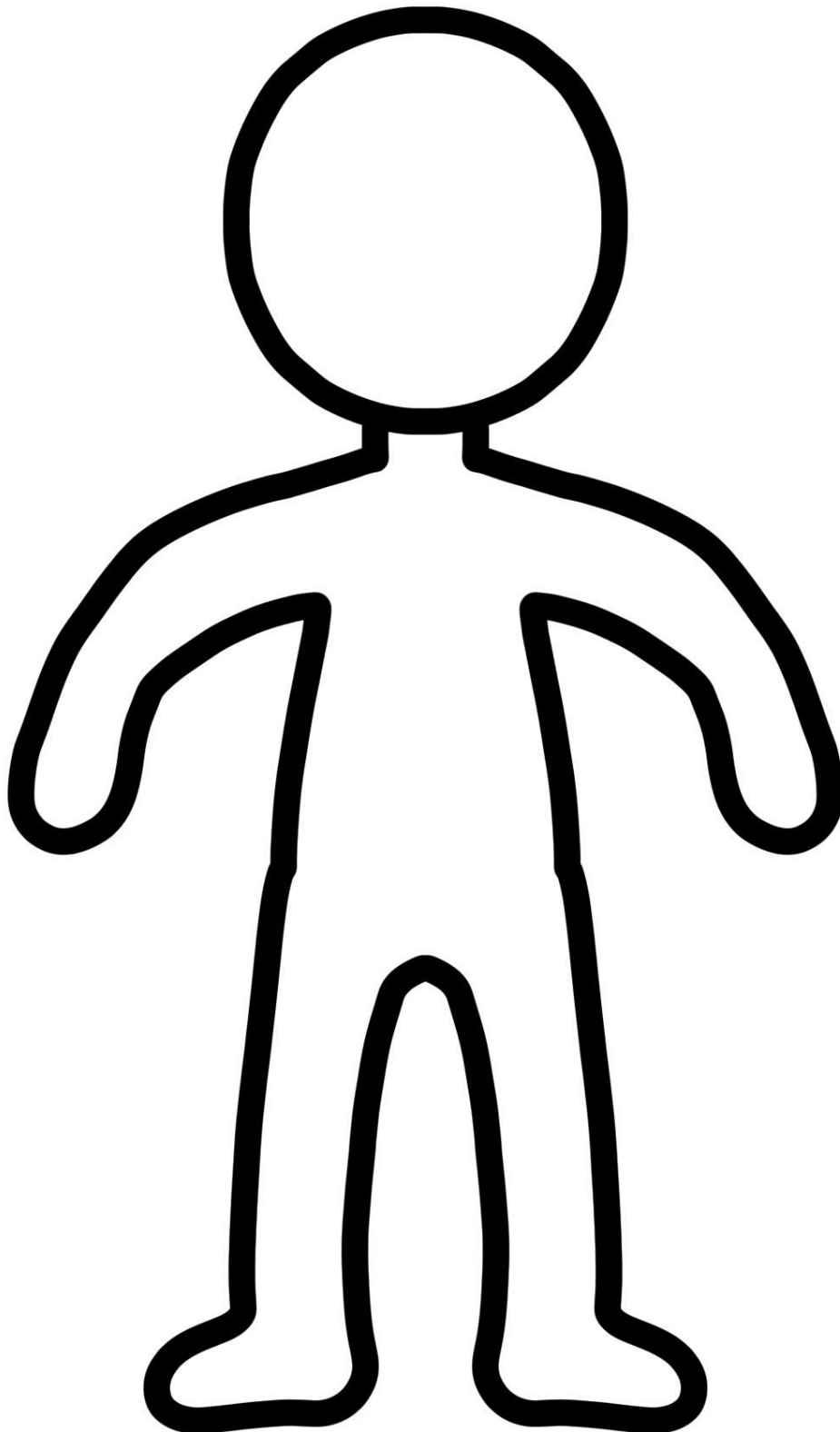
Imagine you have a smoke alarm that is overly sensitive and goes off all of the time, even when there isn't a real fire. When you have a problem with anxiety, your Fight or Flight response is just like this - it goes off and causes the symptoms of anxiety, even if there isn't any real danger.



By understanding Fight or Flight and where anxiety comes from, we can better learn to manage it and to feel better.

My Symptoms of Anxiety

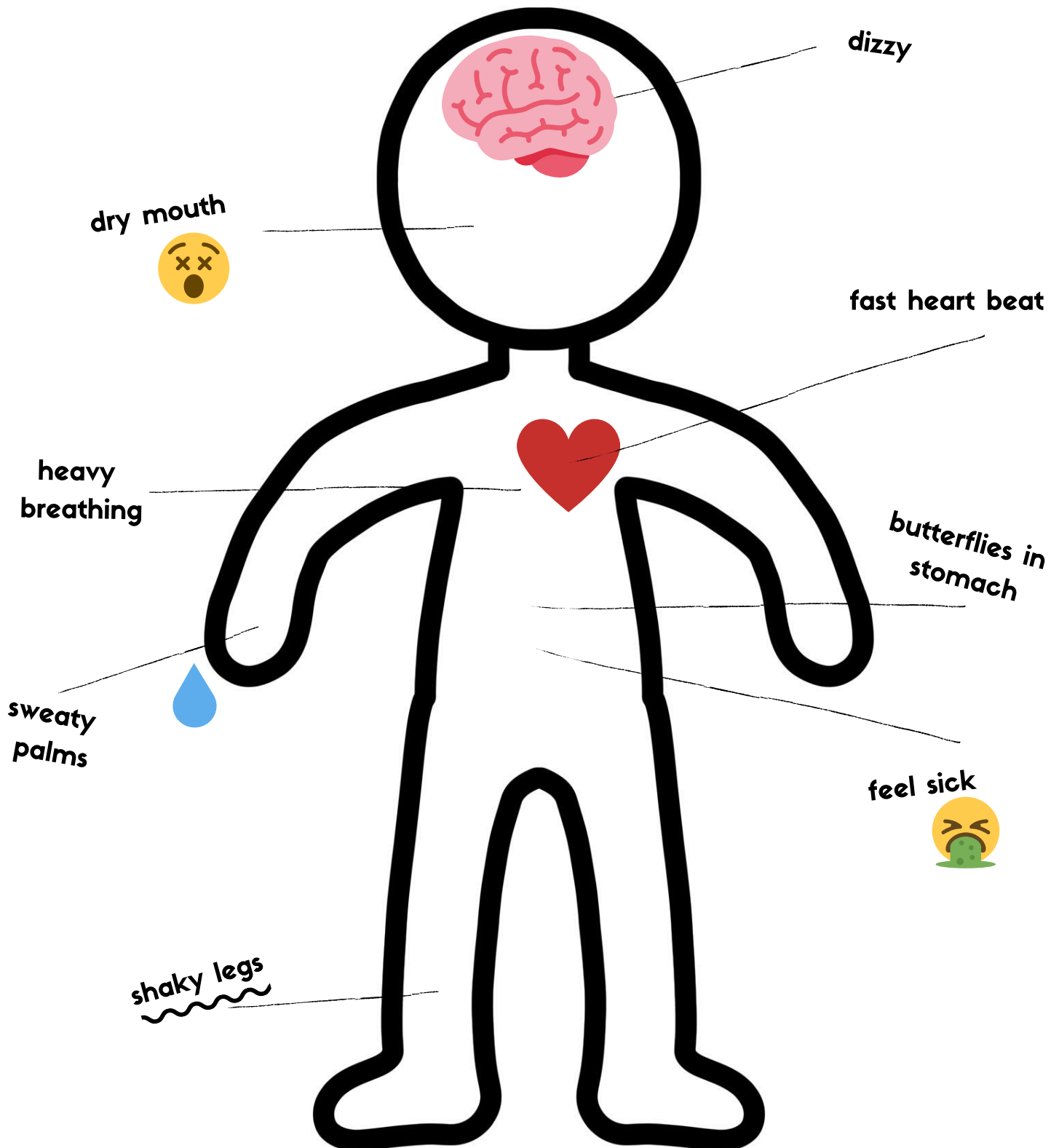
When feeling anxious, we all experience some physical symptoms which can be unpleasant and upsetting. It's important to remember that these are **NORMAL** body reactions to a feared situation that everyone experiences at some time or another. What symptoms do you notice in your body when you're feeling anxious?



Remember! Everyone's symptoms of anxiety might be different but they are **NORMAL body reactions.**

My Symptoms of Anxiety

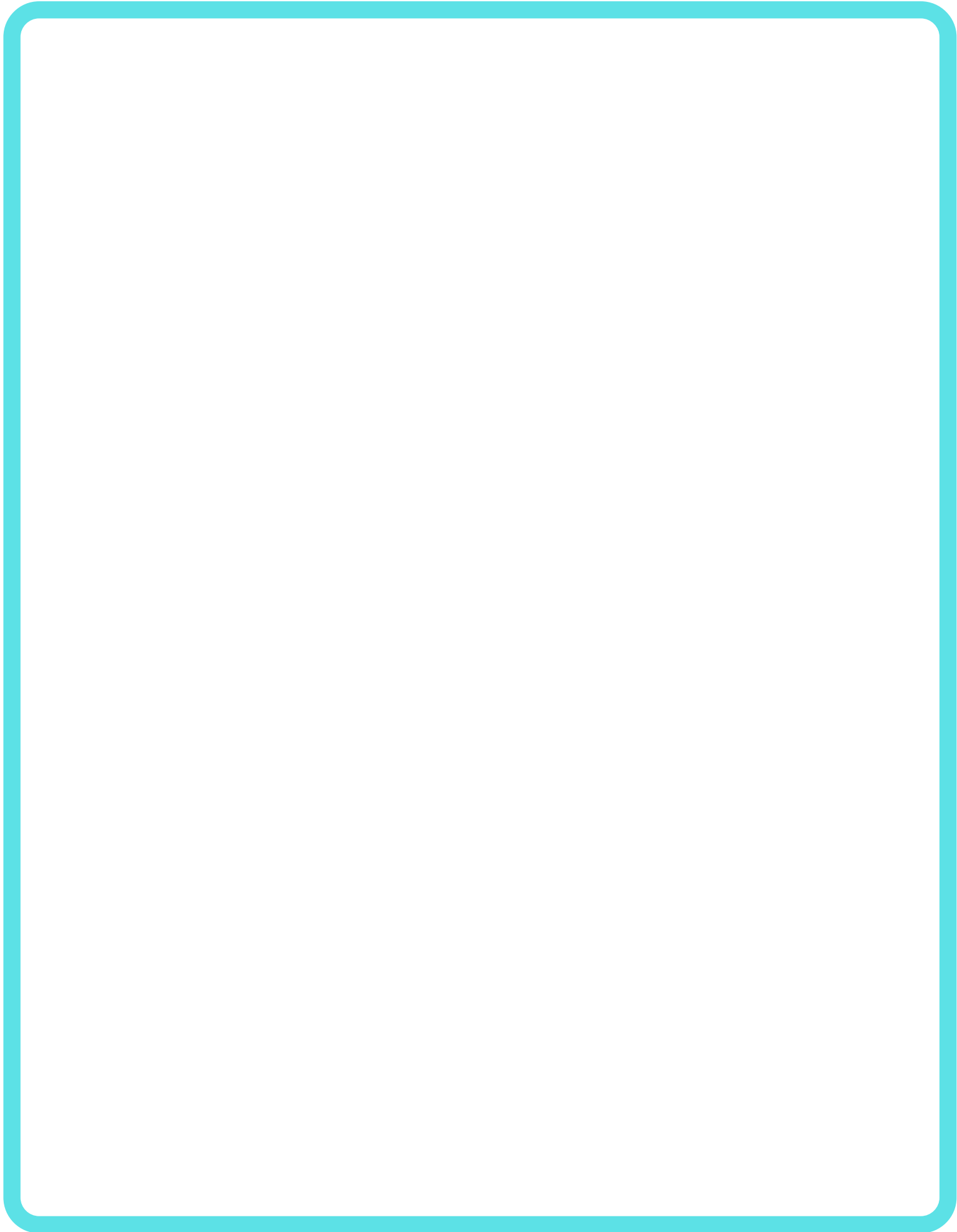
When feeling anxious, we all experience some physical symptoms which can be unpleasant and upsetting. It's important to remember that these are **NORMAL** body reactions to a feared situation that everyone experiences at some time or another. What symptoms do you notice in your body when you're feeling anxious?



Remember! Everyone's symptoms of anxiety might be different but they are **NORMAL body reactions.**

My Poster

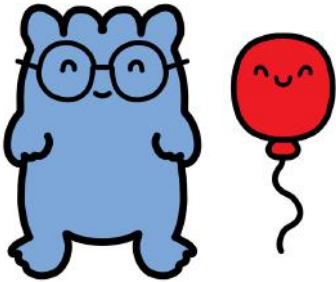
Use this space to create your own poster to tell other people about the Fight or Flight response.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick cyan border and rounded corners, intended for creating a poster. The box occupies the majority of the page below the title and instructions.

Breathing Techniques

When we feel anxious, upset or distressed, it can be difficult to know what to do to feel better. By using these breathing techniques, we can reduce our anxiety and lower our blood pressure/heart rate. This helps us feel calmer and more focused and helps us to face our fears.

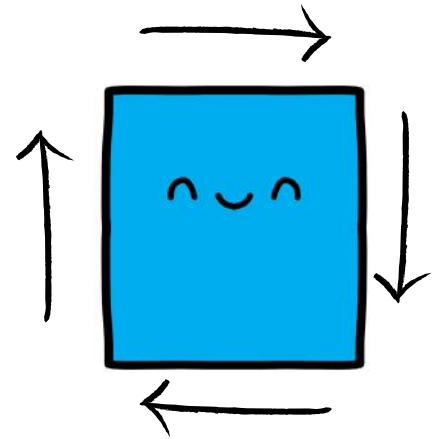
Belly Breathing



- Take a deep breath in and fill your belly like your inflating a balloon.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath in and fill the balloon in your belly.
- Pause and then let all of the air out of your belly like you're letting a balloon deflate.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath out and let the ballon go down from your belly.

Square Breathing

- Imagine you're drawing a square with your finger in the air.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the top line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line down the side and then pause.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the bottom line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line up the side to make the square.

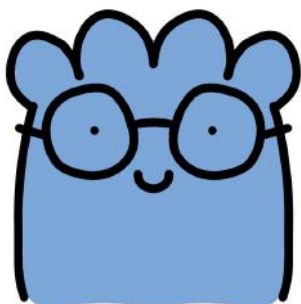


Finger Breathing



- Use your index finger to trace around the edges of the fingers on your opposite hand.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath in as you go up the first finger.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath out as you go down the finger.
- Repeat until you have traced up and down all five fingers, breathing 1, 2, 3, 4 in and 1, 2, 3, 4 out each time.

Top Tip! Practise these breathing techniques when you're calm so that you're better prepared to use them when you need to.

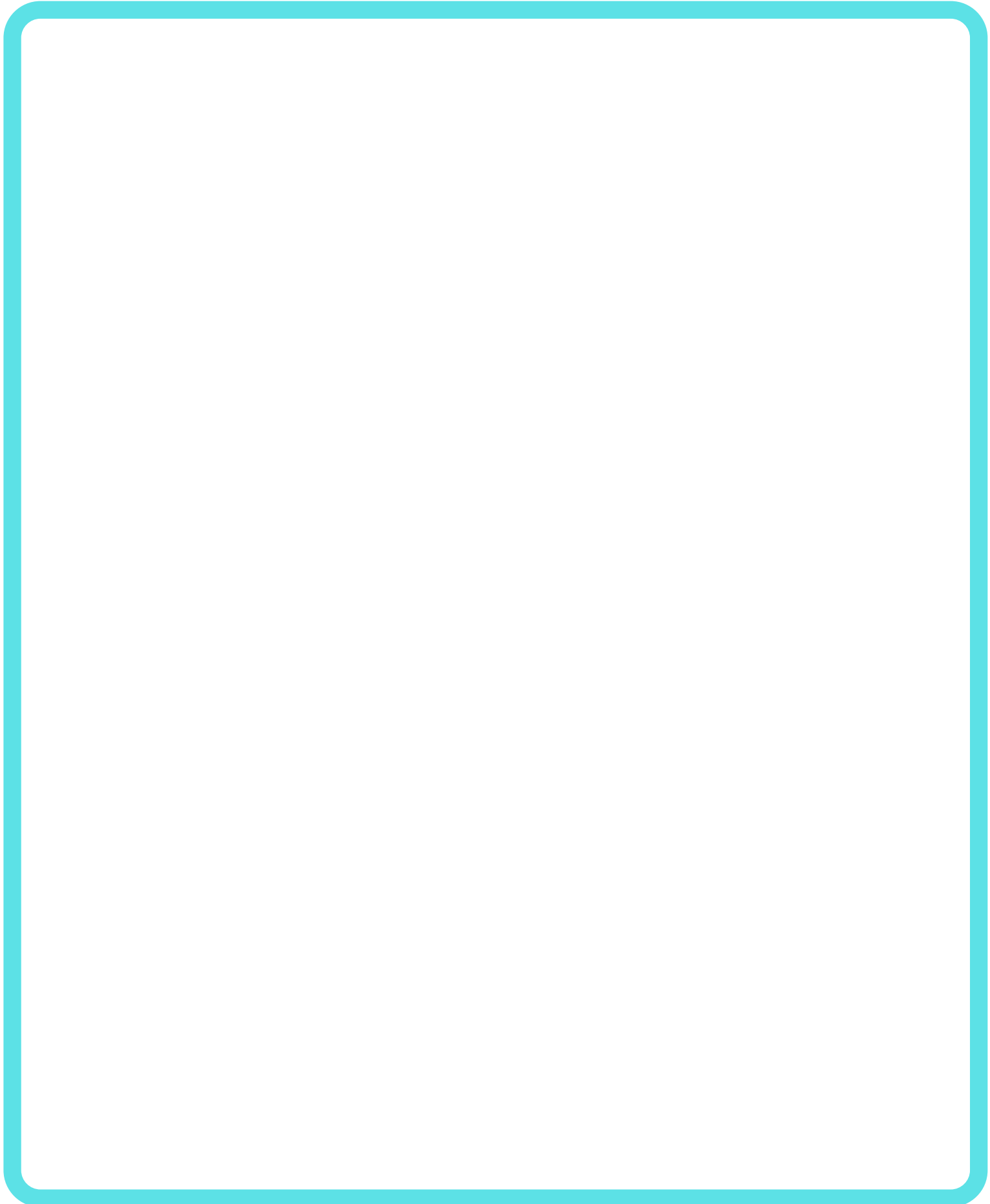


Count **slowly** when breathing in and out and **repeat** the technique as many times as you need to until you feel calmer.

What did you learn this week?

Use this space to:

- 1) Write/draw about what you have learned this week.
- 2) Write/draw about what you have found useful.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick cyan border, intended for writing or drawing. The box is positioned below the instructions and occupies most of the page area.