



## What keeps anxiety going?

### Anxiety can be maintained by:

#### 1. Anxious/negative thoughts



"I will never be able to do that"

"I can't!"

"What if..."

"Everyone will look at me"



When we have anxious/negative thoughts, we tend to:

- Over-estimate "danger"
- Underestimate ability to cope
- Be hypervigilant to evidence which confirms these anxious thoughts

## 2. Anxious feelings

### The Fight, Flight and Freeze Response:

- Anxious /negative thoughts will automatically trigger your body to respond in the same way it would if there was a full scale emergency!



Fight



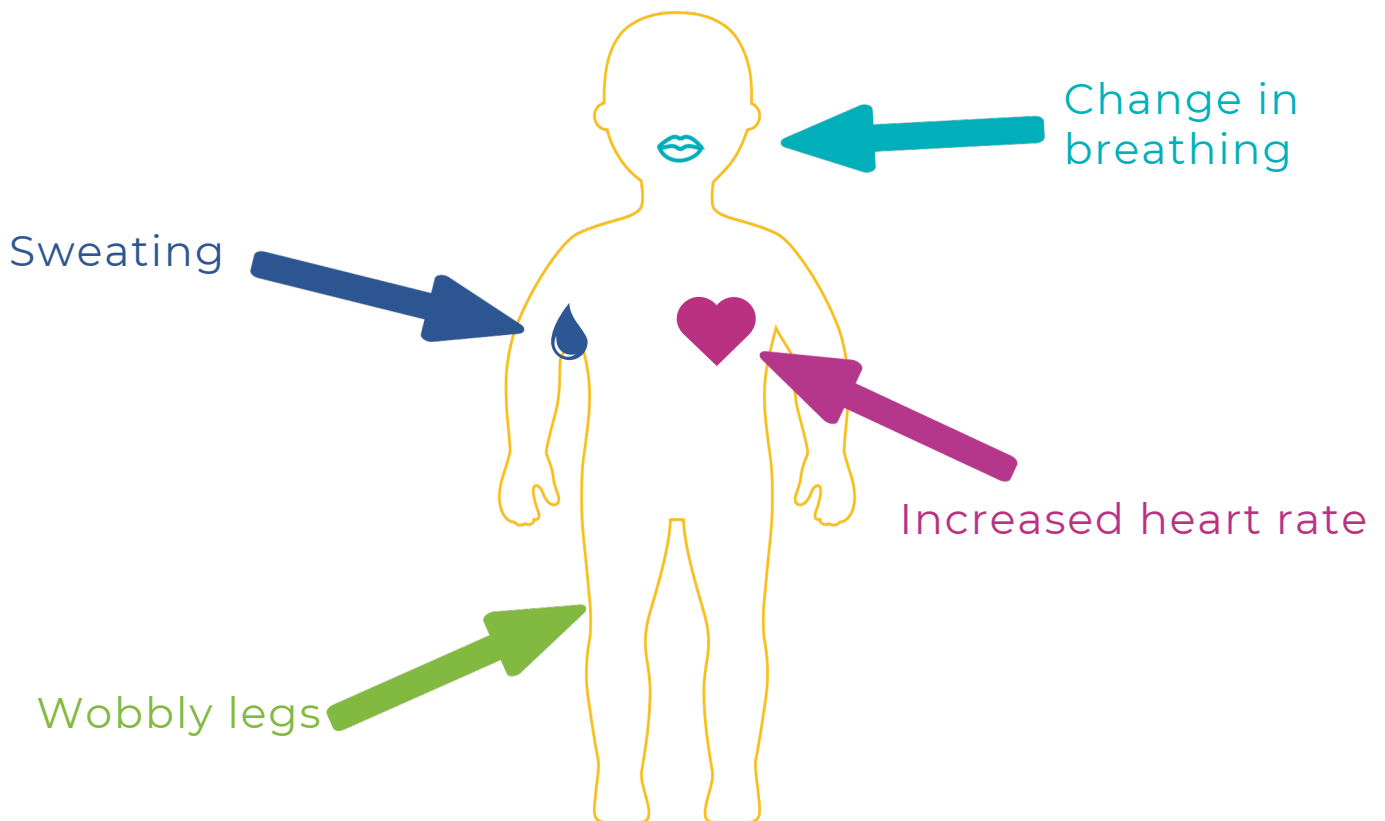
Flight



Freeze

### Physical sensations in the body:

- Associated with adrenaline release, increased heart rate, breathing, sweating nausea .
- Uncomfortable symptoms reducing confidence to cope with threat.



These sensations can then feed into the negative thoughts, reaffirming them, which in turn can lead to anxious behaviours.

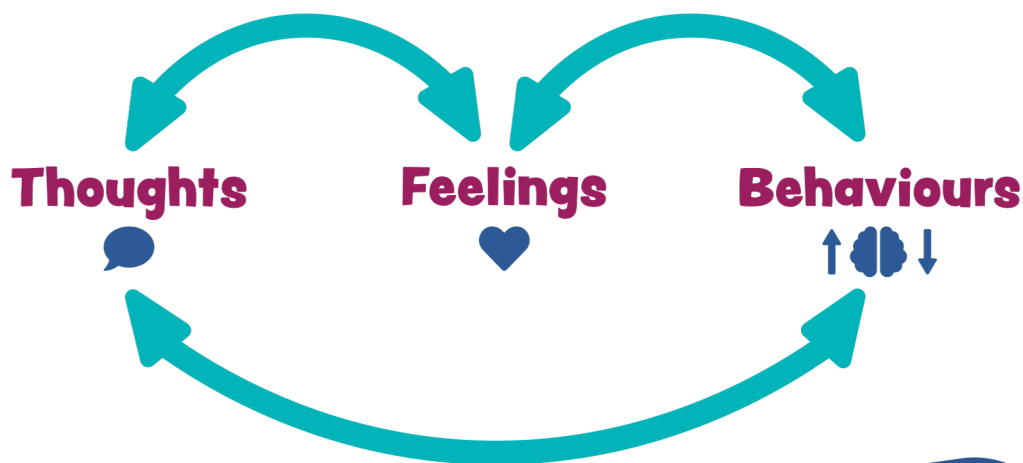
### 3. Anxious behaviours

- **Avoidance** of situations that cause anxiety
- **Safety seeking** behaviours
- **Reassurance seeking**

By **avoiding** the situation, the anxiety will grow and feel bigger than it is overtime.

**Safety seeking** behaviours are things that you do to help you approach the situation. For example, only wearing certain clothes, being very strict with the process or having something with you as a "lucky charm". Although these behaviours may allow you to take part in the situation rather than avoiding it, relying on them can in itself become a problem.

The same thing applies if you constantly **seek reassurance**. This may be always asking if you are doing things right, reading the news/apps for information or checking things repeatedly.



#### Strategies

- Challenge your thoughts by using the **TRUTH** or **BELIEF** method.
- Be aware if you have developed any **Safety Behaviours** and try to eliminate them
- Limit the number of times you seek reassurance
- Its all about breaking the anxiety cycle!