

From Anxiety to Agency – Tools For a Turbulent World

30th January 26

Hazel ANDERSON
TURNER



Who am I?

- Hazel Anderson-Turner
- Chartered Coaching Psychologist
- Certified Business Psychologist
(shortlisted for the ABP Business Psychologist of the Year)
- Resilient Leadership specialist
- Acceptance and Commitment Coach and co-host of The Coaching UnpACT Podcast
- Author of Coaching Through Burnout
- Human on a mission to be useful to other humans



Fear

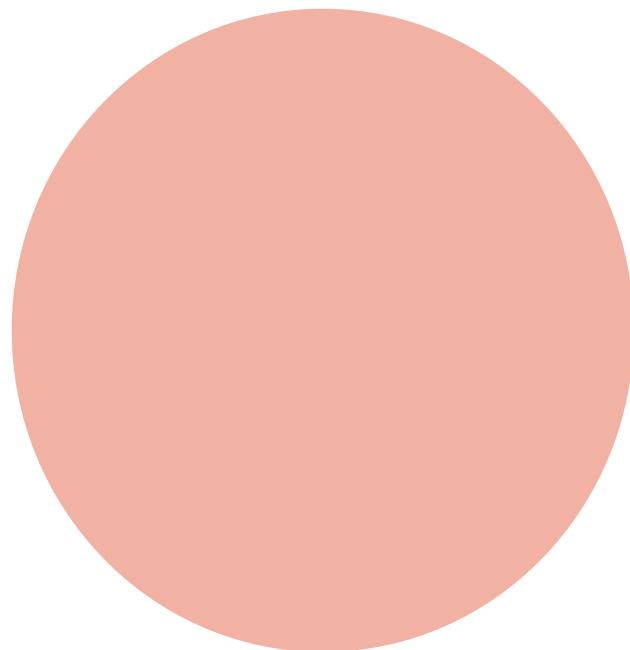
The emotional response to a real or perceived imminent threat.

Anxiety

The anticipation of a future threat.

What does anxiety feel like?

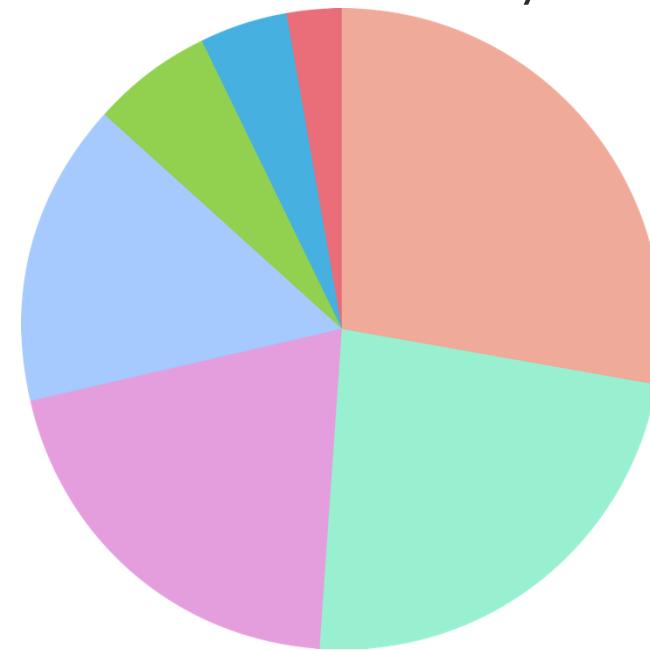
What people think anxiety feels like



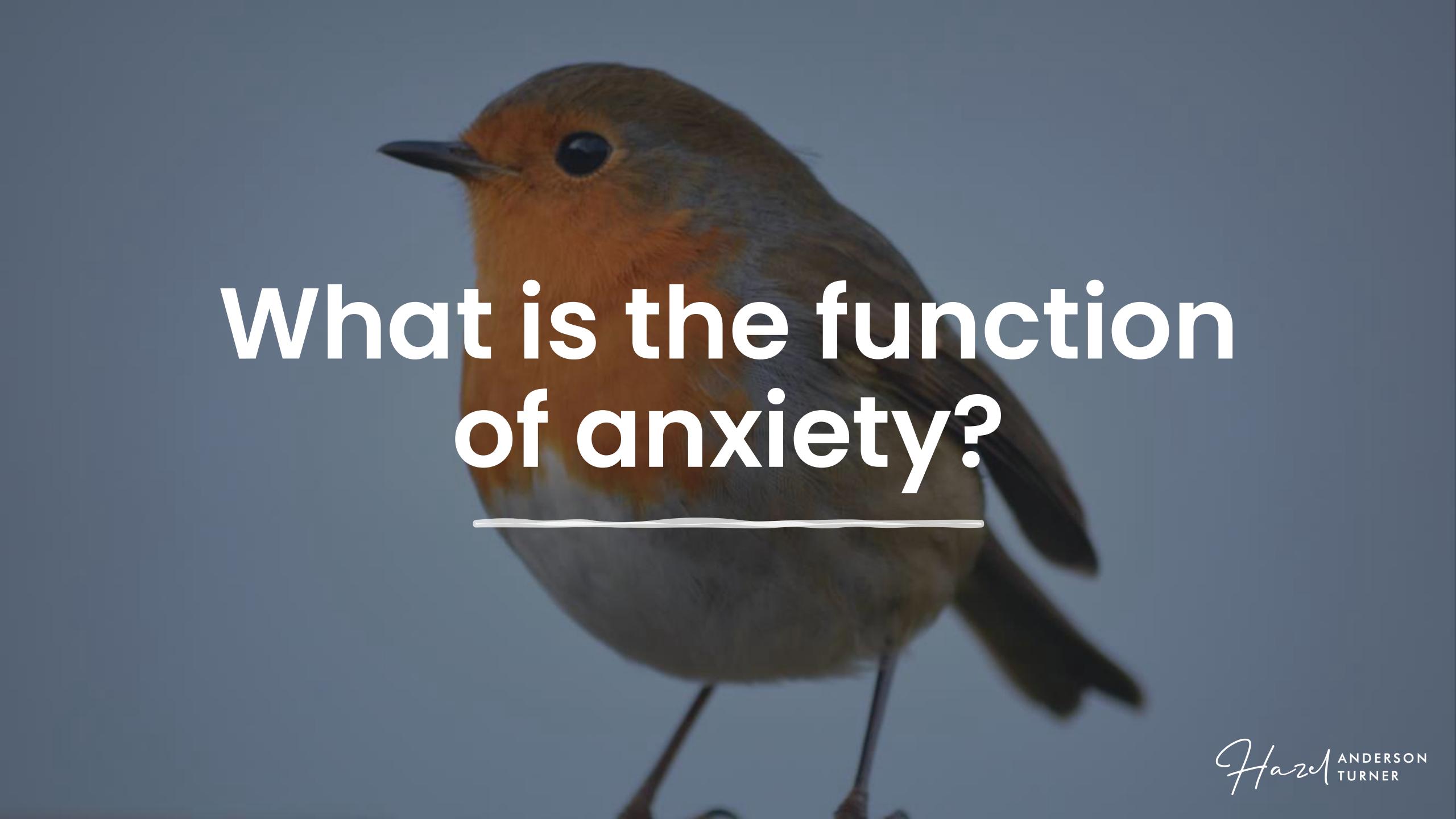
Worrying about everything, all the time



What anxiety can actually feel like



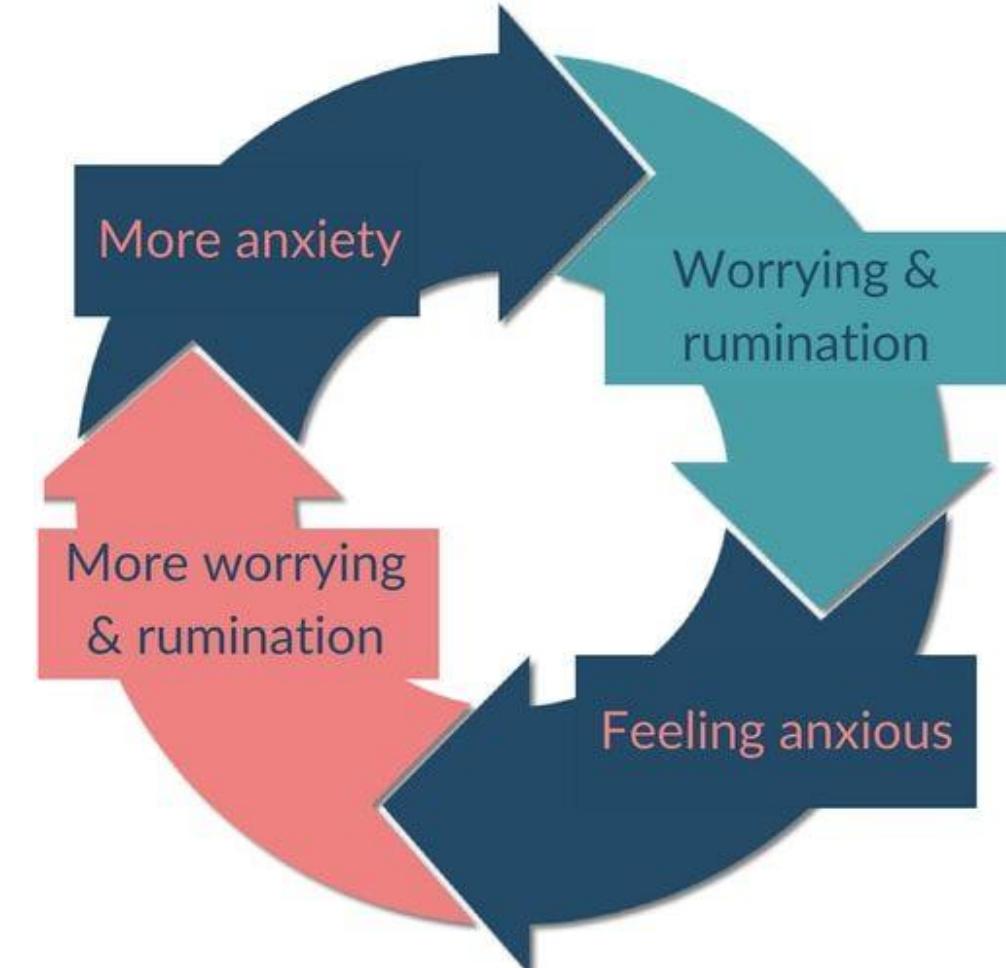
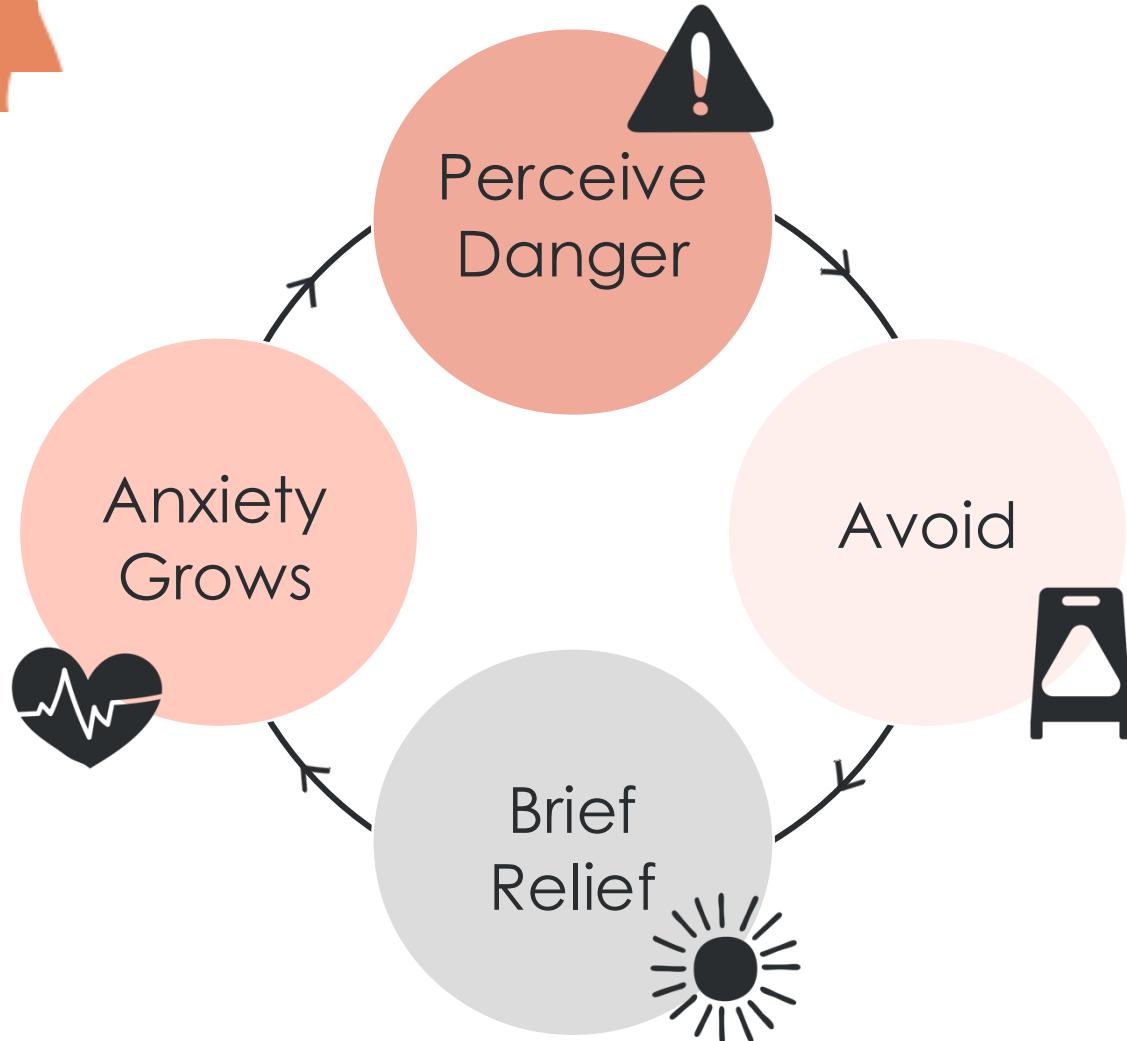
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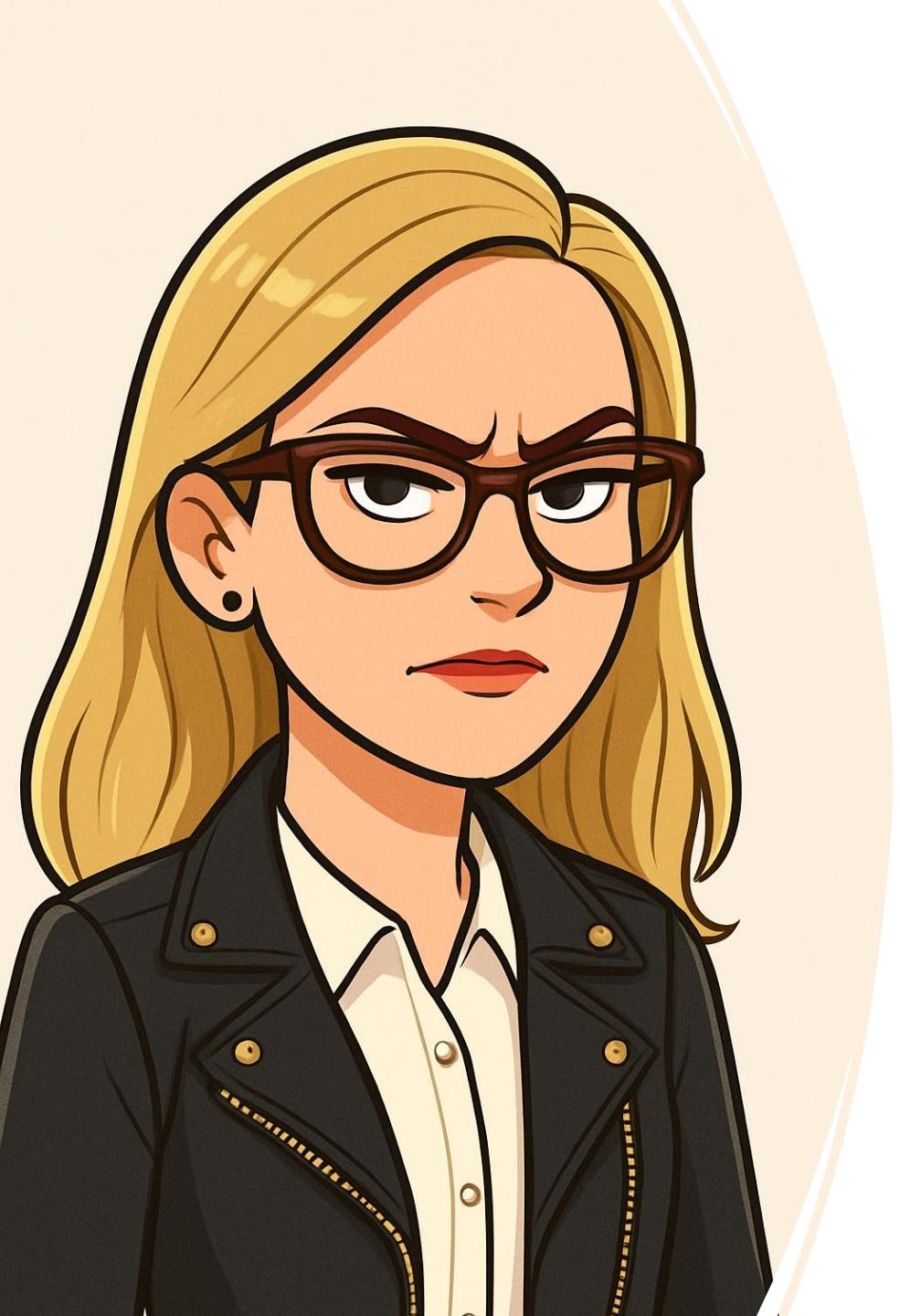


What is the function of anxiety?

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The Anxiety Cycle & Rumination Spiral





Perfectionism

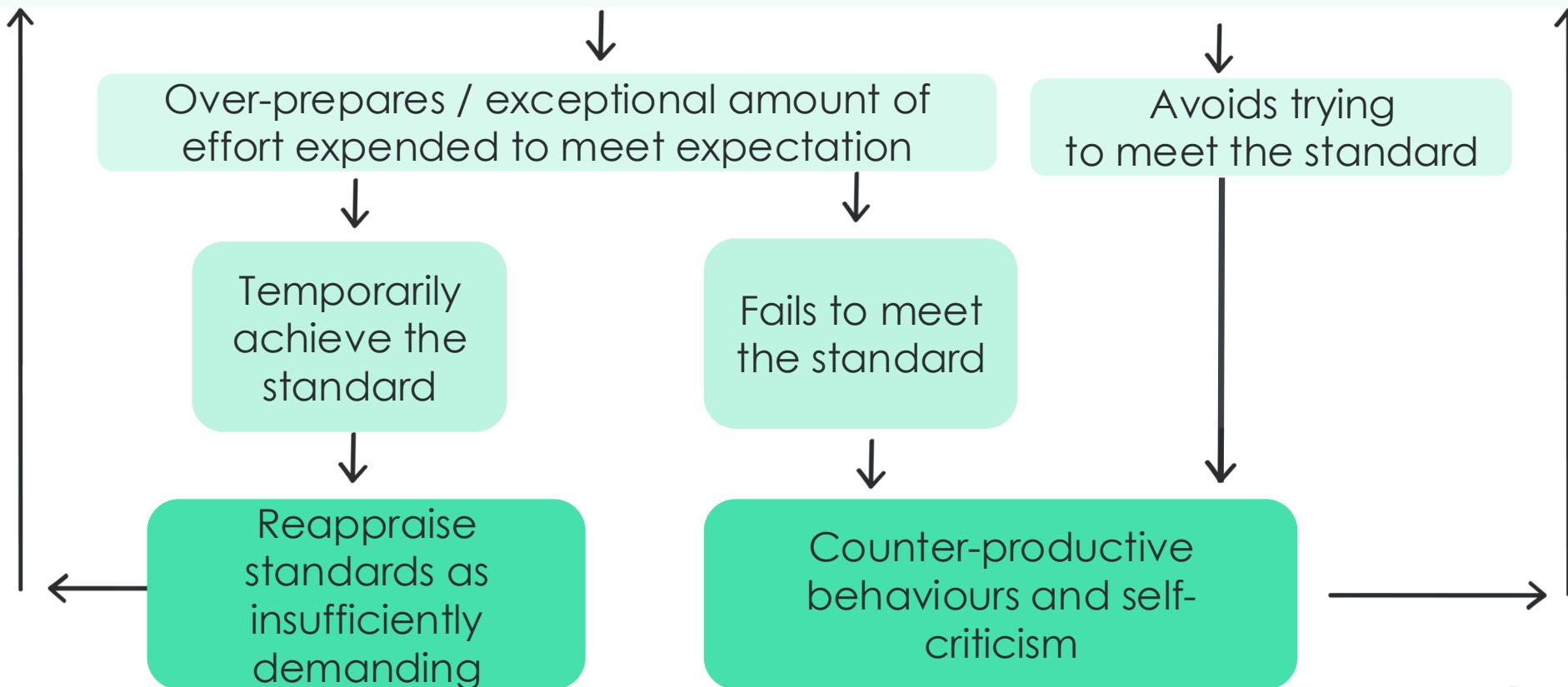
“Perfectionism is the belief that if we live perfect, look perfect and act perfect, we can minimise or avoid the pain of blame, judgement, and shame.”

“Perfectionism is, at its core about trying to earn approval and acceptance.”

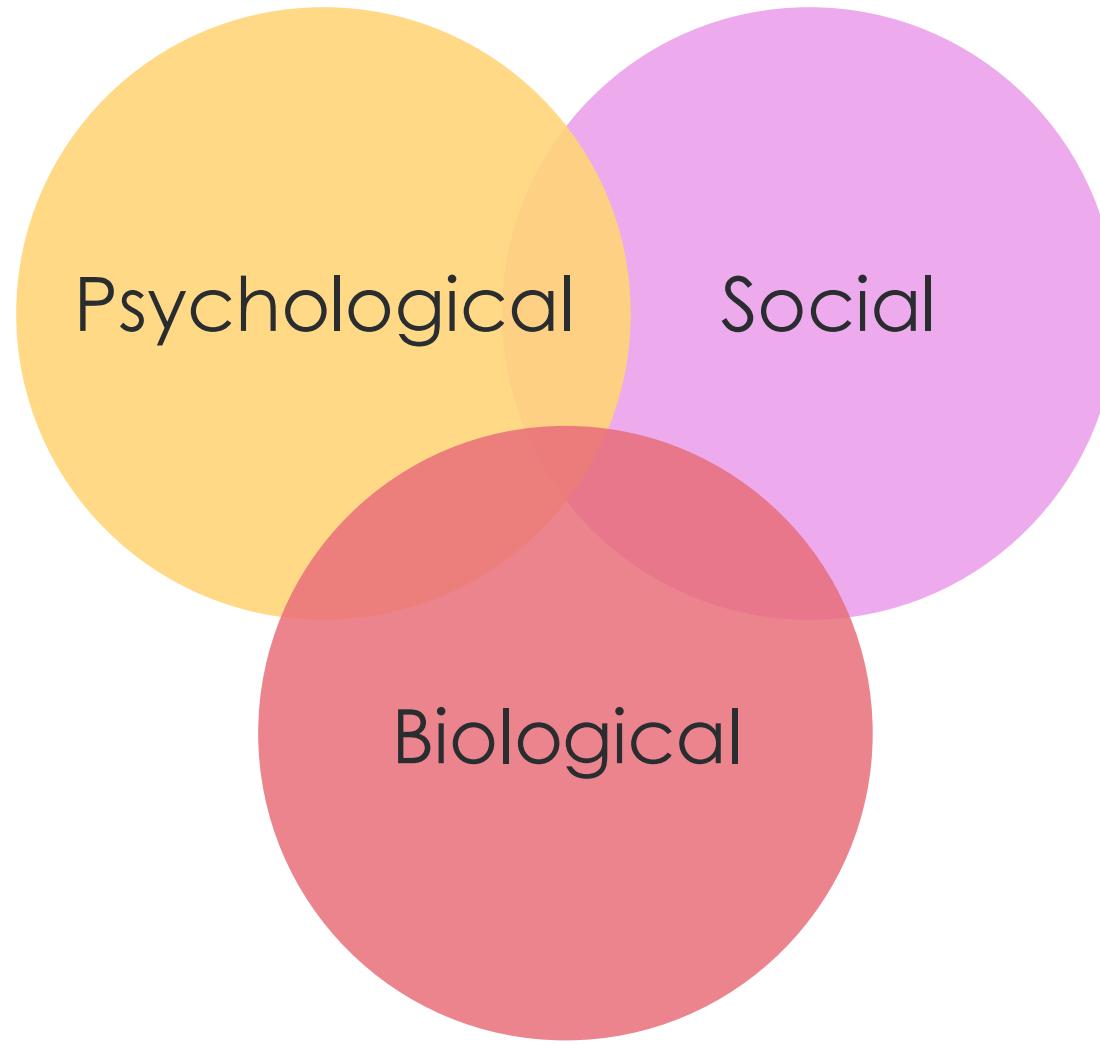
Brenè Brown

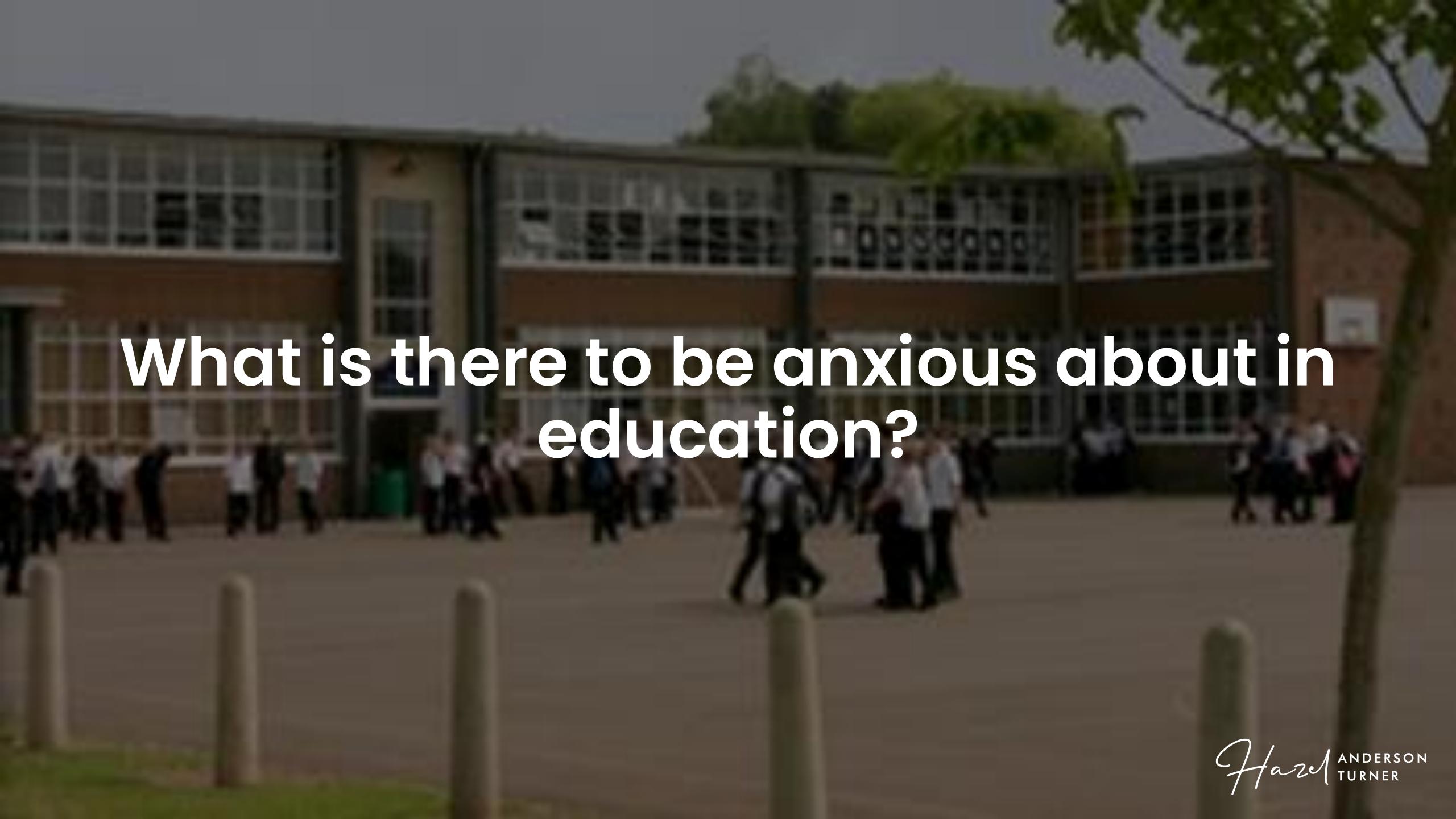
The perfectionist trap

Self-worth overly dependent on achievement of an expected standard
e.g. Excellent teacher, good parent, physically fit.



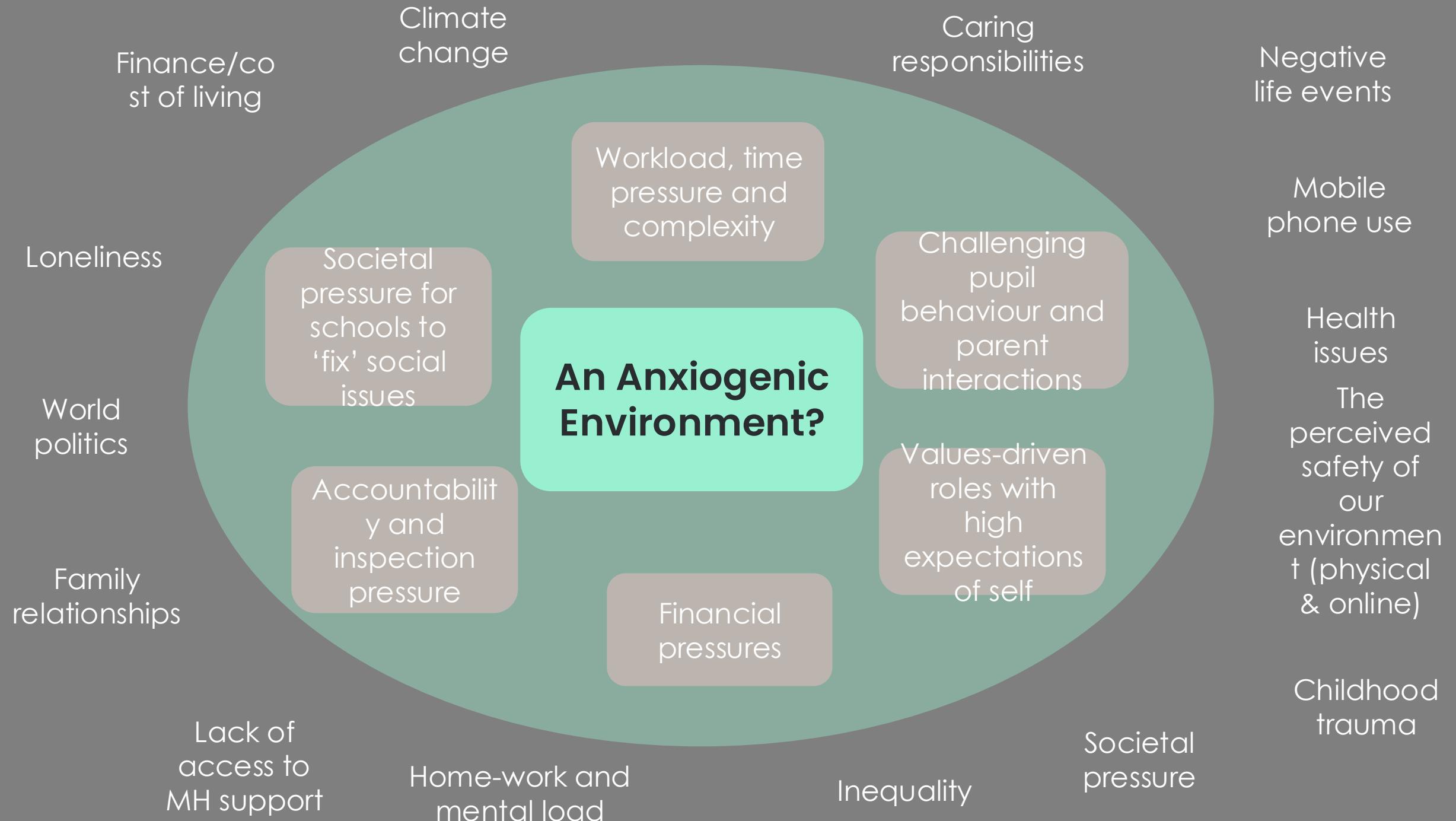
The biopsychosocial model



A blurred background image of a school building with students walking outside.

What is there to be anxious about in
education?

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What anxiety is not

Anxiety is not a personal weakness.

Anxiety is not a sign you're failing.

Anxiety is not something you have to eliminate.

Pairs discussion



How does a healthy level of anxiety help you and your teams in your roles?



What is the impact of sustained and unhelpful anxiety on your staff team?



What could be possible if we had the power to reduce the impact of unhelpful anxiety within the school environment?

**The issue isn't really
about anxiety, it's about
how we try to cope with
the discomfort.**

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Psychological flexibility – from unconscious reacting to consciously responding



Normalise anxiety as our brain's threat-detection system.



Recognise the stories that aren't helpful – anxious thoughts are information, not instructions.



Use present moment awareness to break out of thought spirals.



Notice that anxiety often comes from our values under tension.



Consciously choose what is most important to focus on.



The Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) approach to anxiety

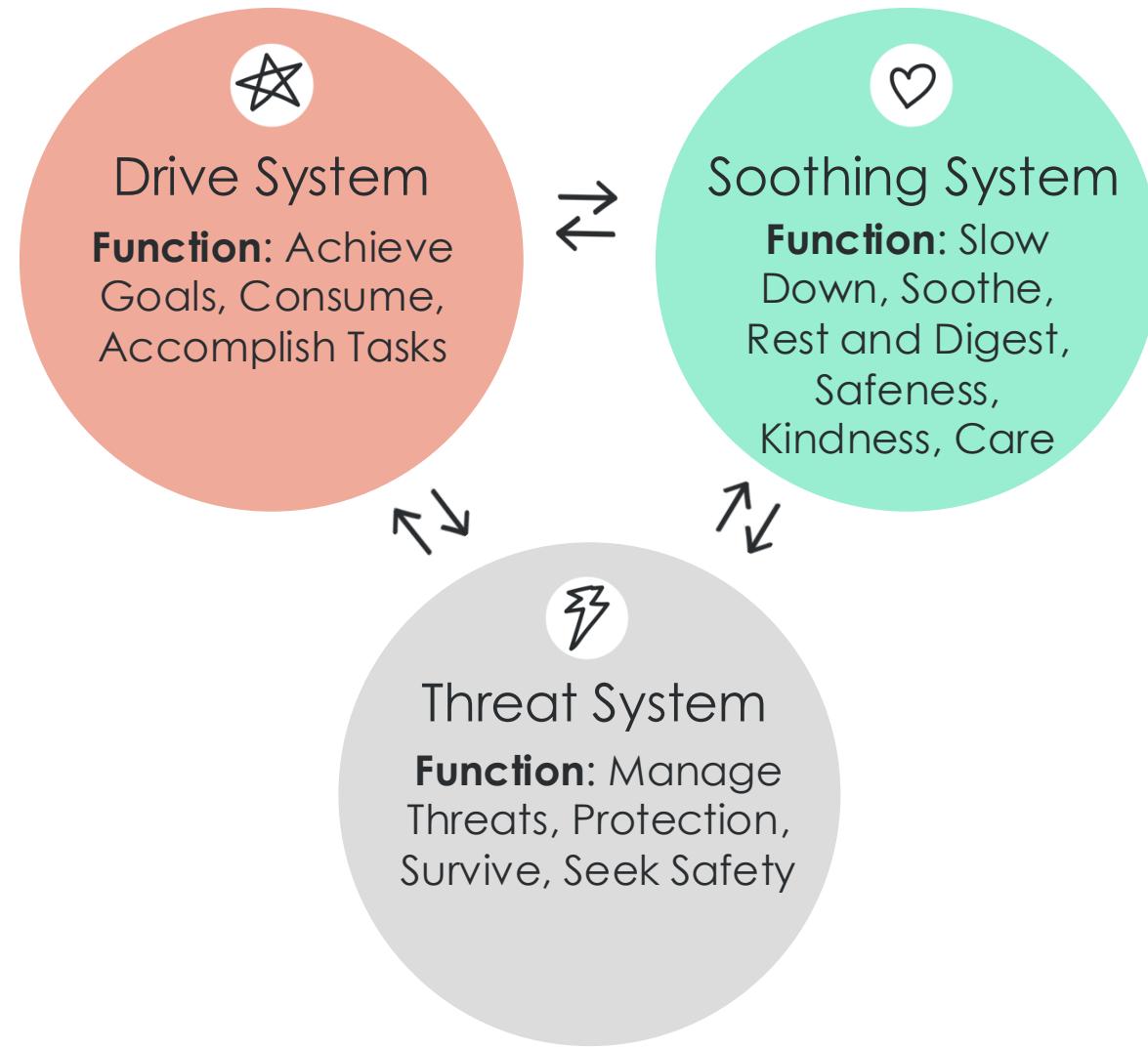
What is compassion?

An acknowledgement of **suffering** in yourself and others



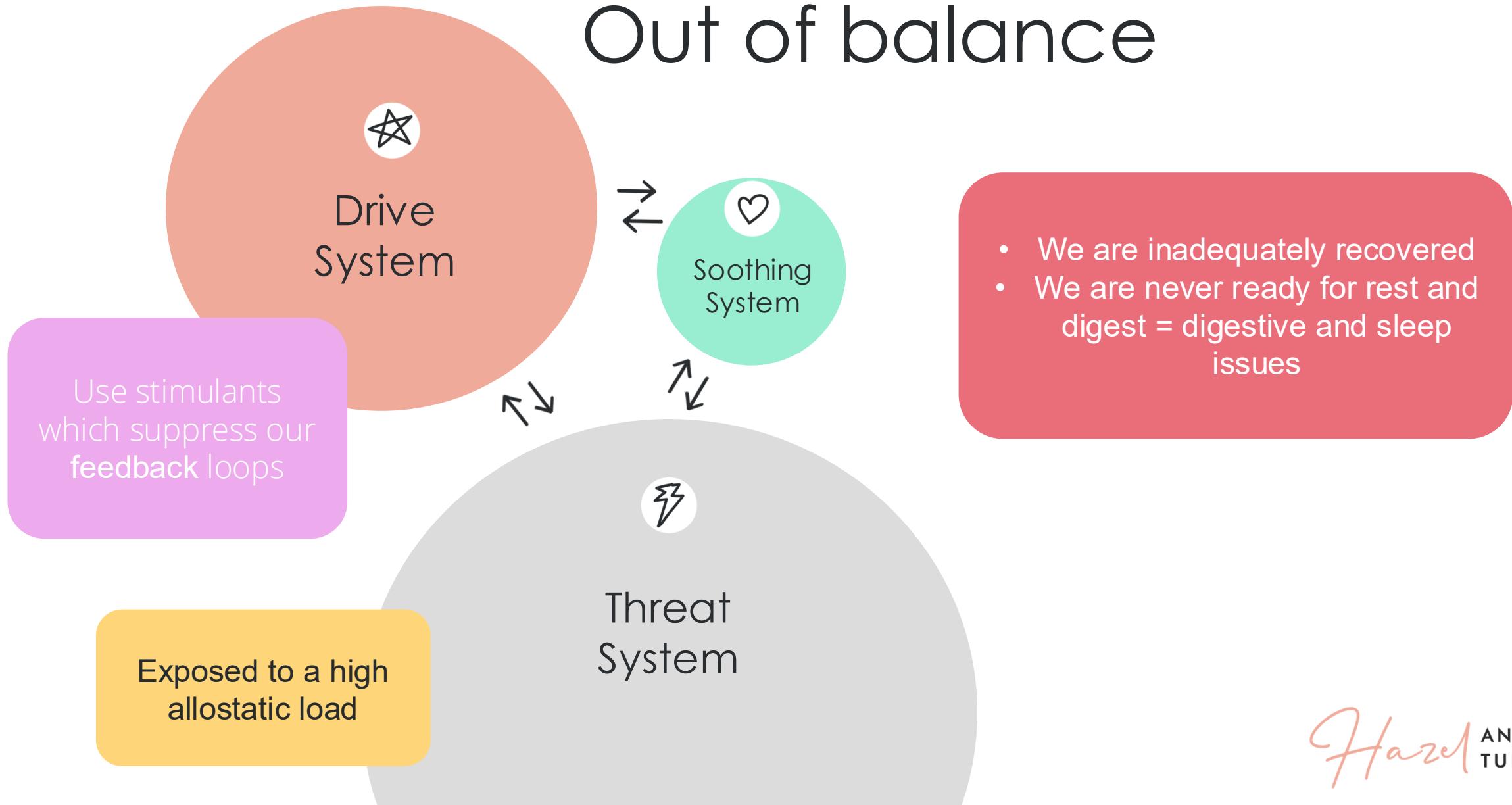
The motivation to take **appropriate action** - grounded in **wisdom** and **courage**

Three Circles of Emotional Regulation

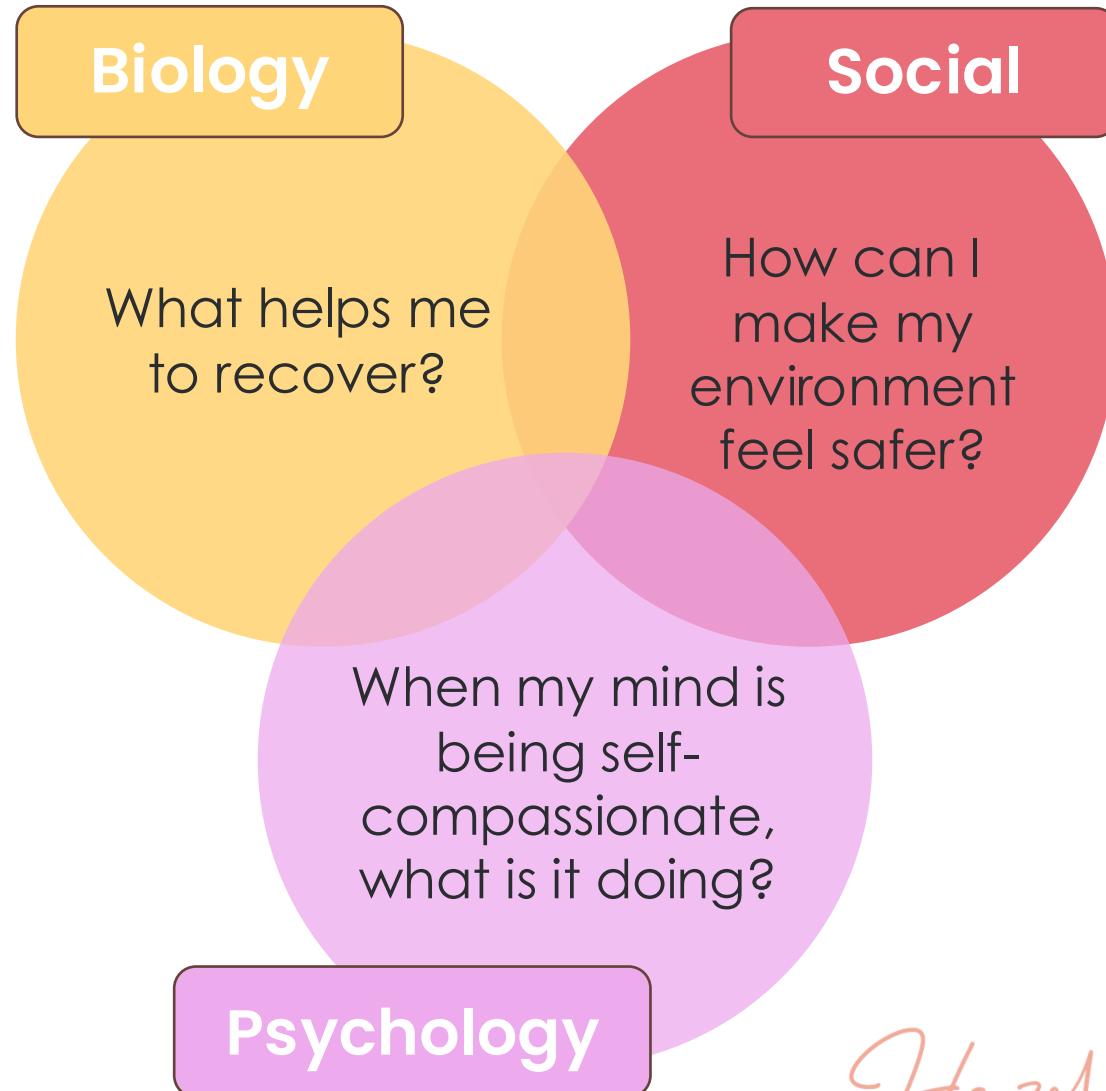


Three Circles of Emotional Regulation

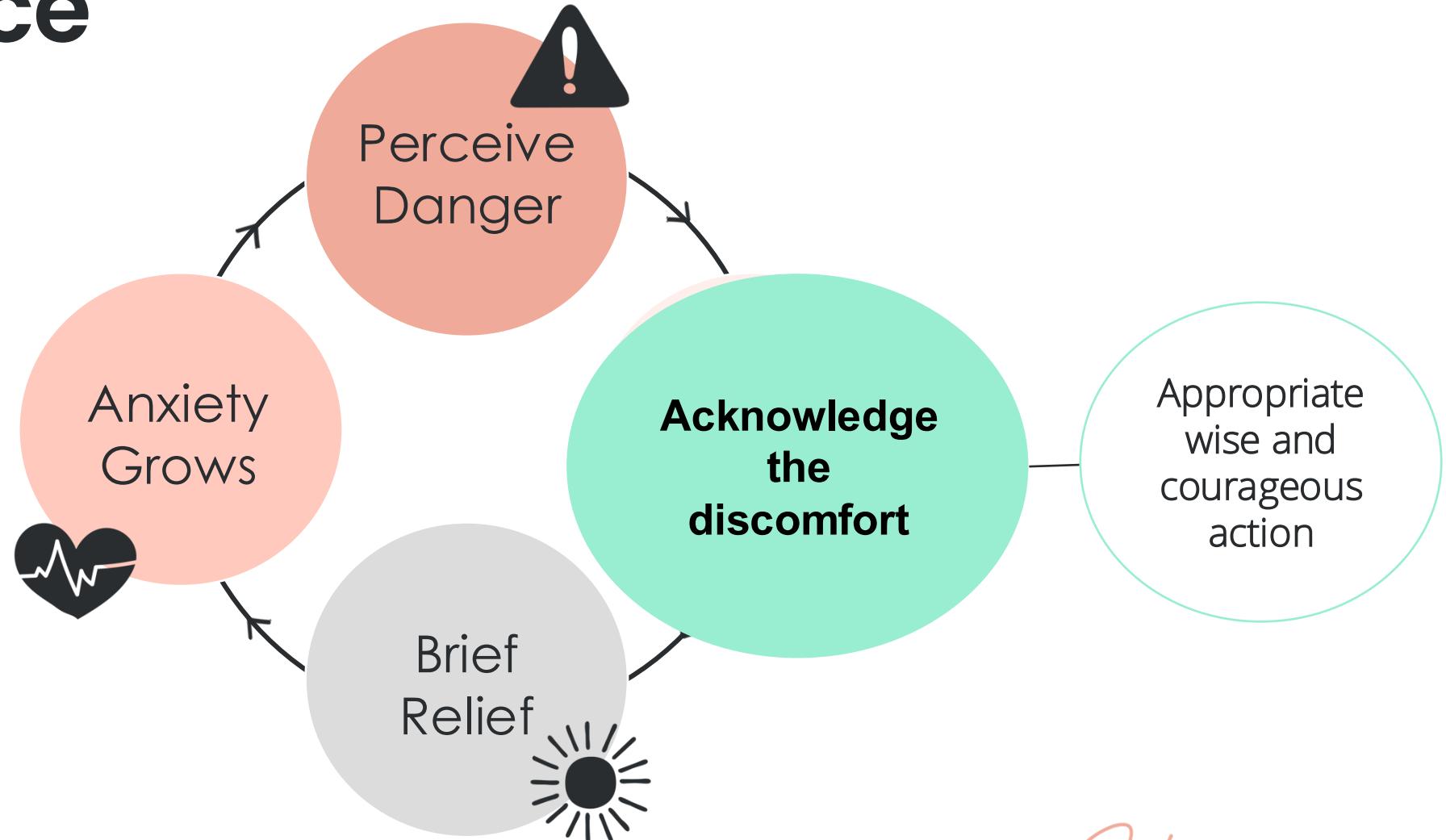
Out of balance



Developing our Soothing System



Compassion as an antidote to avoidance



Do the thing your mind is avoiding

1

Bring to mind something that you are mildly anxious about.

2

Notice how the anxiety shows up in your body.

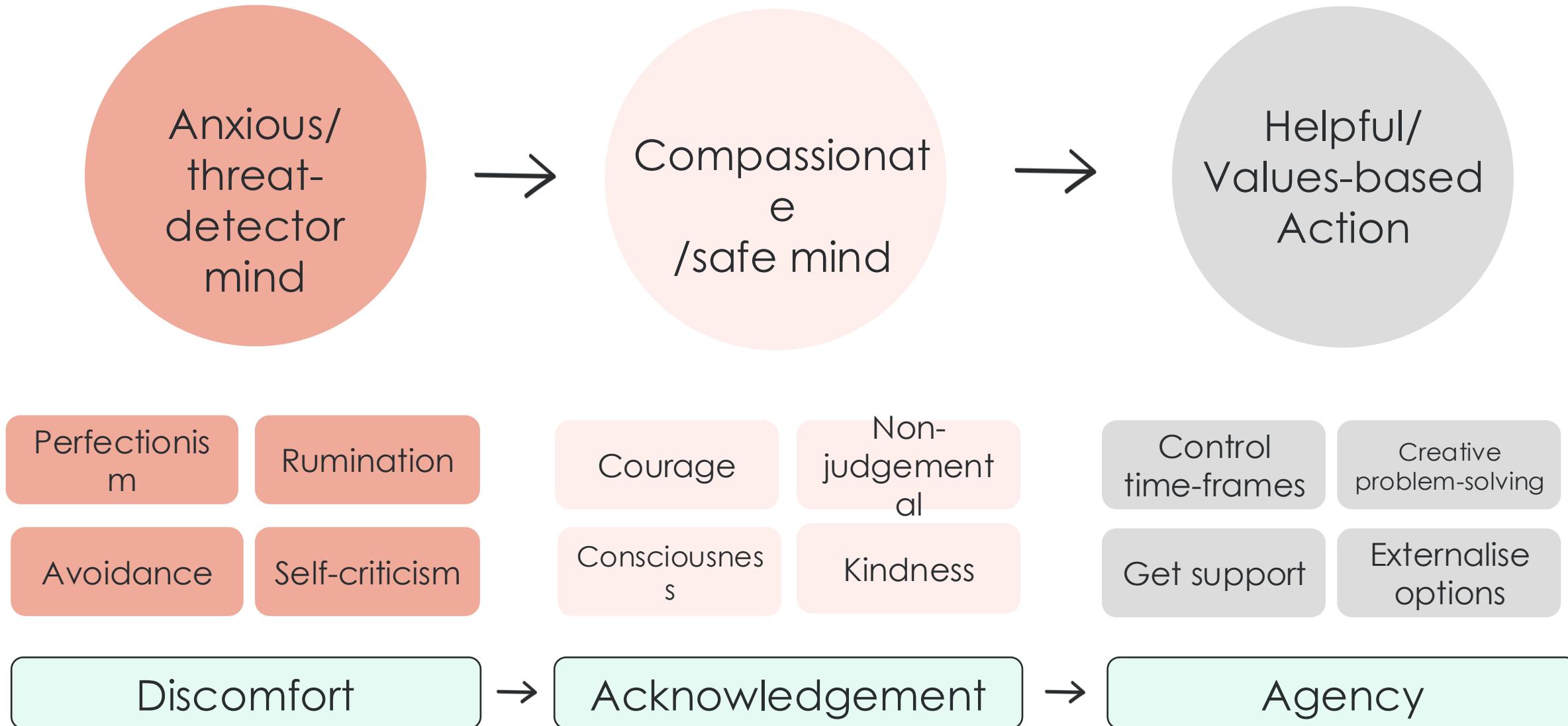
3

Focus your attention on the sensation.

4

Breathe into the area.

From Anxiety to Agency



**What is the anxiety you are carrying
telling you about where compassionate
agency is really needed?**

“

Agency does not require the
absence of anxiety, just the
willingness to act compassionately
in its presence.

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From my bookshelf



For the slides and further information
about my school workshops





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