

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING WORRY: WORKSHEETS FOR KIDS

on Fight, Flight, Freeze & Calming Strategies

UNDERSTANDING WORRY

Sometimes, we all feel worried. That's okay! It's just our brain's way of trying to keep us safe.

Why do we worry?

A long time ago, our brains helped protect us from danger, like wild animals. For example, if a person saw a tiger, their brain would make them run away, hide, or get ready to fight. Even though we don't have the same dangers today, our brains still react the same way when we feel nervous or scared.

This is called the Fight-Flight-Freeze Response.



Our brain thinks it is helping us, but sometimes it reacts to things that are not dangerous, like speaking in class or trying something new. That's why we feel worried, even when we are actually safe!

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OUR BODIES DURING WORRY

What Happens in Our Bodies When We Worry

When we worry, our brain sends a message to our body to get ready. This causes several physical reactions:

- Racing thoughts:** Our brain keeps thinking about the worry over and over.
- Fast breathing:** Our body takes in more oxygen to prepare for action.
- Tense muscles:** Our body tightens up, getting ready to move.
- Fast heartbeat:** Our body gets ready to run or fight.
- Butterflies in the tummy:** Our stomach feels funny because our body is saving energy.
- Sweaty hands:** Our hands get sweaty to cool down.
- Shaky legs or hands:** Our body is getting ready to move fast.

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FIGHT-FLIGHT-FREEZE RESPONSE

The Three Ways Our Bodies React to Worry

When we feel worried, our bodies react in different ways. It's like our brain is trying to protect us, even when there's no real danger.

- 1 FIGHT**
Sometimes, worry makes us feel grumpy or angry. We might get frustrated, argue, or act out.
Example: You're nervous about going to a new place, so when your parent asks, "Do you want to go?", you snap, "I don't care!" even though you do.
- 2 FLIGHT**
Other times, worry makes us want to run or hide from a situation.
Example: You're worried about a mistake in a football game, so you say your leg hurts or you stop playing.
- 3 FREEZE**
Worry can also make us feel stuck, like we can't move or think.
Example: You're in a school play, but when it's your turn to say your lines, you suddenly forget and just stand there.

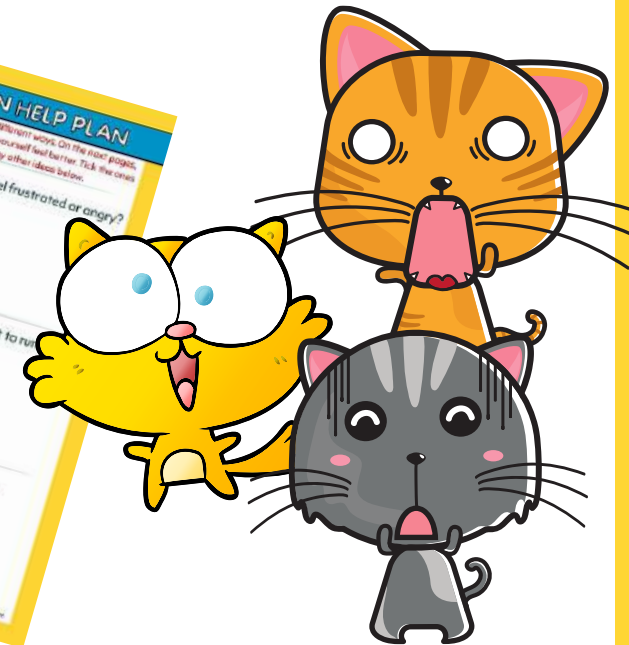
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MAKING MY OWN HELP PLAN

When you feel worried, your body reacts in different ways. On the next pages, you will find some things you can try to help yourself feel better. Tick the ones you want to try, and write down any other ideas below.

- 1 FIGHT** What helps when I feel frustrated or angry?
- 2 FLIGHT** What helps when I want to run away?
- 3 FREEZE** What helps when I feel stuck?

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UNDERSTANDING WORRY

Sometimes, we all feel worried. That's okay! It's just our brain's way of trying to keep us safe.

Why do we worry?

A long time ago, our brains helped protect us from danger, like wild animals. For example, if a person saw a tiger, their brain would make them run away, hide, or get ready to fight. Even though we don't have the same dangers today, our brains still react the same way when we feel nervous or scared.

This is called the **Fight-Flight-Freeze Response**.



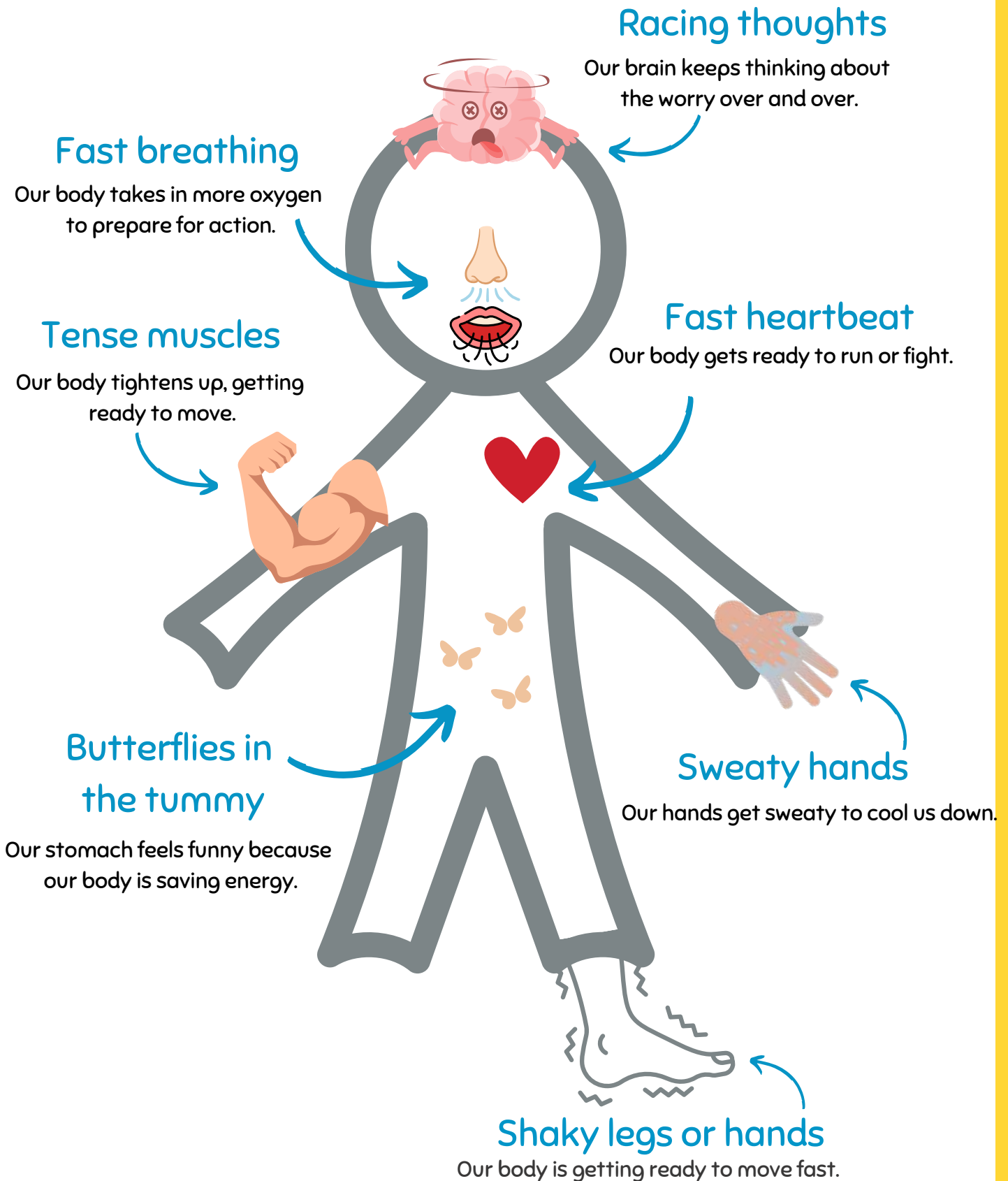
Our brain thinks it is helping us, but sometimes it reacts to things that are not dangerous, like speaking in class or trying something new. That's why we feel worried, even when we are actually safe!



OUR BODIES DURING WORRY

What Happens in Our Bodies When We Worry?

When we worry, our brain sends a message to our body to get ready. This can cause:

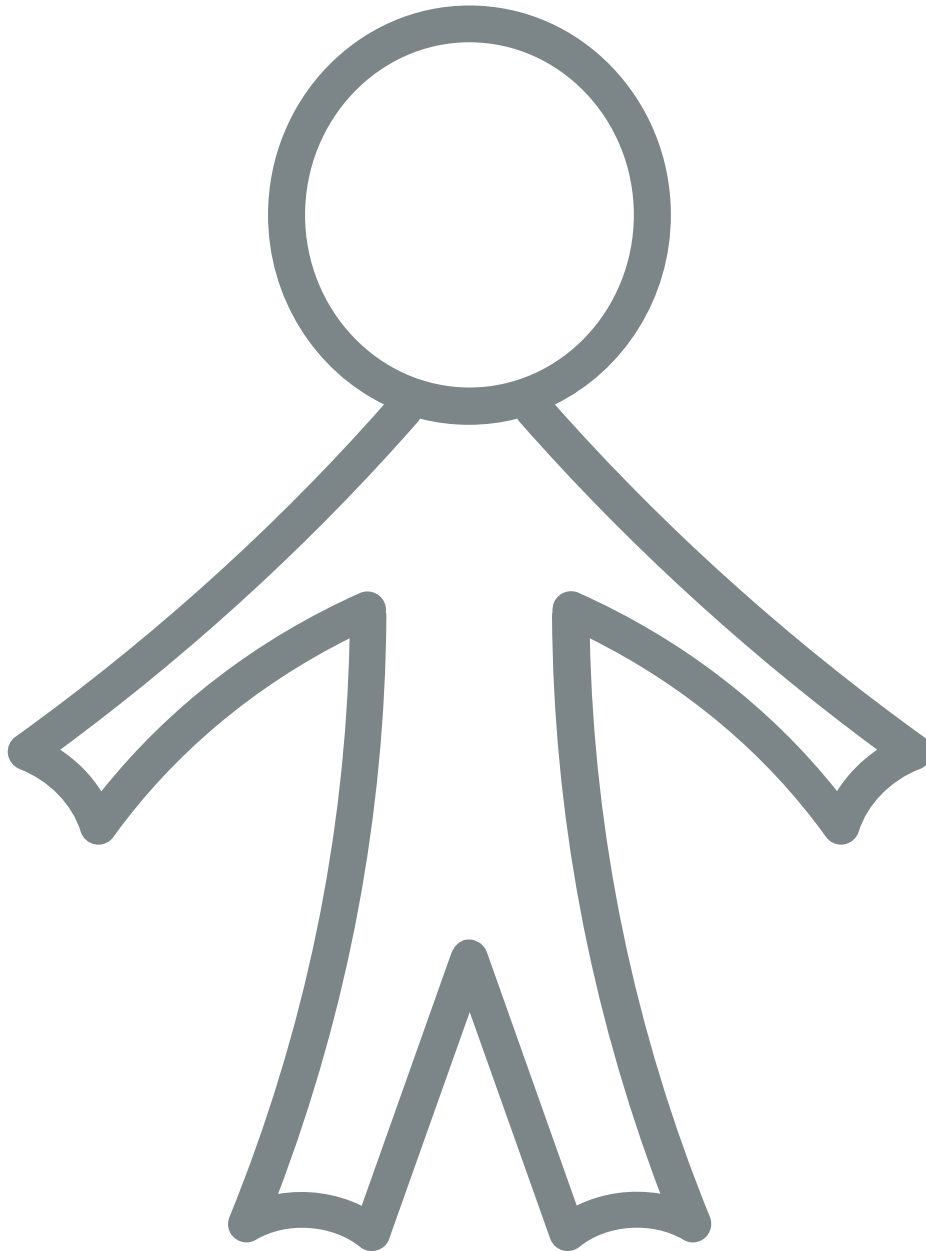


YOUR BODY DURING WORRY

What Happens in Your Body When You Worry?

When you feel worried, your body changes to get ready for action. Think about the last time you felt nervous or scared—where did you feel it in your body?

You can draw or write your answers using the body outline below.



Remember:

These feelings are your body's way of trying to help you, but you are in charge! You can calm your body by taking deep breaths, moving around, or talking to someone.

FIGHT-FLIGHT-FREEZE RESPONSE

The Three Ways Our Bodies React to Worry

When we feel worried, our bodies react in different ways. It's like our brain is trying to protect us, even when there's no real danger.



1 FIGHT

Sometimes, worry makes us feel grumpy or upset. We might get frustrated, argue, or act out.

Example: You're nervous about going to a new place, so when your parent asks if you're excited, you snap, "I don't care!" even though you do.

2 FLIGHT



Other times, worry makes us want to run away or hide from a situation.

Example: You're worried about making a mistake in a football game, so you say your leg hurts and sit out instead of playing.

3 FREEZE

Worry can also make us feel stuck, like we can't move or think.

Example: You're in a school play, but when it's your turn to say your line, you suddenly forget and just stand there.



FIGHT-FLIGHT-FREEZE RESPONSE

Now that you know the different ways our bodies react to worry, think about a time when you reacted in one of these ways.

Have you ever reacted like this?

Write or draw a time when this happened.

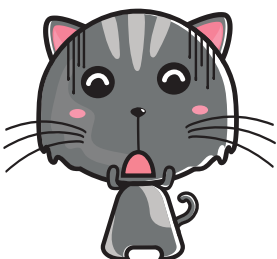
1 FIGHT Have you ever felt worried and then snapped at someone or got frustrated?



2 FLIGHT Have you ever felt worried and avoided a situation or made an excuse to leave?



3 FREEZE Have you ever felt worried and suddenly couldn't move or think?



SPOT YOUR RESPONSE!

Sometimes, when we feel worried, our bodies react in different ways. Do you notice a pattern in how you respond? Let's find out!

Instructions: Read each situation below and circle the response that sounds most like you. There are no right or wrong answers—everyone reacts differently!

1

Someone asks you a question, and you don't know the answer.

- Fight – Get frustrated or say something quickly to cover up.
- Flight – Avoid answering or hope they ask someone else.
- Freeze – Go silent and feel stuck.

2

You make a mistake in front of others.

- Fight – Say, "It doesn't matter!" or blame something else.
- Flight – Try to leave or pretend it didn't happen.
- Freeze – Feel embarrassed and unable to move or talk.

3

You're in a new place with people you don't know.

- Fight – Act extra loud or try to take control.
- Flight – Stay in the background or avoid talking.
- Freeze – Feel stuck and not sure what to do.

4

You hear someone laughing, and you think it's about you.

- Fight – Get upset and say something back.
- Flight – Walk away or avoid looking at them.
- Freeze – Stay quiet and feel nervous.

5

You have to try something new, and it feels scary.

- Fight – Say, "This is silly!" or refuse to try.
- Flight – Find a way to avoid doing it.
- Freeze – Feel stuck and unsure what to do next.

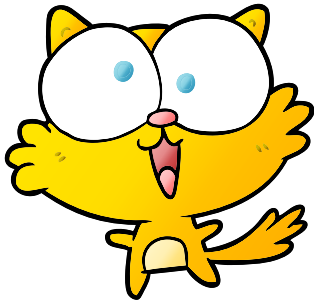
Reflection:

- Do you circle **Fight** the most? That means you might react by getting upset or angry when you feel worried.
- Do you circle **Flight** the most? That means you might try to escape or avoid things that make you nervous.
- Do you circle **Freeze** the most? That means you might feel stuck and unsure what to do when you're worried.

MAKING MY OWN HELP PLAN

When you feel worried, your body reacts in different ways. On the next pages, you will find some things you can try to help yourself feel better. Tick the ones you want to try, and write down any other ideas below.

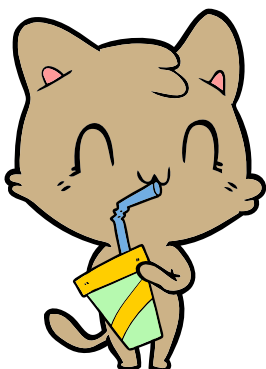
1) FIGHT What helps when I feel frustrated or angry?



2) FLIGHT What helps when I want to run away?



3) FREEZE What helps when I feel stuck?

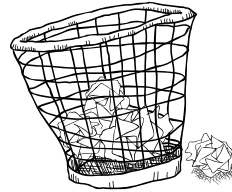


MY FIGHT HELP PLAN

1 FIGHT When I feel frustrated or angry:



- I will scribble hard on paper –
Then rip it up and throw it away!



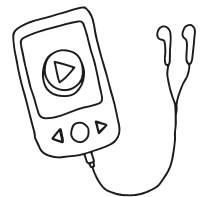
- I will blow out the worry –
Imagine my anger is a balloon. I will take a deep breath
and blow it away.



- I will talk to someone –
I can say, “I feel mad because I’m actually worried.”



- I will listen to music –
I can play a song that makes me feel calm or happy.



- I will squeeze a stress ball –
Using my hands can help let out extra energy.



- I will take five deep breaths – BREATHE
Breathe in for four seconds, hold, and breathe out slowly.

- I will run, jump, or stretch –
Moving my body can help me feel better.



- Other idea:

MY FLIGHT HELP PLAN

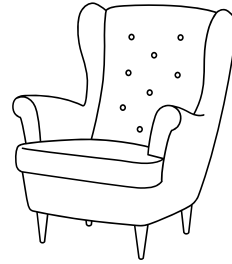
2

FLIGHT

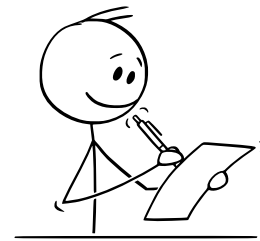
When I want to escape
or hide:



- I will make a safe place –
I can picture a happy place in
my mind or go to a comfy spot.



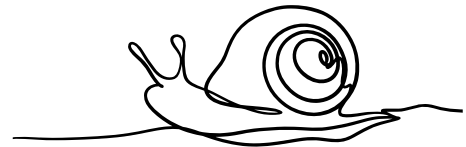
- I will write my worry down –
Seeing it on paper can make it feel smaller.



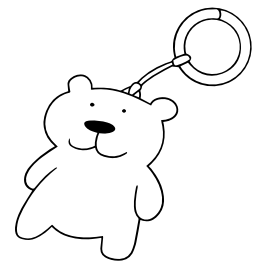
- I will do something fun –
Read, play, or do something that makes me smile.



- I will go slow –
I can remind myself: “I can take one step at a time.”



- I will hold a thing I like –
I can keep a small toy, stone, or keychain with me.



- I will find a breathing buddy –
I can take deep breaths while holding a stuffed
animal, watching my pet breathe, or placing
my hand on my tummy to feel it rise and fall.

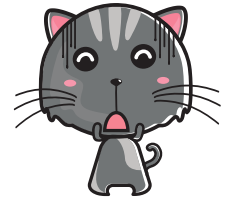


- Other idea:

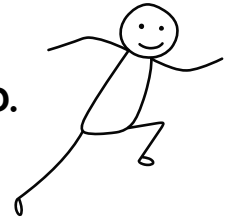
MY FREEZE HELP PLAN

3 FREEZE

When I feel stuck or unable to move.



I will move a little –
I can wiggle my fingers, stretch, or take a small step.



I will listen to sounds –
I can name three things I hear around me.



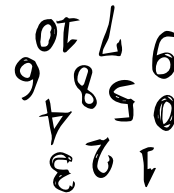
I will say what's real –
I can look around and remind myself: "I am safe."



I will hold something cold –
A cold drink or ice cube can help wake up my body.



I will count backwards from 10 –
I can focus on each number as I say it.



I will tap my fingers together –
I can move them one by one to help unfreeze.



Other idea:

MY WORRY RIGHT NOW - HELP PLAN

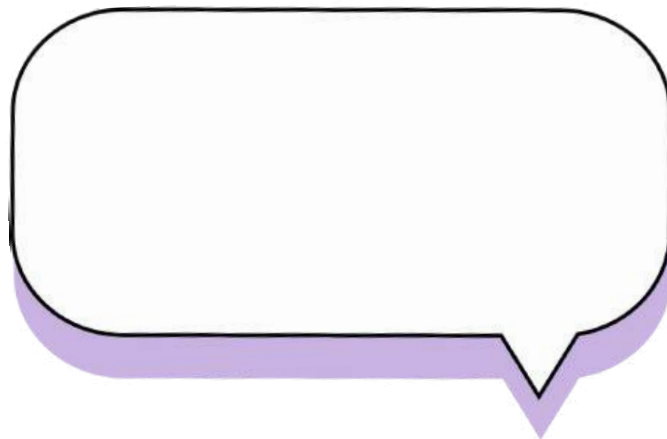
Write your biggest worry in the speech bubble.

Now, think of small actions you can take instead of reacting automatically.

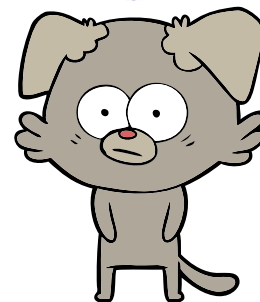
Write or draw them around your worry.

Below are some ideas to help you.

Someone I can talk to:



A way to calm my body:



Something I can tell myself:

A small step I can take:

Something that makes me feel safe or happy:

EXAMPLE OF MY HELP PLAN

Someone I can talk to:

My new teacher !

Going to a new school and not being able to make friends.

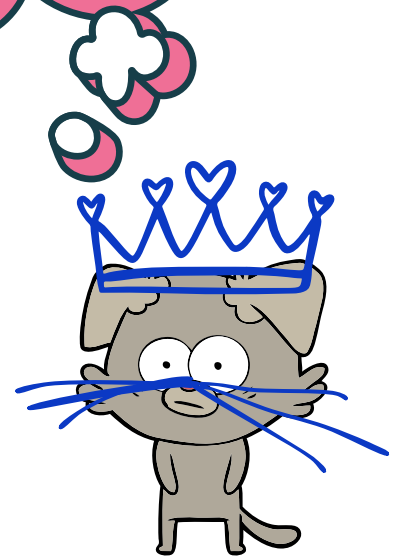
A way to calm my body:

I will take three deep breaths and count to five while looking at something in the room.



Something I can tell myself:

Lots of kids feel nervous at a new school. I will focus on learning my way around first.

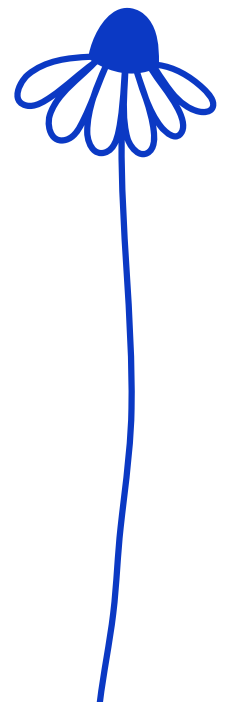


A small step I can take:



Say hi to one person in my class.

Hi



Something that makes me feel safe or happy:

I will bring a small smooth stone to keep in my pocket and hold when I feel nervous.



See Our Websites for More **Free** Resources

1 www.socialworkerstoolbox.com



2 www.anxietyhelpbox.com



3 www.feelingshelpbox.com



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