

The Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being of Young People

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What is adolescence all about

- **Developing sexual maturity**
- **Physical changes**
- **Developing self-image**
- **Uncertainties about the future**
- **Increase in novelty seeking**
- **Increase in social engagement**
- **Increased emotional intensity**
- **Creative exploration with an expanded sense of consciousness**
- **Cutting emotional dependence on parents**



Some Statistics

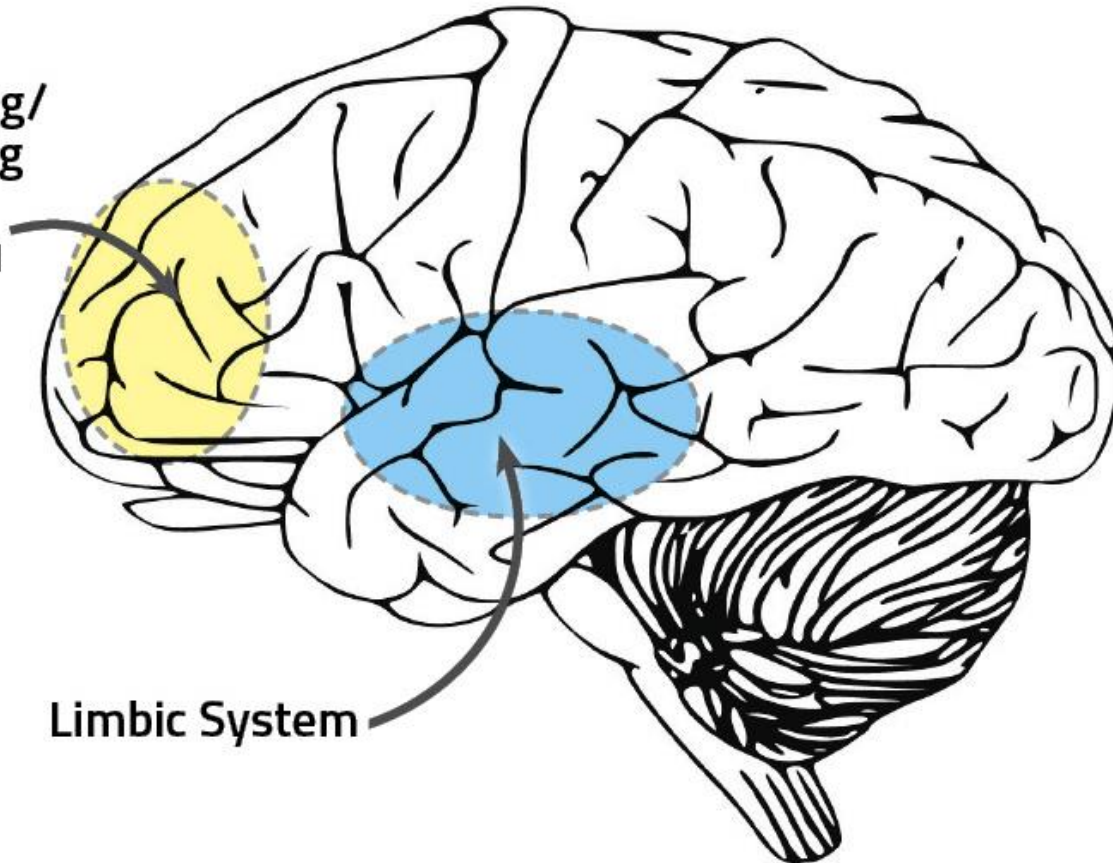
- **50% of mental health problems are established by age 14, and 75% by age 24**
- **1 in 10 or about 850,000 5-16 year olds have a mental health disorder, only about 25% receive any help**
- **Approximately 10% of young people self-harm**
- **1 in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year**
- **In the 1960s depression was most commonly diagnosed in people aged 49-51. Recent studies show that the age has dropped to 13-15**
- **In 2016 the UK charity Childwise stated that “Children between the ages of 5–16 spend 6.5 hours a day on computers/devices”**



The Human Brain

**Learning/
Thinking
Brain**
(Prefrontal
Cortex)

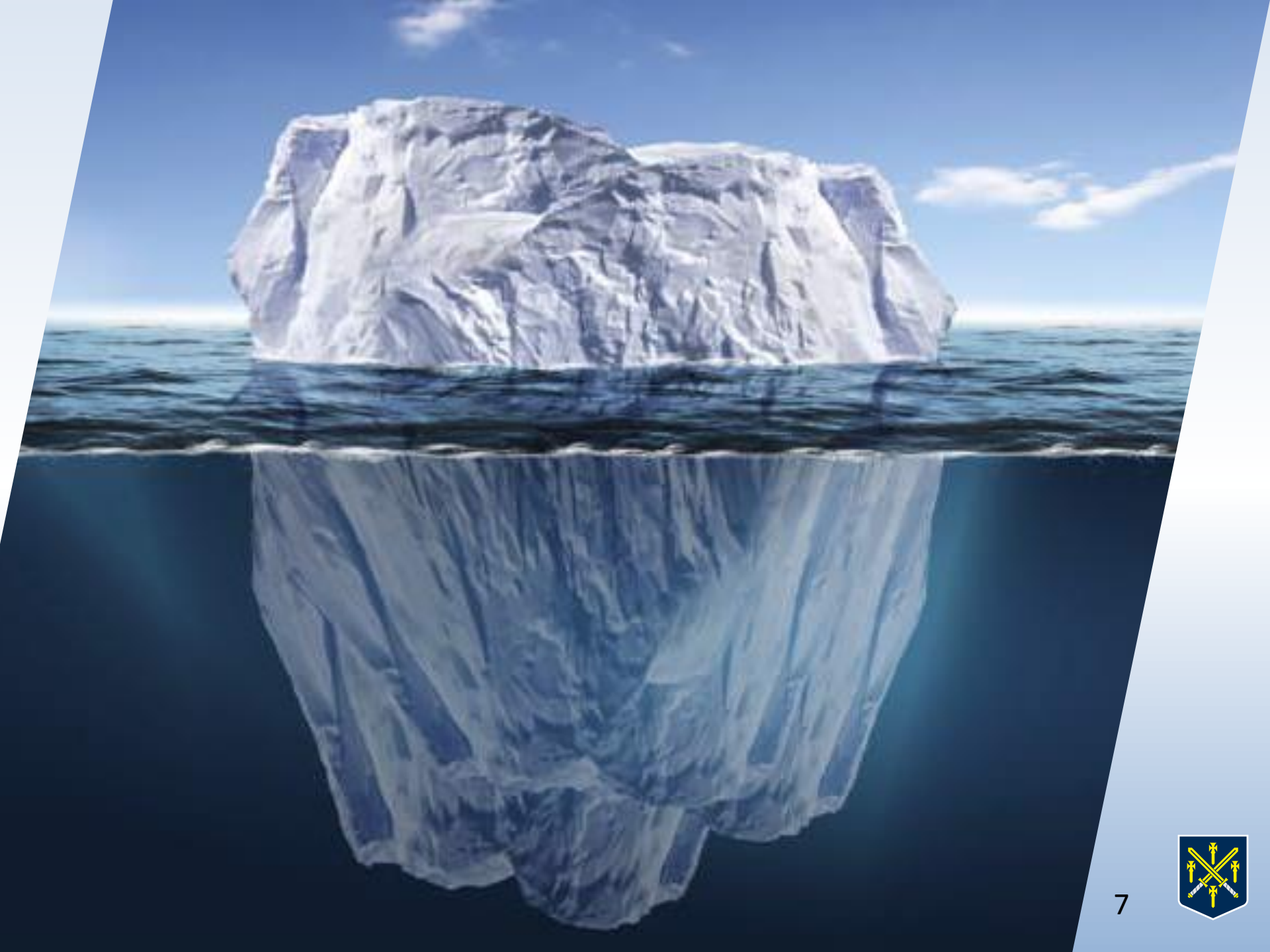
Limbic System



Mental Health Issues

- **Anger**
- **Anxiety**
- **Attachment difficulties**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Depression**
- **Stress**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Loss and Bereavement**
- **Relationship/family issues**
- **Self harm**
- **Sleep problems**
- **Suicidal thoughts**







Get your feet off!
How many times do I have to tell
you?

Why aren't you doing your
homework - I've told you twice

How many times do I have to
ask you to use a plate?

Put that mess in the bin







'Even when things are wonderful I'm always waiting for something horrible to happen.' **Lindsay Ballard**





Why are Young People Anxious

- **Pressure from parents, school, peers, society, themselves**
- **Perfectionism**
- **High expectations**
- **Technology**
- **Overly protective parenting/risk averse culture**
- **Too much choice**
- **Not enough true 'down' time**



Emotional Regulation Systems









Warning Signs of Depression

- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Feeling hopeless and helpless**
- **Dwelling on negative thoughts**
- **Lost appetite or eating much more than usual**
- **Much more irritable, short tempered or aggressive than usual**
- **Withdrawn, isolated**
- **Using drugs or alcohol or other reckless behaviour**
- **Sleep problems**



What Fans the Flames of Anger? or What Not to Do!

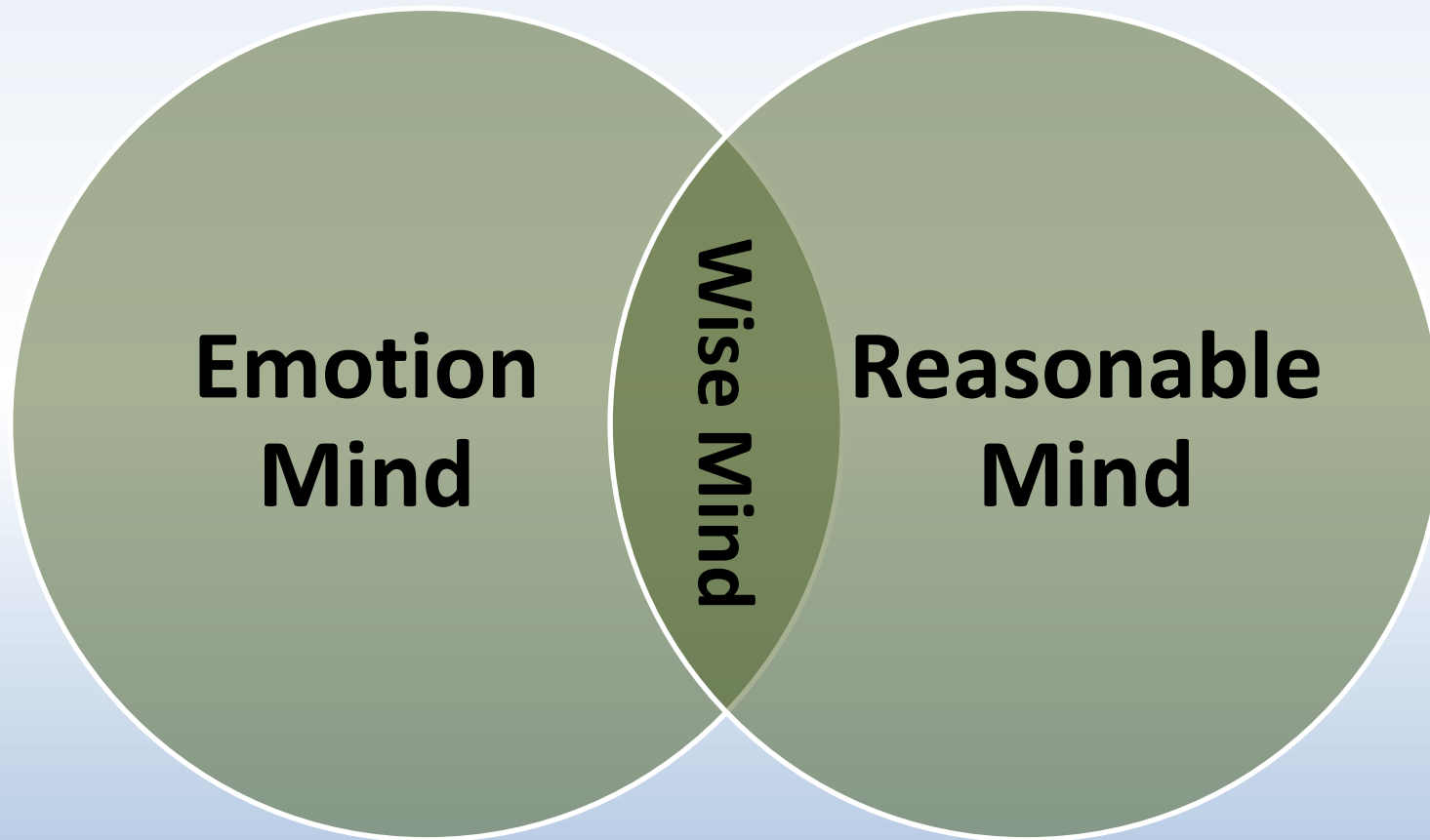
- **The 3 'S's': Shouting, Screaming and Swearing**
- **Pointing and using aggressive body language**
- **Getting in another person's space**
- **Interrupting**
- **Name-calling**
- **Laughing, making fun or sarcasm**
- **Staring aggressively**
- **Making threats**



Ideas for Calming Down

- Take time out and do something relaxing
- Breathe deeply 5 times, focusing on nothing but your breathing
- Count backwards in units of seven
- Repeat to yourself 'I can deal with this' or 'this feeling will pass'
- Distract yourself
- Exercise vigorously
- Punch a cushion
- Walk away from the problem (6 seconds can be enough)
- Think calming thoughts ('green' thoughts as opposed to 'red' thoughts)





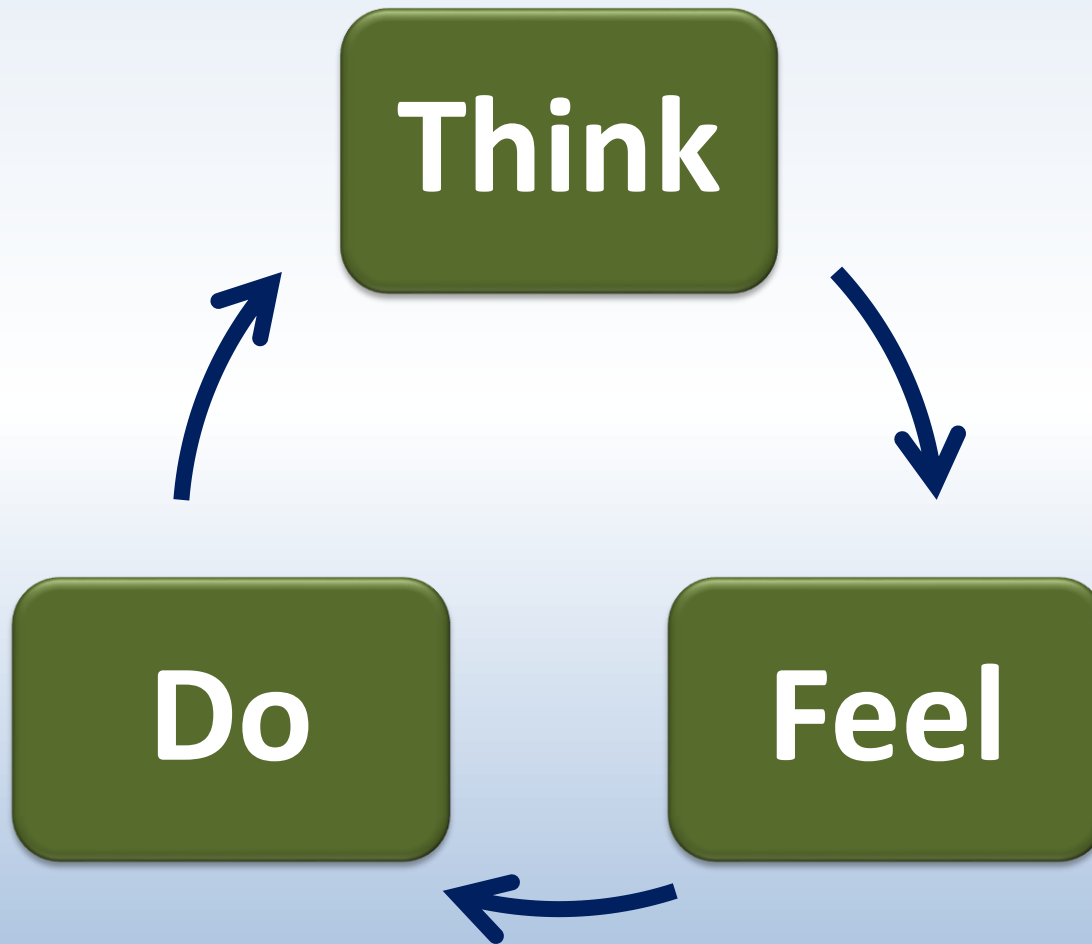


Screen Time/Social Media

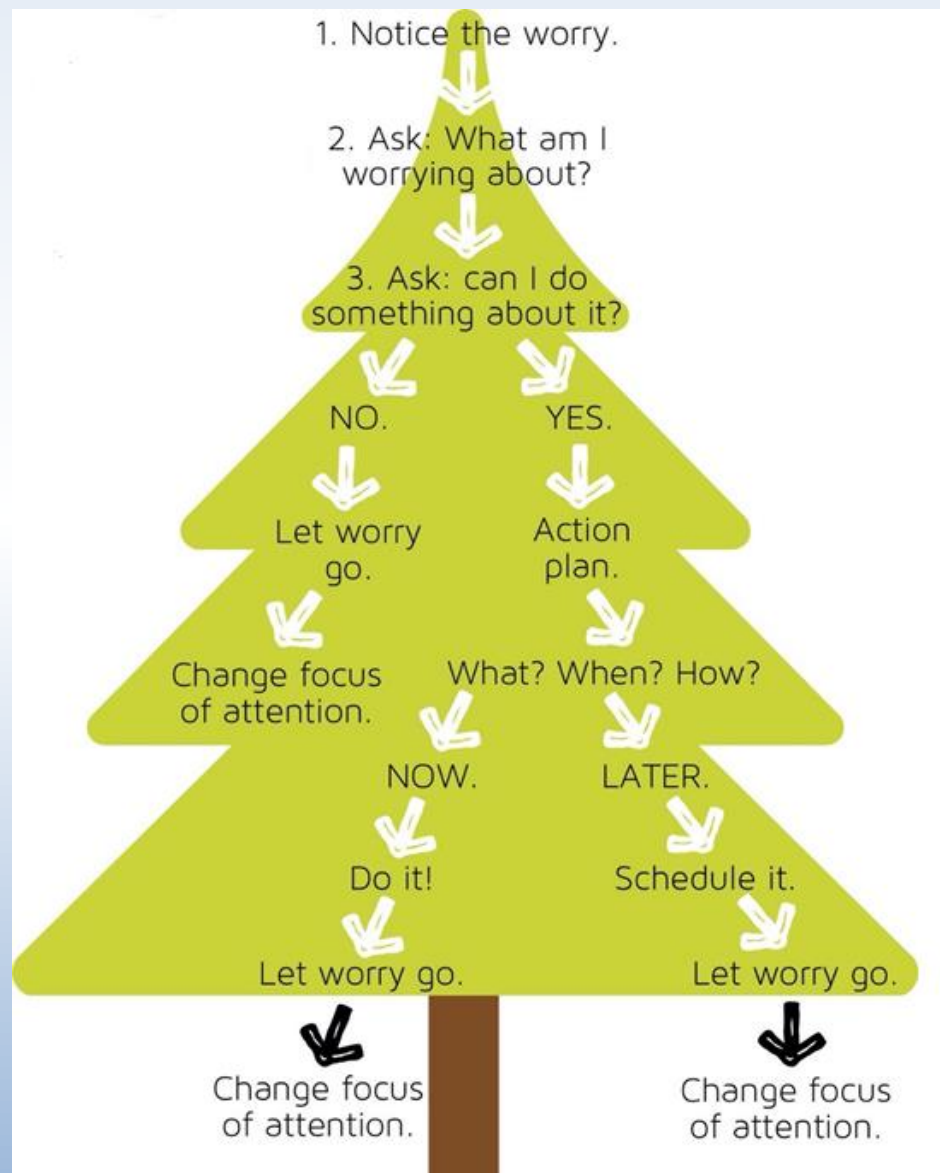
- Amount of time/addictive qualities
- Inappropriate images and information
- Comparing yourself to others
- Cyberbullying
- Selfie culture
- Lack of face-to-face communication
- Difficulties between reality and fiction
- Online grooming
- Access to comments that may be extremist, offensive, hateful
- Not enough sleep
- Don't forget the positives

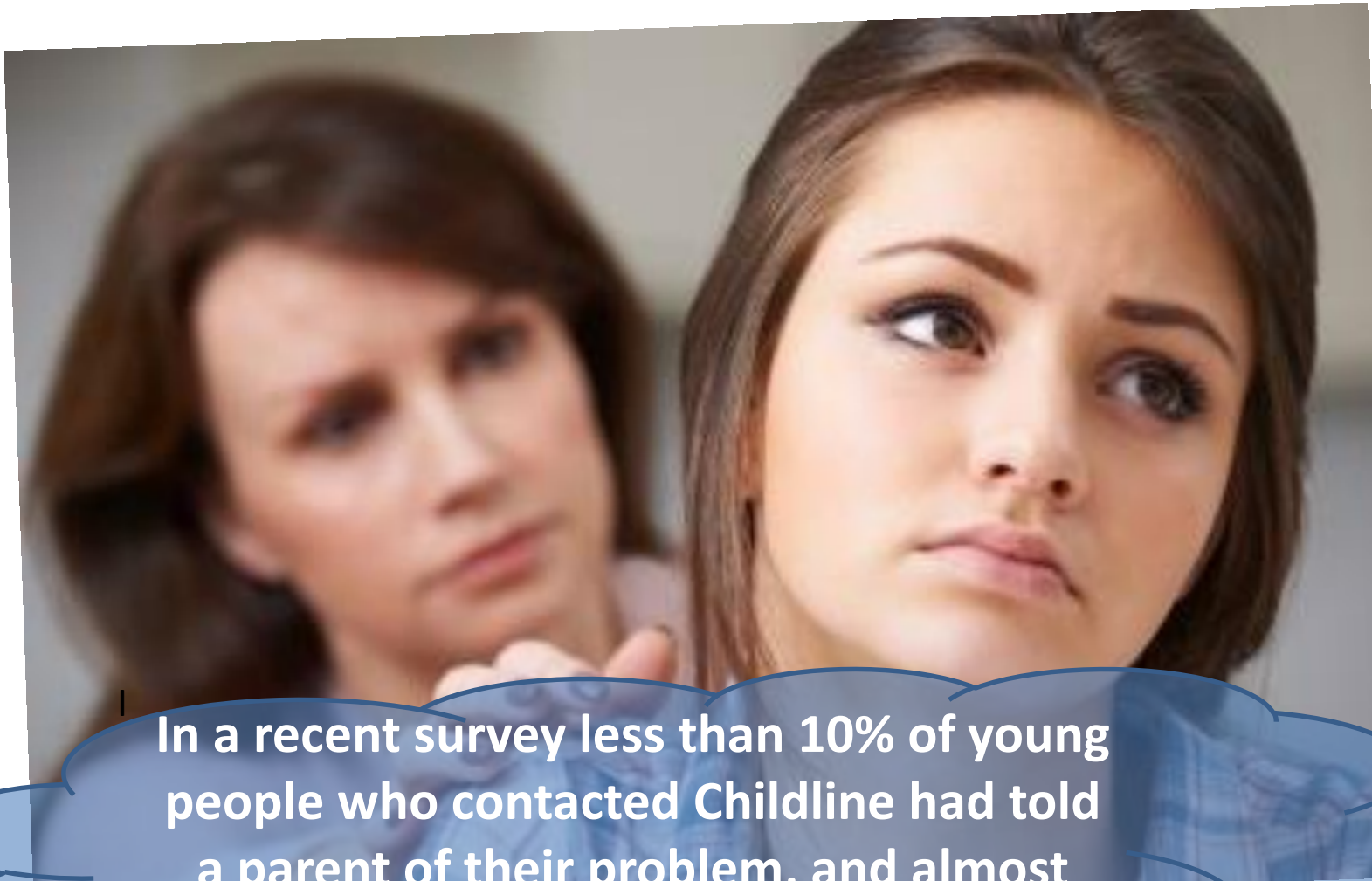


The CBT Vicious Circle



The Worry Tree





In a recent survey less than 10% of young people who contacted Childline had told a parent of their problem, and almost half had told nobody.

What Can We Do

- **Keep communicating**
- **Validate their feelings, by listening, really listening**
- **Don't judge. Being judgemental is one of the most toxic behaviours**
- **Respond, don't react**
- **Give them your time, be emotionally available**
- **Don't bear grudges**
- **Be aware that negative remarks have 3 times the impact of positive**



What Can We Do

- **Maintain boundaries, but do try to be flexible**
- **Try to not always have the last word!**
- **Use the 'Random Gift' trick**
- **Buck the trend - children hear about 8 times as many negative comments as positive from their parents every day**
- **Help them have healthy sleep patterns, eating habits, take enough exercise, learn relaxation techniques**



What Can We Do

- **Practice Acceptance - 'Love your child for who they are, not for who you want them to be'**
- **Be forgiving**
- **Maintain perspective. They will soon be grown up and no longer your responsibility**



