



MANAGING EXAM ANXIETY



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Open



Collaborative



Compassionate

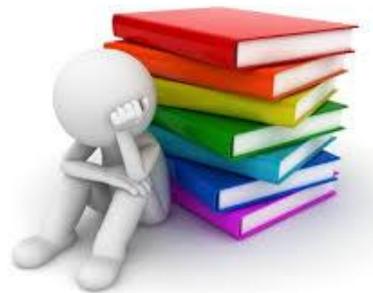


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EXAM STRESS

REMEMBER, IT IS NORMAL TO WORRY BEFORE AN EXAM – THE CHALLENGE IS HOW TO MANAGE THE WORRY SO THAT IT WORKS FOR YOU RATHER THAN AGAINST YOU!



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Introduction and Aims

- Introduction
- Common concerns
- Understanding of anxiety
- How anxiety presents in relation to exams
- What you and your parent can do to manage exam stress.



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What are your concerns/worries?



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WHAT SOME YOUNG PEOPLE SAY EXAM STRESS FEELS LIKE



I am not going to get my predicted grades.

I just feel like crying all the time.

I have so much revision to do for my GCSEs.

My stress is causing me to have arguments at home.

The amount of work I have from school is piling up and I am finding it hard to keep up.



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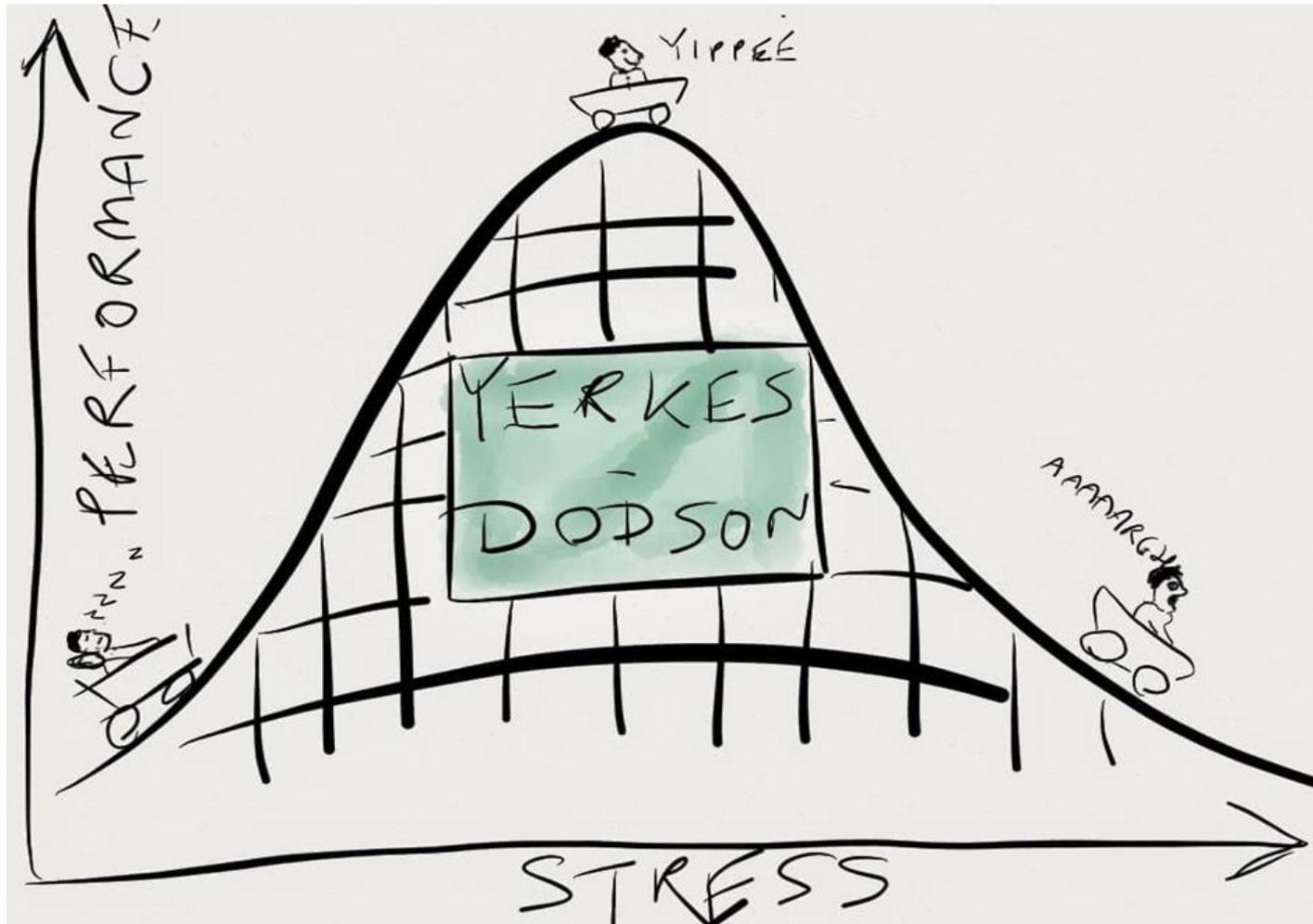
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How might this stress present itself?

- Avoidance
- No time for chores (untidy bedrooms)
- Arguments
- Lack of sleep
- Not eating properly
- Stop attending extra- curricular clubs

WE NEED A BIT OF STRESS... BUT NOT TOO MUCH



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FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE



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ANXIETY

HAS THREE CHARACTERISTICS:

BODILY SENSATIONS

- ❑ ASSOCIATED WITH ADRENALIN - PREPARING THE BODY FOR ACTION
- ❑ E.G. SWEATING, HEART BEATING FASTER, TREMBLING

ANXIOUS BEHAVIOUR

- ❑ AVOID WORRYING SITUATIONS
- ❑ SO YOU DON'T GET THE CHANCE TO LEARN IF IT'S AS BAD AS YOU THINK IT WILL BE OR COPE

ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

- ❑ OVER-ESTIMATE "DANGER"
- ❑ UNDERESTIMATE ABILITY TO COPE



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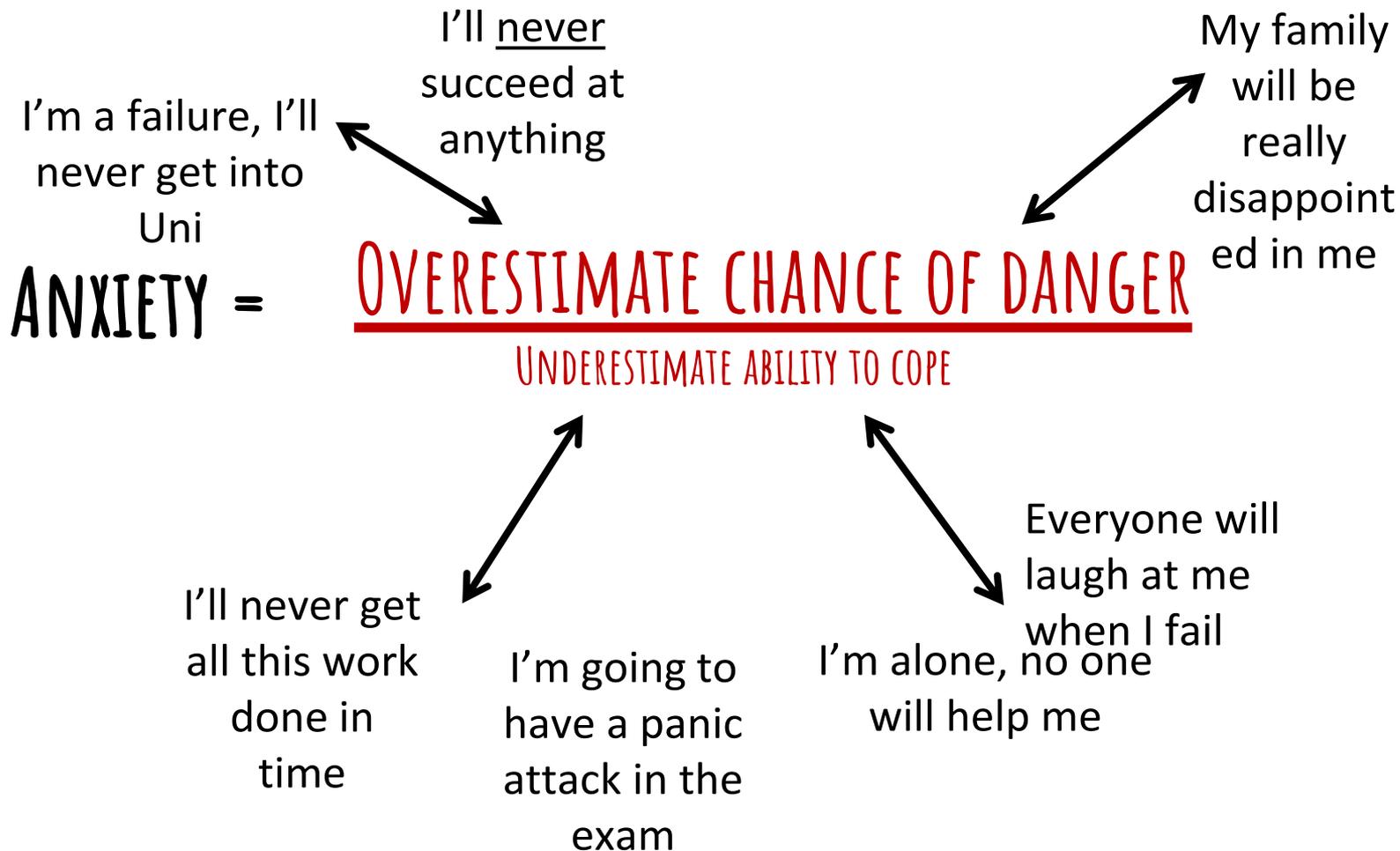


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ANXIOUS THINKING



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Thinking about thinking!



I will never pass my exams
They aren't doing enough work

I can't do this
I don't think they can manage the stress

Everyone will think I'm stupid
What do I tell my friends if they fail

Everyone else is smarter than me
What if their friends do better than them?

I will never get a good job
They will never get a good job



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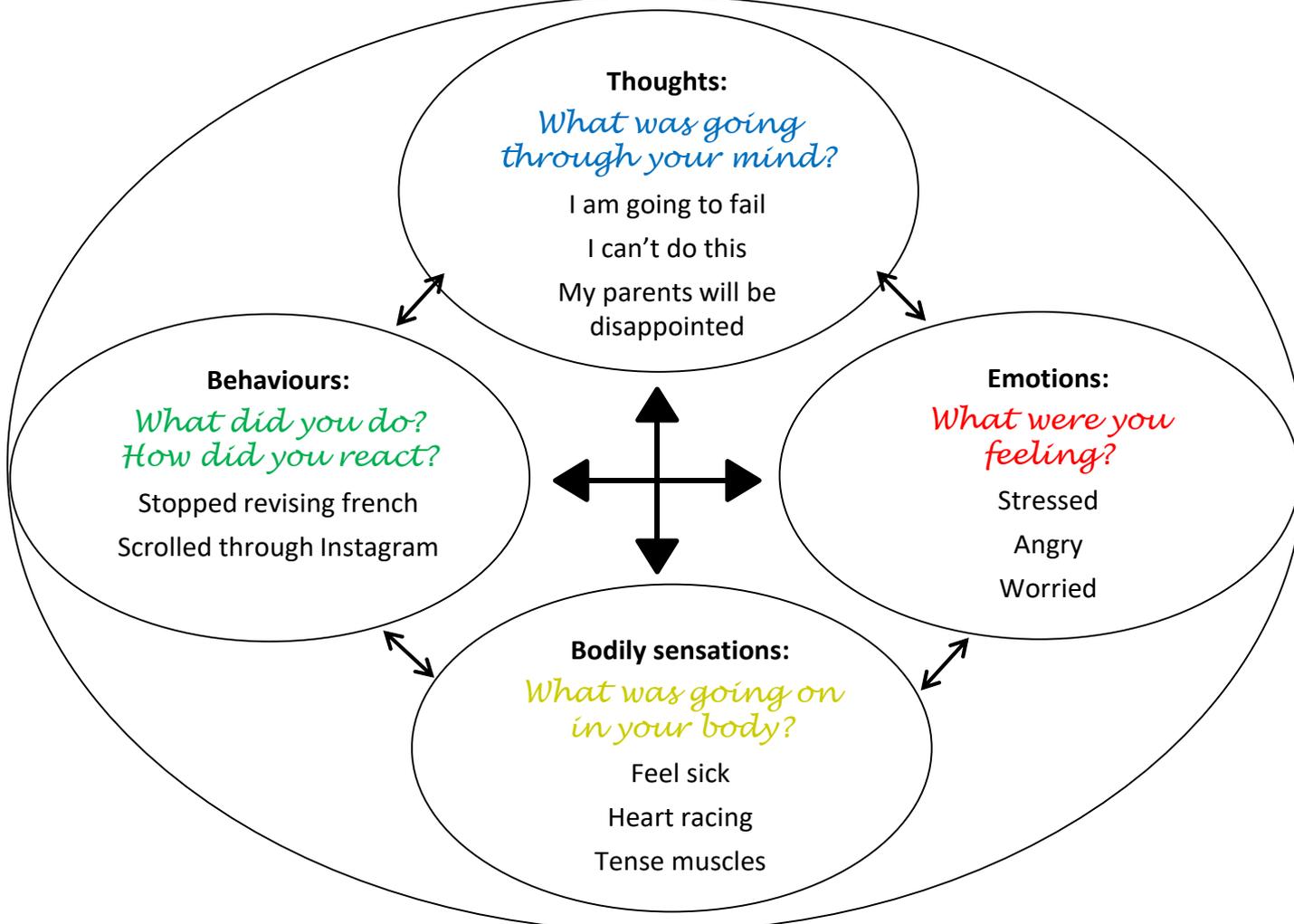
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WHAT DOES ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

Situation: revising for a French test



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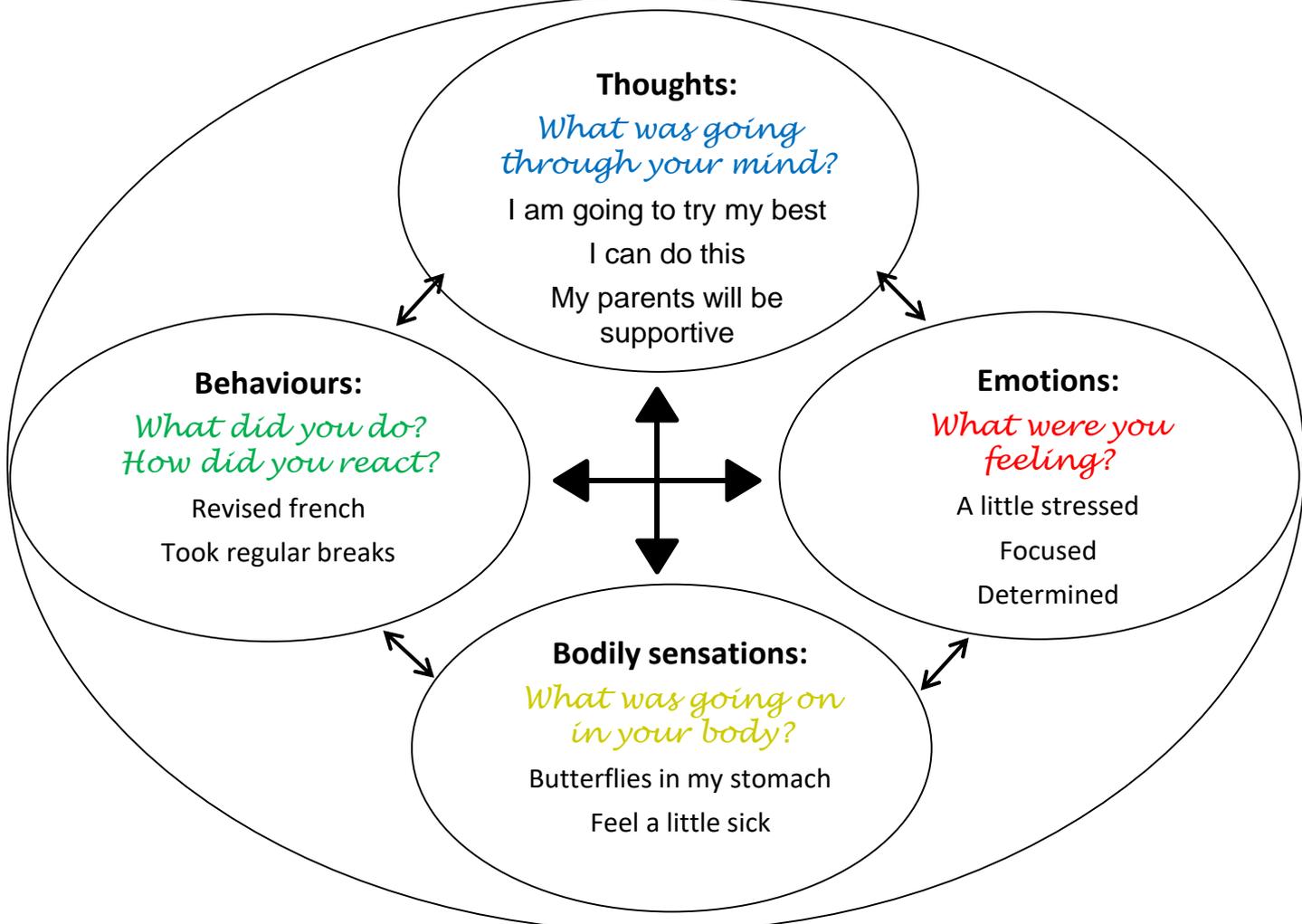


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WHAT WOULD A LESS ANXIOUS PERSON LOOK LIKE?



Situation: revising for a French test



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WHAT CAN WE DO TO MANAGE OUR ANXIETY?

CHALLENGE OUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



SITUATION: SITTING AN EXAM

WORST CASE SCENARIO

I won't know any of the questions, I will panic, I will fail the exam, I won't be able to get a college place or a good job

BEST CASE SCENARIO

I will get every question right, it will be a breeze, I will get offered scholarships, and the examiners will give me a round of applause

SOMETHING IN THE MIDDLE

I might not know all the answers, but I have revised, all I can do is my best, if I do badly it's not the end of the world, it is not the only exam I am sitting



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UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES... DO YOU CATCH YOURSELF USING THESE?



All or nothing thinking

Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

Either I do it right or not at all

Over-generalizing

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

"everything is always rubbish"

"nothing good ever happens"

Mental filter

Only paying attention to certain types of evidence

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

Disqualifying the positive

Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

Jumping to conclusions

There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

2 + 2 = 5

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimization

Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning

Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling

Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

I'm a loser

I'm completely useless

They're such an idiot

Personalization

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault

"this is my fault"

Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault



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CHALLENGING OUR UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

THOUGHT: *"I will fail my exam"*

RATE TRUTH OF STATEMENT 0-100%: **70%**

EVIDENCE FOR THE THOUGHT

- I have so many subjects, and not enough time
- I do not have a revision timetable
- I find the subjects hard
- I do not know how to revise
- I failed in my exam last year

EVIDENCE AGAINST THE THOUGHT

- I have a good amount of time for revision
- I can create a revision timetable
- I have asked for help during lessons when I didn't understand something
- When I study with friends it makes it more fun
- I haven't failed all of my exams

UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES:

Catastrophising, predicting the future

ALTERNATIVE, MORE BALANCED THOUGHT:

Although I might not remember everything I still have time to revise for my exams. I can make the study fun with friends and continue to ask my teachers for support.

REVIEW TRUTH OF STATEMENT 0-100%: **30%**



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Helpful questions to help challenge your thoughts:

What evidence is there for this thought?

Is there anything that contradicts this thought that I am ignoring?

Would my friend be thinking the same if they were in this situation?

Has this belief or thought stop me from doing something else?

How likely is it going to happen?

What would a friend say to me or what would I say to a friend?

How many times has it not happened?

What is the worst & the best thing that could happen from it occurring?

What are the benefits of engaging with the thought? Will it help me in the



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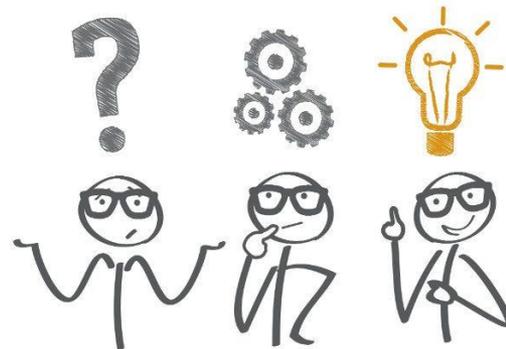
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PROBLEM SOLVING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

1. DEFINE WHAT THE PROBLEM IS.
2. LIST ALL OF THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS. THINK OF AS MANY WAYS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM AS YOU CAN, EVEN IF SOME OF THEM INITIALLY FEEL SILLY.
3. THINK OF THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH SOLUTION. HOW PRACTICAL ARE THEY? HOW HELPFUL ARE THEY? WHAT WOULD THE LONG AND SHORT TERM CONSEQUENCES BE?
4. IS THE PLAN DO-ABLE? WHAT COULD GET IN THE WAY? WHO COULD HELP YOU WITH IT?
5. RATE EACH PLAN FROM 0-10 IN TERMS OF HOW GOOD YOU THINK IT IS.
6. CHOOSE ONE PLAN TO TRY AND SET A TIME TO DO IT.
7. REVIEW WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU DID IT. DID YOUR SOLUTION WORK? IF NOT WHICH OTHER OPTION COULD YOU TRY?



WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?: I cannot motivate myself to revise for my English exam

LIST ALL OF THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	PROS AND CONS OF EACH SOLUTION	IS THE PLAN DO-ABLE? YES/NO	HOW GOOD IS THE PLAN? RATE 0-10	WHAT HAPPENED?
Create a revision plan	+ I can plan a balanced timetable.	Yes	8	
Don't revise	- I might find it hard + I won't do my best - I won't have to motivate myself	Yes	0	
Revise with friends	+ More fun - Might need to focus on different areas	Yes	7	
Take regular breaks	+ Rest my brain	Yes	9	
Reward myself	+ Increase motivation	Yes	9	



WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO REVISION?



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BARRIERS TO REVISING - WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?



BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
LEAVING IT TOO LATE	Act NOW! Set a day and time to get started
HATE REVISING	Try different strategies & materials, make it fun, revise with friends
POOR ORGANIZATION	Study timetables/lists
CONFUSING REVISION NOTES	Use BBC Bitesize/how to pass revision books/speak to teacher
NOWHERE TO REVISE	Find a small area that can be used as a small study space/local library
NOT ENOUGH TIME	Make time – plan time in your week
OTHER THINGS TO DO	How important is this? What's in it for you?
THINK YOU CAN'T DO IT	Reflect on positives/your strengths/past achievements
CRAMMING/TOO MUCH REVISION	Start early/use effective planning
NOT KNOWING HOW TO REVISE	Try out different methods taught at school/find one that suits you

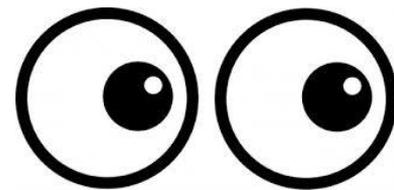


AUDITORY



LEARNING STYLES

VISUAL



KINAESTHETIC



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REVISION... EVERYONE DOES IT DIFFERENTLY!



Learning Styles

VERBAL

Words are your strongpoint!
You prefer to use words both
in speech and in writing!

VISUAL

You prefer to use pictures,
diagrams, images and spatial
understanding to help you
learn

**MUSICAL /
AUDITORY**

You prefer using sounds or
music or even rhythms to
help you learn.

**PHYSICAL /
KINAESTHETIC**

You use your hands, body
and sense of touch to help
you learn. You might 'act
things out'.

WHAT'S YOUR LEARNING STYLE?

**LOGICAL /
MATHEMATICAL**

Learning is easier for you if
you use logic, reasoning,
systems and sequences.

SOCIAL

You like to learn new things
as a part of a group.
Explaining your
understanding to a group
helps you to learn.

SOLITARY

You like to work alone. You
use self-study and prefer your
own company when
learning.

COMBINATION

Your learning style is a
combination of two or more
of these styles.



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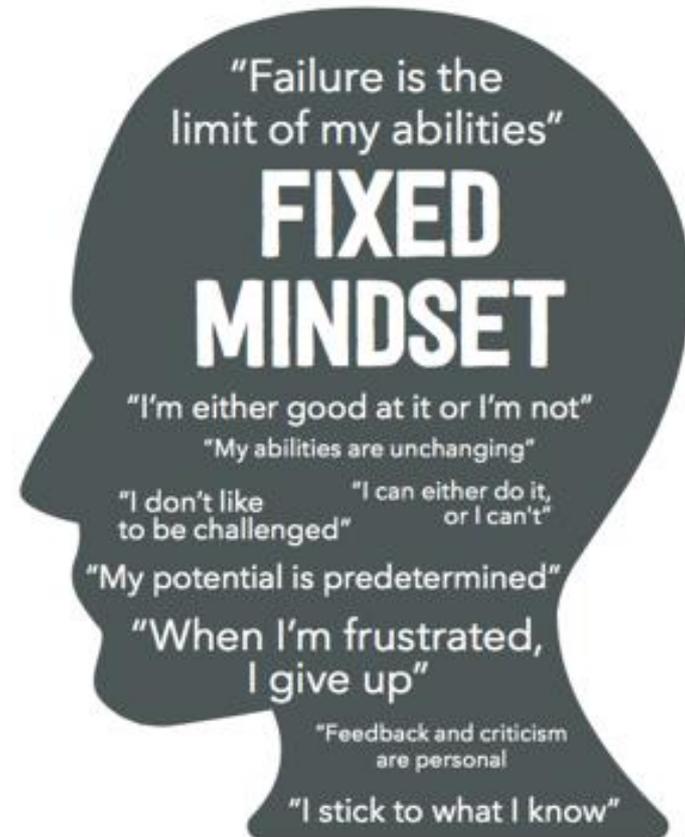


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GROWTH MINDSET VS FIXED MINDSET



Abilities can be **developed**
through effort and practice



Abilities are **static** and
cannot be changed



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HOW TO DEVELOP A GROWTH MINDSET?



✓ PRAISE YOURSELF FOR WORKING HARD

Say this: "I worked so hard on this!"
Instead of: "I am so smart"

✓ TALK ABOUT THE BRAIN

Your brain's pathways develop through effort and practise. You have control over growing your brain!

✓ ACCEPT MISTAKES AS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Speak positively about mistakes and struggles with friends and family, and this help you believe that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process.

✓ UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN LEARNING

Our brains are wired to protect us when we feel threatened. Stress symptoms such as feeling sick, stomach aches, and your mind going blank are completely normal. Use relaxation strategies to overcome them!



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THE BACK-UP TEAM

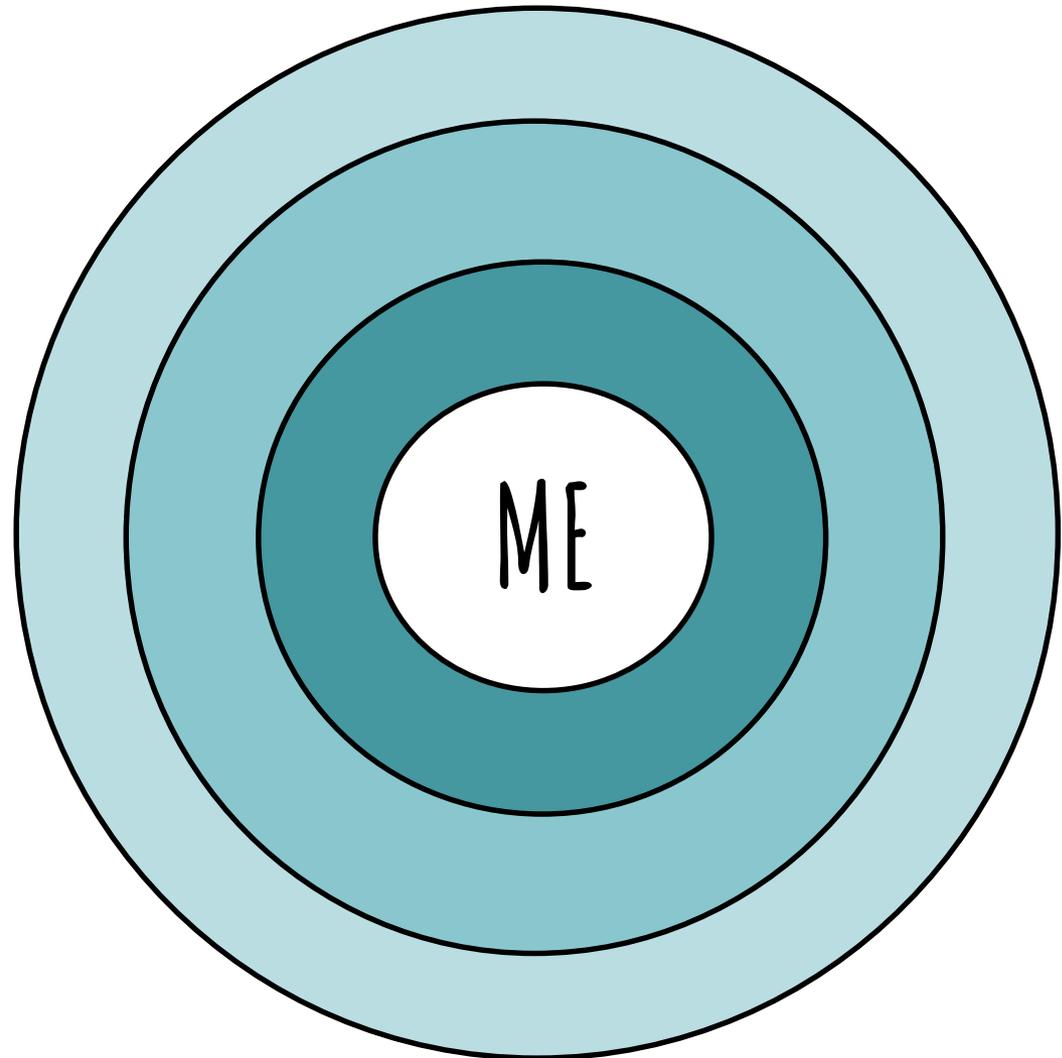
Who is in your back-up team?

What sort of support can they offer?

- Emotional
- Practical
- Motivational
- Companionship

The back-up team works better if the people who are in it, know they are in it.

How could you let them know they are part of yours?



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HERE ARE SOME COPING STRATEGIES TO MAKE IT A BIT EASIER



★ I CAN LEARN FROM THIS AND IT WILL BE EASIER NEXT TIME ★

★ SHORT TERM PAIN FOR LONG TERM GAIN ★

★ THOUGHTS ARE JUST THOUGHTS ★

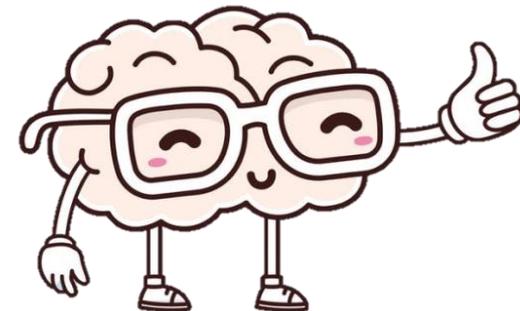
★ ITS OKAY TO FEEL THIS WAY ★

think
POSITIVE

★ I CAN USE MY COPING STRATEGIES AND GET THROUGH THIS ★

★ STOP, AND BREATHE, I CAN DO THIS ★

★ I HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE, I CAN DO IT AGAIN ★



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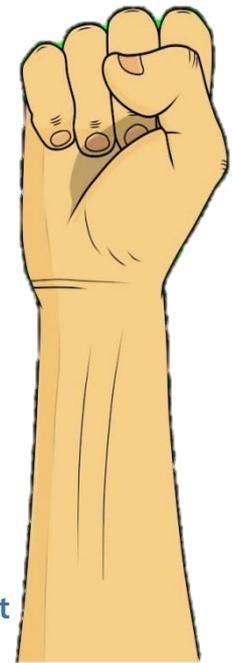


RELAXATION STRATEGIES



★ MUSCLE RELAXATION ★

★ CONTROLLED BREATHING ★



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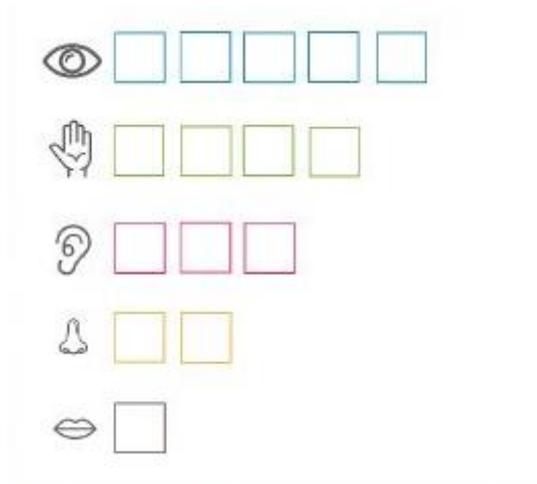
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DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES



★ 5 COLOURS ★



★ 54321 ★



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SHOPPING

HAVE A BATH

DO SOMETHING CREATIVE E.G. DRAW,
PAINT, MAKE, BAKE

DO SOMETHING PHYSICAL E.G. GO FOR A
WALK, PLAY FOOTBALL, GO
SKATEBOARDING

PLAY ON THE
PLAYSTATION/XBOX

ACTIVITIES THEY ENJOY

LISTEN TO MUSIC – HAVE A “RELAXING”
PLAYLIST

NAILS/MAKE UP/FACE MASK

SPEND TIME WITH PETS

WATCH TV/A FUNNY FILM/
YOUTUBE CLIPS



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In Summary

- ❖ They are putting enough pressure on themselves, reduce any additional pressure by offering support
- ❖ Help focus on the growth mindset through conversations you have to help encourage them during this difficult time and use it as a practice to learn from, for the summer
- ❖ Discuss the best ways of revising for them based on their individual learning style
- ❖ Help with any organizational difficulties, even if it just for them to talk it through to see if it sounds ok
- ❖ Encourage them to use strategies that help reduce any anxiety
- ❖ Remind them to problem solve or challenge unhelpful thoughts
- ❖ Encourage good sleep, exercise and diet, ensuring they take some time out and have regular breaks



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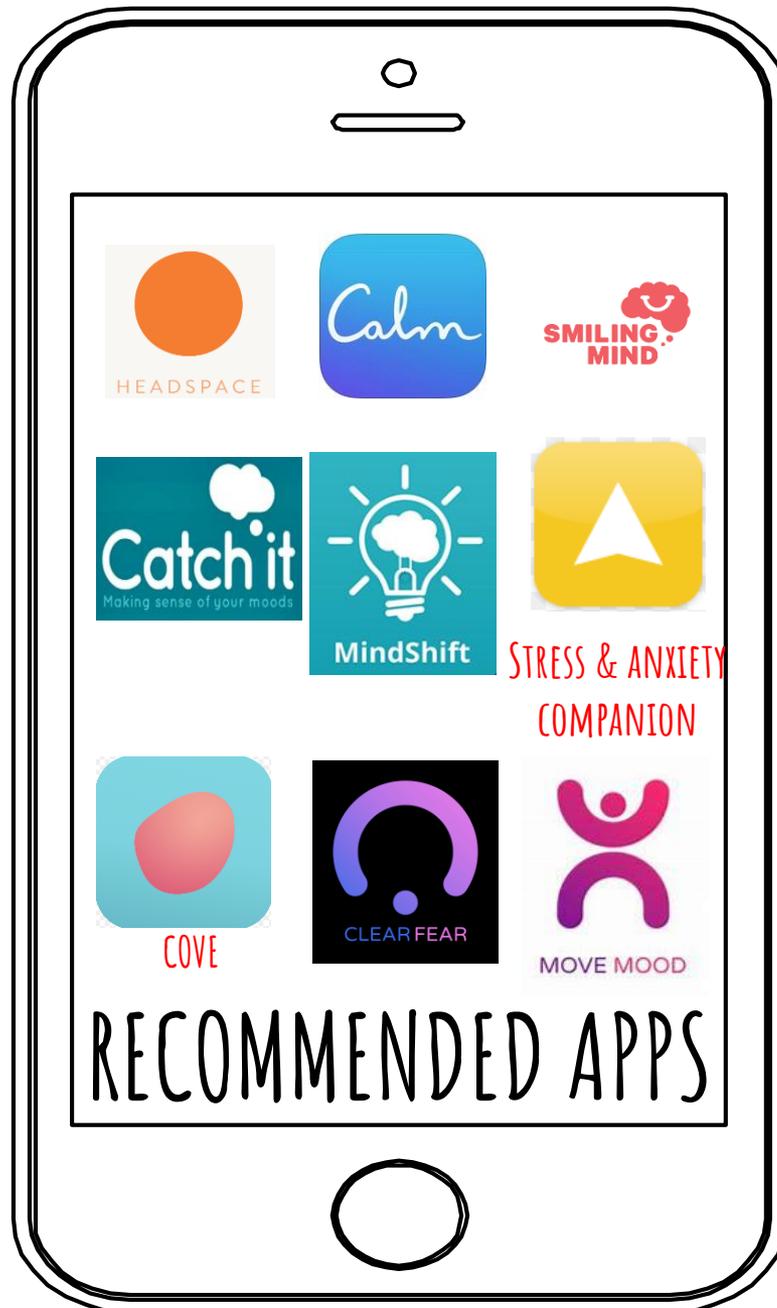
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ANY QUESTIONS?



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