Feeling Stressed About College?



A Toolkit To Help You Prepare

Valleys Steps Camau'r Cymoedd

Steps to Student Wellbeing

With students for students

Valleys Steps Camau'r Cymoedd

Steps to Student Wellbeing

With students for students

The Steps to Student Wellbeing project from Valleys Steps aims to develop wellbeing resources and support ***with*** students ***for*** students.

Working with The College Merthyr Tydfil, Coleg y Cymoedd, and University of South Wales to provide tailored wellbeing support that students need.

The College Merthyr Tydfil
Y Coleg Merthyr Tudful

Coleg y Cymoedd

University of South Wales
Prifysgol De Cymru

This toolkit aims to prepare students to start and/or return to college/university. We've tried to include a range of ideas - hopefully there's something useful for you!

You can also check out our other sessions (aimed at adults) here: http://www.valleyssteps.org/online-sessions/

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@valleyssteps

What's In The Toolkit?



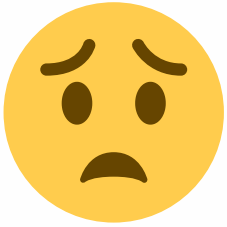
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1: About This Toolkit



- During COVID-19 we have spent a lot of time at home.
- College will be reopening in September but things will probably not be the same as before.
- You may attend classes online or have to go into the college at some point.



- All of this change can cause us to feel anxious, worried or panicky.
- You might have mixed emotions about going to college, maybe feeling excited and worried at the same time. This is perfectly normal.



- This toolkit can help you to prepare for going to college, thinking about how you might feel and ways you can deal with those feelings.
- Completing the workbook will help you to discover what things might be worrying you and how you can deal with them.



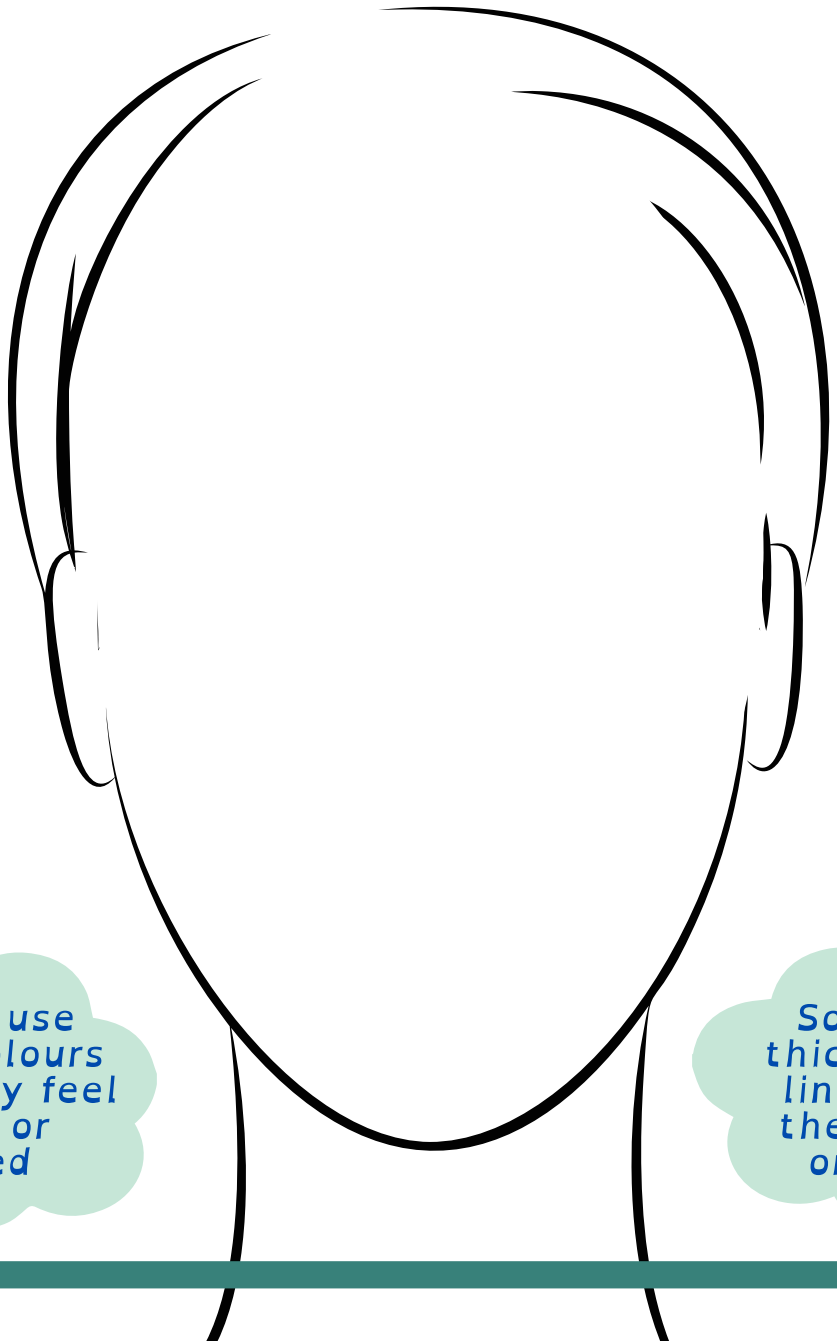
- You can ask someone you know and trust to help you complete it if you prefer.
- Take your time to work through it, record any tips you feel are helpful and try some out before you start college.

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2: How Do You Feel When You Think About Going To College?

What's Your Mood?

Draw or write words to describe how you feel.
If you feel really creative get your colours out!



Artists use bright colours when they feel happy or excited

Some use thick, heavy lines when they're sad or angry

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3: My Ideal First Day

Imagine you've finished your first day starting / going back to college and it went totally as you wanted it to.
Draw or write what your ideal first day was like in the boxes:

What did you look like?

What was the college like?

What did you see?

What did you notice?

What did you hear?

How did you feel?

Remember! There are no right or wrong answers - it's your story!

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4: My Ideal First Day

Top tip: If you find it hard to think about your ideal first day, try making a story about someone's ideal first day and create a main character that is similar to you!

What happened?

What obstacles/ barriers were in your way?

What strengths & resources did you have?

How did the day end?

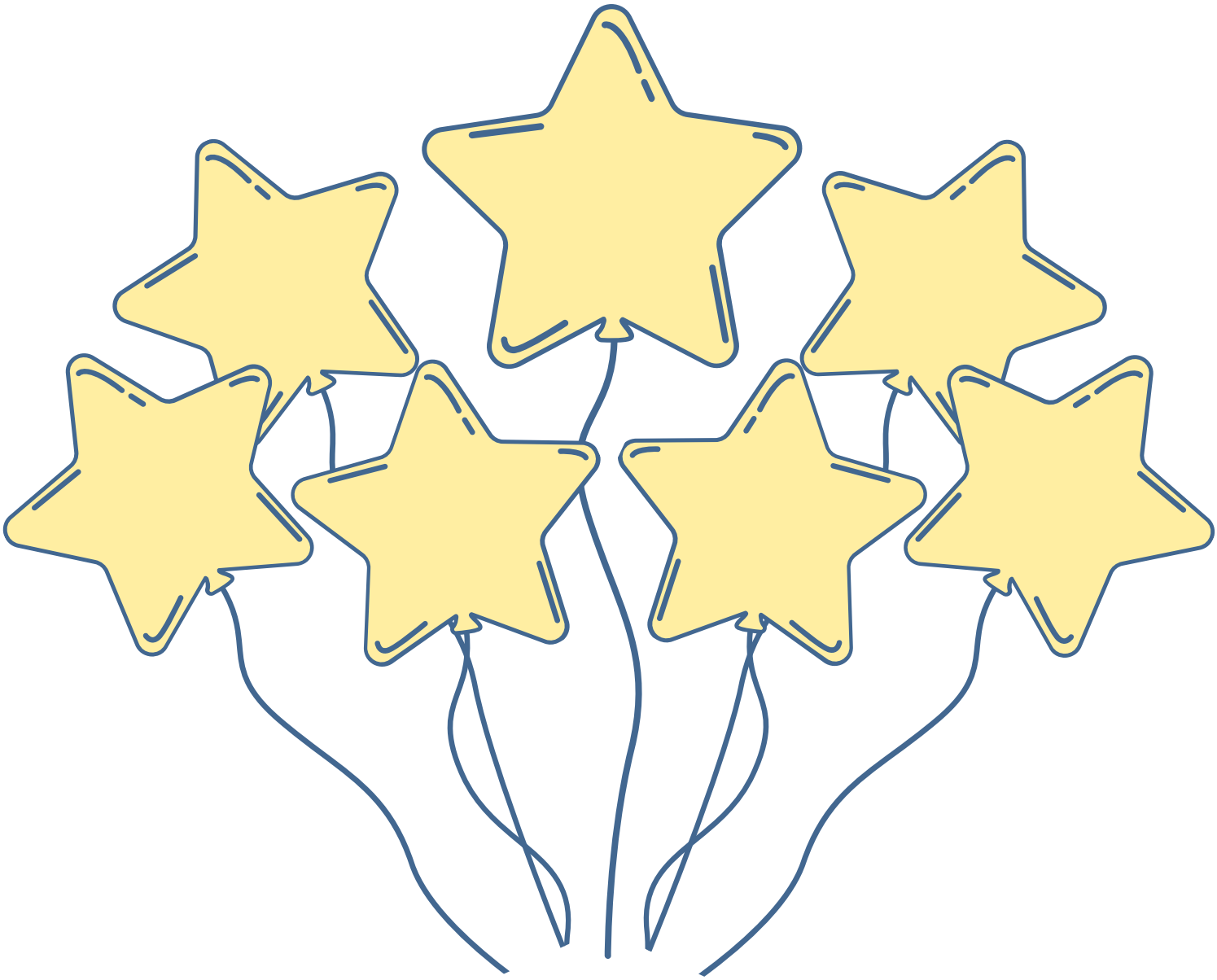
What have you achieved?

What reduced your worries?

What made you feel safer?

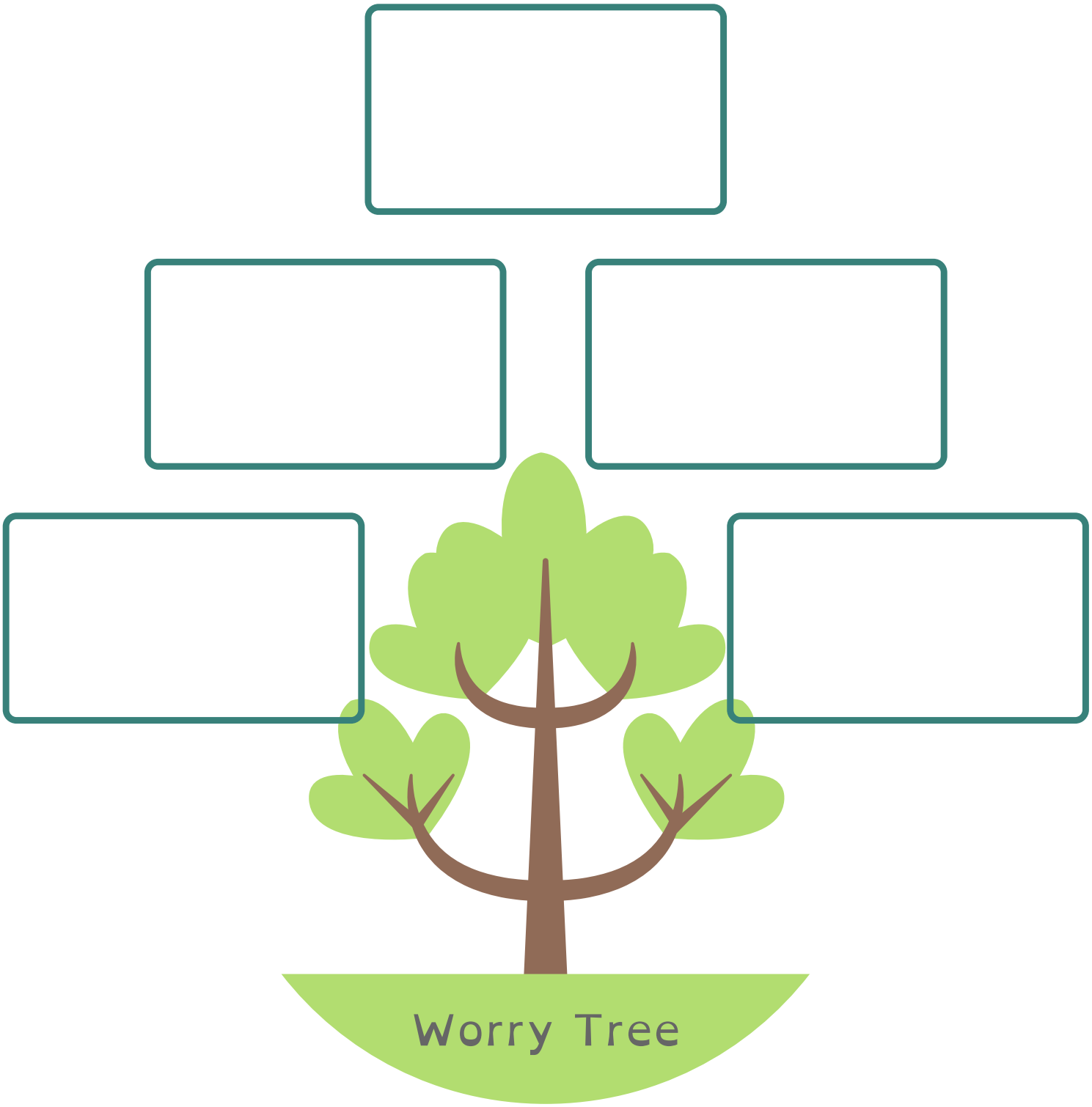
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5: Things I Am Looking Forward To As A College Student



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6: Things I Am Worried About

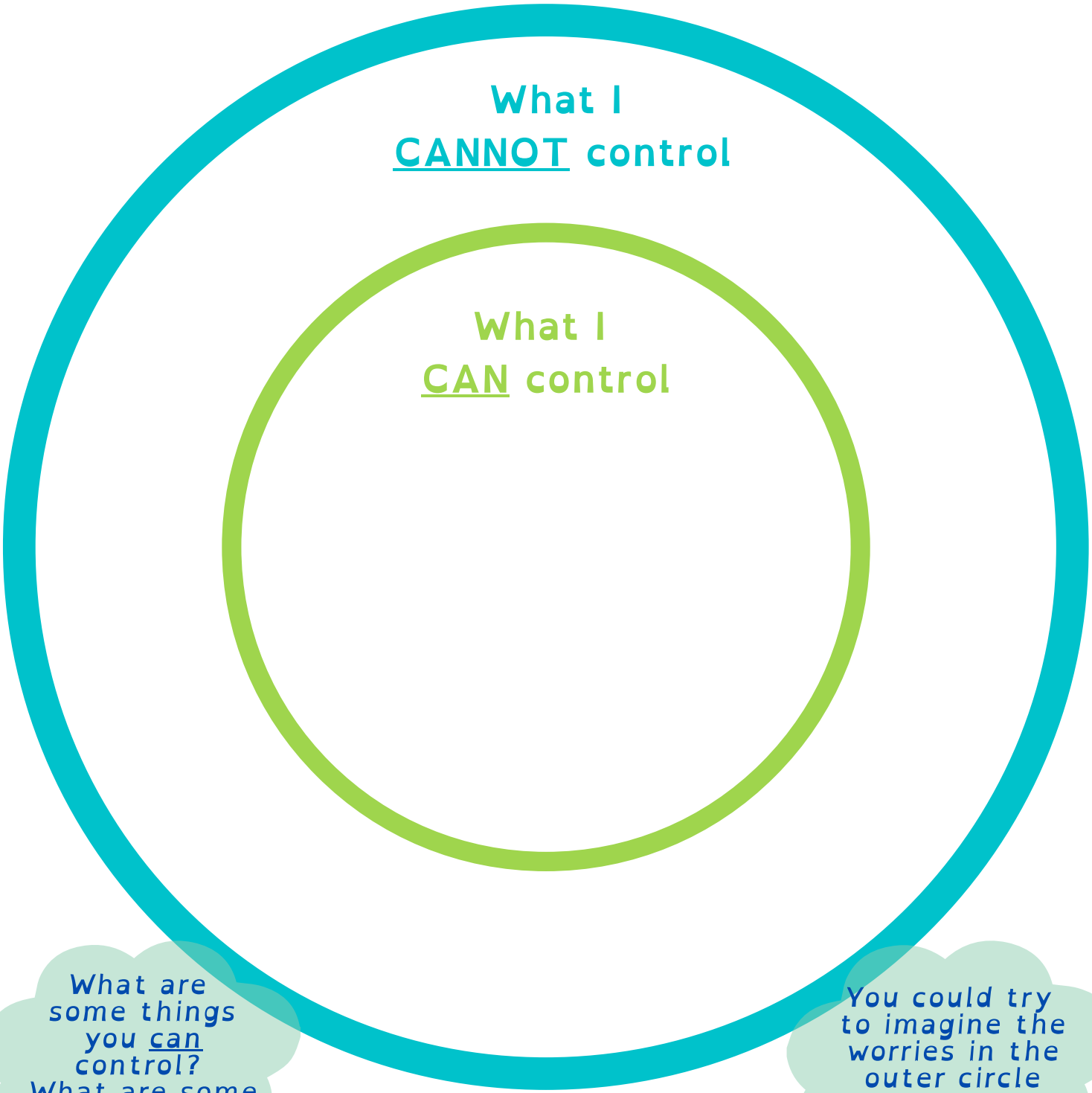


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7: What I Can Control

We can worry about a lot of things - some we can control, some we can't

It can help to focus on the inner circle and try to let go of the worries in the outer circle!

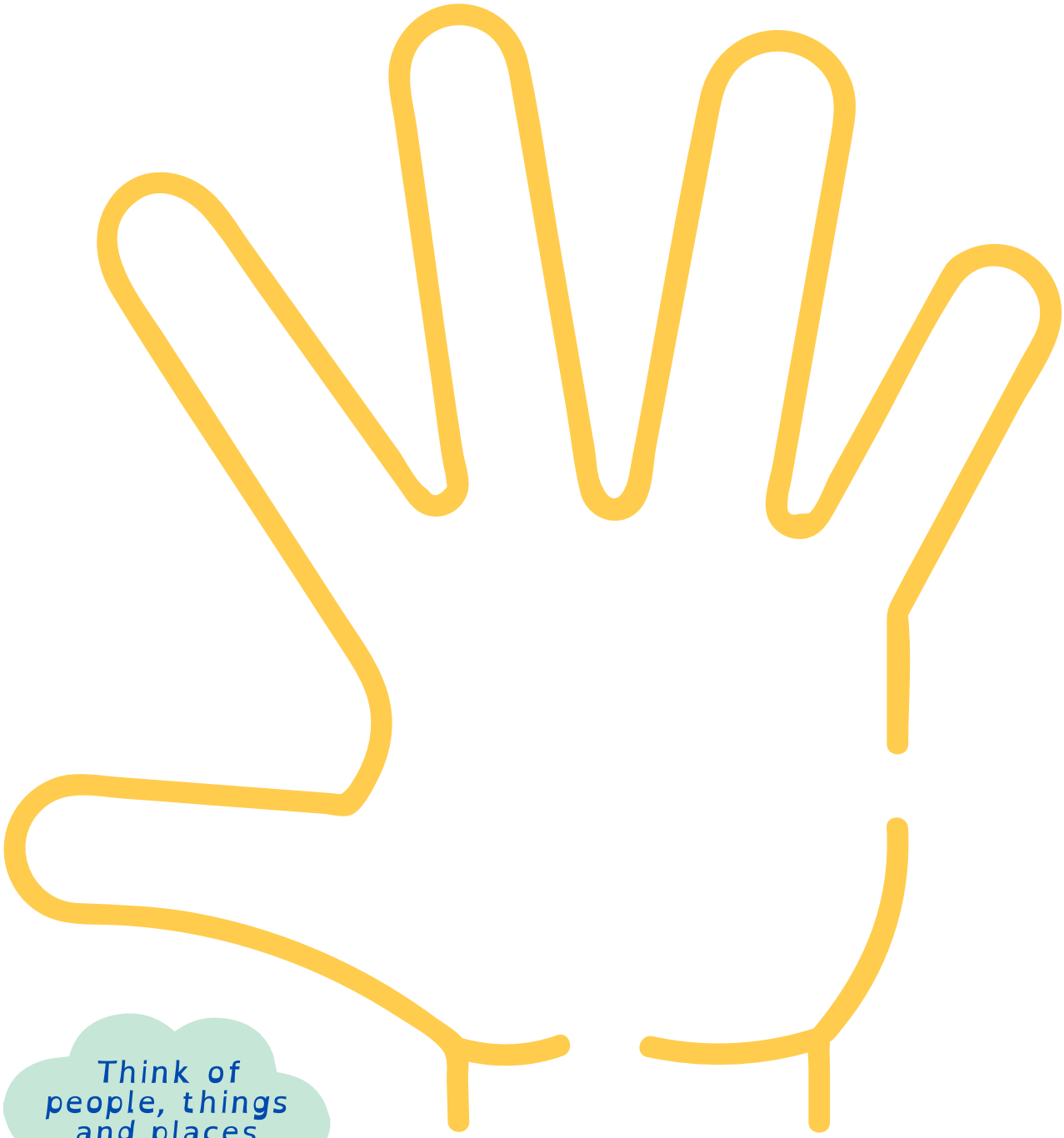


What are some things you can control? What are some you can't?

You could try to imagine the worries in the outer circle floating away like balloons...

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8: Who / What Can Give Me A Hand?



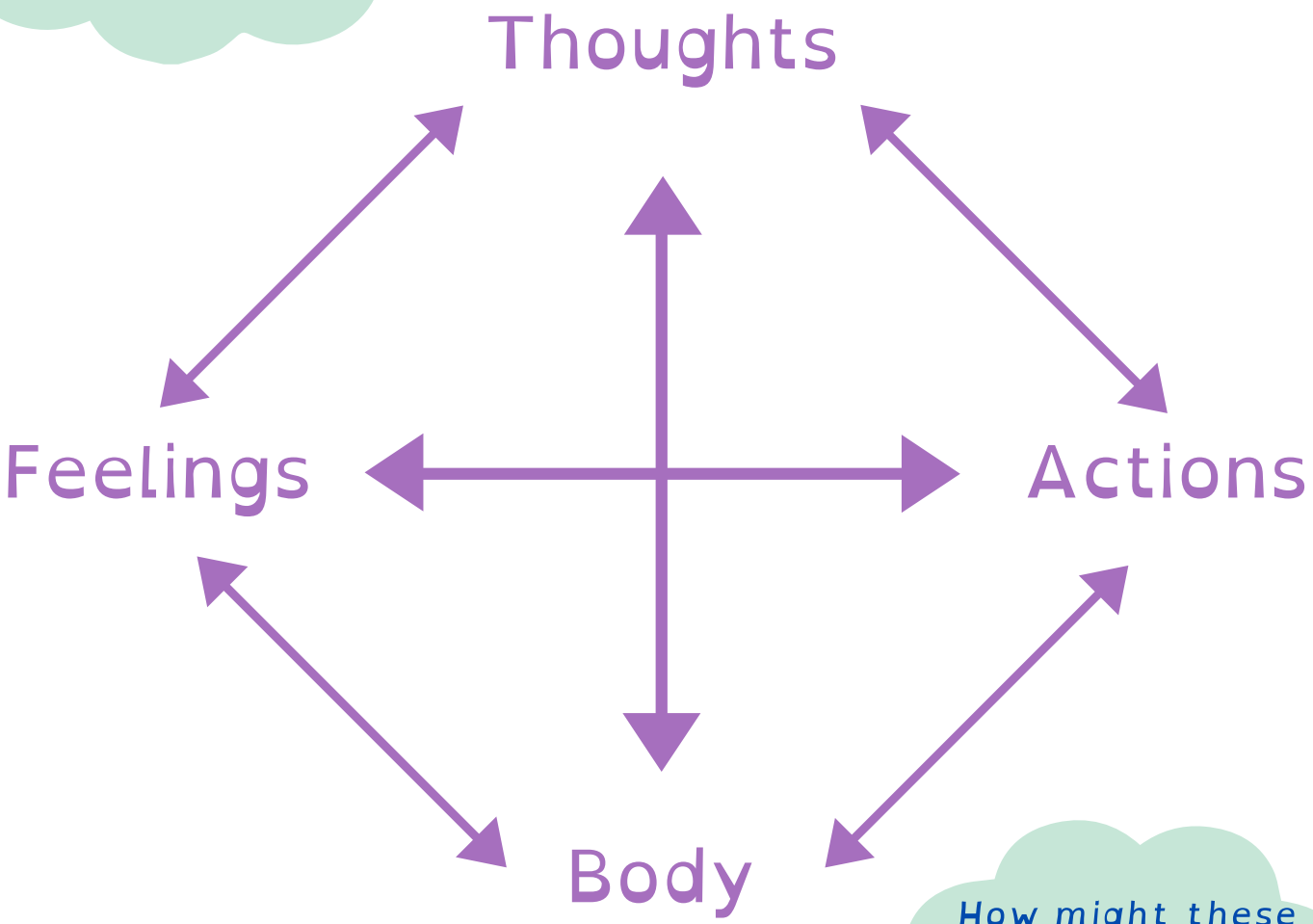
Think of people, things and places that you find helpful

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9: It's All Connected!

How we think affects how we feel (emotions), what we feel in our bodies, and what we do

What are your thoughts, feelings / emotions and body sensations about going to college?

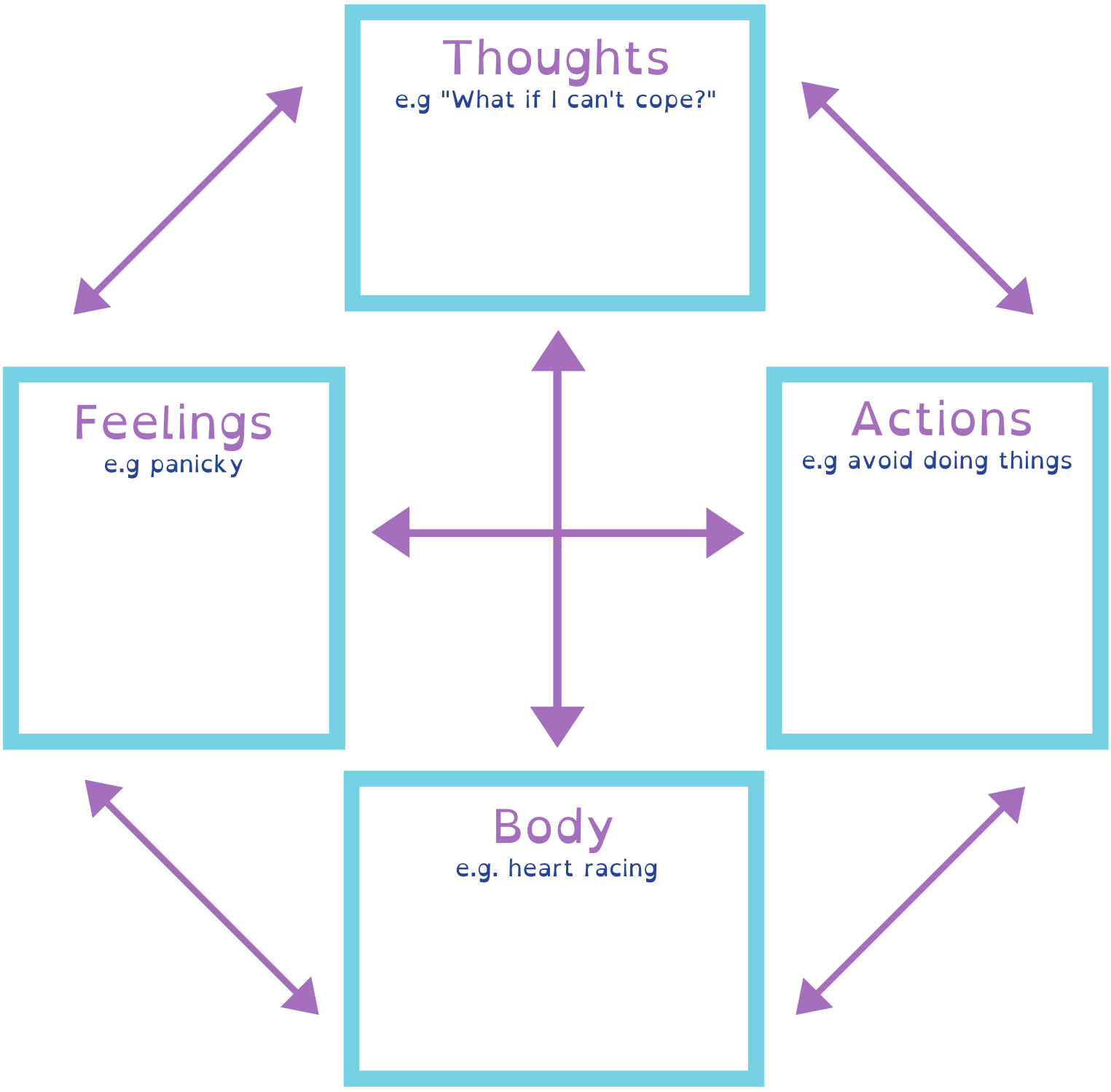


How might these affect what you do / how you act? What might you do differently?

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10: It's All Connected!

Write in any thoughts, feelings, body sensations and actions relating to going to college



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11: How To Deal With Unhelpful Thoughts

When we are worried, stressed or scared we tend to have lots of unhelpful or negative thoughts



Put your thoughts on trial

Ask yourself some questions:
- Is it true?
- What's the evidence?
- Who said it?
- What would your best friend say to you about it?



Put some distance between you

Imagine hitting the thought out of the park or it floating away on a balloon



Stop and distract yourself

Imagine a stop sign, then switch to do something else:
- Go for a walk
- Listen to music
- Call a friend



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12: Exercise

Being physically active can help you feel less stressed and anxious, lift your mood and helps you to sleep better.

Aerobic exercise that gets you to breathe faster is especially beneficial.





Short bursts of intense exercise (about 5 mins) can help with overwhelming feelings e.g. star jumps, sprinting, speed skipping







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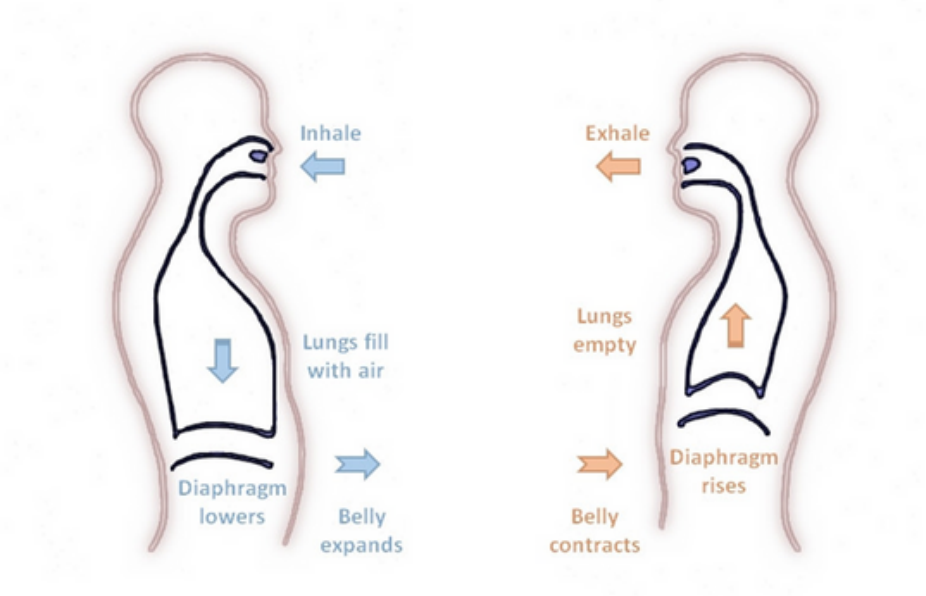
13: Breathing Techniques

When we feel scared or anxious our heart rate increases and we breathe faster.

Try out these breathing techniques to slow down your breathing:

Belly Breathing

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Notice how your hands move when you breathe. Aim to push the hand out on your belly as you breathe in slowly.



Finger Breathing

- Hold one hand up and trace around each finger with a finger from the other hand
- Breathe in as you move up and breathe out as you move down

If you find it tickles, just hold each finger as you breathe in and out.

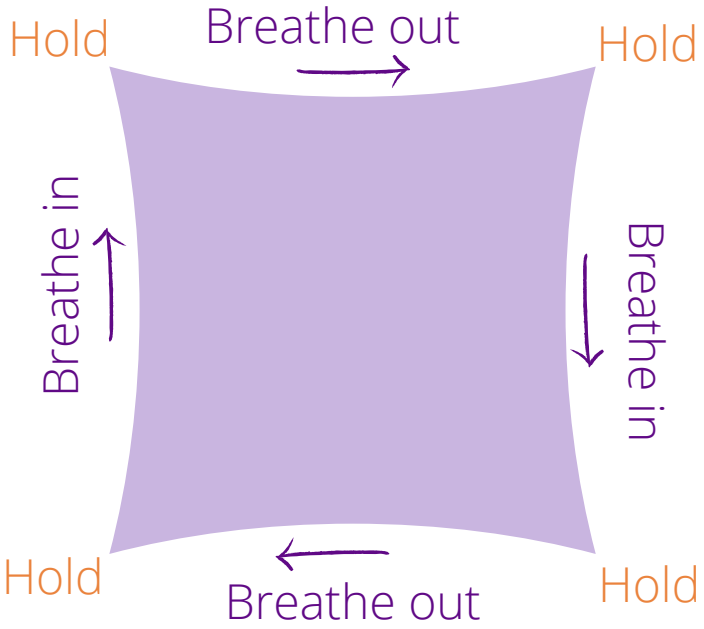


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14: Breathing Techniques

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Try out these breathing techniques to slow down your breathing:

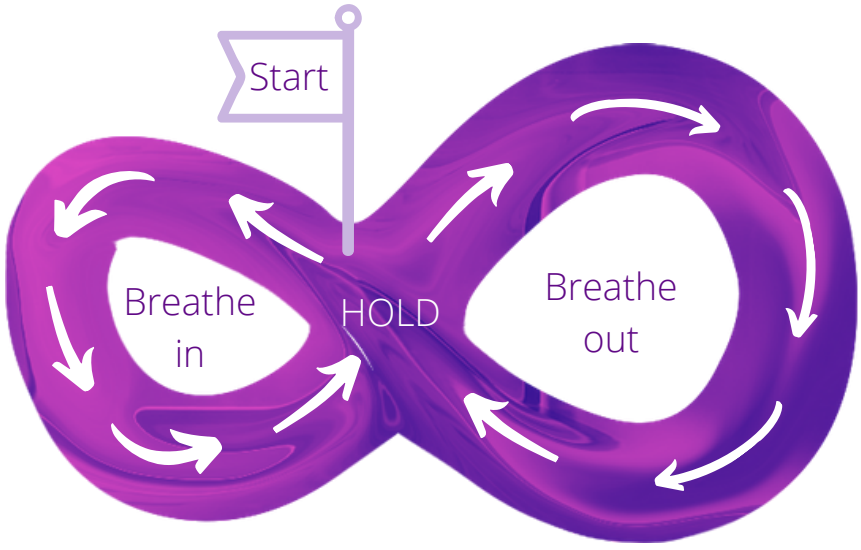


Breathing to shapes

Try to slow your breathing down.

Trace the shape with your finger as you breathe in, hold and breathe out.

Here's a different shape to try: breathe in round the shorter loop, breathe out round the longer loop



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15: Ways To Relax

Progressive muscle relaxation

When we are anxious or stressed we tend to tense our muscles. Relaxing our bodies is a good skill to practice as it can reduce the anxious feelings.

Breathe in	Breathe out
Start by tensing your feet and leg muscles, really squeeze them tightly as you breathe in	As you breathe out allow them to relax
Now tense the muscles in your buttocks, back and belly	And release as you breathe out
Next tense your arms, hands, shoulders and neck,	Let them relax down as you breathe out
Screw your face up tightly and clench your jaw	Now allow your whole body to relax as you take a few deep breaths

Relaxing music playlist



Find music that makes you feel chilled and relaxed!
Make a playlist for times of stress



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16: Grounding

5 Things you can see



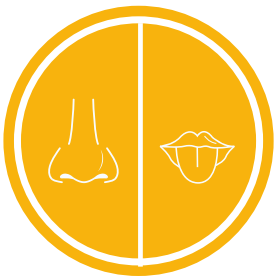
4 Things you can hear



3 Things you can touch



2 Things you can smell/taste



1 Mindful breath!



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17: Positive Self-Talk

Talking positively to yourself makes you feel better and can help you face difficult situations.

What other things can you say to yourself?

You are doing really well

I can do it
I can get through this



I will try some new tools to help me

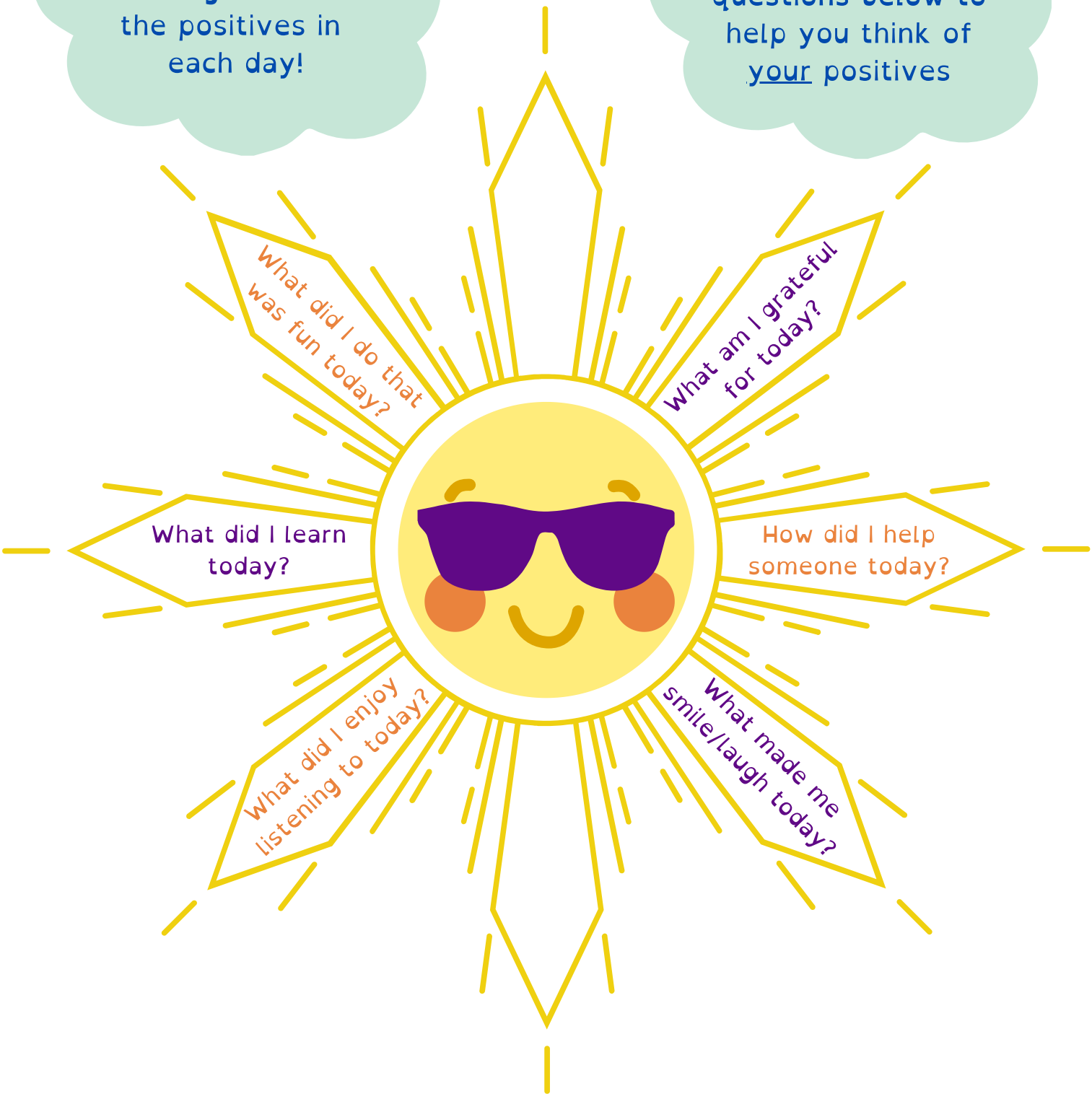
I can always ask for help if I'm struggling

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18: Daily Positives

It can boost your wellbeing to look for the positives in each day!

Check out the questions below to help you think of <u>your</u> positives



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19: What's In Your Toolkit?

what I can control

breathing techniques

exercise



ways to relax

helping hand

positive self-talk

dealing with unhelpful thoughts

grounding

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20: Balancing Act

When we feel stressed, worried, anxious or panicky we need to build up our resources so we can cope.

What can you use to help you regain balance?

Write in things that can help when you feel overwhelmed - or maybe something you're going to try!

worry

fear

panic

stress



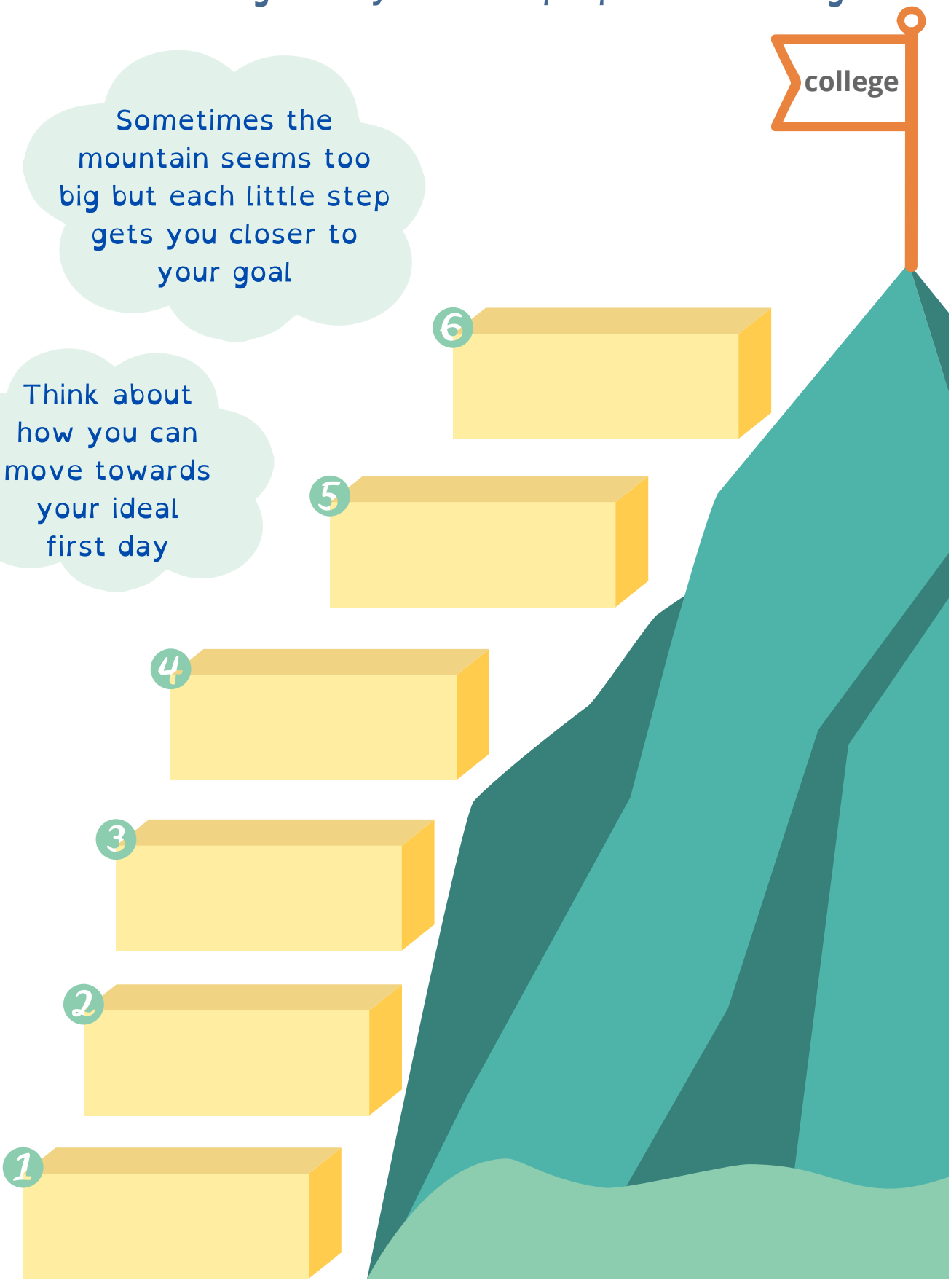
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21: Climbing The Mountain

What things can you do to prepare for college?

Sometimes the mountain seems too big but each little step gets you closer to your goal

Think about how you can move towards your ideal first day



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22: Who can I talk to?

Make a list of people you can call, text, video chat with or speak to face to face when you feel stressed, worried or anxious

This might be friends, family, tutors or others

Remember to record the numbers too if they are not saved!







Talking to someone really does help!

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23: My Plan

What things do I like?

What am I excited about?



What am I worried about?

For each worry:
Is it in my control?

YES!
Continue to next page

NO!
Let it float away...



Remember to be kind to yourself, you're doing the best you can!

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24: My Plan

What steps can I take to reduce my worry?

When can I take these steps?

Which tools from this toolkit might be helpful?

Who can support me?



You're not alone...
This is a stressful time
for lots of people
You can get there!



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25: Struggling? Need more help?

CALL Mental Health
Helpline: 0800 132 737 or
text help to: 81066

Samaritans:
116 123

SHOUT: In Crisis? Worried?
Anxious? Stressed?
Text 85258

Childline:
0800 1111
www.childline.org

PAPYRUS
(Prevention of Young Suicide)
Hopeline: 0800 068 4141

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26: Useful Websites & Apps

The Mix:
www.themix.org.uk

Childline:
www.childline.org

Kooth:
www.kooth.com

YoungMinds:
www.youngminds.org.uk

Apps:

Daylio	Daily mood tracker
Calm Harm	Helps manage self-harm
ReachOut Worry Time	Saves worries for worry time
Presently	Simple daily gratitude
MindShift	Helps cope with anxiety

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