

# What do you hope to gain from this session?

- Go to [www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- Use code 366370

# HELPING YOUR TEENAGER MANAGE ANXIETY AT SCHOOL



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<http://andyresearchclinic.com>

# Supporting your child around anxiety in school



Understand how anxiety works



Help your son/daughter to develop skills



Work with the school



Resources bank

# Understanding how anxiety works

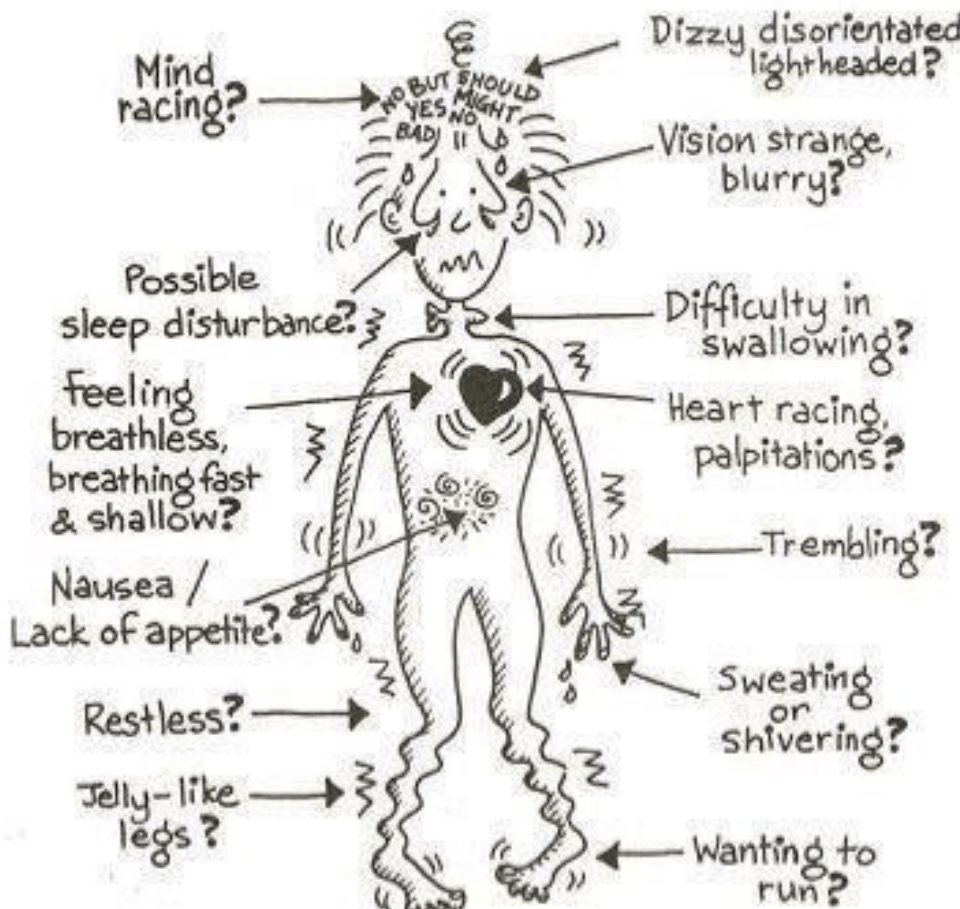
Think about the last time you felt worried or scared

What was happening in different parts of your body:

- Face
- Throat
- Chest
- Arms
- Legs



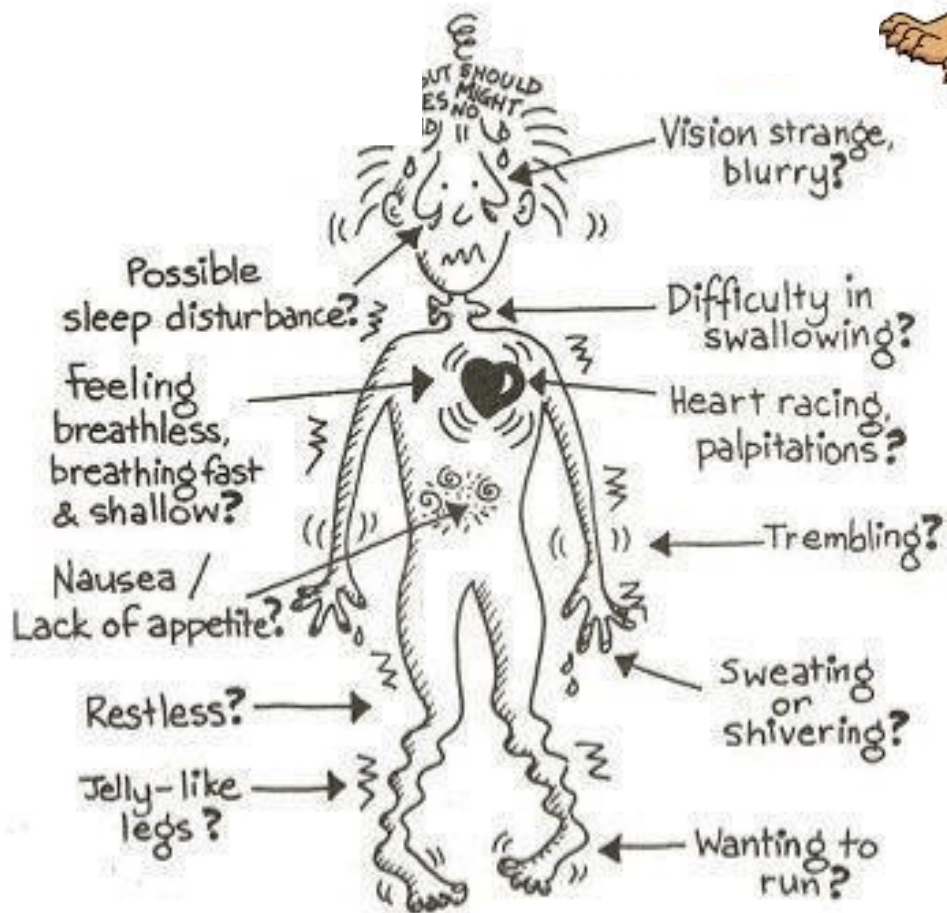
## FAMILIAR?



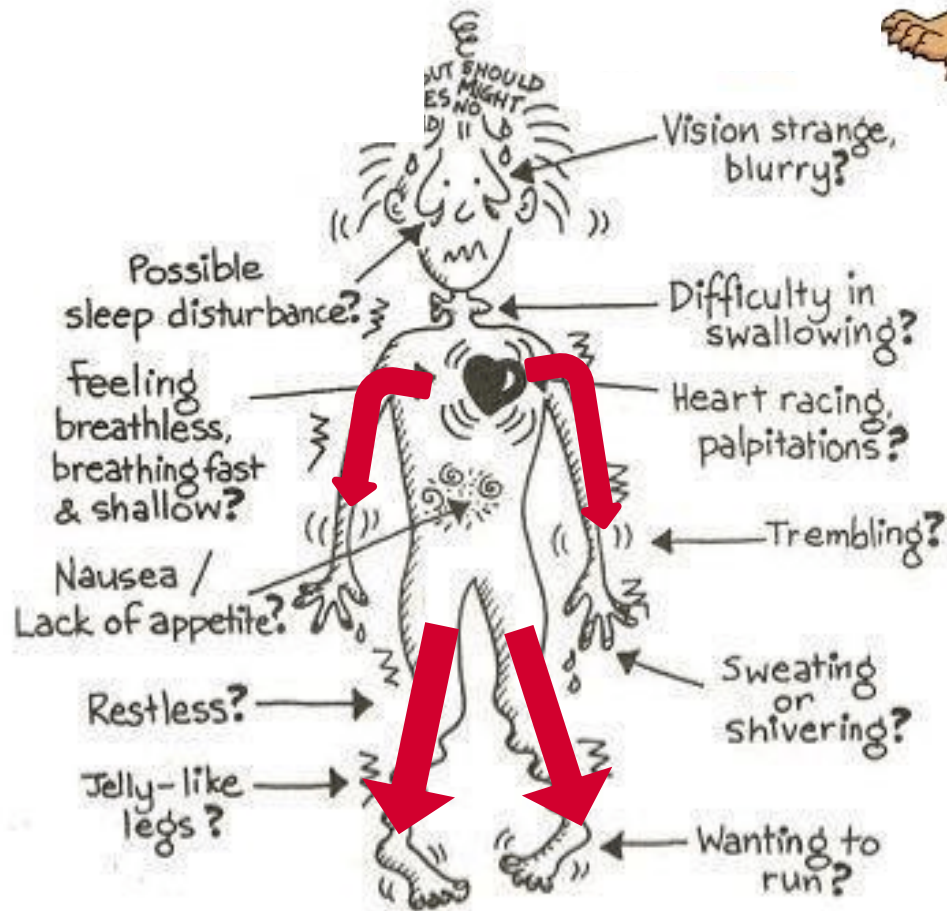


Our body has detected a threat and is dealing with it by getting ready to run – just like our prehistorical ancestors!

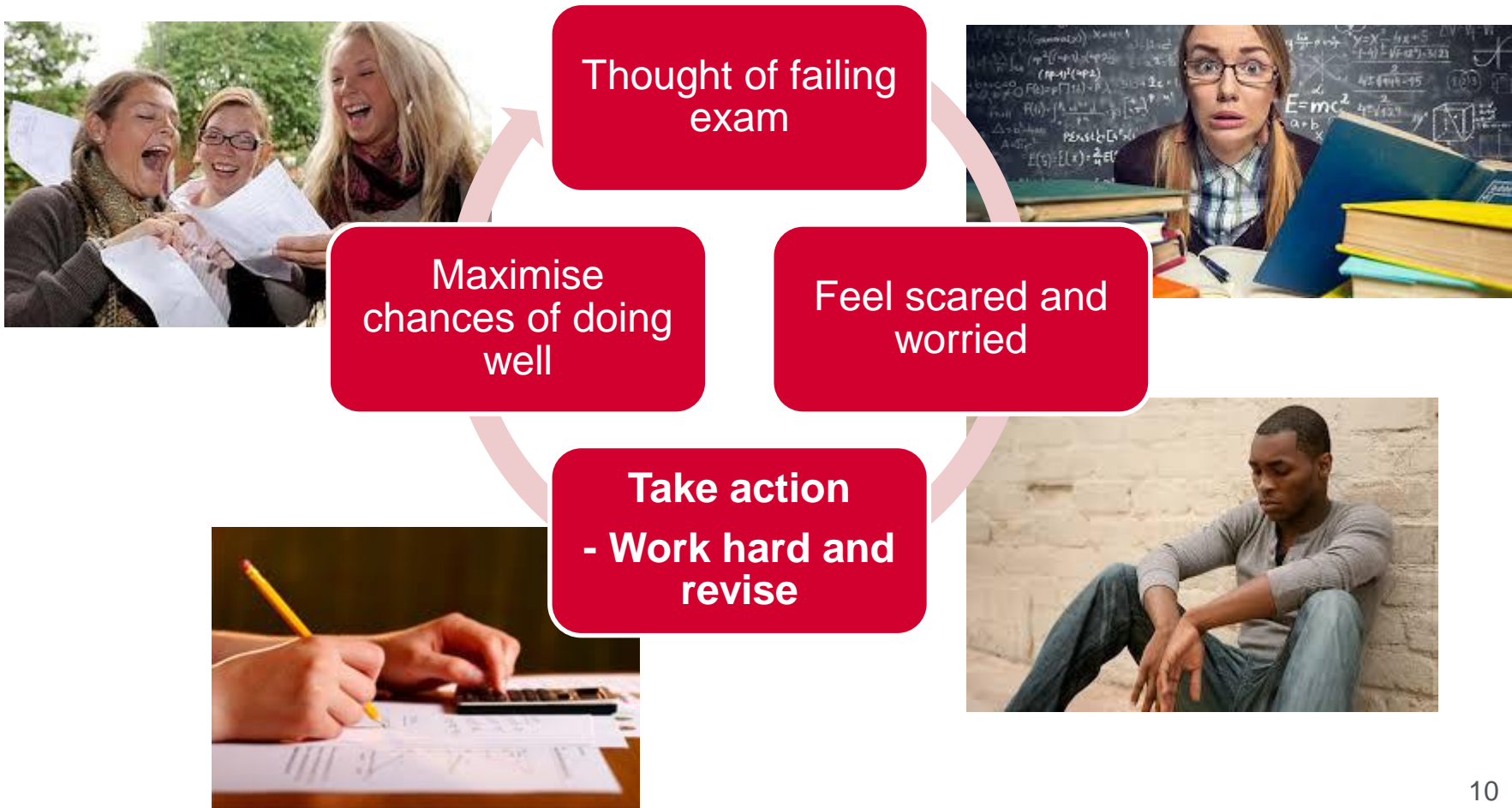








# When anxiety can be a good thing



# When anxiety can be a good thing





# Overcoming anxiety as a skill for life



When is anxiety a  
problem?



Anxiety disorder

# When it causes distress and interferes in life

At school/college/work  
At home and in family life  
With other people/friends  
Taking part in leisure activities and hobbies



Anxiety disorder




# Helping your child to develop skills

# Understanding anxiety

Particular thoughts can keep anxiety going and make it worse

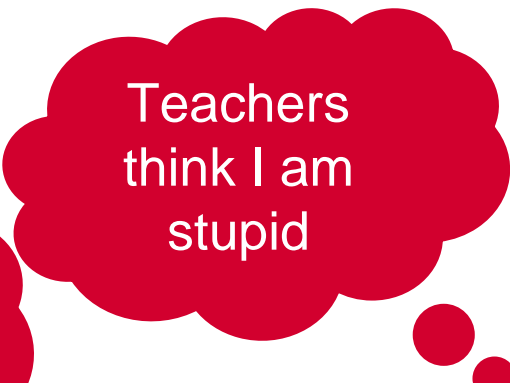
- thinking in a threat-focused, negative way




I'm going to  
fail my  
exams



What if I am  
wearing the  
wrong  
clothes?



Teachers  
think I am  
stupid



My friends  
think I am  
ugly.

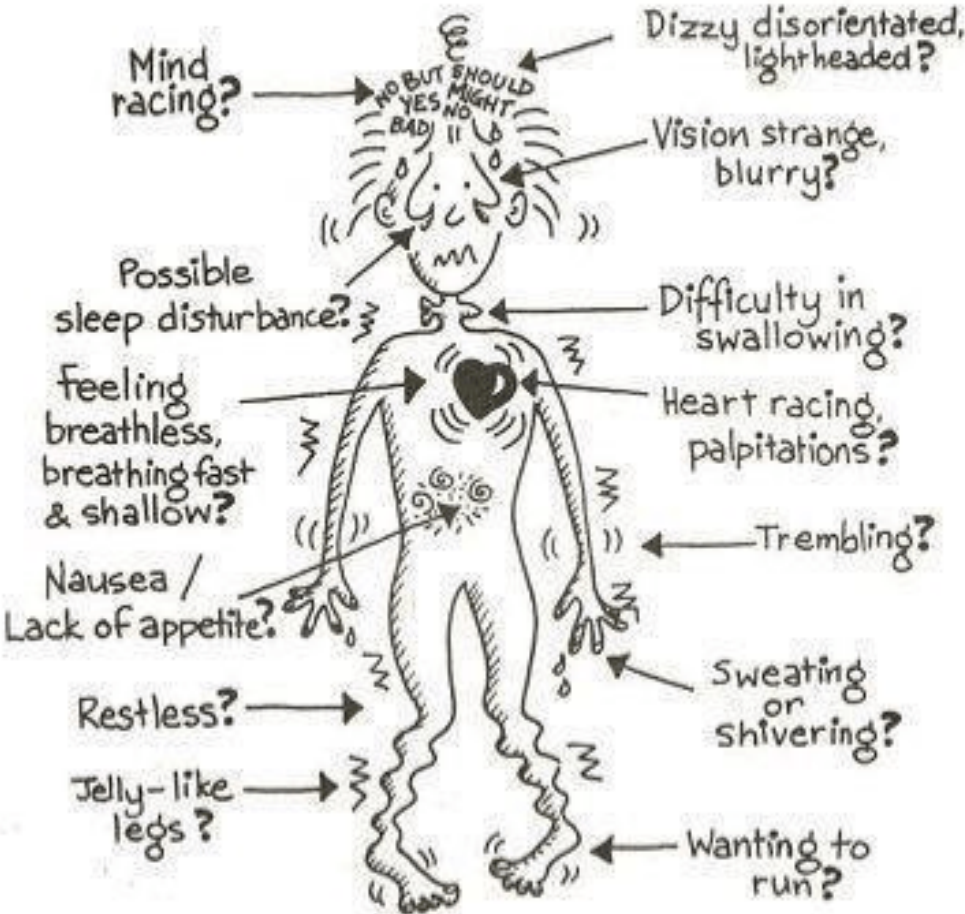


Everyone  
will laugh at  
me

# What messages do they hear at school?

- 'This is your only chance'
- 'You have to get it right first time'
- 'It has to be perfect'
- 'You can be good at everything, you just need to work harder'
- 'School/exams/tests performance is the only way to show your worth'
- 'You don't have very long, time is running out'

## FAMILIAR?



# Understanding anxiety

Particular behaviours (aimed at keeping us safe) can keep anxiety going



# Understanding anxiety

These thoughts and behaviours make anxiety worse by creating a vicious cycle



But in the long run trying to control the anxiety in this way keeps the problem going and can make it worse...



# Understanding anxiety

These thoughts and behaviours make anxiety worse by creating a vicious cycle



Sometimes well-meaning school staff can end up (inadvertently) reinforcing the problem...

# Think about your son or daughter

- How does their anxiety present at home?
- What impact does this have on them and your family?
- How does their anxiety present at school?
- Are there differences between home and school?

# Managing anxiety

The way to get over anxiety is to challenge anxious thoughts and develop more realistic thinking



What I believe will happen...



What actually happens...

# NEGATIVE THINKING

## All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

*If I'm not perfect I have failed*

*Either I do it right or not at all*

## Over-generalizing



Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

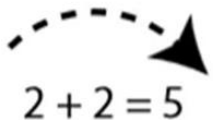
## Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

*That doesn't count*

## Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading**  
(imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling**  
(predicting the future)

## Magnification (catastrophising) & minimization



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

## Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true

*I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot*

## Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser  
I'm completely useless  
They're such an idiot*

## should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

## Personalization

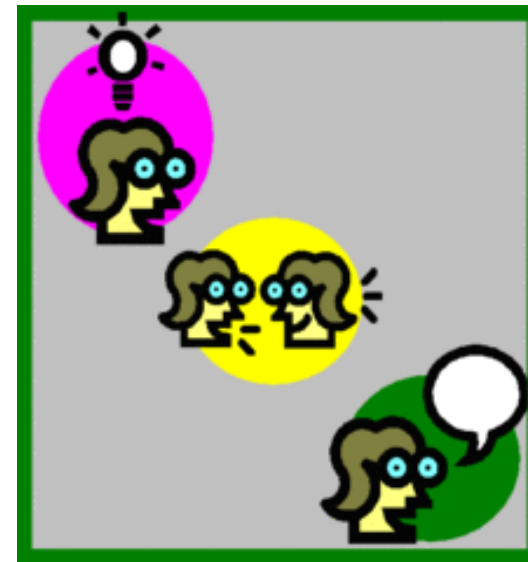
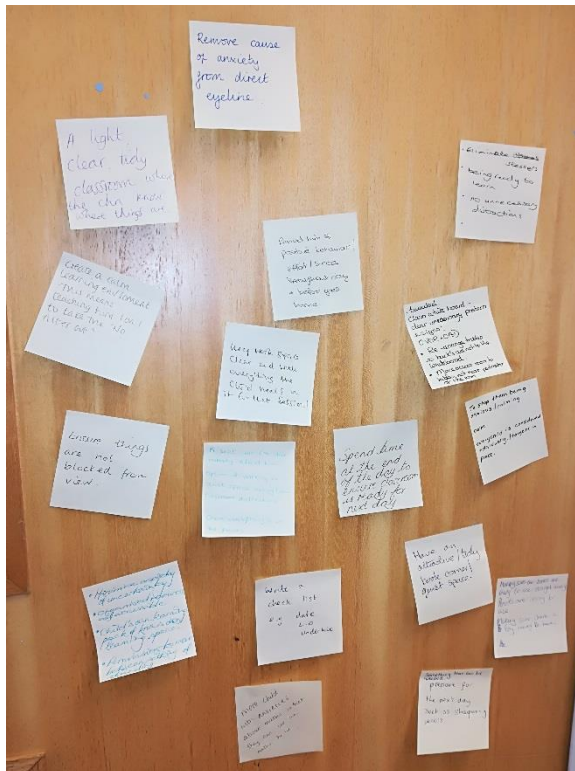
## "this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault

Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault

# Managing anxiety

The most important part of getting over anxiety is to face fears (but in a graded manageable way) through exposure



# Managing anxiety around social situations

1. Recognise that thinking may not be true
  2. Recognise how you may be doing things to stay safe (being in head, thinking about how you are coming across, trying not to draw attention to self)
- 
1. Expose yourself to situations where you can test out your predictions
    - E.g.
      - Asking for something in a shop
      - Speaking to a stranger
      - Putting hand up in class and answering a question
      - Chatting to someone that you don't know well



# Managing worries about real-life problems



What  
if...?

For real life problems, use problem-solving to move from problems to solutions

1. Identify problem
  2. Generate lots of practical solutions
  3. Choose one, implement it
  4. Afterwards, review whether it worked
  5. If it didn't choose/implement another
- Use this all time (not just when they are anxious)



Then  
what...

# Working with your school

# The importance of consistency between home and school

Family members and school staff can help by encouraging the teenager to be independent, face fears and give attention to brave behaviour

- Praise brave attempts
- Give them choices but not avoidance
- Role model failure
- Work together to share helpful strategies

# How to prepare for a meeting with school

- Emails can be dangerous
- Book the meeting
- What do you want from the meeting
- Make notes of what you want to say
- Consider whether having your son/daughter there will be helpful
- Take someone with you for support
- Recognise limitations of the school

# How you might encourage school to implement strategies

- Be realistic
- What is important?
- Prepare a short explanation
- Identify one key link

# What is manageable in your household?

Being a parent is a tough job

Be realistic about what you can and can't do

Think about how it will work in your household

# What next?

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1. What will I do?

2. What do I need?

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3. How will I do it?

4. What help do I need?



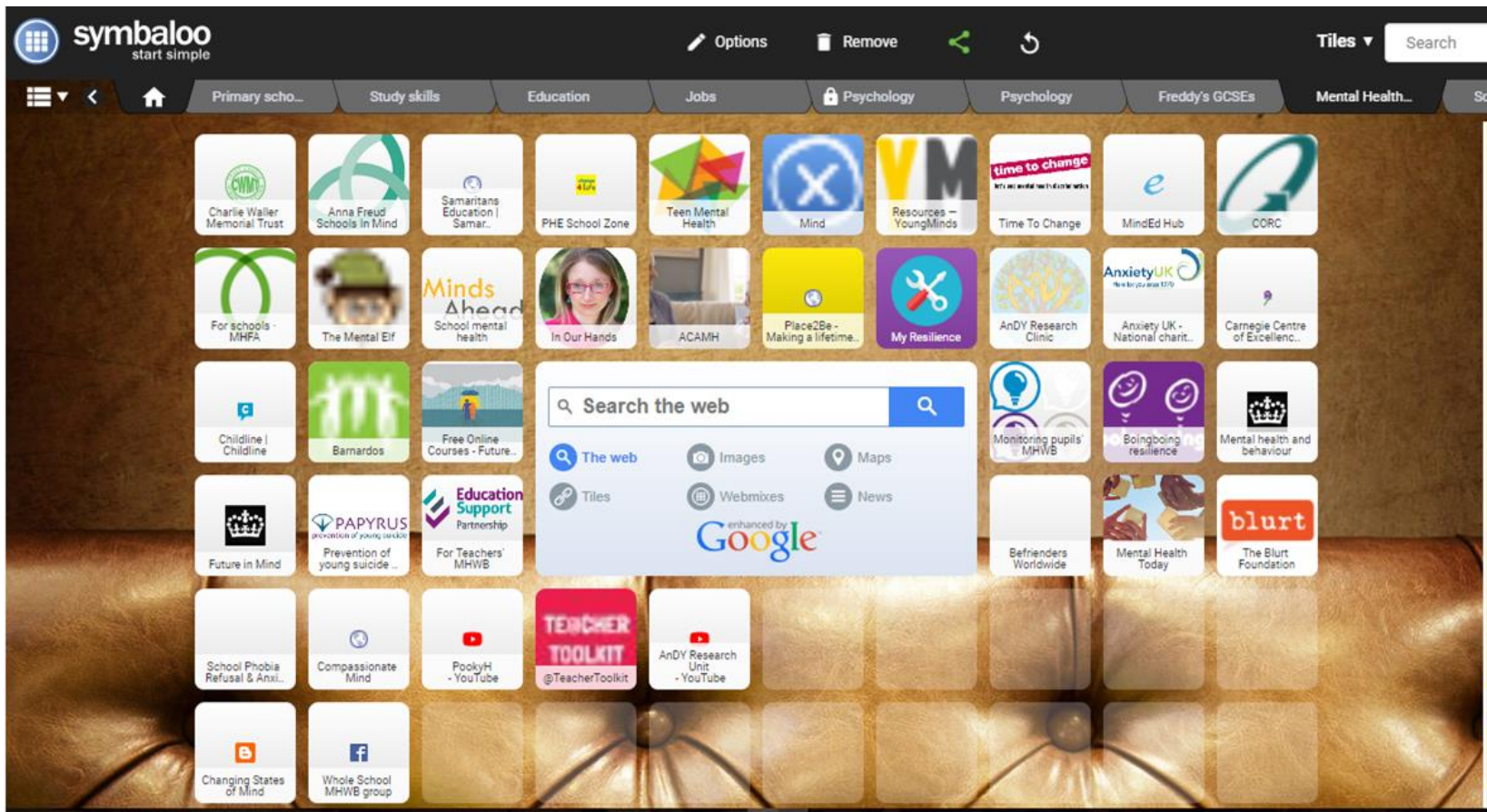
# How will you take this forward?

- On your device go to: [www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- Type in the code: 366370

# Free Resources

- The Mindwise Project: <http://cypmentalhealth.org/dev/home>
  - Information on how to help distressed students, free lesson plans and resources
- Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/>
- Online courses from University of Reading
  - <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/depression-young-people>
  - <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/anxiety-depression-and-cbt>
- Lots of free online resources can be found on:  
[www.symboloo.com/mix/mentalhealthpublic](http://www.symboloo.com/mix/mentalhealthpublic)
- Study skills:  
[Sixthformsavvy.wordpress.com](http://Sixthformsavvy.wordpress.com)
  - Unhelpful thinking patterns  
<https://www.psychologytools.com/worksheet/unhelpful-thinking-styles/>

[www.symbaloo.com/mix/mentalhealthpublic](http://www.symbaloo.com/mix/mentalhealthpublic)



# Thank you for listening



# Contact us

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