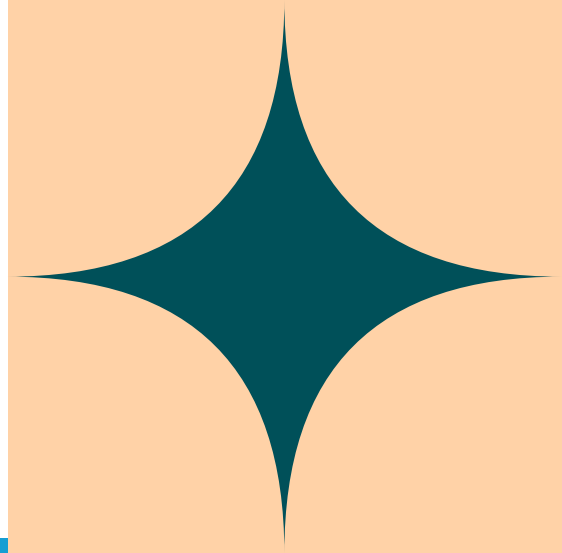


**PRACTICAL
HELP FOR
ANXIETY**



Youth



Inspired



01

What is Anxiety and when is it a problem?

02

- **Deep Breathing and note page**
- **Guided Imagery and note page**
- **Distraction techniques and note page**
- **Body scan muscle relaxation technique and note page**
- **Challenging Irrational thoughts and note page**

03

Notes for your purse or wallet

04

Sign Posting



**"BE NOT AFFRAID OF LIFE.
BELIEVE THAT LIFE IS WORTH
LIVING, AND YOUR BELIEF WILL
CREATE THE FACT"**

WILLIAM JAMES

WHAT IS ANXIETY AND WHEN IS IT A PROBLEM?



These tools are not a substitute for therapy but can be very useful:


- Deep Breathing
- Guided Imagery
- Distraction Techniques
- Body scan muscle relaxation technique
- Challenging irrational thoughts

The American Psychological Association states that Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure.

It is a survival mechanism that we need to feel but becomes a problem when it is recurring you struggle with intrusive thoughts or concerns and/ or the physical sensations reoccur too often. This may lead to avoiding certain situations out of worry. Limiting our experiences and abilities.

There has been a lot of research around how we can gain a sense of control and reduce our symptoms and improve our way of being.

This booklet gives a range of ideas and worksheets that you can try. We are all different so try them all and see what works best for you.

A photograph of a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover. A white note is placed on top of the notebook, containing text.

Note of any tools you have tried before from the above list.

EACH PAGE IS FOLLOWED BY A NOTE PAGE FOR YOU TO WRITE ANY CHANGES THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO YOU AND YOUR NEEDS. PLEASE TAKE TIME TO NOTE THEM DOWN SO THEY ARE AVAILABLE WHEN YOU NEED THEM MOST.

DEEP BREATHING

WHY DO THIS?

During periods of stress, the body triggers a response where you experience an increased heart rate, breathing can be shallow and fast, and your muscles become tense and ready for action. A relaxing response to this is to reduce our breathing rate to allow the symptoms to leave or at least, reduce.

Deep breathing can be helpful in calming many uncomfortable emotion and reducing anxiety symptoms.

How to do this

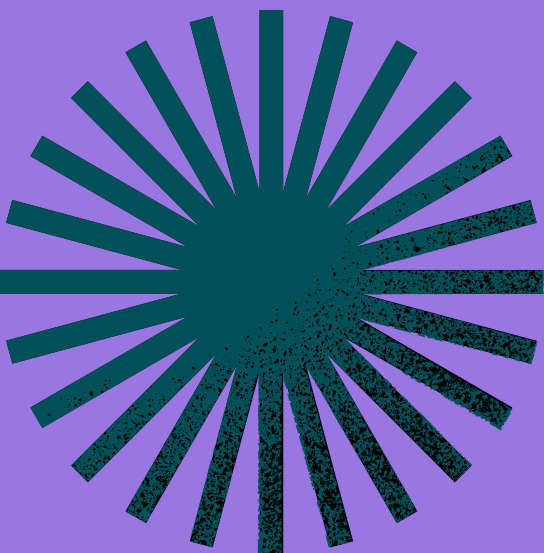
Sit Comfortably, one hand on your stomach, Breathe in through the nose and feel the stomach rise, hold it then exhale slowly as if blowing through a straw.

TIPS

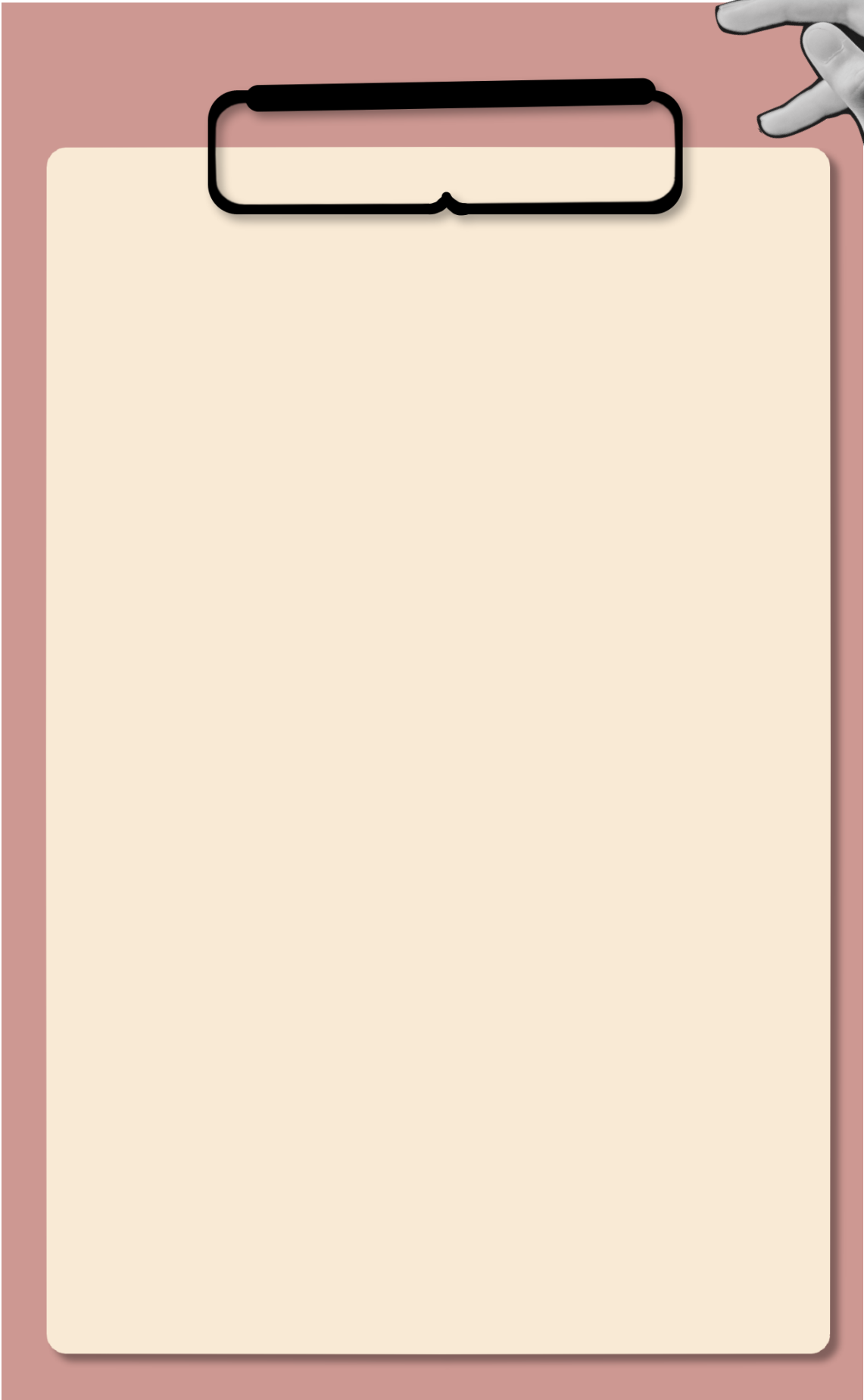
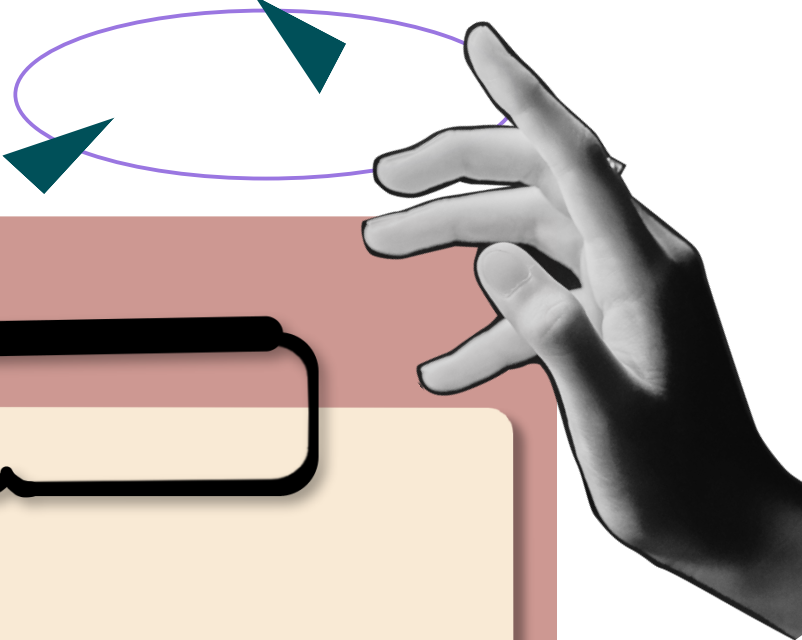
A basic rule for this exercise is to breathe out longer than you breathe in and hold. An example of this is to breathe in for 4, Hold for 4 and Breathe out for 6

Counting your breaths has 2 functions:

- It helps to slow down but be comfortable, you shouldn't feel like you are going to pass out.
- It provides you something to focus on, taking your thoughts to a different place that isn't anxiety provoking.



Notes



GUIDED IMAGERY



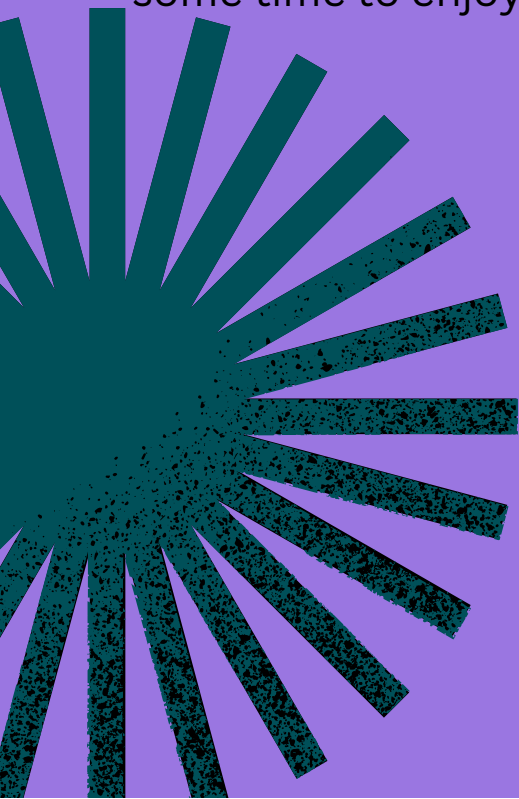
Why do this?

Our thoughts are powerful and can change how we feel. In this exercise we can use our senses to change how we feel in a positive way.

How to do this

Think of your safe place. A place that brings comfort, where all of your needs are met. Don't just think casually, really try to imagine it for 5-10 Minutes

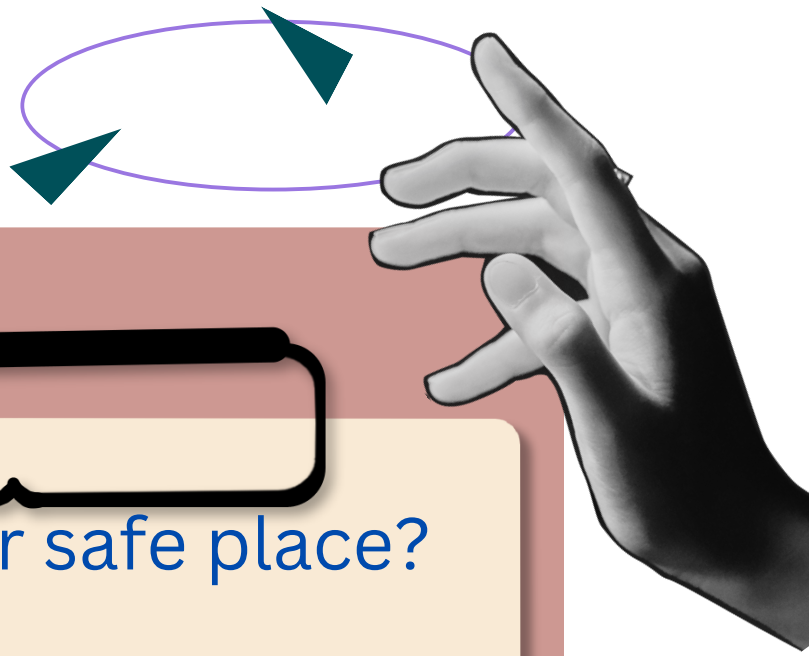
- What do you see? What is all around, close and in the distance, above and below, look for small details
- What do you hear? Are the sounds gentle or loud? What is close and in the distance? Notice all of the different sounds.
- What can you taste? Is it fresh air? Is it Salt from the sea? or is it your favourite food or drink? Enjoy the taste.
- What Can you feel? Is it warm or cold? can you feel your clothes on your skin, can you reach out and touch anything?
- What do you smell? Are there different smells around you? take some time to enjoy them all.



TIPS

- Use all of your senses, This will help you to have a range of experiences.
- Take it slowly during the experience and when returning to the present moment, take your time, stretch and breathe.
- Doing some Deep Breathing before and after can also improve the experience

Notes



Where is your safe place?

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES



Why do this?

When we feel triggered all of the power goes to our survival, fight, flight, freeze or fawn response, triggering the physical experiences needed to keep us safe. When this is only a thought and there is no need to run or fight etc, these physical sensations are uncomfortable. If we can direct the power to 'curiosity' and thinking of other things then our more logical parts of the brain will work better and we get a rest from the of anxiety and gain more control.

How to do this

You can distract yourself in different ways. One way is again to use your senses.

Look around you and notice:

-  **5 things you can see:** Your hands, the sky, a plant.
-  **4 things you can feel:** Feet on the ground, the chair.
-  **3 things you can hear:** Birds chirping, your breath.
-  **2 things you can smell:** Coffee, your lunch, clothes.
-  **1 thing you can taste:** A mint, gum, the fresh air.

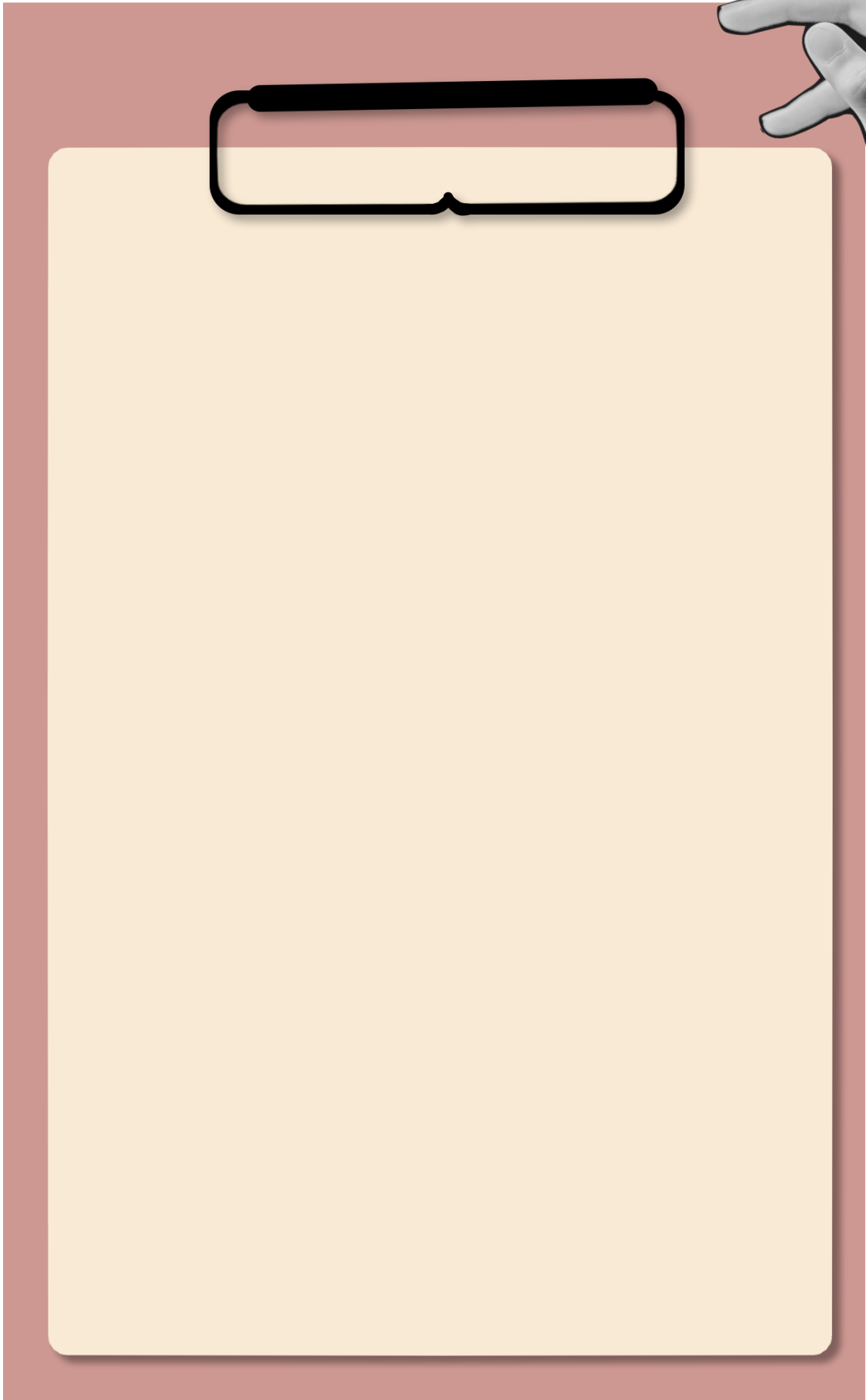
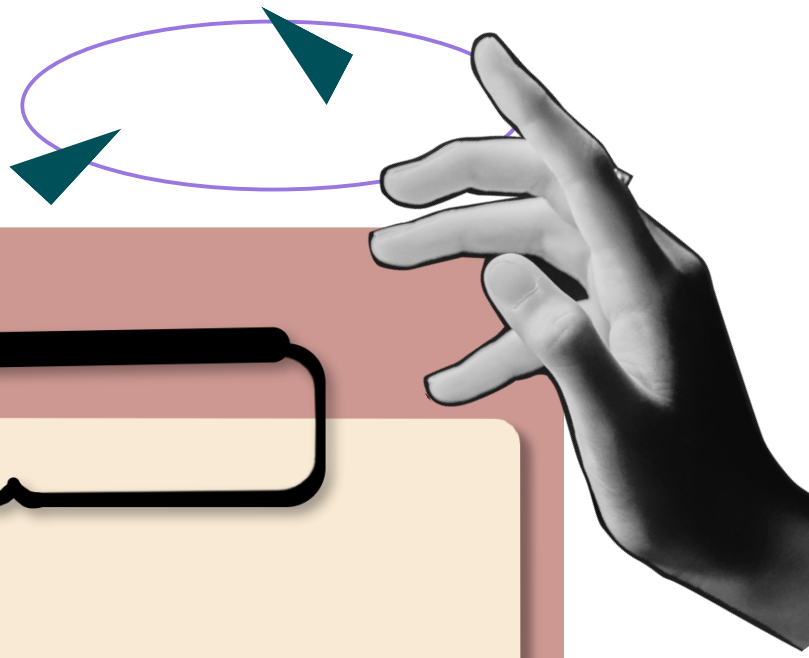
An other way is to do something you enjoy. Such as:

- Listen to music you enjoy
- Watch your favourite film
- Phone someone you find calming and rational.
- Be Creative

TIPS

- If doing the deep breathing techniques try to find a tiny sensation at the end of your nose to focus on.
- Everyone is different so use the next page to list your own personal ways of distracting yourself from anxious thoughts.

Notes



BODY SCAN MUSCLE RELAXATION TECHNIQUE



Why do this

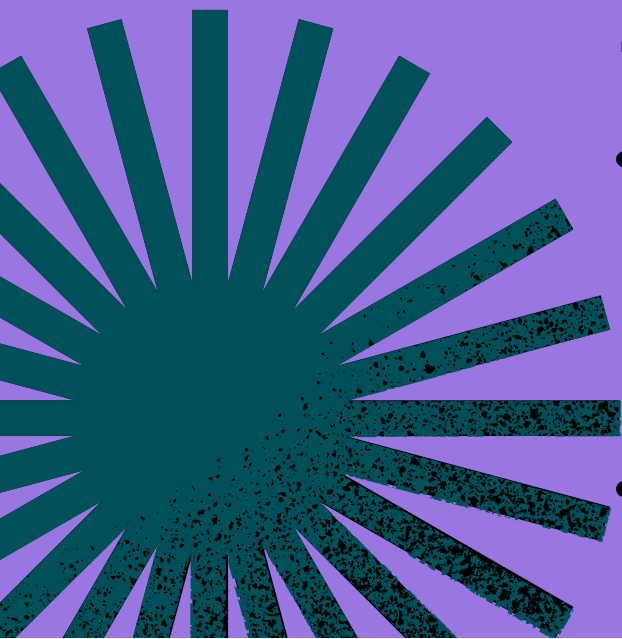
This exercise can work well as a distraction and a relaxation techniques. It helps you to notice anxiety through noticing muscle tension and preventing further painful issues along with providing a powerful feeling of relaxation

How to do this

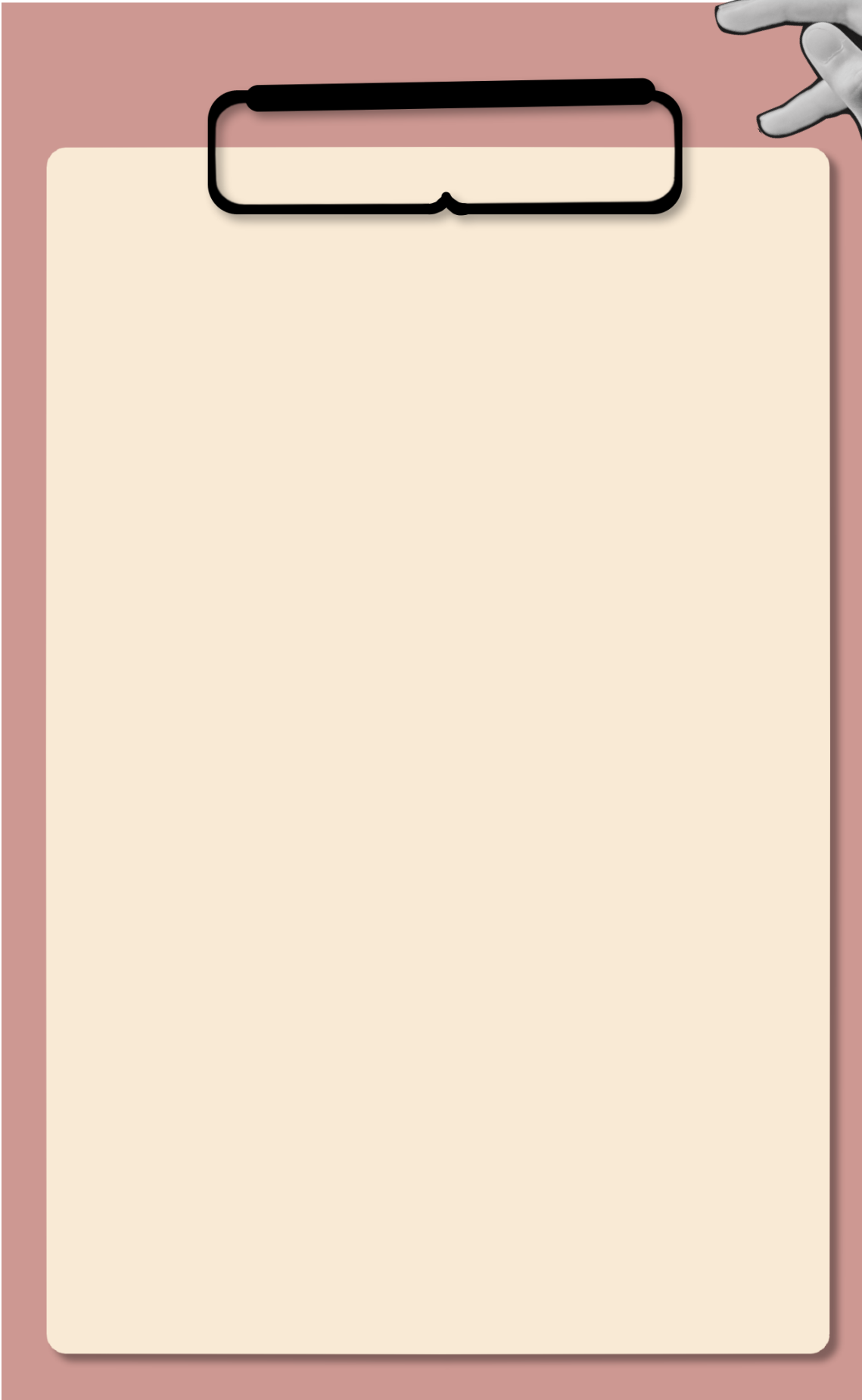
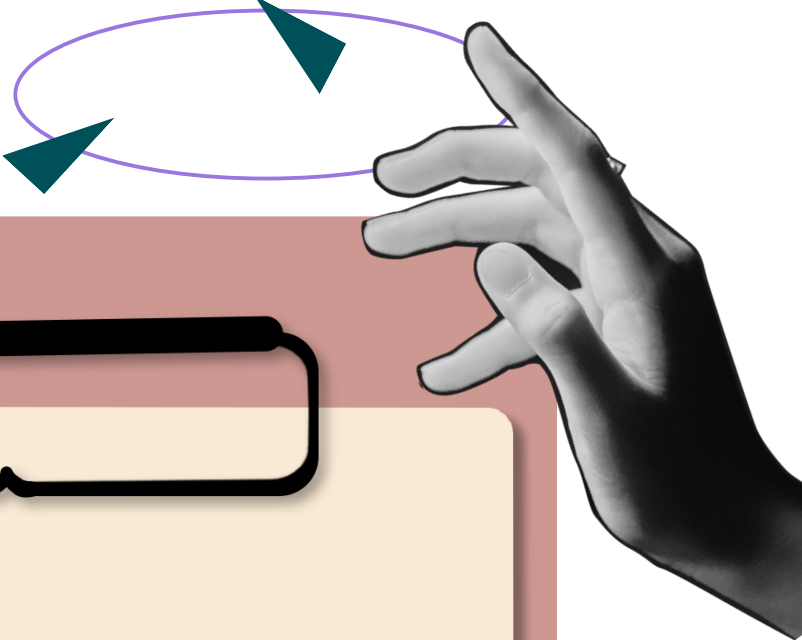
- Begin by sitting comfortably, lower your eyes and do 3 deep breaths and begin by thinking about the top of the head and how that feels, Tense it and then feel it relax.
- Down your forehead, cheeks and chin, you can scrunch these if it helps then feel them relax.
- Think about your eye balls, feel them soften and sink into your head.
- Move on to your neck and shoulders, you can tense them and/or feel them relax.
- Move to the chest and back; The arms, Imagining the tension flowing down and out of the hands.
- Moving to the chest, the back, your hips, thighs, calves and feet, feeling any tension flowing down and away from the feet.
- Finally you can tense all of the body and release all of your tension,
- Take a few moments to breathe and when you open your eyes slowly have a gentle stretch and take your time before standing up.

Tips

- Remember to breathe with every part and to go slowly. Imagining with every in breathe you are breathing in relaxation and with every out breath you are breathing out any tension.
- If you are tensing try to hold for around 10 seconds then release.



Notes



CHALLENGING IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS



Why do this

Anxiety can be increased by irrational thoughts that are in need of further assessment. If we can look at the evidence around our thoughts and challenge these, we can often reduce anxiety. This can be done by self questioning whether this is done mentally, through writing or journaling.

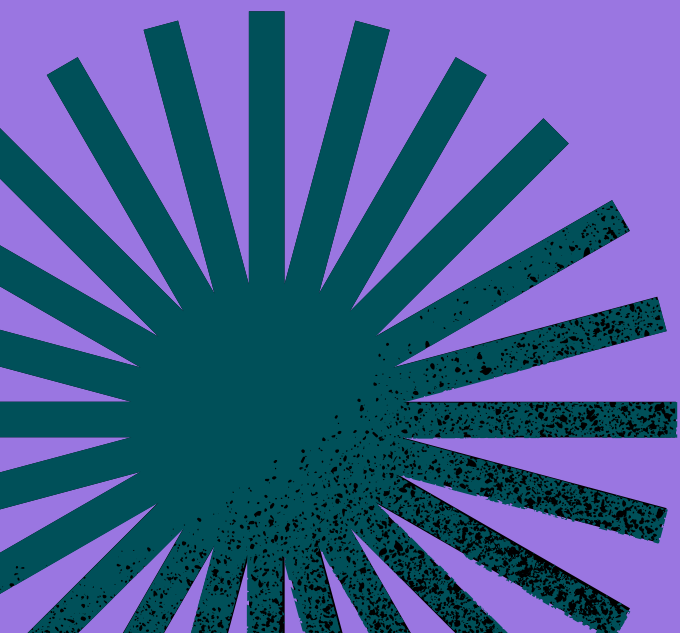
How to do this

This technique is known as 'Socratic Questioning', ask yourself:

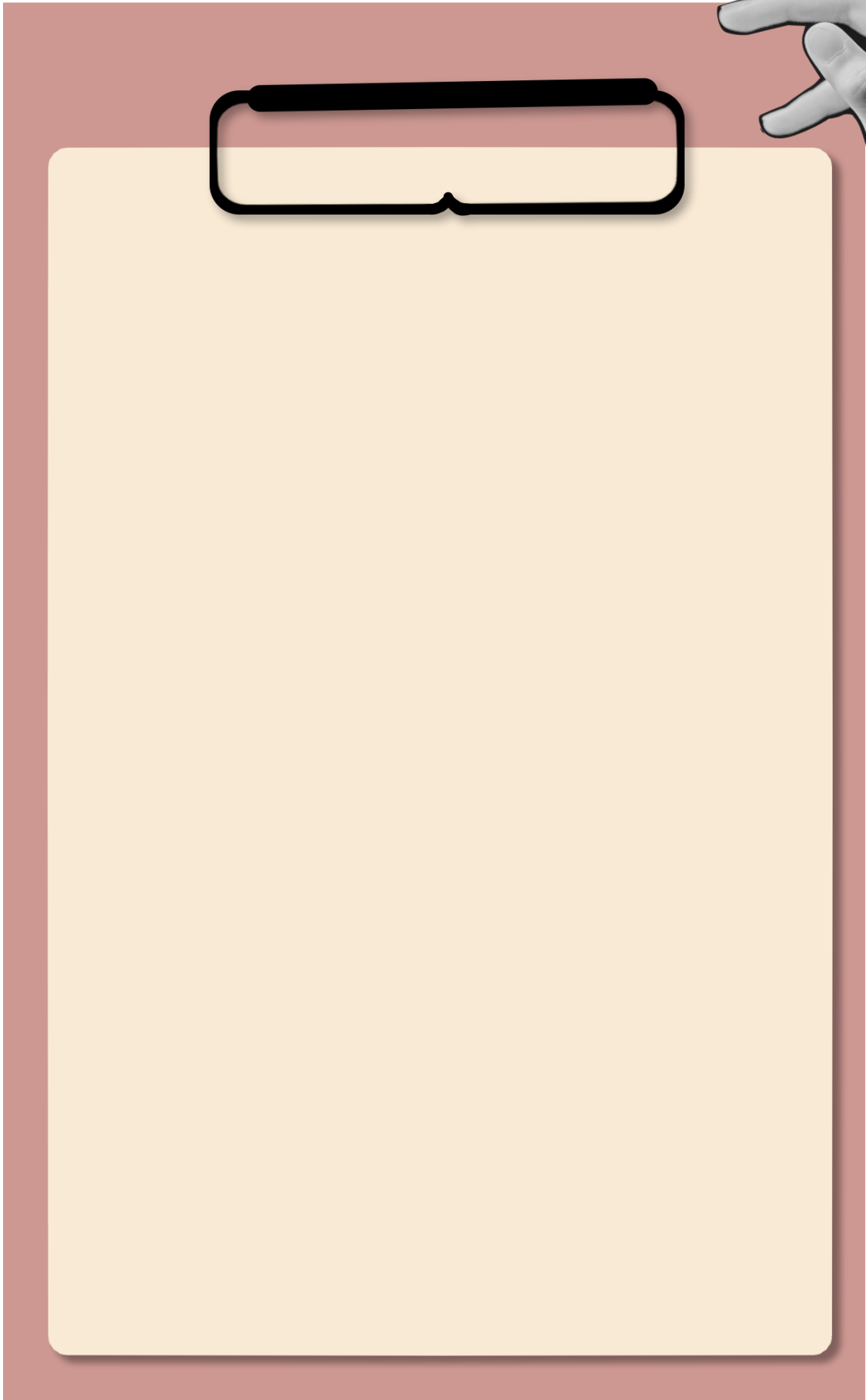
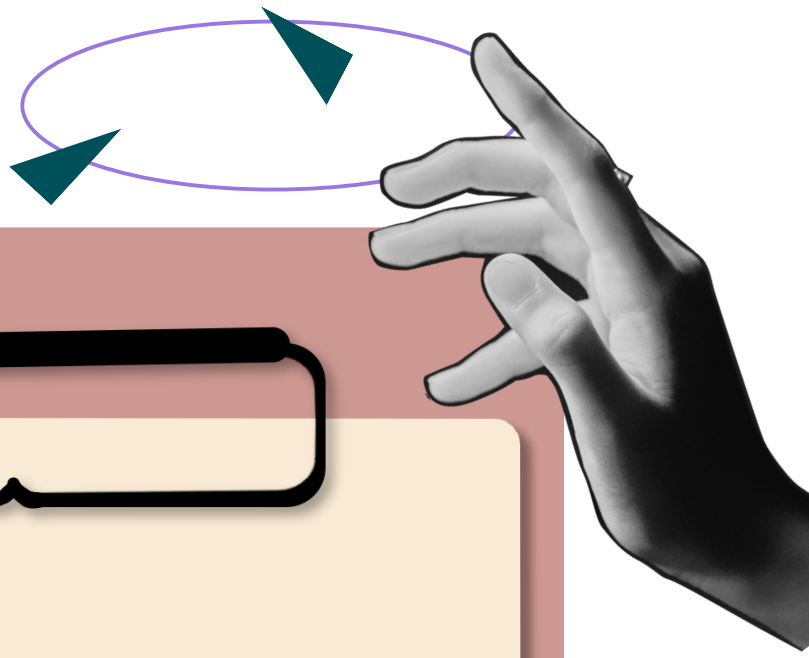
- "is this thought based on fact or feeling?"
- "How would someone I trust see this situation?"
- "What is likely to happen?"
- "Have I handled anything like this before?"
- "How likely is it that my fear will come true and what could I do if it does?"
- "If it does come true, will it still matter in a week? Month? Year?"

Tip

**Remember that this
feeling will pass**



Notes



Challenge Negative Thoughts

Am I making assumptions?

Is there another way to look at it?

Are there any other possible outcomes?

Is there evidence for this worry?

What advice would I give to a friend?

Is this worry in or out of my control?

4-7-8 Relaxing Breath

Press the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth and open your mouth slightly.

Close your mouth and inhale through your nose for 4-8 counts (You can work up to 8 counts as your lung capacity increases)

Hold your breath for 7 counts
Exhale very slowly for 8 counts
Repeat steps as many times as needed

Grounding Exercise

Take a deep breath and name

5 things I can **SEE**

4 things I can **FEEL**

3 things I can **HEAR**

2 things I can **SMELL**

1 thing I can **TASTE**

Take a deep breath

Stop & Listen

Spend a few minutes just listening to the sounds around you.

What sounds do hear? Are they loud or soft?

Pay special attention to interesting sounds you've never noticed before

You can cut these notes out and keep them in your purse or wallet. Just keep them close for when you need them.

Sign Posting



www.youthinterventions.org.uk

**Working with young people and
families in Renfrewshire**

24/7 telephone/text support

TEXT SHOUT to 85258

Call SAMARITINS 116 123

Call CHILDLINE 0800 1111

IN AN EMERGENCY

CALL 999 OR

GO STRAIGHT TO A&E