

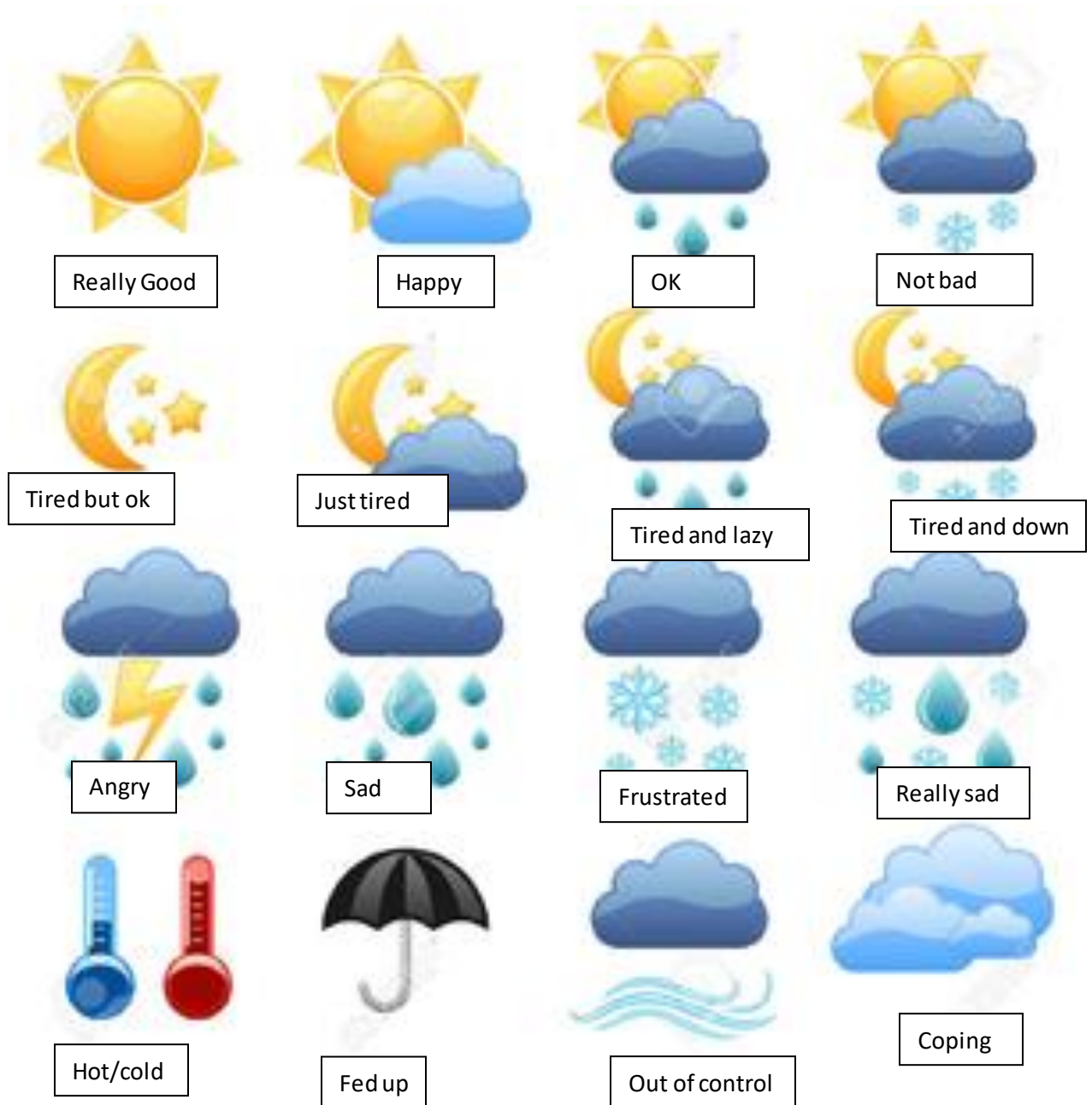


Understanding Anxiety and Making Time to Stop



How do you feel?

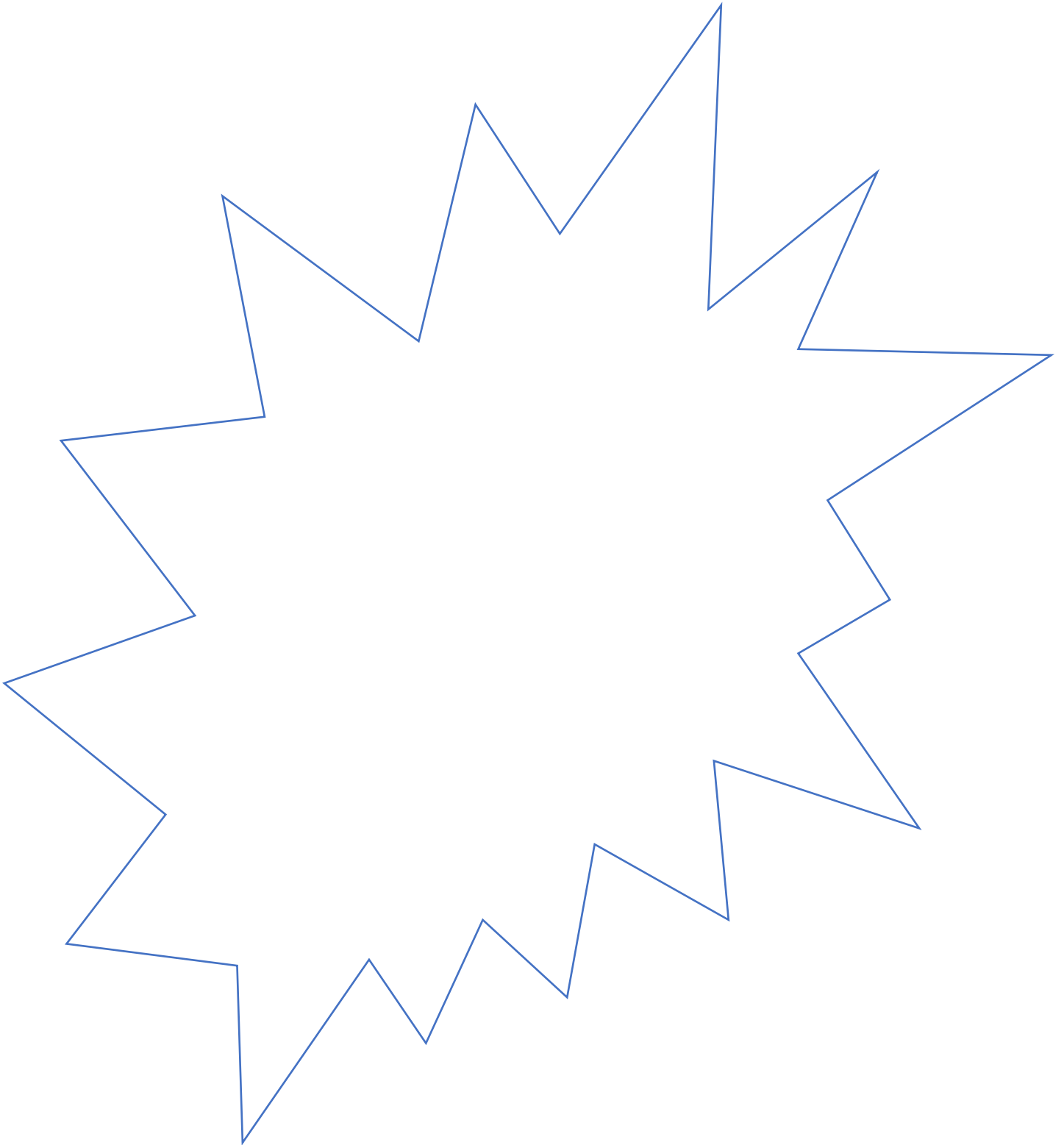
Use these weather pictures to describe how you feel. We have put words with the pictures that may describe your feelings. You may interpret the pictures differently and that's ok.



You could use our sign language videos to learn these words in sign language too.

Change

The last year has caused quite a lot of changes for us all.
Can you list some of the changes that you have been through?



These changes may have caused you to worry about school, your family and your friends. Have a look at these words and think about how they make you feel? You may want to draw or write to express your feelings for each word.

Covid

Restrictions

Lockdown

Schools closed

Face masks

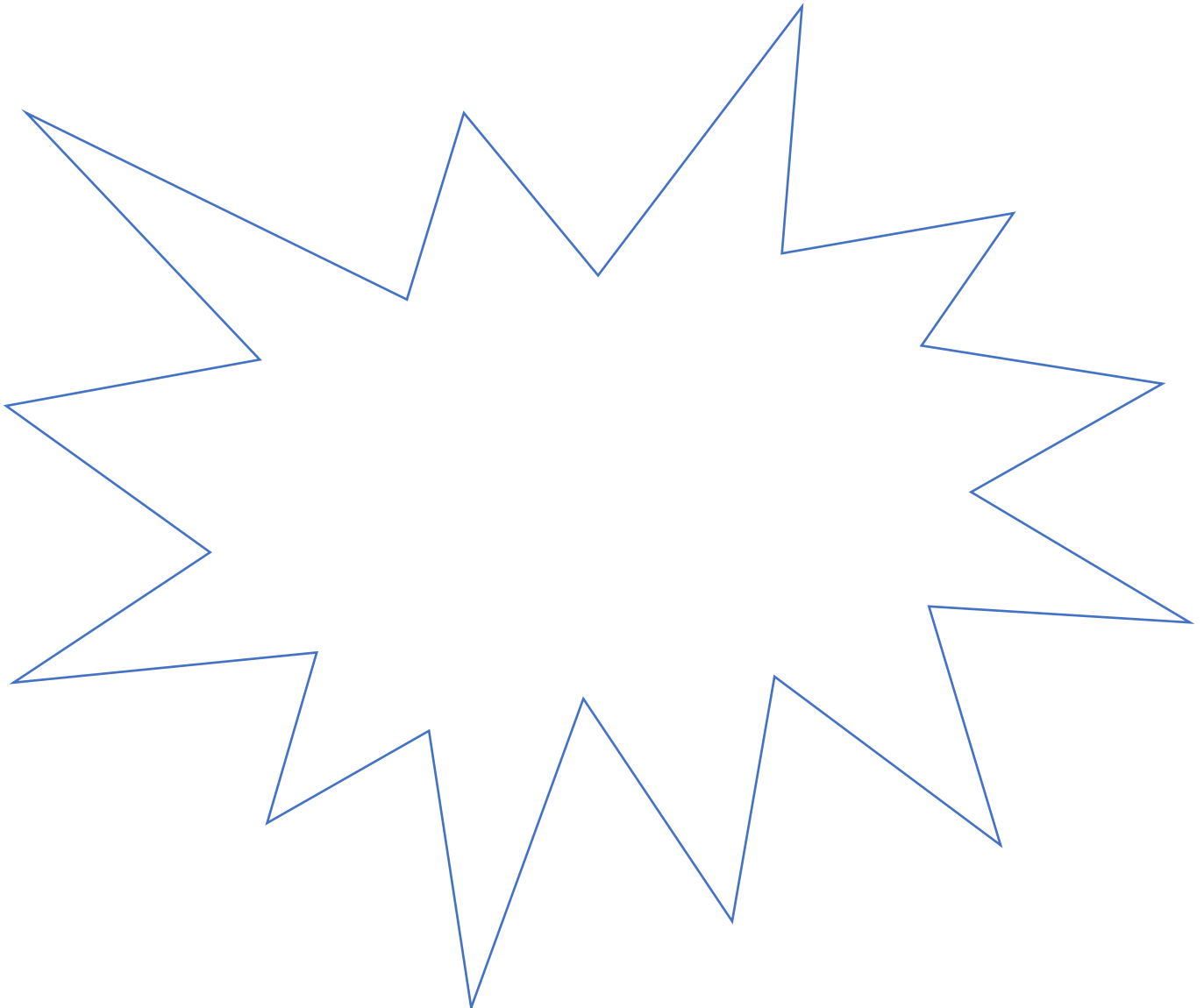
School work at home

Hospital

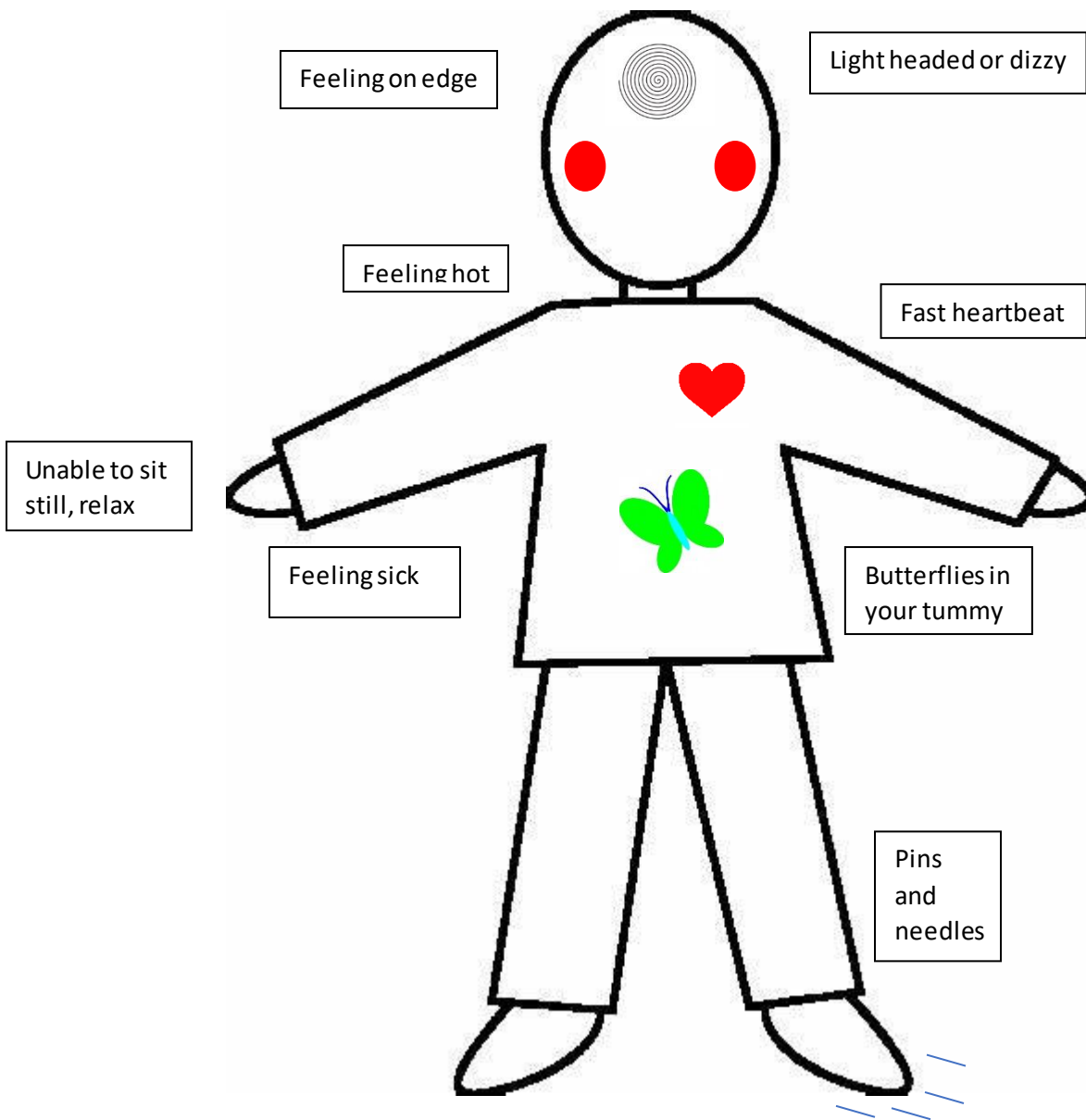
Illness

Vaccination

Use the sign language videos on our web page and facebook page to express your reactions to these words. Draw or write why you think you have these responses.



What does anxiety feel like?



Highlight the ones that you have felt, add in any that are not here.

How can we deal with anxiety?

Anxiety can be overwhelming for our minds but it is a normal reaction to situations that make us scared. Our body reacts to situations because our thoughts are telling us there is something to worry about. Think about a lion. The two pictures below show a cute lion cub and a grown-up lion roaring. If you were walking down the street and saw a little, cute lion cub, you would probably want to go and pick it up and check it is ok and even take it home with you. If you met the grown-up lion whilst walking down the street you would mostly likely run away.



In the first situation, your mind is telling you there is nothing to fear, and so your body reacts calmly because you don't want to scare the cub, maybe a little excited to see it.

In the second situation, your mind will be telling you to fear, so your heart will start racing, you may feel shaky, you may want to freeze or run.

These reactions are the same as if you were dealing with a difficult situation at school. If there is a lesson you are really worried about, your body will react as if it has seen the big lion. You are worried and scared, and so your body will show the anxiety signs on the previous page.

If you understand the feelings that you have when anxious, it doesn't take away the anxiety, but it helps you to know that these feelings are normal, and then you are able to start to learn ways to control the symptoms and recognise them when they start.



Recognising your triggers

Your triggers are the things that set off your worries. If you can recognise these triggers you can put in place things that can help to calm your worries before they get to being overwhelming anxiety.

For example:

Jo gets very worried about catching Covid. She hears on the news that cases have risen. Her heart starts racing, she begins to feel sick, she can't sit down and relax. Jo recognises that the trigger is the news, so next time she knows the news is on she can choose to not watch it and instead talks to her mum and dad about facts on Covid in her area, and finds out that cases in her area are dropping. Therefore relieving her anxiety a little.

This all sounds very simple! It isn't! It takes a lot of practise to recognise your triggers, and do this before the anxiety symptoms kick in. However, it is possible, you just have to be patient with yourself. If you have been very anxious about something, you could write down what it was, and begin a list of things that make you anxious,

Once you have your list, you can begin to recognise the triggers. Is it listening to the news? Is it doing a lesson that you find really tough? Is it having a supply teacher in school? Once you know your triggers, you can then begin to do things to help ease the anxiety.

This leads us nicely onto things to help relax your mind and body.....

Mindfulness

Breathing techniques

Relaxation





Mindfulness challenges

Mindfulness brings you back to the now, focussing on right now rather than worrying about things in the past or the future. It can be done in a number of different ways.

Have a go at some of these mindfulness challenges. They can last 10 minutes, an hour or you can do them over the course of a few days. When you do them, just be creative, don't rush and use your imagination.

Lego

Get creative with Lego! You could build a planned set following instructions, or be creative and come up with your own ideas. It could be a vehicle, a film character or an animal. Whatever you want to do. If it breaks, don't worry, that's the great thing about Lego, you can re build it and adapt it too.



Nature craft

Look in your garden or go for a walk, collect sticks, leaves, tree bark, anything at all! Take it home and create something, anything. A picture or pattern, it doesn't matter.

Pasta and rice pictures

Get some pasta and rice and be creative. Create pictures, patterns shapes.

Photograph nature

Go on a walk. Take your phone or borrow your adults phone or camera. Take some photos of what you see. Try different perspectives, up close, a different focus. Doing this helps you to take notice of what is around you – colours, shapes, trees, plants, animals.

Sensory box creation

Create your own sensory box. Look for things around your house to put into a sensory box. You would use, a cuddly toy, rice, flour, breakfast cereals, stones from your garden. Anything at all that has a different texture. Once you have collected them, put them into a box or bag. You could fill a balloon with flour or rice and use it as a stress toy. Use them if you are feeling worried, would like a break from your school work or while watching TV. AS you touch each item, think about how it feels, smooth, rough, cold.

Take a picture of your creations and send it to us at Fireworks, via Facebook or email: fireworkseh@gmail.com



Breathing techniques

Sometimes when we get anxious we can begin to breathe quickly. Using breathing techniques can bring down this physical symptom of anxiety, bringing our body back to normal. Therefore, beginning to calm our mind too. Have a go at these techniques.

Belly Breathing

Imagine there is a balloon in your tummy. When you breathe in you have to fill the balloon as much as you can. Try breathing in and holding it to stop the 'balloon' deflating'. This uses your diaphragm which the muscle that helps us to inhale and exhale.

Balloon Breathing

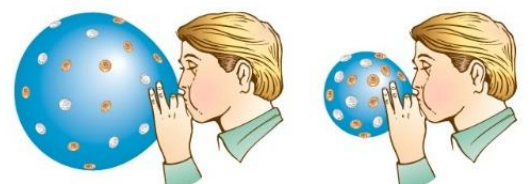
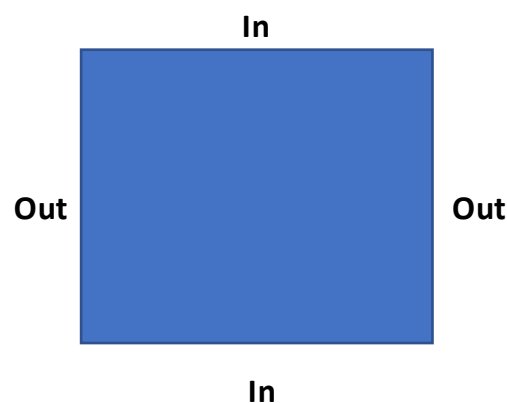
You can do this with real balloon or imaginary. Hold your balloon and take a deep breath in. Let your breath out slowly into the balloon and watch it inflate. Repeat this until you balloon is big. Then let the air out of your balloon. You could let it go and watch it fly around the room!

Bubble Breathing

Again, you can do this with real bubbles or imaginary. Take a deep breath in and blow the bubbles. Watch the bubbles as they float around. Repeat this, taking a deep breath in and then blowing.

Square Breathing

Trace you finger slowly around the square, for each side, breath in and out.



Stretch and relax guide

There is a piece of music on our web page which you can do this exercise to. The piece is called 'Urrey.'

www.fireworks.btck.co.uk

Start standing up. Lift your shoulders to your chin and lower them back down.

Repeat this three times.

Stretch your arms out to the sides and imagine there is a string on each hand, gently pulling your arms away from your body. Lower your arms to your side. Take a deep breath in and out. Repeat three times.

Imagine, when you breathe in that there is a balloon in your tummy inflating. Fill the balloon and then deflate it. Feel your tummy rise and fall. Reach your arms up to the sky. Imagine those strings again this time pulling your arms upwards.

Lower your arms, and deep breathe in and out three times. Come to the floor. Lay on your back and breathe, in and out slowly. Gently turn your head to the right, back to the centre and then to the left. Do this slowly. Stretch your arms out to the side, imagine the string again, gently pulling on your hands. Lay still for few seconds.

Come to a sitting position. Cross your legs and gently drop your body forwards, only go as far as you feel comfortable. Reach your arms out in front of you, touching the floor, again, only as far as is comfortable.

Bring yourself back to sitting position. Shrug your shoulders to your chin, hold for a count of 3, and lower. Repeat this three times.

Let your chin rest down to your chest, and relax.

An adaptation to this, goes with another piece of music on our web page called 'Winding Down'. Before starting the stretch and relax routine, get up, jump about, jog on the spot, do some jumping jacks. It doesn't matter what you do, just get lively! Then as the music begins to slow, start the stretch and relax routine. As you come to the end of the music, just lay back down and breathe in and out slowly.

Body scan

Lie down on your back. Let your legs and your arms relax and fall to the sides. Settle yourself in a comfortable position and close your eyes.

Start by taking two or three gentle, large breaths. Pay attention to how that feels. Your belly rises and falls. Air moves in and out of your body. If you like, place a hand on your belly and feel it move with each breath.

Now we're going to pay attention to the other parts of the body. Start with your feet. Are they warm or cold, relaxed or restless? It's also okay if you feel nothing at all. Relax your feet, let them drop naturally.

Now move your attention to your lower legs. Do they feel heavy, light, warm, cold? Next, move your attention next to your knees and let your knees and lower legs relax. Let the floor or bed take the weight of your legs.

After a few more breaths, move your attention to your upper legs. Are your muscles feeling tight or loose? Let your whole legs relax.

Now move your attention to your belly. It always moves when you breathe, rising and falling. You might feel something on the inside, like full or hungry. You might even feel emotions in your belly, like happy or sad.

Now turn your attention to your hands. Stretch your fingers out and relax them again. Move your attention up into your arms, stretching and relaxing them. Feel the weight of them as rest on the bed or floor.

Next, move your attention around to your back. How does it feel against the bed or the floor? Notice how it moves with each breath.

Now move attention to your neck and shoulders, letting go and relaxing them.

And now feel your face and head. What expression do you have right now? What would it feel like to smile? What else do you notice in your face, your head, and in your mind?

Finally, spend a few moments, paying attention to your whole body. Pay attention to your breath. Remain still and continuing to pay attention to your breath or feelings in your body.

Just relax.



Music

Just to finish off, here are some songs with a message from us to you, to keep you going! Have a look at them on YouTube or another device. Please get your parents' permission first.

Hang on - Needtobreathe

The main message from this song is to Hang on. Hang onto the passions you have, the things you love the people around you. Listen to that small voice in you that breathes passion. Don't look back at the past, use that passion to look forwards, and 'Hang on.'

Hold on - Shawn Mendes

This song starts with 'Stop, take it in and I breathe for a minute'. Absolutely! When you're finding things tough, so this. It continues, 'I never win when I keep all my thoughts inside, so I pick up the phone.' When you're feeling overwhelmed, talk to someone, write down your thoughts, and get them out in the open.

'I don't know what you're going through, but there's so much life ahead of you, and it won't slow down no matter what you do, you just gotta hold on'. Life may feel like it's tough at the moment, and with so many restrictions it feels like we can't do what we want to do, and in many cases we can't. But, hold on, keep talking to your friends and family, and hold on, cos this will pass.

Be still – The Killers

The chorus of this song says 'Don't break character, you've got a lot of heart... rise up like the sun, labour til the work is done.' Don't let your strong character get broken down by the circumstances around you. You can do this! The first verse talks about your limits being unknown, later on in the song it talks about being dragged through the mud, over rocks and chains, sunset plains. This could represent that you will go through tough times, but you have the character and ability to get through it. Most of all it says 'Be still.' One of our key messages is that its so important to stop and take time out.

Here comes the sun – The Beatles

This song gives a little hope. The line 'Here comes the sun' represents that things will get better. It talks about it being a long cold winter, perhaps representing our experiences over the last year. As the song plays, it talks about the ice melting, maybe showing a move from winter to spring as we see signs of hope, flowers growing. Perhaps, at the moment, when things seem dark and tough, we need to dig deep to find a little bit of hope.

Roar - Katy Perry

This is a motivational song, talking about our 'roar', the strength we have. The lines 'You held me down, but I got up, already brushing off the dust, you hear my voice, you hear that sound', show that despite being 'held down', stuck at home working and not being able to see friends, you have got up, you've continued working hard, you've achieved, you've had fun.

