



# **PSYCHOLOGY AND WELLBEING**

**FOLDER**



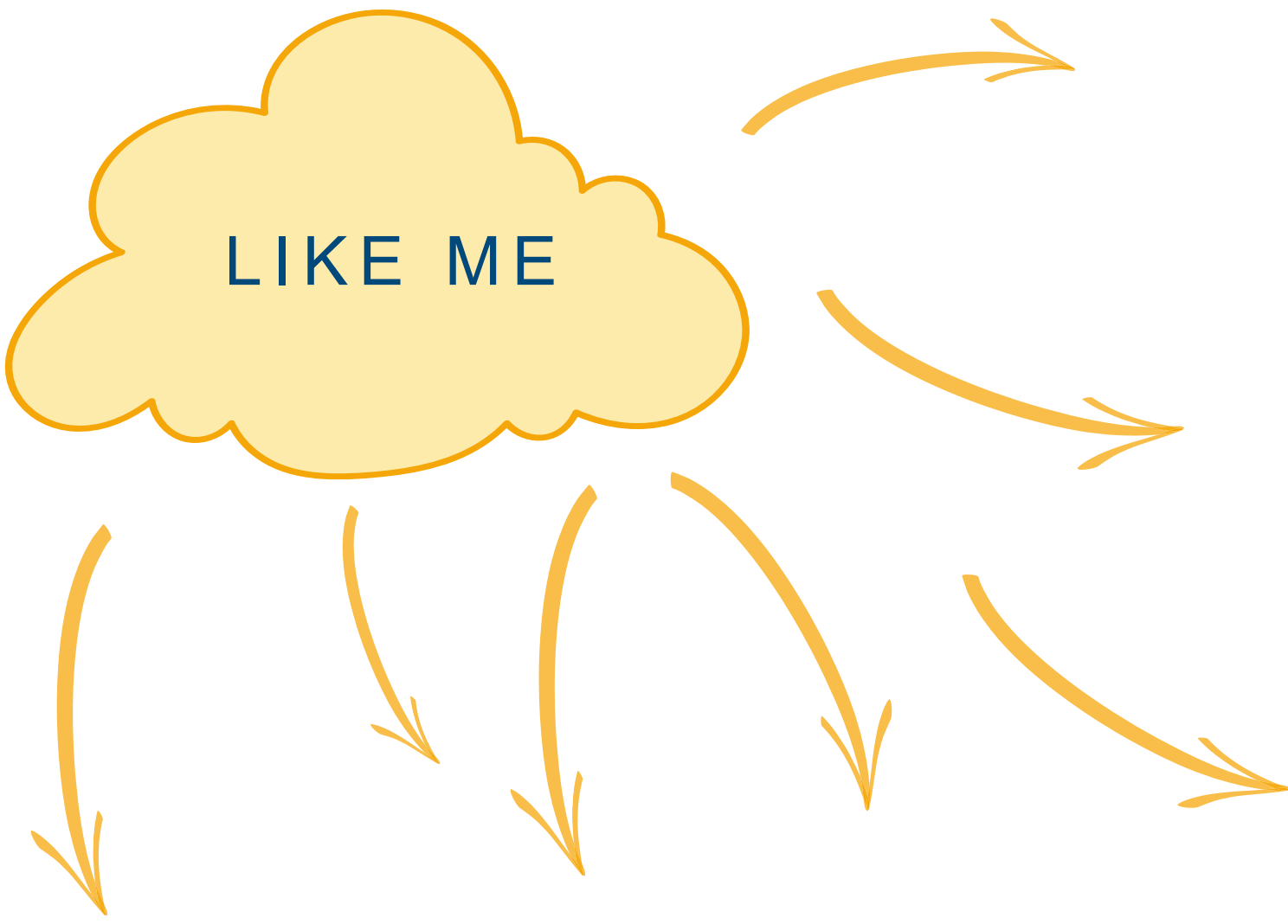
# ABOUT ME



# MY GOALS



# MY EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR BRAIN!

Our brains' main job is to **keep us safe**. Sometimes they get **too** good at keeping us safe and start seeing danger all over the place! This can lead to us feeling stressed, anxious and panicky when actually we need to teach our brain that it is safe to relax!

Learning about how our brains work can help us notice when it is doing things that lead to us feeling sad, angry, anxious and worried. It's the first step to taking control of our brain!

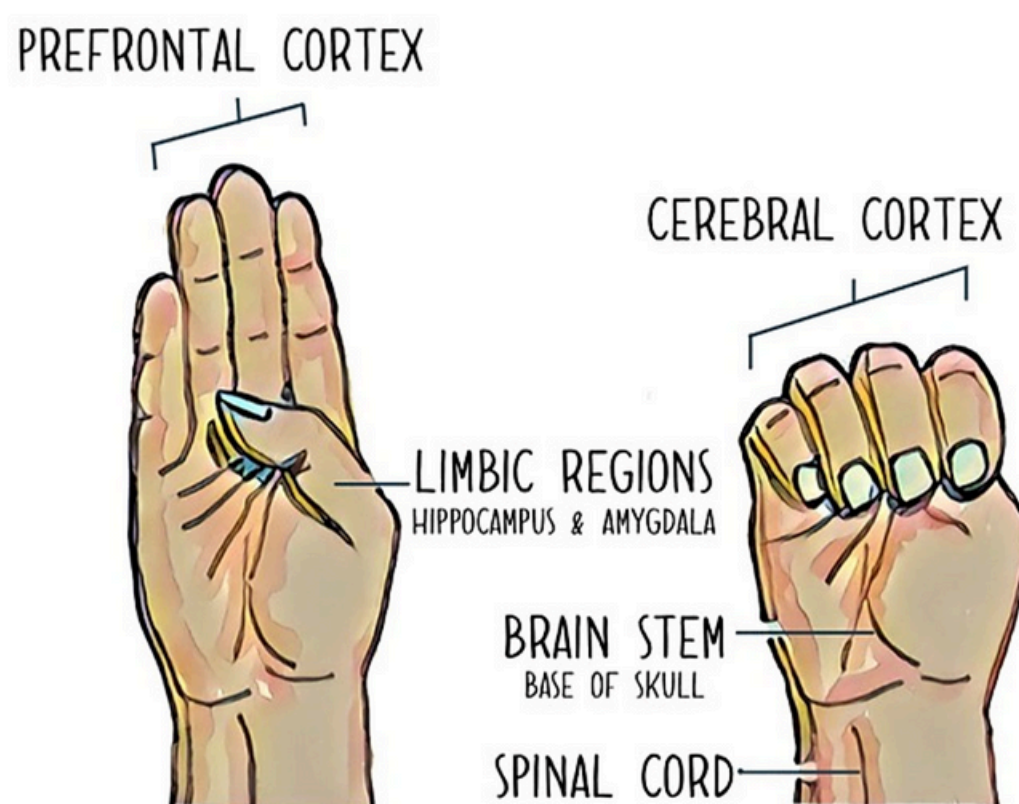


Our brain is like a muscle - the more we train it, the stronger it becomes.

On the next few pages you will find information that will help you understand **your** brain. Can you notice these things happening?

# UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

Dr Dan Siegel's  
Hand Model of the Brain



NYP  
Northampton

## The Stress Response

Sometimes, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed or out of control of our emotions. This is normal! This is what happens when the part of our brain responsible for **emotions** (the **limbic regions**) take over. Our emotions and feelings are much more powerful than the **thinking** part of our brain (the **prefrontal cortex**) so when they take over, it can be really hard to think rationally.

In the picture above, the fingers represent the **thinking** parts of our brain. When something triggers a big emotional reaction in our brain we "**flip our lid**" and the the **emotional** part of our brain is left in control! When this happens, it's really hard to have conversations or think about what's happened.

**Can you think of times when your emotional brain has been in control?**

# UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

## FIGHT

- Feelings of irritability
- More ready to engage in arguments with others
- Excessive competitiveness or wanting to challenge people
- Feeling very angry and annoyed
- .....
- .....
- .....



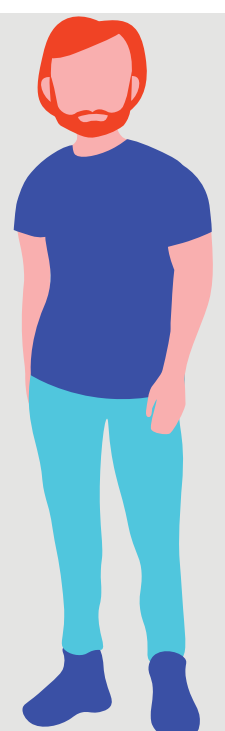
## FLIGHT

- Reluctance or refusal to engage in activities
- "People pleasing" to avoid conflict or confrontation
- Avoiding other people or social interactions
- Avoiding situations that might make you anxious
- .....
- .....
- .....



## FREEZE

- Increased time spent on social media
- Excessive time watching TV just to fill time
- Feeling "numb" or hopeless and not knowing what to do
- .....
- .....
- .....



When you are having feelings of stress or worry, you might notice some of the ways your body and brain responds. These responses are known as the **fight, flight and freeze** responses. Which response we have depends on the situation, and our individual brains.

**Are any of the responses above familiar to you? Can you think of any more?**

# MY CORE BELIEFS

A **Core Belief** is a belief you have about the world that you've had for a long time. It shapes how you understand the world and how you react to different people, situations and events. Our core beliefs can sometimes get a bit confused, and might make us see the world as more threatening, scary or unsafe than it really is.

What are your core beliefs?



Positive

Negative





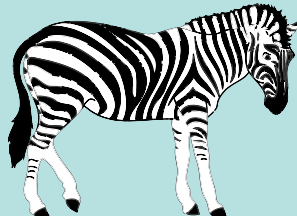
# "NEGATIVE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS"

**Negative Automatic Thoughts** (also known as **Thinking Errors** or **Cognitive Distortions**) are a very common form of thought. They are usually irrational and quite extreme. They pop into our heads and we believe that they are true. Quite often this causes feelings of anxiety. To take control of our worries, we need to practice **noticing** and **replacing** those negative, automatic thoughts.

## Types of Negative Automatic Thought:

### Black and White Thinking

- All or nothing
- Right or wrong
- Perfect or a disaster
- "If it's not 100% right, I have failed"



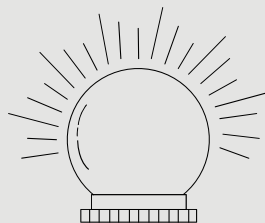
### Filtering

- Only paying attention to evidence that confirms your worries.
- Only noticing your failures and not your successes
- Disqualifying positives



### Crystal Ball Gazing

- Making negative predictions about the future
- Predicting what others are thinking and feeling without really knowing



### Catastrophising

- Blowing things out of proportion
- Overthinking something until it becomes a massive problem.
- "If I don't pass this exam, I will never get a job and will have a horrible life!"



### Overgeneralising

- Seeing one negative event as evidence that every other similar event will be negative.
- Assuming things about whole groups of people.

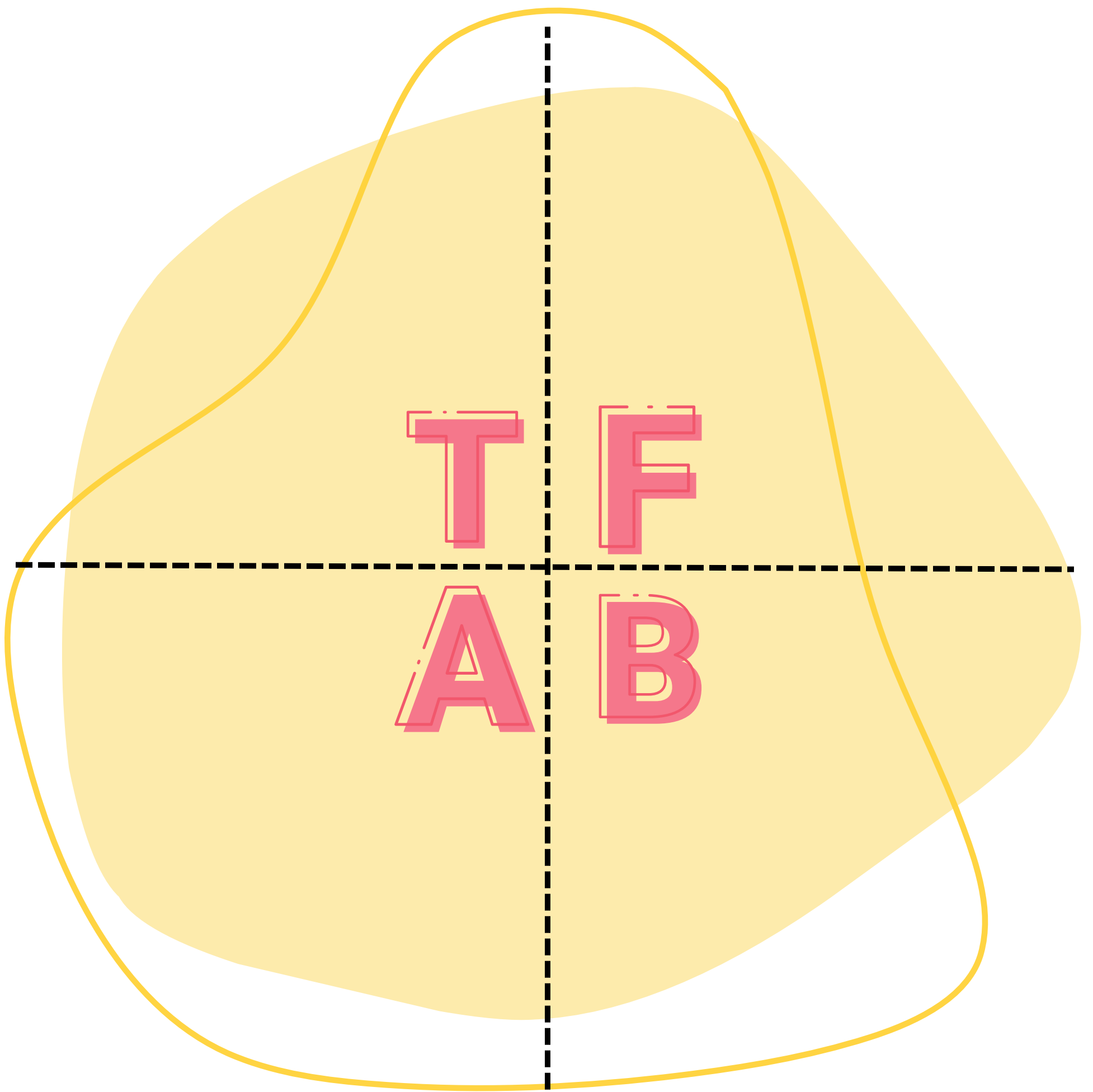
$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

### Using "Should"

- Using words like "should" that make us feel guilty or like we have already done something wrong.



# THE "HOT CROSS BUN"



This model is used to help us notice how our **thoughts, feelings, body responses** and **actions** are all linked. When we have a **thought (T)** it influences how we **feel (F)**, our physical reaction in our **body (B)** and then our **actions (A)**. Usually, this is a helpful process that helps us respond to things in the right way. However... if that first thought is a **Negative Automatic Thought**, it can effect the whole cycle!

**Can you think of some of the negative thoughts you have often and try and fill in the "hot cross bun"? Now try changing that thought to a positive one. What do you notice?**

# THE WORRY WHEEL



When we feel worried, our body immediately thinks it is in danger. To keep us safe, our brain finds something to do to avoid (get away from) the thing that has made us anxious. This is very helpful if the situation is actually dangerous... but not so helpful when we need to stay in the situation or when we are trying to take control of our worries!

The **Worry Wheel** shows that whilst this makes us feel better in the moment, it also teaches our brain that it was right to feel worried and so it actually makes the anxiety worse for the future! Facing our fears, although it feels hard, is actually the best way to prove to our brain that we are safe and help it to not start those survival strategies in our bodies!

# YOU ARE IN CONTROL!



In this booklet, we have started to think about what you can do to take control of your thoughts, feelings and actions. Now it's time to think about what **you** can do to support yourself, and what **others** can do to support you.

What can I (.....) do to support myself:

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

What others can do to help me:

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

