



## Anxiety and the body.

Your brain is super powerful. Faster than the fastest computer. Each day we have millions of thoughts... but not every thought is true. To grow and strengthen your good, positive thoughts, think and practice them often, over and over again.



**The body & mind are closely connected and one affects the other.** There are nerve pathways which carry messages from the body to the brain, and from your brain to your body. These messages have to happen very, very fast if they are to keep us safe. There is a special part of the brain that keeps us safe. This Lizard Brain is focussed on making sure that we survive and stay safe. The Lizard Brain protects us through the **“fight or flight” response**. It works so fast that it is happening before we realise or know that it is happening. It has to act fast if it is to keep us safe.

**We can use our breathing to calm us down.** When we are anxious or stressed we breathe more rapidly than when we are calm and at rest. If you are at risk, your breathing sends a message to the brain to tell it that there is danger and your survival is at risk. Because **our breathing is able to be consciously controlled**, we can use it to send a message to the brain to tell it that all is well and there is not need to protect us from danger.



### **Breathing Exercises**

Sit in a comfortable, safe and preferably quiet place. Take a slow deep breath in to the count of 3 or 4. Hold for a count of two then slowly exhale to the count of 6 or 7. The idea is that you breath out for longer than you breathe in. This changes the chemical balance in the lungs as you will increase the amount of oxygen and decrease the amount of carbon dioxide. The change signals to the brain that all is well and helps to return us to a state of calm.

Another breathing exercise is the physiological sigh/double inhale. We do this naturally when we sob and sometimes when we are settling or calming down after a period of activity. We inhale twice without a breath out in between. This is followed by a long, slow exhale. Again, chemically, we are producing more oxygen and getting rid of carbon dioxide. This sends a message to your brain to say that you are safe and are not in any danger, and that it does not need to be on high alert.



### **Body Scan**

Where in my body do I feel the worry?

Stomach, shoulders, head, hands, feet, legs, heart, chest.

### **Grounding techniques using your five senses to calm yourself**

Find:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch/feel
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can xxx



### **In your body**

Place your feet flat on the floor. Starting at the crown of your head, focus on your body bit by bit. Pay attention to each section of your body and be aware of each tiny movement as you breath in and out slowly.