

Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Aims of the session

What is wellbeing?

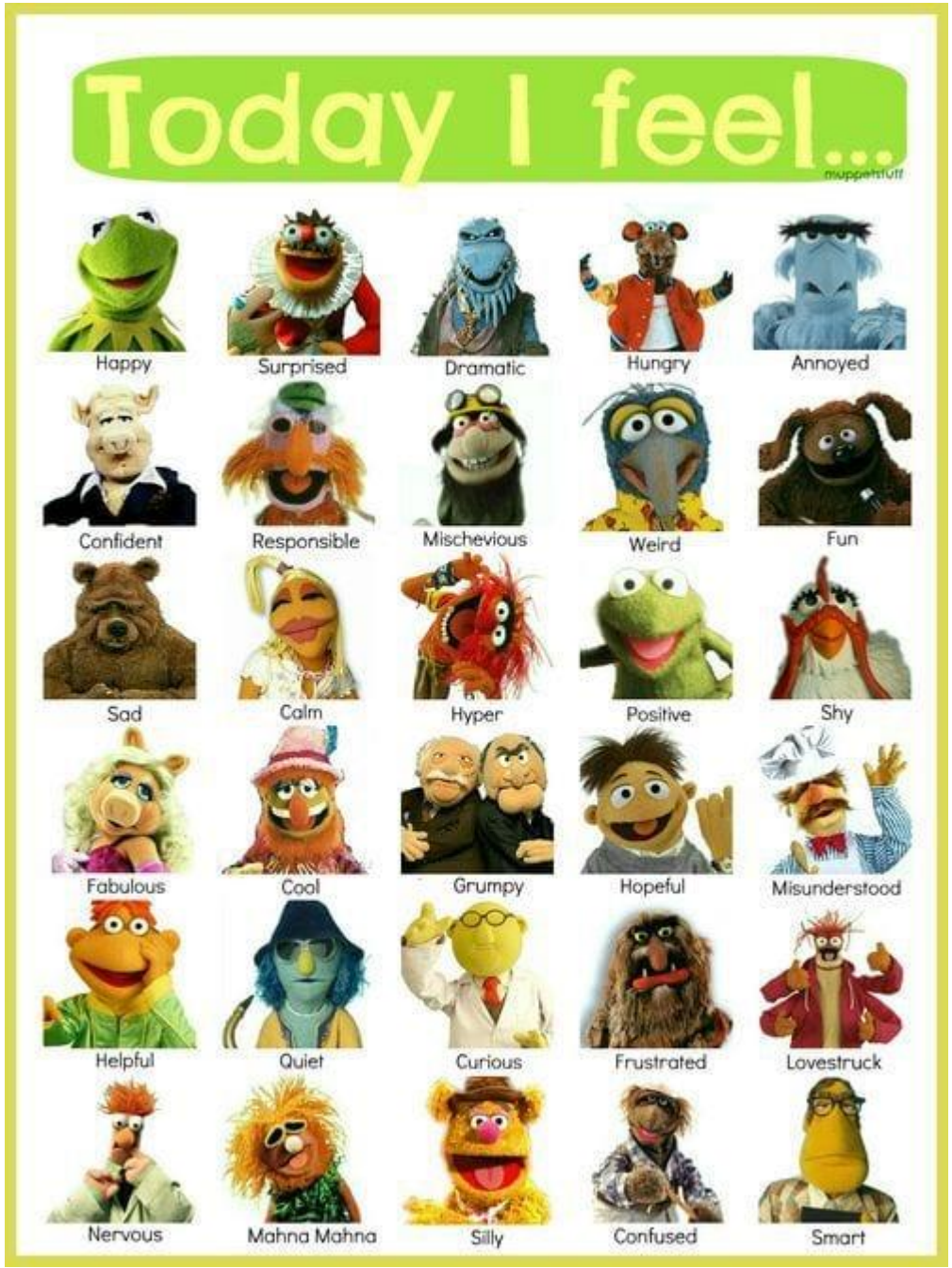
How do we measure wellbeing?

What is mental health?

Parent and child mental health

What is anxiety?

How can we help?



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Emotional Check In…

Which muppet are you today?!

Why do you feel this way?

Do you need to do anything to change or to sustain this mood?

What is wellbeing?

- There is no one agreed definition of wellbeing – it means different things to different people.
- Good mental wellbeing doesn't mean you're always happy or unaffected by your experiences. But poor mental wellbeing can make it more difficult to cope with daily life (www.mind.org.uk)
- Wellbeing can be understood as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole (New Economics Foundation)

Measuring wellbeing

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
2. I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
3. I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
4. I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
5. I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
6. I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
7. I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
8. I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
9. I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
10. I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
11. I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
12. I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
13. I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
14. I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

"Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). ©NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006, all rights reserved."

Higher score = greater wellbeing

Personal measures of wellbeing

- How do you look after your own wellbeing? (Either day-to-day or longer term)
- How do you know you are feeling positive?
- What are the signs that your wellbeing may be suffering?

Take a minute to reflect on these questions – make notes if it helps

Wheel of Wellbeing



New Economics Foundation (2013)

Self-Care Strategies

Mood journal

Gym/exercise

Singing and dancing

Go for a walk

Doing nothing at all! (REST)

Fixing and repairing things

Podcast/film/TV

Bath/spa/pamper

Socialising

Meditation/mindfulness

Retail therapy

Mental Health

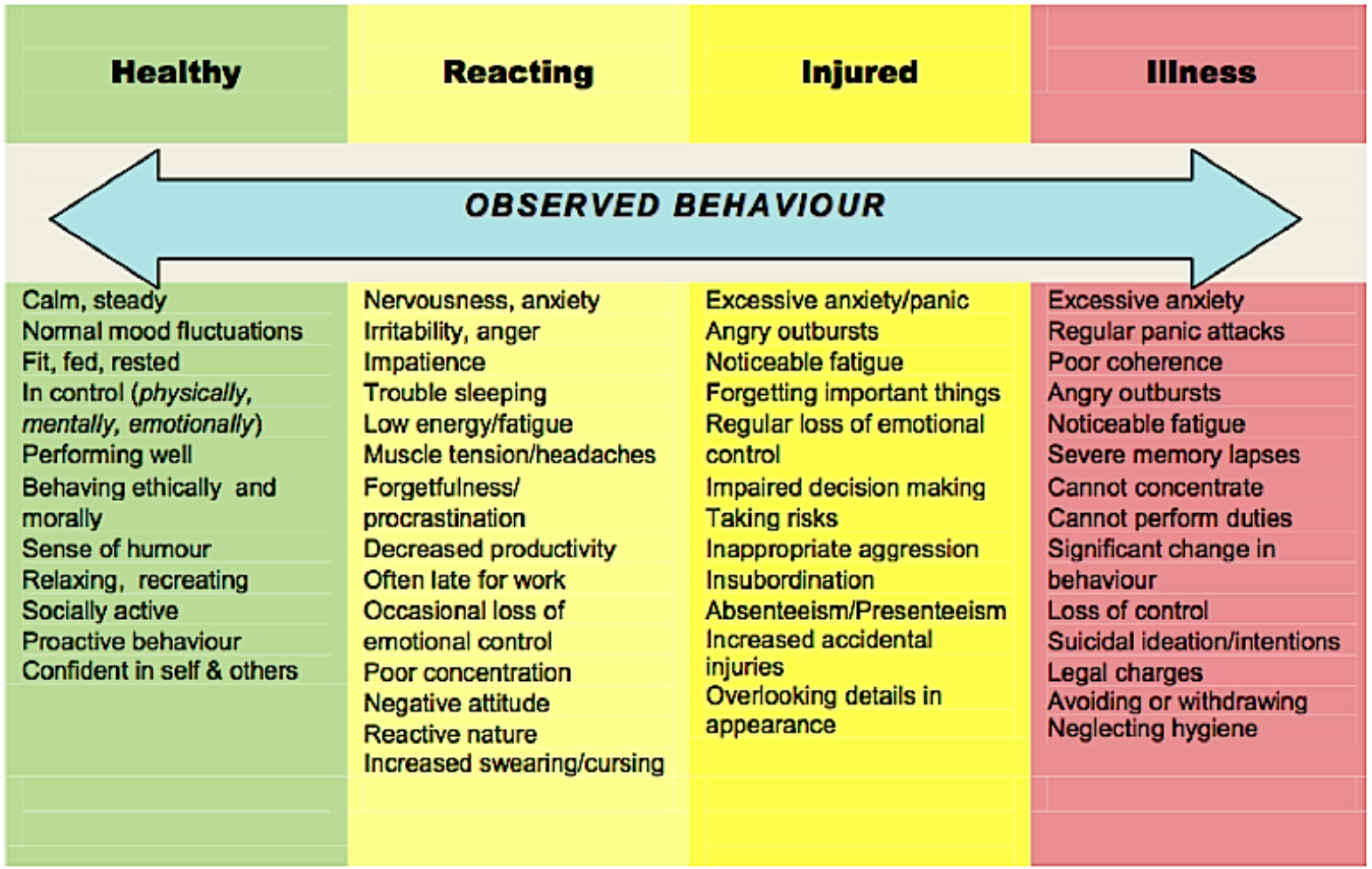
The World **Health** Organisation (WHO) defines **mental health** as 'a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'.

Good mental health means being generally able to think, feel and react in the ways that you need and want to live your life. But if you go through a period of poor mental health you might find the ways you're frequently thinking, feeling or reacting become difficult, or even impossible, to cope with. This can feel just as bad as a physical illness, or even worse. (www.mind.org.uk)

Mental Health and Parenting

- Approximately 68% of women and 57% of men with mental health problems are parents.
- The most common mental health problems experienced during pregnancy and after birth are anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- A 2013-2014 study found that 38% of first-time fathers are concerned about their mental health.
- Poor maternal and paternal mental health has been associated with poor outcomes in children but not all children of parents who have mental health problems are at risk. A number of biological dispositions, sociocultural contexts and psychological processes are likely to interact and can serve as protective factors or risk factors for both parents' and children's mental health. (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Mental Health Continuum



- Mental health can best be described as a continuum (good mental health to poor mental health).
- We will all have felt differently at different times in our lives – either day to day or over longer periods.
- ‘Ill’ mental health is likely to require a higher level of specialist support and intervention.

Mental Health and Children

- Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)
- Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise

- having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors

- being part of a family that gets along well most of the time

- going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils

- taking part in local activities for young people

Mental Health and Children

- Other factors are also important, including:

- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe

- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves

- being hopeful and optimistic

- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed

- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at

- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community

- feeling they have some control over their own life

- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems

Risk factors in childhood

- There are certain risk factors that make some children and young people more likely to experience problems than other children, but they don't necessarily mean difficulties are bound to come up or are even probable.
- Some of these factors include:

- having a long-term physical illness

- having a parent who has had mental health problems, problems with alcohol or has been in trouble with the law

- experiencing the death of someone close to them

- having parents who separate or divorce

- having been severely bullied or physically or sexually abused

- living in poverty or being homeless

- experiencing discrimination, perhaps because of their race, sexuality or religion

- acting as a carer for a relative, taking on adult responsibilities

- having long-standing educational difficulties

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

How can we help?

- Be observant – look for signs of changes in your child's mental health.
- Be available – be present and emotionally available. Spend time together that may open up a dialogue naturally (e.g. taking a walk, reading a story, playing a game).
- Don't force a conversation (pressure can make it more difficult to speak).
- Provide opportunities to build positive relationships with others (e.g. wider family, friends, professionals such as family support workers).
- Co-operate with school and other professionals (don't take things personally).
- Make good use of preventative measures – exercise, mental stimulation, social time, belonging and connection.
- Audit your parenting style – are you overly critical or negative?
- Keep tabs on your own mental health and wellbeing.
- If you feel out of your depth… SEEK SUPPORT!

Self-audit questions

- Suppose that tomorrow you are functioning at your very best, being the best version of you:
  - What will you be doing?
  - What will others notice?
  - How will others respond?

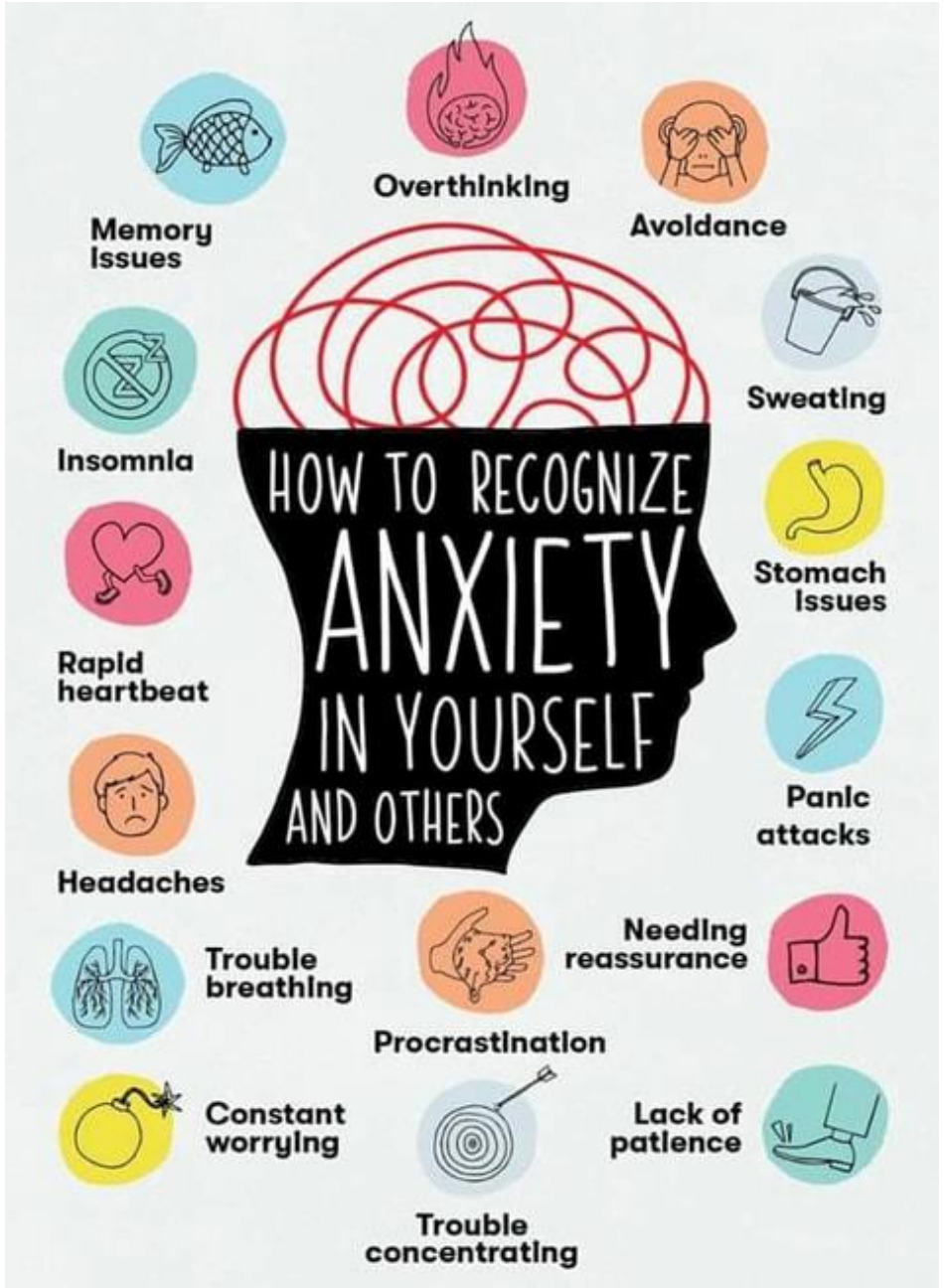


Spotlight on anxiety

- Anxiety is the most common mental health concern for children and adults.
- Anxiety is one of our body's natural in-built survival mechanisms. Physical changes in the body can occur in response to a perceived threat…these changes can be things such an increased heart rate, sweating, brain fog, restlessness.
- Sometimes low-level anxiety can be normal. At other times, it can be prolonged, intense, and can have a negative impact on our day-to-day life.

Spotlight on anxiety

- All children and teenagers experience anxiety as part of their normal development and there are appropriate fears to feel at different developmental stages – e.g. a fear of the dark at three years old. Like depression, anxiety becomes a problem when it goes on for a long time and prevents the young person from enjoying their life. This is when anxiety can lapse into depression. About 25% of 8-year-olds and 21.7% of 17-year-olds report with anxiety. It is more common in girls than in boys. (https://stem4.org.uk/anxiety/)



School-specific signs of anxiety:

- School refusal
- Work or lesson avoidance
- Friendship issues
- Tiredness or excessive alertness
- Mood swings or heightened emotions
- Challenging behaviour
- Appearing withdrawn
- Concentration and attention difficulties
- Forgetfulness and lack of organisation

Online Anxiety Resources

https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/anxiety/

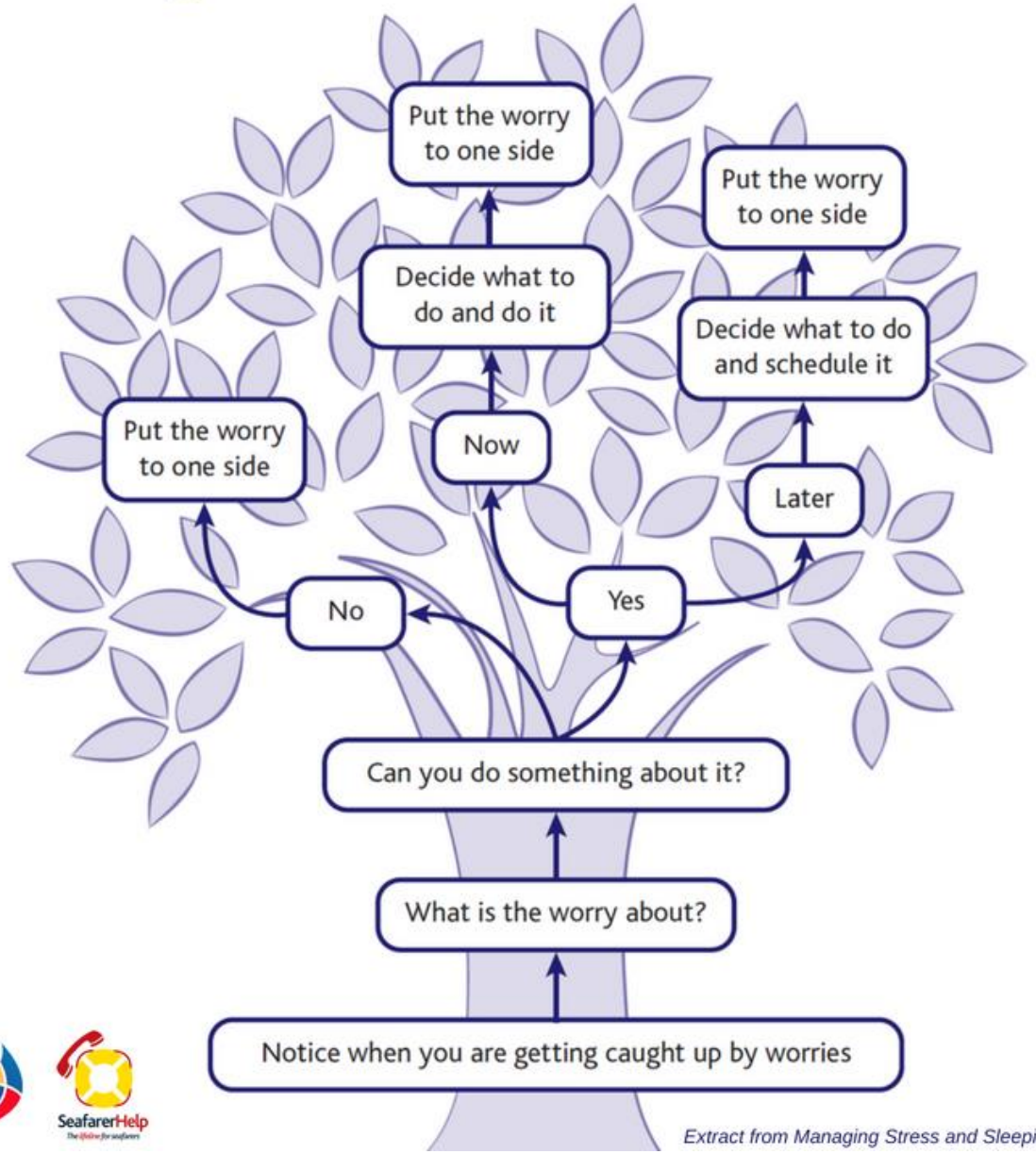
https://childmind.org/article/classroom-anxiety-in-children/

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/r/understanding-anxiety-at-school.html

https://hbtg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/KAN-Emotional-resilience-toolkit.pdf

https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/social-health/children-and-families/mental-health-and-wellbeing/emotional-and-mental-health-toolkit.pdf

Worry Tree



Extract from Managing Stress and Sleeping Well at Sea

Re-focussing

- 1. Find a palm-sized object. This could be any anything with an interesting texture (such as a pebble).
- 2. Get your child to explore the object with their hands, feeling the bumps, grooves and rough areas.
- 3. Ask them to describe the object to you. How does it feel, and which bits do they like or dislike?
- If your child finds this activity useful, they can use it as a ‘go to’ resource whenever they feel overwhelmed.

Next Steps

- Reflect on your own mental health and wellbeing
- Think about what you, your child, and your family have as your go-to protective factors (self-care).
- Are there any changes you may wish to make to further promote good mental health and wellbeing?
- Do you need to ask somebody else for help and advice with this?



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Sources of Support

- https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- www.mind.org.uk
- www.nhs.uk
- https://youngminds.org.uk
- www.barnardos.org.uk