



Managing Exam Stress

Tuesday 19th March 2024

Managing Exam Stress

- Mr Bastable – what does it all mean?
- Time2Talk – managing stress during the exam period
- TellMi – support for students

Stress

Everyone gets stressed. A little stress can be a good thing.

Stress becomes a problem when it feels greater than your ability to cope. It may make you feel sad, tearful, worried, angry or unable to concentrate.

Stress can make you not want to eat or sleep.

Being stressed for a long time is bad for your **mental health**.

Tired, sore eyes, shortness of breath, muscle soreness...

Anxiety and Fear

Anxiety is a normal biological reaction.

We all experience anxiety, most days. Exams, interviews, changes at home can make us feel anxious.

Anxiety and Fear...

Anxiety (and fear) should pass when the event passes. If it doesn't and starts to impact your everyday life then it is important to talk to someone about this.

Prolonged fear may lead to **panic attacks**.

Panic Attacks

A panic attack is when you feel overwhelmed by the physical and mental feelings of fear.

People who have panic attacks say that they find it hard to breathe, and they may worry that they're having a heart attack or are going to lose control of their body.

If you are experiencing symptoms like these you should speak to a healthcare professional.

Difficulty breathing, sweating, trembling, racing heart...

Mental Health

It is natural to feel down, anxious or stressed out at times.

It does not automatically mean that you have a mental illness, or you are at risk of one in the future.

Some people break a leg, some need their appendix out, we all get a physical cold. Some people will get a mental illness in their life. Feeling anxious or stressed will impact your mental health but this should pass.

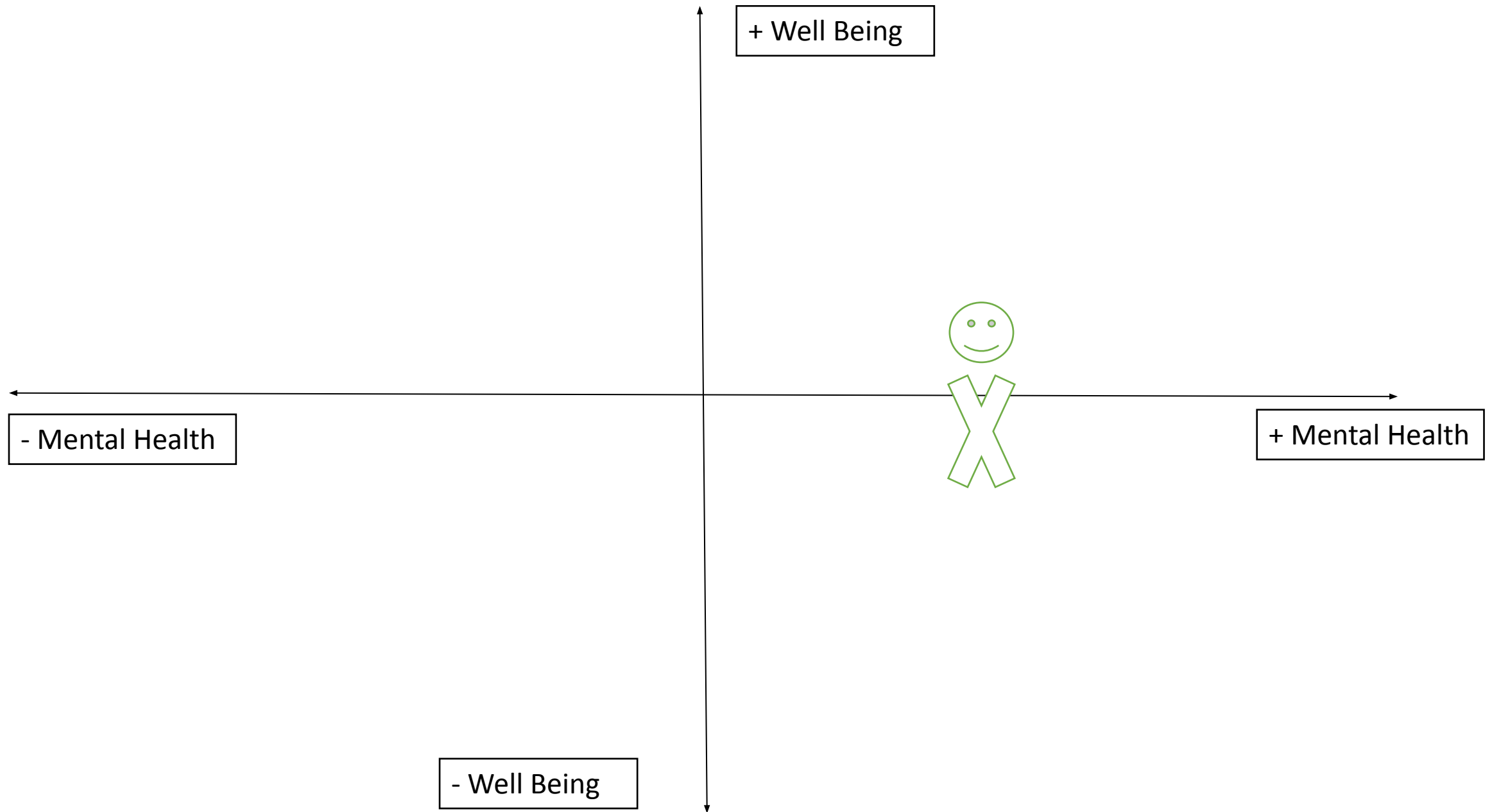
If you feel these feelings are not passing and are impacting your daily life then you should speak to an adult.

Depression

We all have times when our mood is low and we are feeling sad or miserable. Usually these feeling will pass after a short time.

If low mood does not go away and lasts for a long period time this COULD be a sign that you are experiencing depression.

If you think you are experiencing depression then it is important to talk to a trusted adult about this.



Tips for Parents

- Keep calm!
- Talk to your children about how they are feeling.
- Acknowledge when you are feeling anxious – show them it is normal.
- During exam times do not make drastic changes to home living. Do not change diets, sleep patterns etc.
- Keep to a routine during study leave and weekends.
- Spend quality time together – outside if possible.



SURVIVING EXAMS

St Bartholomew's

19th March 2024

DAVINA NICHOLSON
CLINICAL LEAD

KATE ADAMS
DEPUTY CLINICAL LEAD

However you are feeling...
you are not alone.

We are a charity that delivers an emotional and psychological support service for young people aged 11-25 and parents connected to West Berkshire.





timetotalk
WEST BERKSHIRE

WHO ARE WE?

- ❖ Independent local charity established in 1986
- ❖ Promote mental and psychological support for young people aged 11-25 and parents connected to West Berkshire
- ❖ One to one counselling: 7,000+ One to one counselling sessions in 2023
- ❖ BACP accredited
- ❖ Supported online programmes
- ❖ Presentations, workshops, assemblies



Stress/Anxiety

- ❖ Pounding heartbeat
- ❖ Feeling faint/dizzy
- ❖ Sweating
- ❖ Nausea (feeling sick)
- ❖ Chest pains
- ❖ Feeling unable to breathe
- ❖ Shaky limbs
- ❖ Tense muscles
- ❖ Tense/nervous
- ❖ Short tempered
- ❖ Sense of dread
- ❖ Busy crowded mind
- ❖ Negative thoughts
- ❖ Feeling restless
- ❖ Feeling numb



THE ANXIETY/STRESS PARADOX

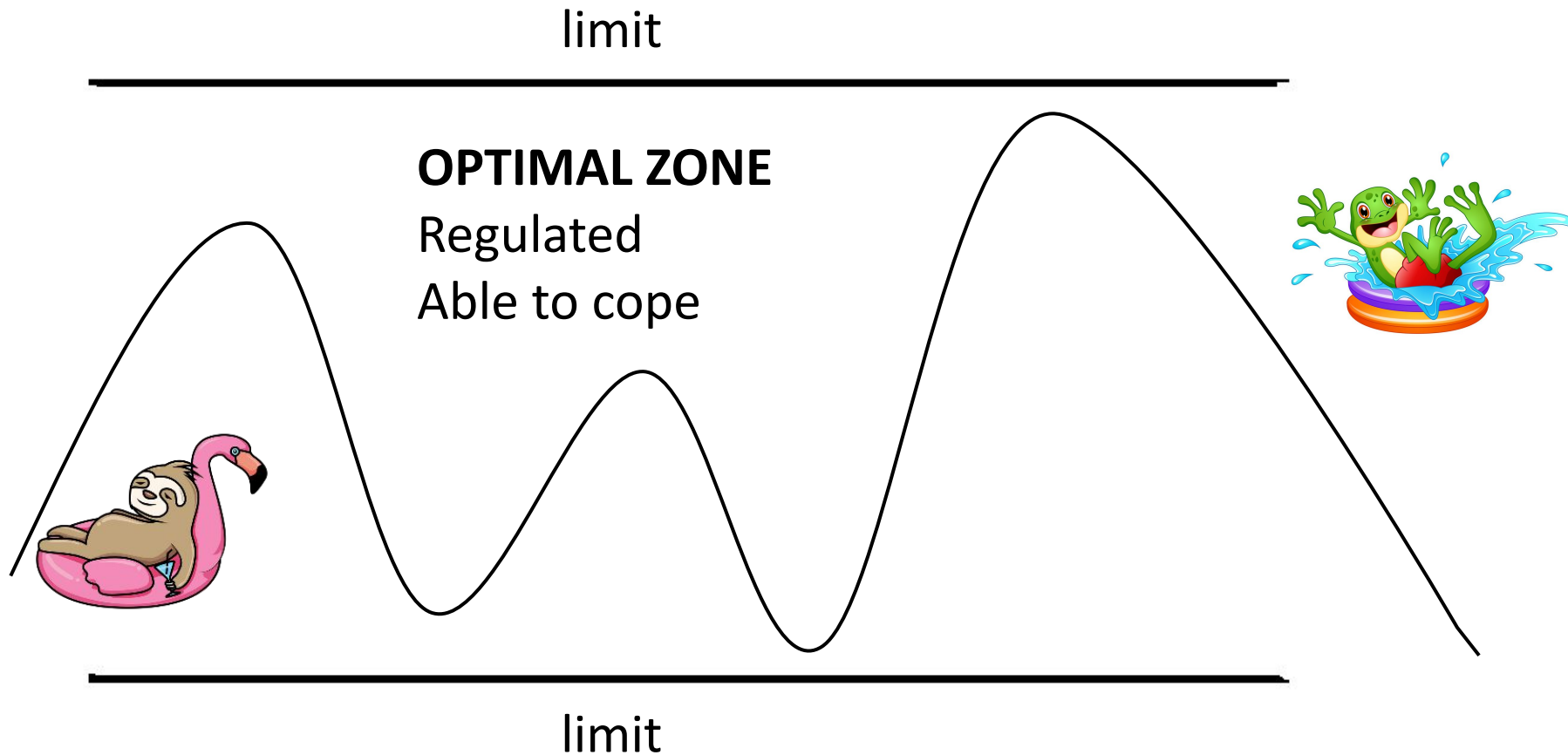


Makes us feel rubbish!

BUT.....

- ❖ Focuses attention
- ❖ Extra strength/energy
- ❖ Determination to succeed
- ❖ Provides learning opportunities
- ❖ Can be felt in enjoyable situations

“WINDOW OF TOLERANCE”*



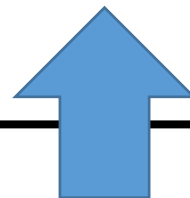
*Dan Siegel

UNREGULATED ZONE

Less able/unable to Cope
Overwhelmed



limit



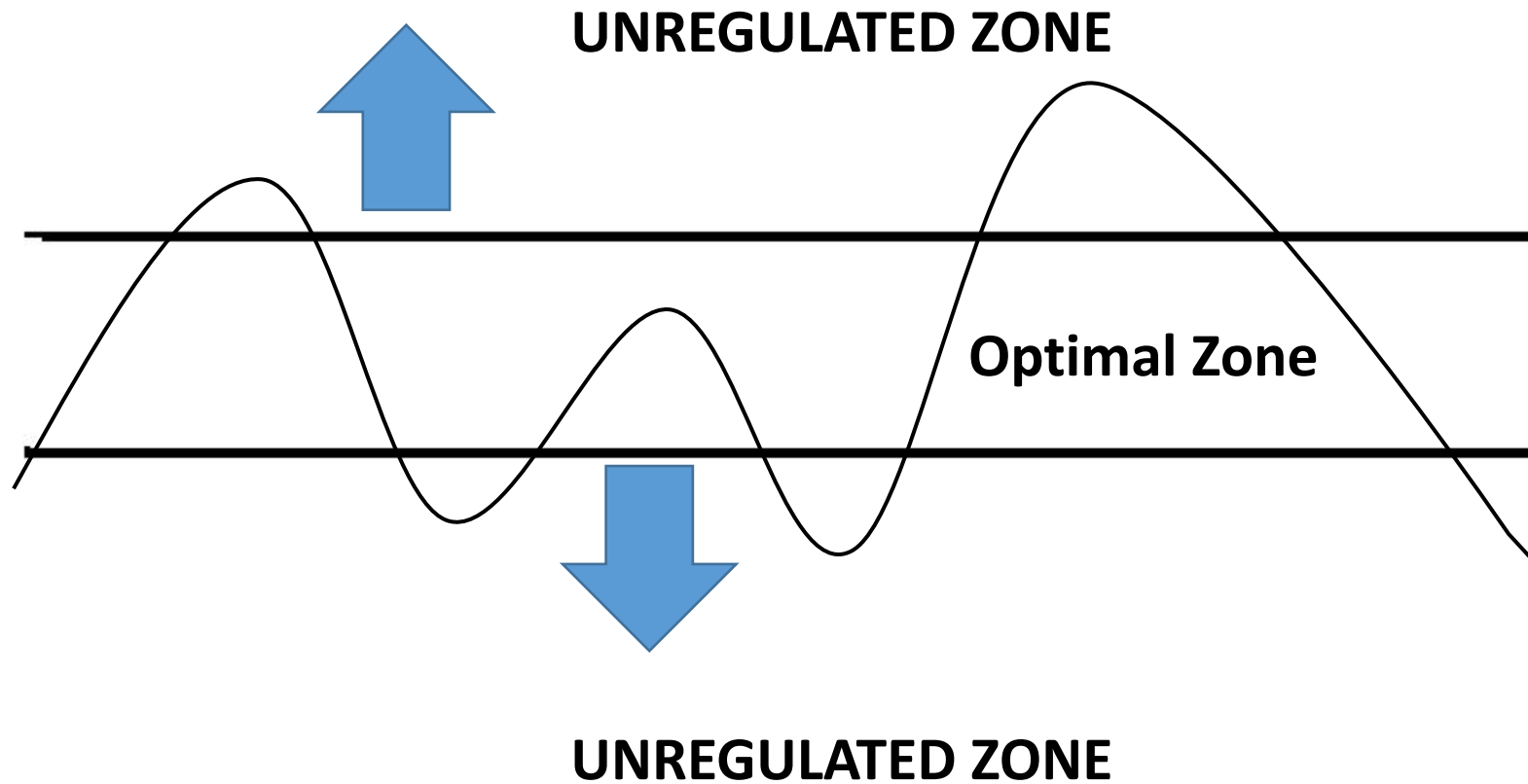
limit



UNREGULATED ZONE

Less able/Unable to Cope
Overwhelmed





Prefrontal Cortex

- ❖ Allows us to think before we act
- ❖ Decision-making
- ❖ Control over emotions & body
- ❖ Focus/Concentration
- ❖ Empathy
- ❖ Self Awareness



Limbic System

- ❖ Allows us to act before we think
- ❖ Fight/flight/freeze response
- ❖ Emotional reactions
- ❖ Bodily functions

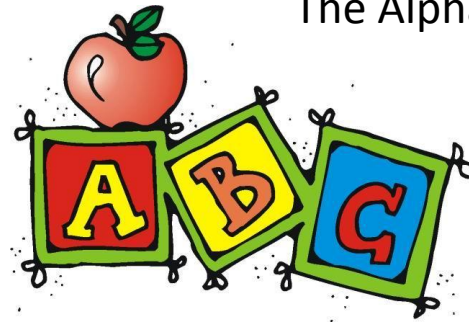
GETTING BACK INTO THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE



- ❖ 5 – things I can see
- ❖ 4 – things I can hear
- ❖ 3 – things I can feel
- ❖ 2 – things I can smell
- ❖ 1 – a thing I like to taste



Use your senses

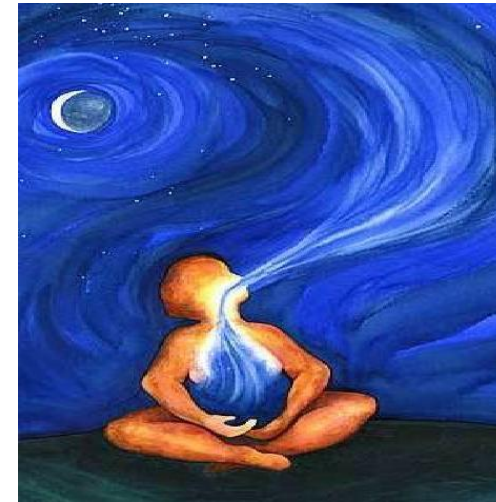


The Alphabet game



Visualisation

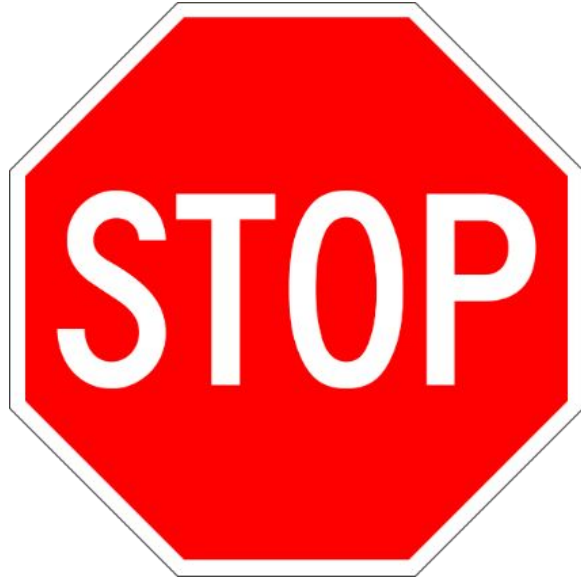
Reframing



AND BREATHE.....

Widening the Window of Tolerance





- STEP AWAY
- TAKE A BREATH
- OBSERVE
- PERSPECTIVE
- PROCEED

STEP AWAY

Find a space, either physically or mentally imagine a safe space.



TAKE A BREATH

Taking just 5 deep breaths has been shown to help regulate emotions and calm the brain

OBSERVE

Take a moment to observe what is happening for you.

Where are you feeling tense, uncomfortable?

Are you tired, hungry, thirsty?

Do you need a hug, some alone time, a distraction?

PERSPECTIVE

Is this fact or opinion?

See the situation as an outside observer.

Is there another way of looking at it?

What would someone else see and make of it?

What advice would I give to someone else?



Proceed (with caution)

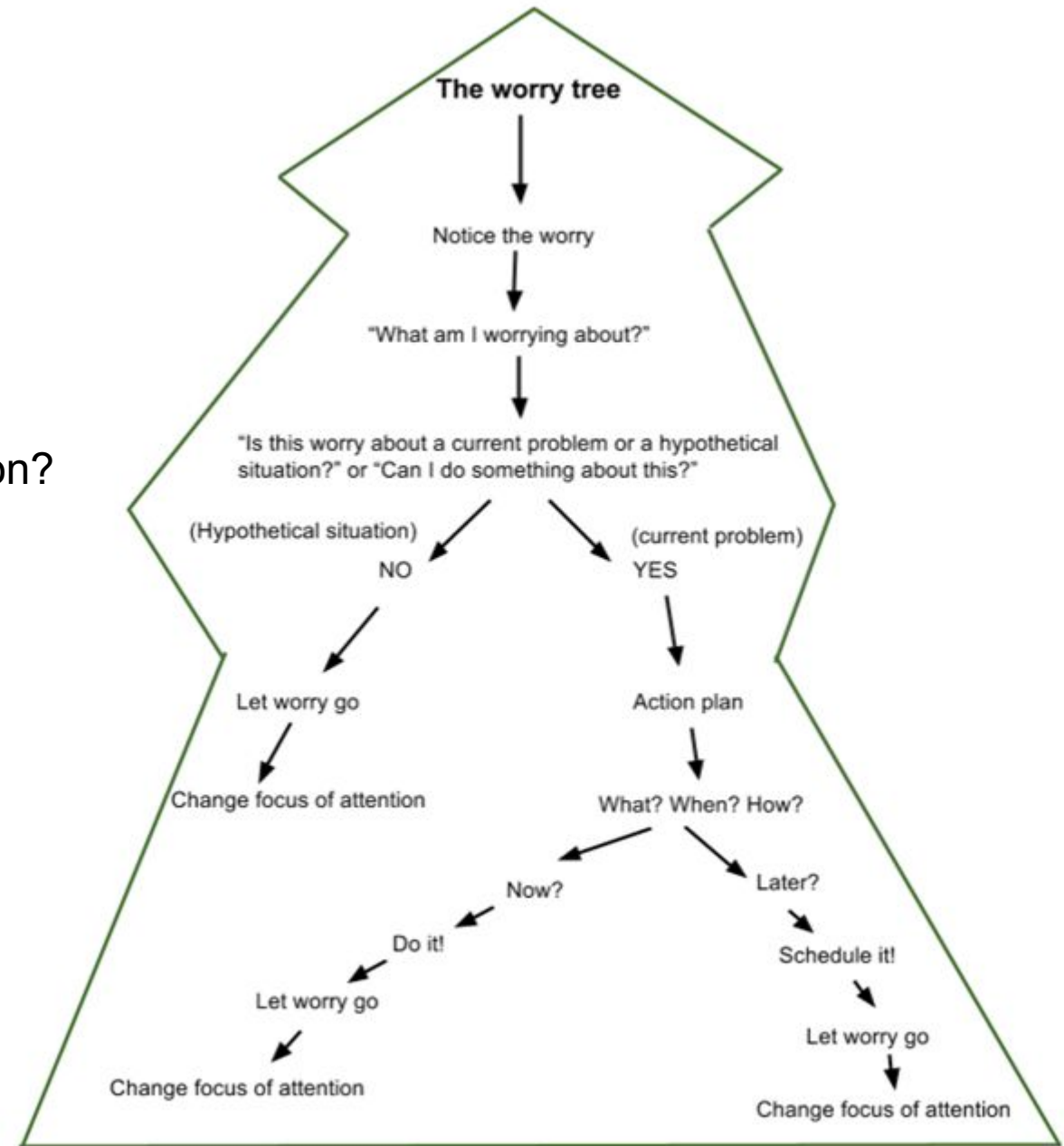
You might want to react right away but do you really need to? Take some time to think through your options – use the worry tree if useful

THE WORRY TREE

REASSURING BUT NOT DISMISSIVE

COLLABORATIVE BUT BOUNDARIED

- ❖ What is the worry/anxiety/fear?
- ❖ Is it a current problem or a hypothetical situation?
- ❖ Where is the evidence?
- ❖ What else might happen?
- ❖ What could we do?
- ❖ What has worked before?
- ❖ When could we do it?



A COMPASSIONATE APPROACH

This isn't going to be easy but
I've done tough stuff before so
let's give it a go!

One step at a time!



I've got a lot going on at the moment
– not surprising I feel rough!

.....and that's ok!

I've got this.

I'm can't do it yet but I will give it my best shot!

I'm not perfect but I am good enough!

ANXIETY COPING STATEMENTS



**BE KIND TO
YOURSELF!**

MAKE IT PERSONAL

AND PRACTISE!



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

People you can go to for help when it's difficult

- ❖ Understanding and trusted friends
- ❖ Trusted adults such as parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents
- ❖ School staff, e.g. tutors, teachers or school nurses
- ❖ Youth leaders
- ❖ Doctors/GPs
- ❖ Us!

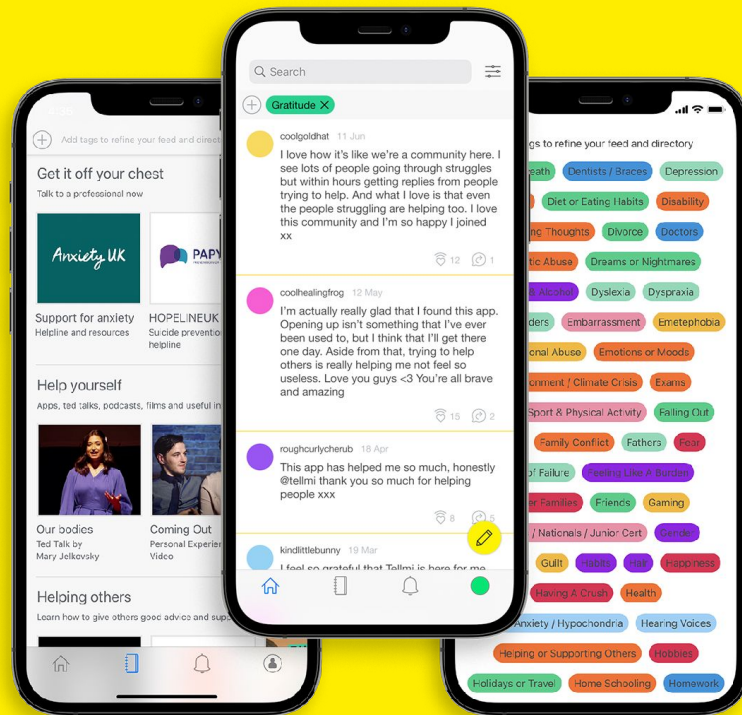


**In Partnership With Berkshire West NHS
And Local Authorities**



What is Tellmi?

- Tellmi is an NHS-commissioned digital peer support app for children aged 11+.
- 100% pre-moderated peer support, with pre-emptive counsellor intervention.
- Age-banded two years above and below (until aged 18).
- 600+ mental health self-management tools accessible 24/7.



<https://vimeo.com/739671965>

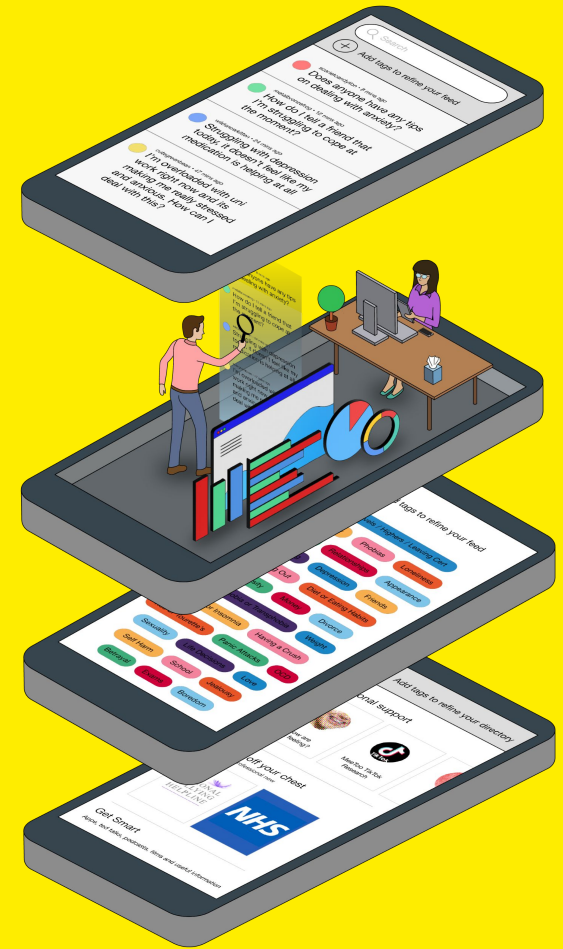
Tellmi is safe

- All posts checked before they go live
- Connected to NHS safeguarding teams
- No personal information shared
- All data stored in the UK
- Cyber Essentials Certified
- DTAC compliant



Moderators

- Every 30 mins, 8:30 am to 11:00 pm
- Moderators are experienced working with young people
- Moderators risk assess and topic tag all posts and replies before publication
- No bullying, potential harm, abuse, or identifiable information is allowed.





Counsellors

- Respond privately to all high-risk posts
- Providing pre-emptive in the moment support or signposting.
- Follow up with individuals and track their progress to ensure ongoing safety and support.
- Young people within Berkshire West also have access to Solution Focused Therapy





Solution Focused Therapists

- Scheduled Text-based Solution Focused Therapy
- Therapists accredited with UKASFP
- Focus on identifying strengths and building resilience



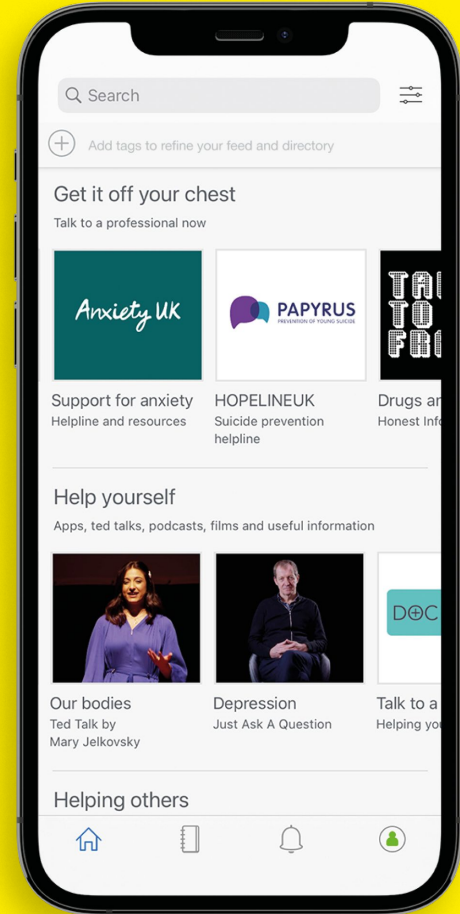
SuperPeers®

- Volunteer undergraduate Psychology students.
- Trained to respond in a supportive, friendly and encouraging manner.
- Ensure every post gets a reply.
- A diverse group of passionate people on hand to support young people.



The Telmi Directory

- Over 700 easily accessible national and local resources
- Personalised and filtered by needs, age and location of the individual
- Frequent editorial review and refresh
- No dead ends



Tellmi users

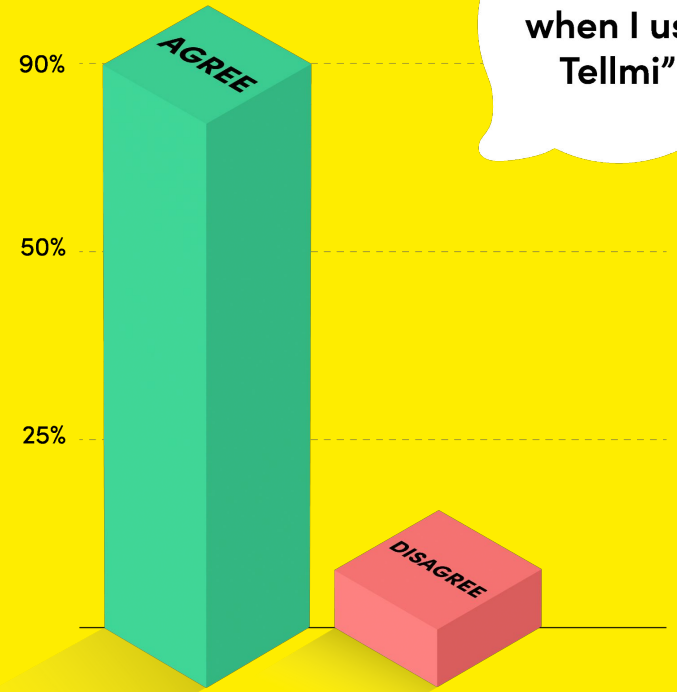
Results from our 2022 Impact Survey (N=1,205) show:

- 56% identify as LGBTQ+
- 32% receive free school meals
- 21% Black/Minoritised Ethnic
- 18% have ADHD
- 17% are Autistic
- 7% have a Disability
- 3% are in the care system



Tellmi Evaluation

- **82%** said Tellmi connects them to others with similar problems
- **79%** felt less alone.
- **78%** believed it was easier to talk about problems anonymously.
- **72%** of young people felt better overall.
- **71%** of young people found new ways to help themselves





Thank you

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