

# Managing anxiety about Year 6 SATS

Presented by Dorrie Hegenbarth and Melanie Nixon

at Westfield Primary School

17<sup>th</sup> January 2024



# Woking Mental Health Support Team – Who we are and what we do



Kerrie -  
Clinical  
Lead



Katherine - Senior  
Clinician

Education Mental Health Practitioners and Trainees: Alex, Emma, Dorrie, Melanie and Rachel



# Aims of presentation



 Understanding anxiety

 Helping your child to take SATS in their stride



# What is anxiety?

“Anxiety is a normal, human feeling of fear or panic. When we face stressful situations, it can set off our brain’s in-built alarm bell system, which tell us something isn’t right and that we need to deal with it.”

**YOUNG**MINDS

Fight, Flight  
Freeze



# Some common signs of anxiety...



- Frequent headaches
- Feeling irritable or overwhelmed
- Lack of motivation / lethargy
- Stopping socializing with friends
- Loss of enjoyment in hobbies
- Mind going blank
- Butterflies in stomach
- Biting nails or fidgeting
- Feeling sick or unwell
- Poor concentration
- Losing appetite or overeating
- Sleeping poorly



# It is normal to feel anxious about tests...

- Events that challenge us cause most people to feel some nervousness and apprehension
- A small amount of anxiety can help us to perform at our best

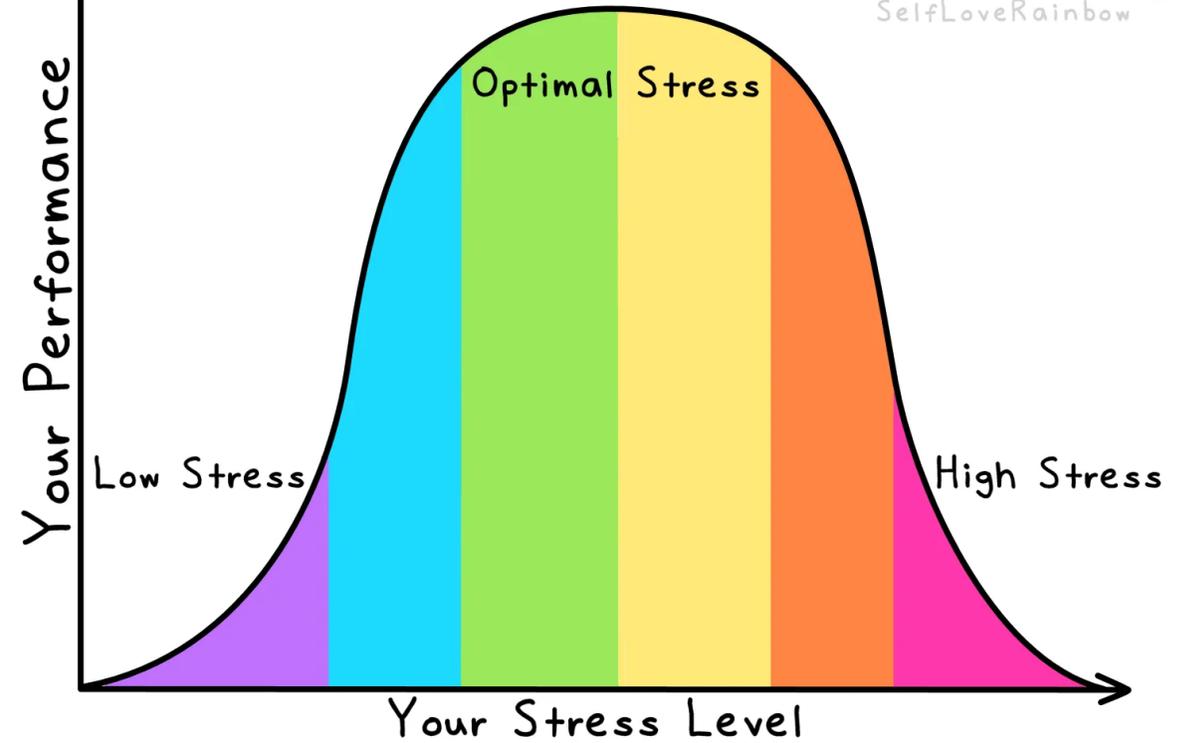


- But too much stress can lead to feelings of excessive anxiety and low mood.
- These can have a negative impact on us and may prevent us from doing our best.
- So it is important to find ways of managing those feelings.

# Stress Performance Curve

Check in with your stress levels! Are you feeling **over-stressed**, **under-stressed**, or **in the middle**. 

SelfLoveRainbow



Under-Stressed		Optimal Stress		Over-Stressed	
Bored	Unmotivated	Creative	Productive	Overwhelm	Burnout
Inactive	Listless	Focused	Motivated	Exhaustion	Anxiety
Relaxed	Laid Back	Engaged	In the Zone	Breakdown	Panic



# Encourage positive coping strategies

- Exercise
- Connecting with others
- Doing something creative
- Doing something calming
- Shifting your child's mindset



## Exercise - What does your child enjoy?

- Going for a walk or bike ride
- Dancing or gymnastics
- Playing football or another sport
- Swimming
- Bouncing on a trampoline
- Playing in the park



## Connecting with others

- Seeing or messaging a friend
- Playing a game with someone
- Cuddling or playing with a pet
- Sharing feelings and worries with a trusted adult



## Doing something creative

- Colouring or drawing
- Playing Minecraft
- Cooking or baking
- Playing with Lego

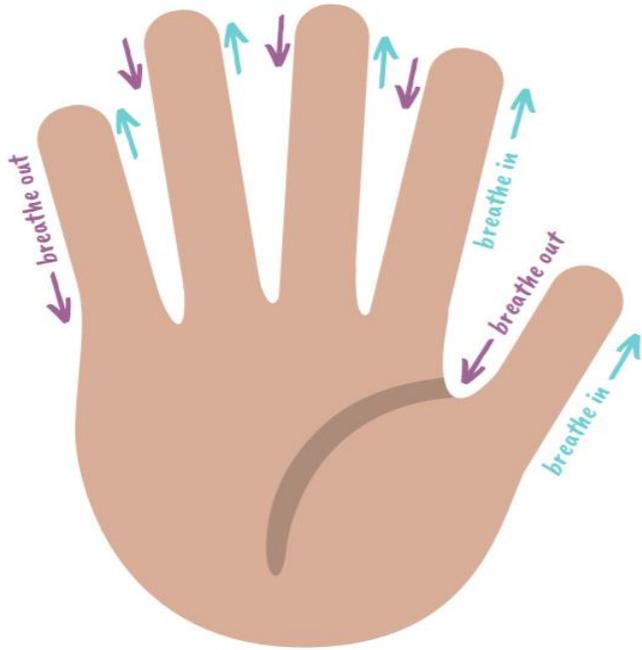


## Doing something calming

- Taking some deep breaths
- Listening to soothing music
- Thinking of a calm, happy place
- Looking at photos of favourite memories



# Doing something calming – ways to help your child relax



**HOLD**  
4 SECONDS

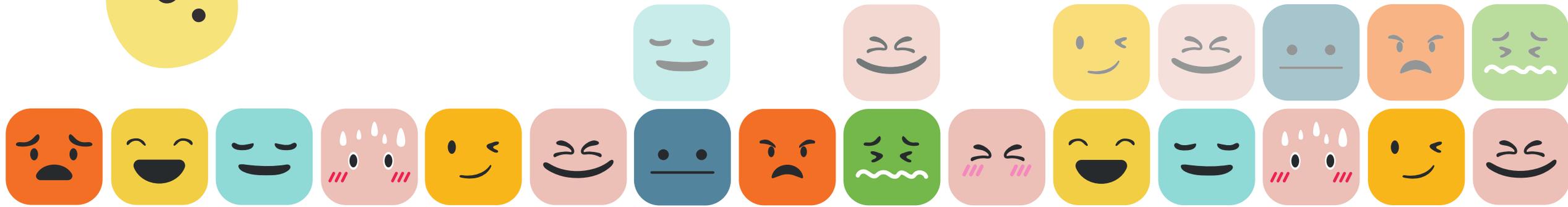


**HOLD**  
4 SECONDS

**BREATHE OUT**  
4 SECONDS

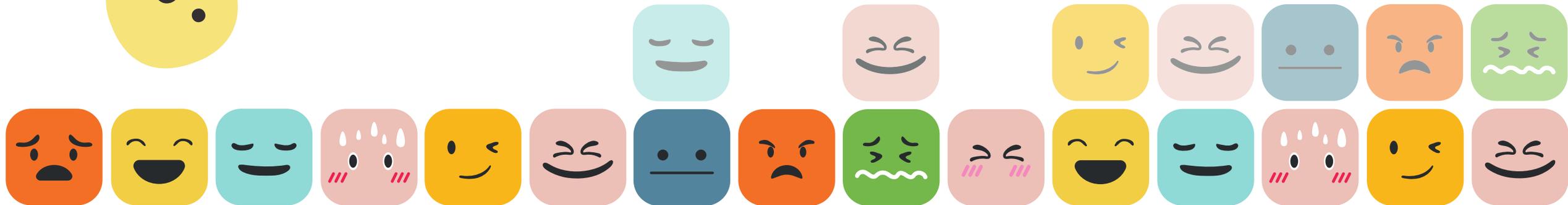
## The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

Ease your state of mind in stressful moments.



# Shifting your child's mindset

- Focus on what is in their control
- Remind them of things they're good at
- Help them to think about something they're looking forward to



# Sleep

- Most children aged 10-11 still need 10-11 hours sleep per night
- Sleep deprivation affects mood, memory and concentration
- So not getting enough sleep is likely to prevent children from being able to do their best in school tests



# Getting a good night's sleep – make it routine

- Encourage your child to keep to the same bedtime each day and have a relaxing routine, for example, bath, milky drink, clean teeth, read a story in bed, lights out
- Keep your child's bedroom dark, cool, quiet and free of distractions – white noise or soothing sounds apps can help or calming music



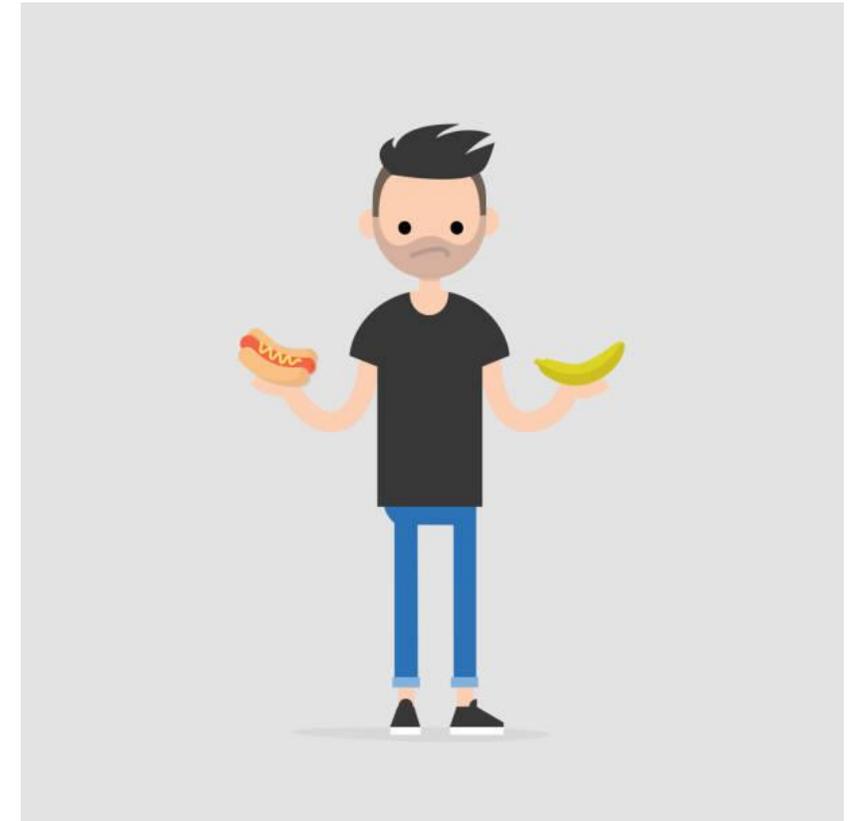
# Things to avoid

- Screens for at least an hour before bedtime
- Sugar and fizzy drinks from mid-afternoon onwards
- Doing school-work in the bedroom
- Doing anything stressful in the hour before bed



# Healthy eating

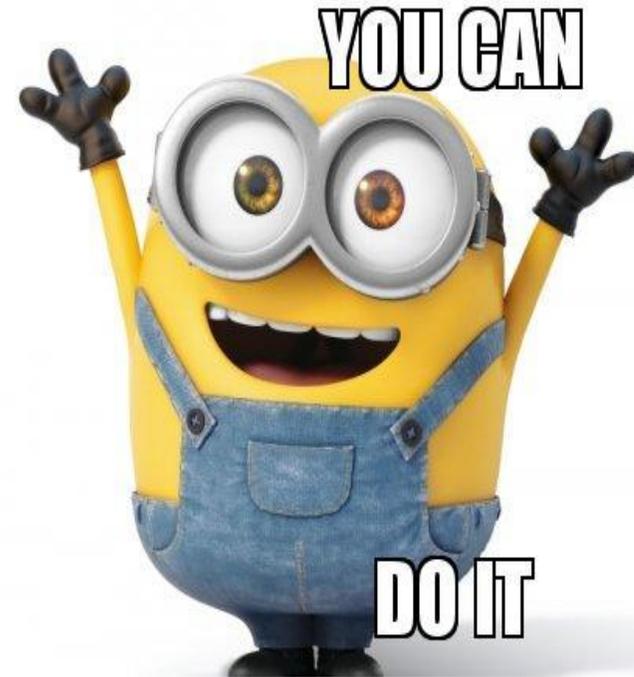
- Food is fuel so eating the right types of food at the right time sustains energy levels and improves concentration
- Eating breakfast is therefore important, and drinking enough water to keep hydrated



Finally, self-belief is important so remind your child:

YOUR  
BEST IS  
GOOD  
ENOUGH

and



## Useful sources of support and information about managing anxiety:



**Childline**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



**Mindworks Surrey**

<https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/>



**NHS Choices**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anxiety-disorders-in-children/>

**Young Minds (has a parent helpline)**

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

**Anxiety UK - National charity helping people with Anxiety**

[www.anxietyUK.org.uk](http://www.anxietyUK.org.uk)

We would love to hear your feedback!

