

WELCOME TO

# Understanding Anxiety



# Who We Are

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- Therapy practice called TeenMatters based in SW London
- Experienced therapists & experienced parents
- TeenMatters specialise in ages 10 - 28 years & parents



**"The mind is its own place,  
and in itself can make a  
heaven of hell and a hell of  
heaven"**

John Milton



# What is anxiety?

- Body's alarm system
- Essential
- Oldest part of our brain
- Drives our attention
- One response system

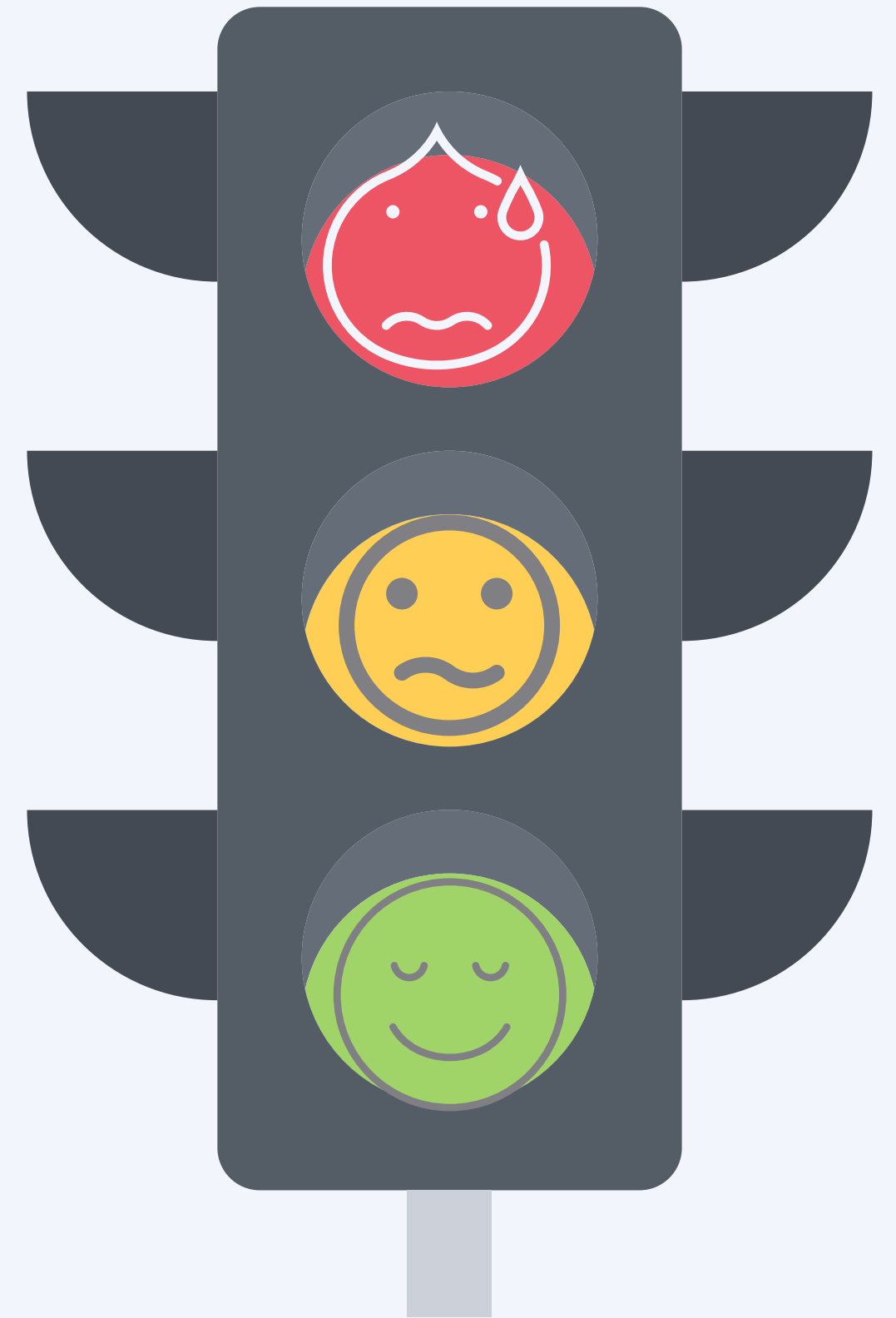


# Our body's response system

**Fear** relating to an actual dangerous situation

**Anxiety** anticipation of something difficult/important

**Safe** feeling relaxed and calm



# What are young people anxious about?

*I don't like how I look*

*I don't know who I am....*

*Someone might attack me*

*I'm different...*



*I have no friends*

*No-one respects me*

*My exams won't go as well as I hope*



# Healthy vs. Unhealthy



**Signals importance**



**View anxiety as a friend**



**Leads to appropriate action**



**Ongoing negative impact**



**View anxiety as a problem**



**Endlessly focus on worries**

# Medical vs. Therapeutic model

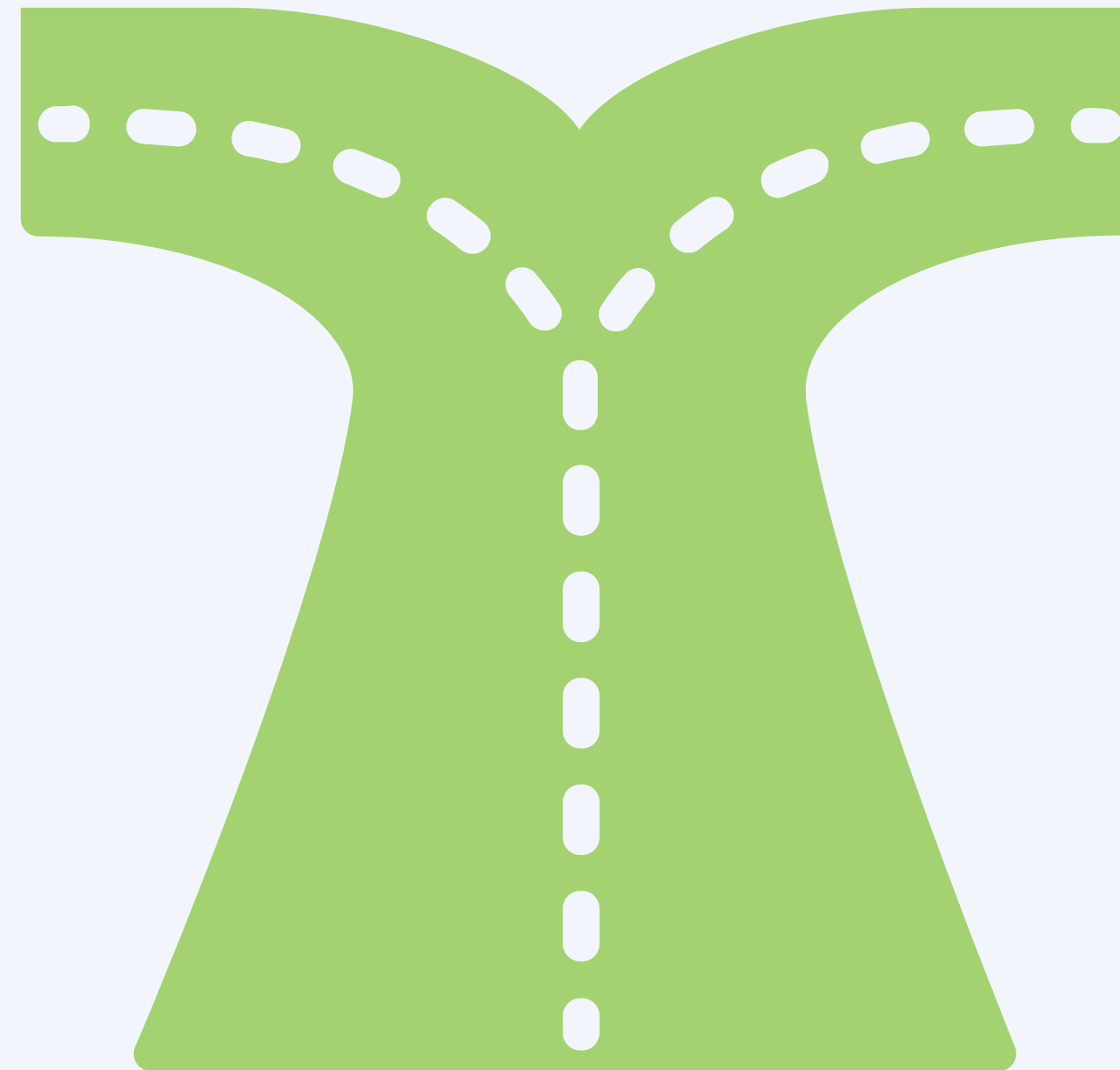
Anxiety as illness

Medication

Stigma of labelling

Symptom management

Passive recipient of care



Anxiety to be managed

Root cause

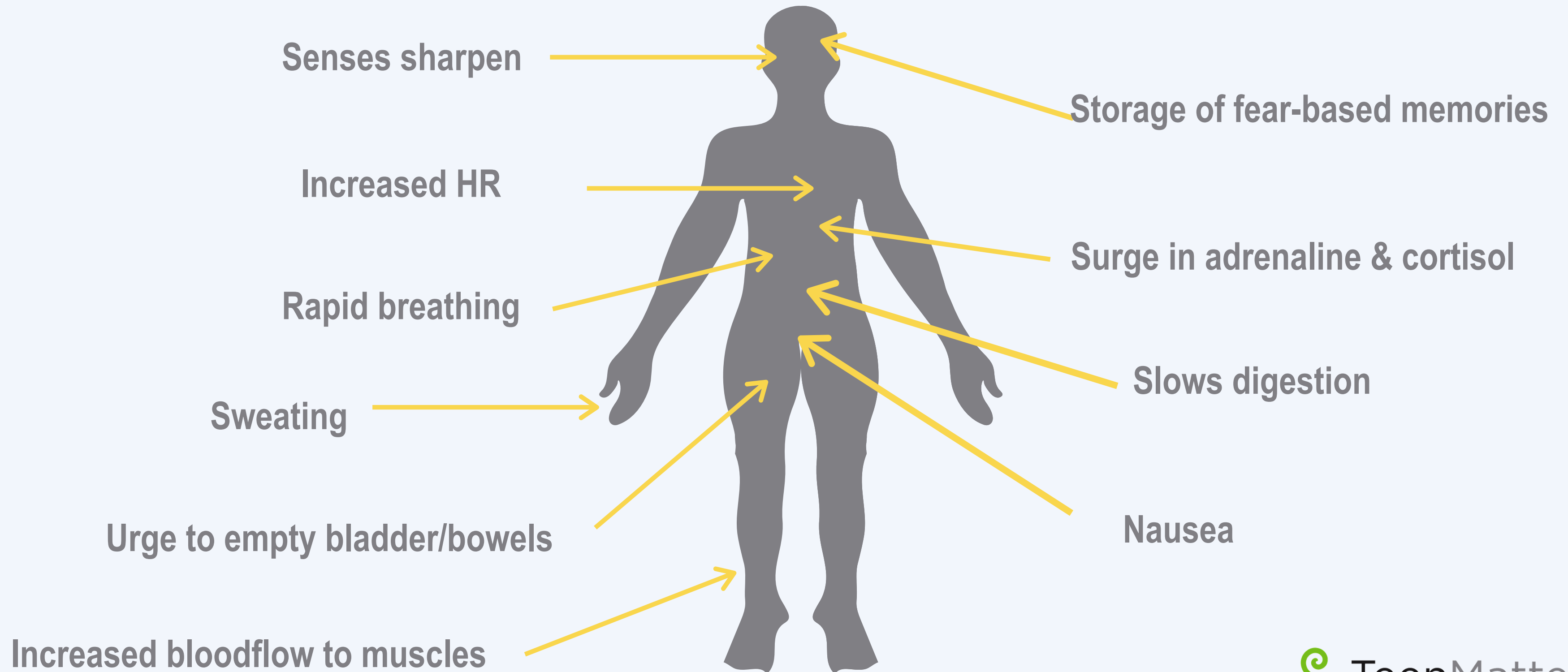
Awareness & choice

Strategies

Empowering the individual



# Short-term effects of anxiety



# Long-term effects of anxiety

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↑ Acne

Reproductive system

↑ Tension

Digestive issues

↓ Pain tolerance

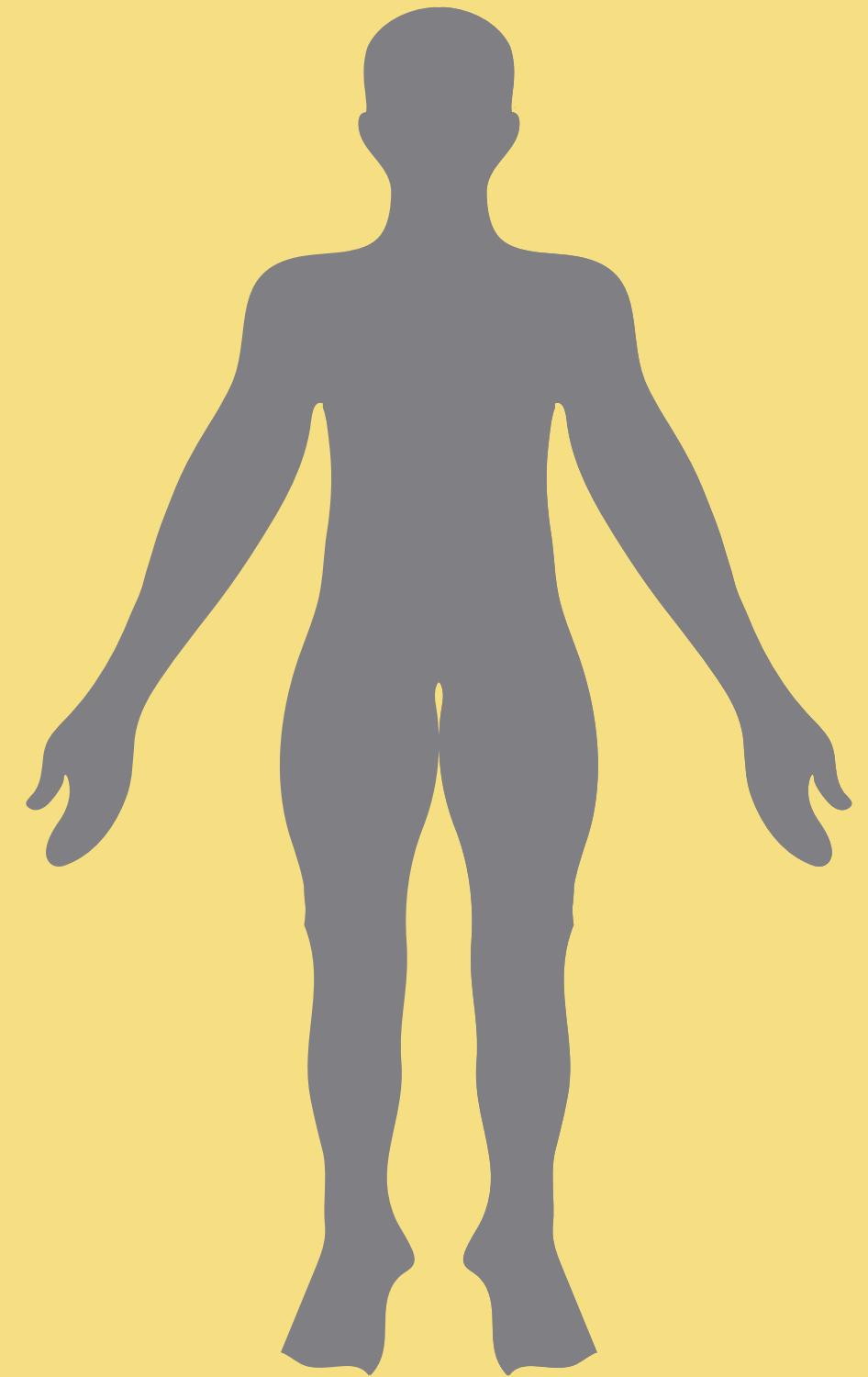
Heart issues

↓ Attention

Diabetes

↓ Immune system

Emotions



# How to spot anxiety



Disrupted sleep



Isolation



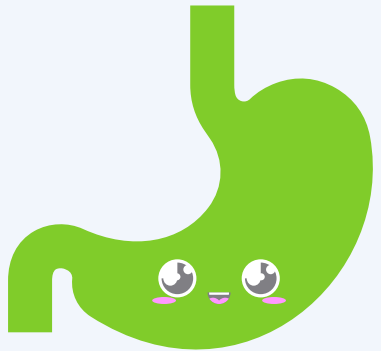
Procrastination



Seeking approval



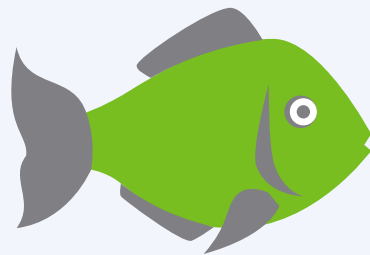
Breathing



Stomach ache



Overthinking



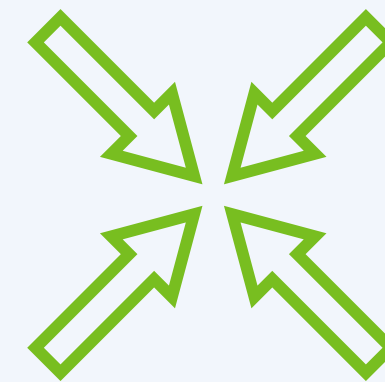
Memory issues



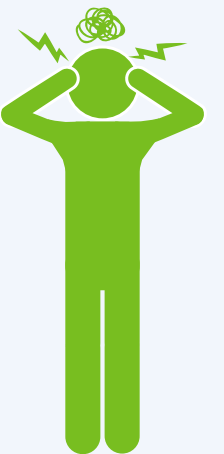
Irritability



Inc. heart rate



Concentration



Headaches

# Some causes of anxiety



Frightening experience



Low self-esteem



Parent mental health

# Some causes of anxiety



Anxious attachment style

Fear of intense feelings

Perfectionism



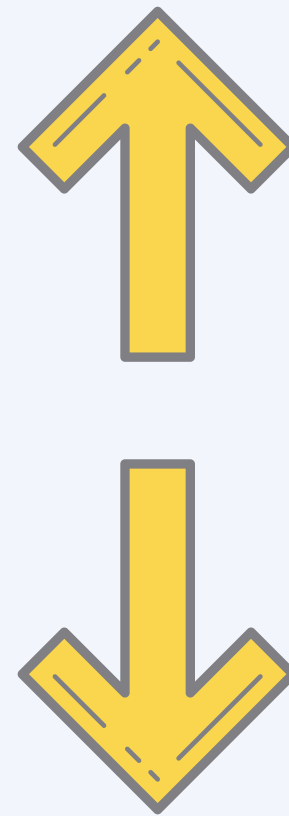
Hyperarousal



Window of Tolerance



Hypoarousal



# What is under our control?

## In our control

- Our thoughts - affirmations
- Our actions
- How we spend our time
- How we are with others

## Out of our control

- What other people think of us
- The actions of others
- The weather
- Politics



# Covid-19



# Tips for parents

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- Facing fears
- Space to express anxiety
- Praise
- It is ok not to be perfect
- Step back
- Age-appropriate risks
- Whole child
- Rule setting & unconditional positive regard



# Practical Anxiety Strategies



Meditation, breathing & yoga



Time in nature



Creative outlets



Sleep hygiene



Exercise



Reduced caffeine

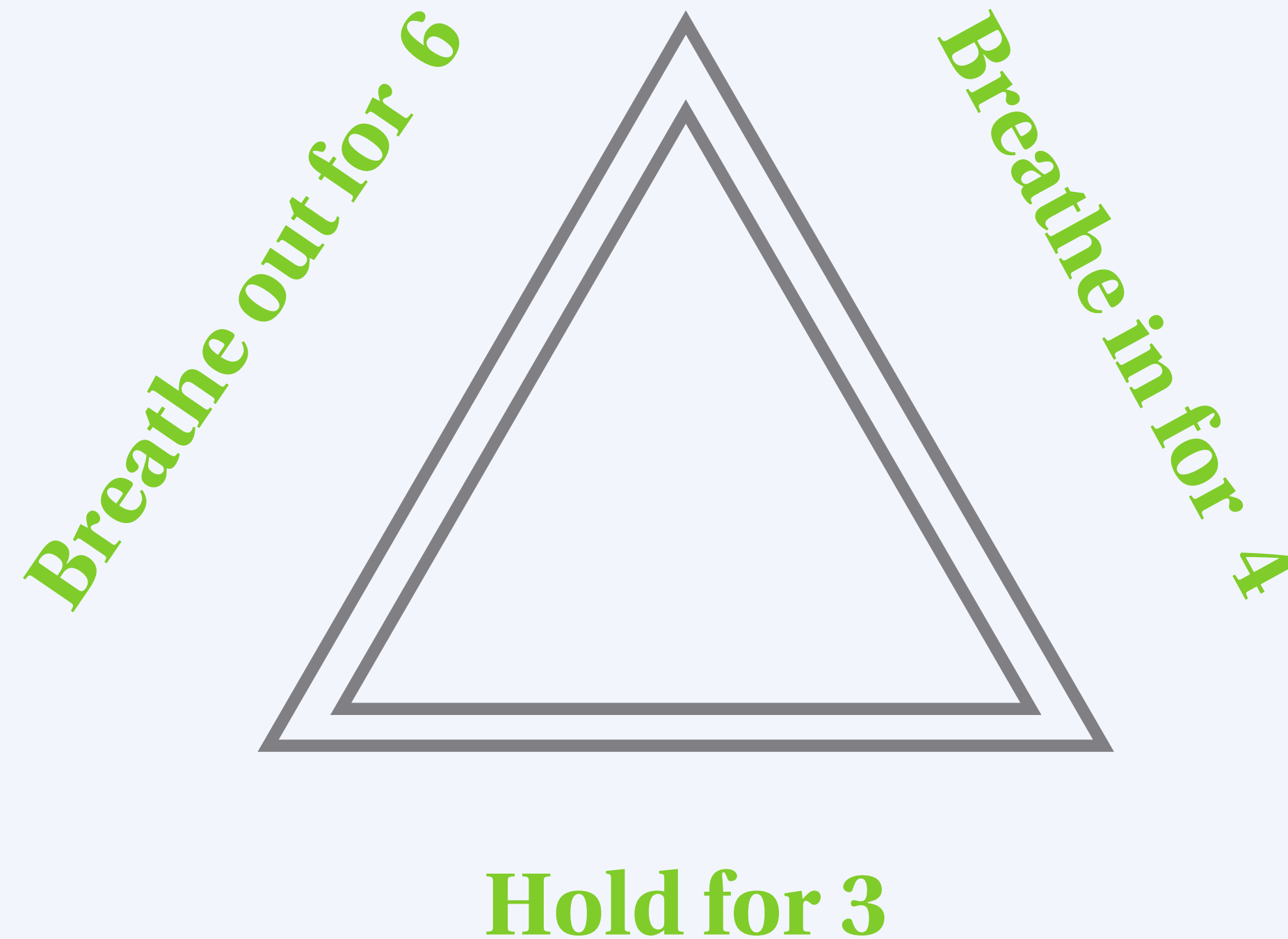


Social connection



Lists

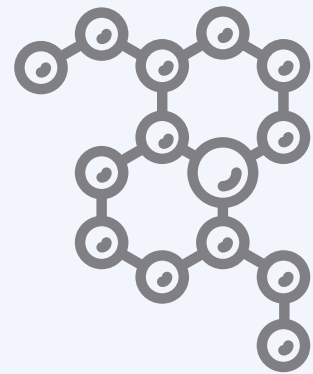
# Breathing exercise



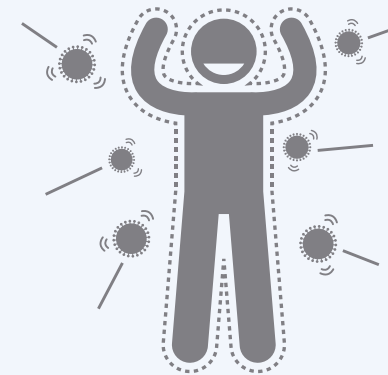
# Benefits of breath work



Lowered BP & HR



Lower stress hormones



Improved immune system



More energy



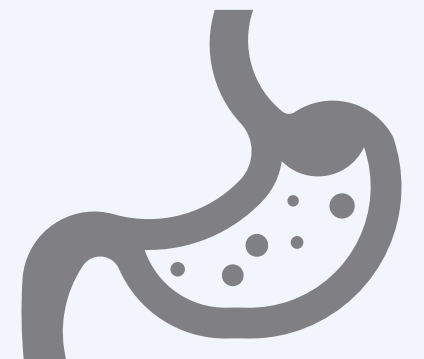
Faster muscle recovery and  
reduced soreness



Better sleep



Feeling of calm



Improved digestion

# When might professional help be useful?

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- Strategies not working
- Potential compromised
- Objective listener
- Parental anxiety
- Strengthen family relationships

# Questions?

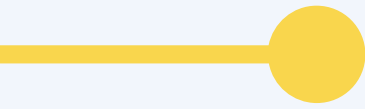
I am a single parent and I can't get my teenager off his PlayStation as he says it's the only time he is happy (playing with his friends) as this pandemic has scared him and he prefers the virtual world?

What's the tipping point for seeking professional help? Some links to refer teenagers to so they can explore and build their understanding about their anxiety and how to manage it.

Going through puberty in isolation.



# Questions?



How do you help a child whose anxieties have spilled over into obsessive checking behaviours to make them selves feel better (particularly at bedtime when 'bad thoughts and worries seem more acute)... how to help them understand that by doing X or Y or Z checking behaviour isn't directly linked to whether a 'bad thing' will or won't happen?

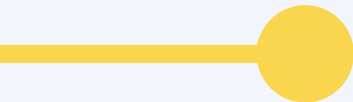


Additional coping mechanisms when the teen suffers from OCD, depression and anxiety



How do we as parents have identified anxiety vs. teenage behaviour

# Contact us



If you wish to discuss this or another similar issues with us further please do not hesitate to contact us on [hello@teenmatters.co.uk](mailto:hello@teenmatters.co.uk)

# Resources for parents: Internet

- [www.teenmatters.co.uk](http://www.teenmatters.co.uk) - Blogs on anxiety, coronavirus

- **School of Life- YouTube Channel**

What is Your Attachment Style

- **Ted Talks**

How to raise successful kids without overparenting - Julie Lythcott-Haims

- **YouTube**

Developing a Growth Mindset with Carol Dweck

Dan Siegel - "The Adolescent Brain"

# Resources for parents: Books

- Mindset: How to Fulfill Your Potential- Carol Dweck
- Brainstorm- Daniel J. Siegel    Mindsight- Daniel J. Siegel
- 101 Ways to Stop Anxiety: Practical Exercises to Find Inner Peace- Tanya J. Peterson
- The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read - Phillipa Berry

# Resources for teens

## Instagram Accounts

@anxiety\_wellbeing @dlcanxiety @theofficialsadghostclub

## School of Life Youtube Channel

Overcoming Bad Inner Voices

Why We Worry All the Time and How to Cope

The Importance of an Unhappy Adolescence

## Ted Talks

How to cope with anxiety - Olivia Remes

3 ways to overcome anxiety - Olivia Remes

How to stop feeling anxious about anxiety - Tim Box