



Dorset
Mental
Health
Support
Team in
Schools



Dorset HealthCare
University
NHS Foundation Trust



Supporting Young People with Exam Stress

MHST North and East Dorset



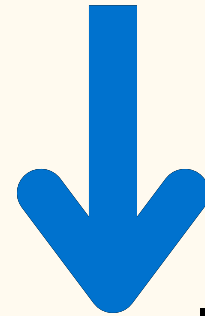
What is
the
MHST?



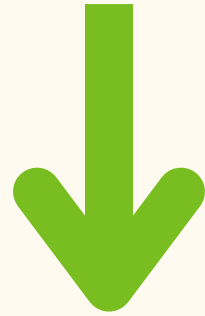
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Threat identified (real or perceived)



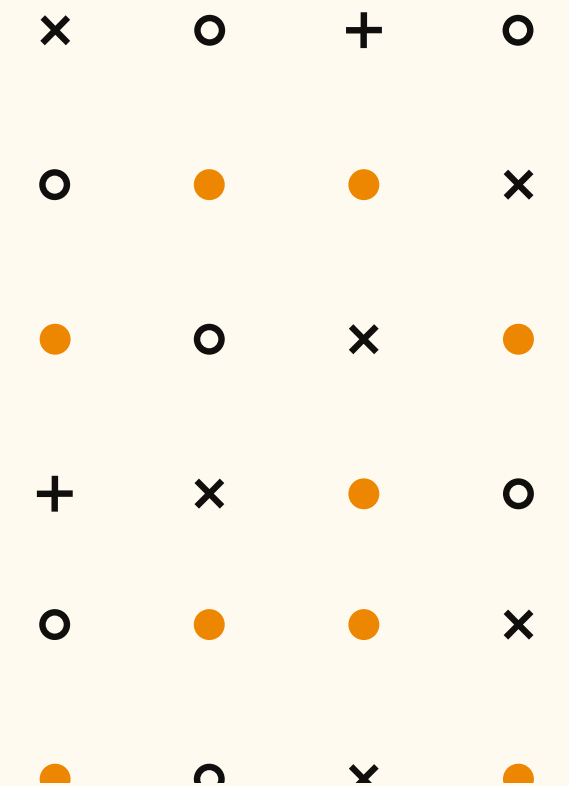
Release of adrenaline and cortisol

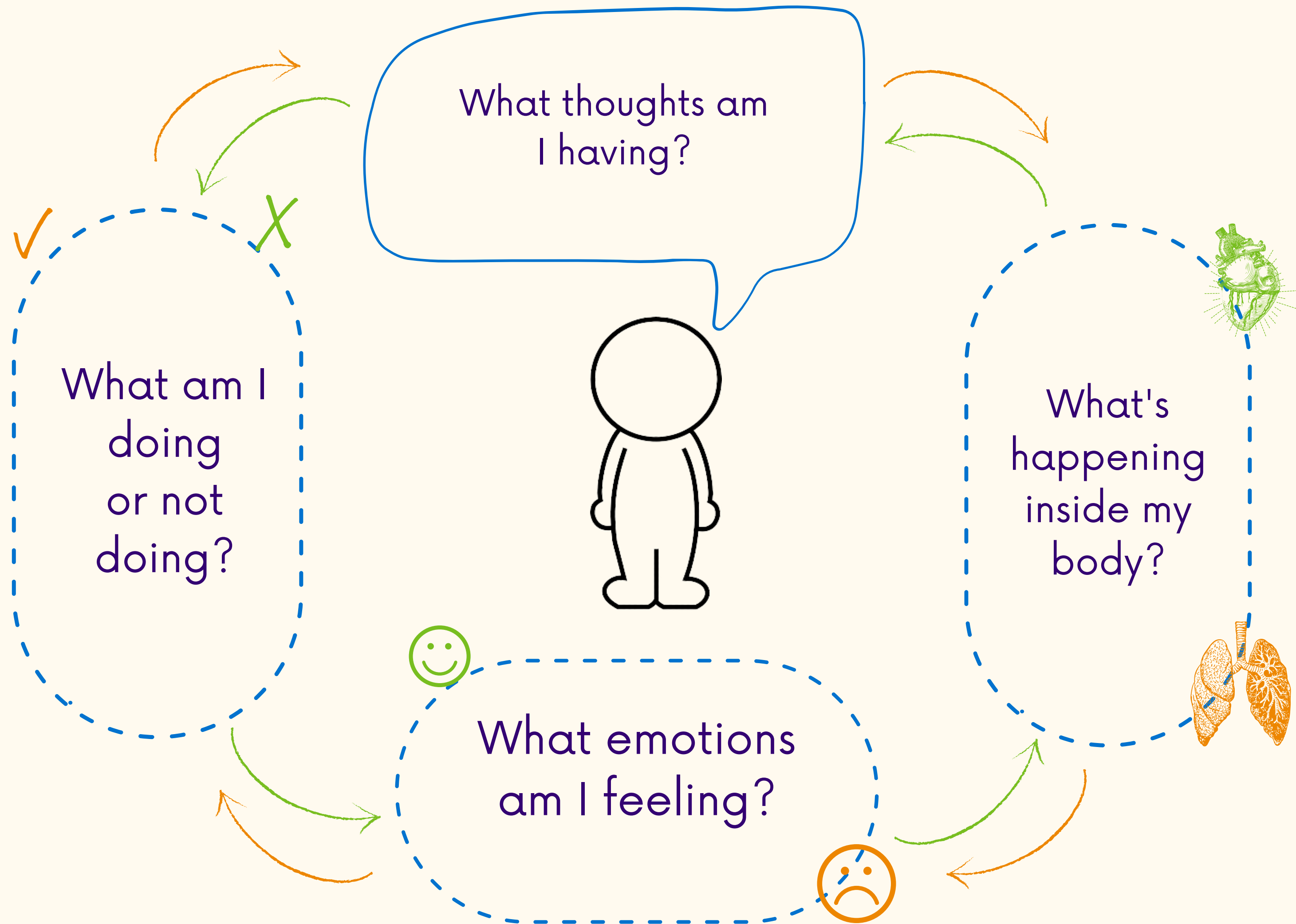


Physical reactions (e.g: increased heartrate, sweaty palms, headaches)

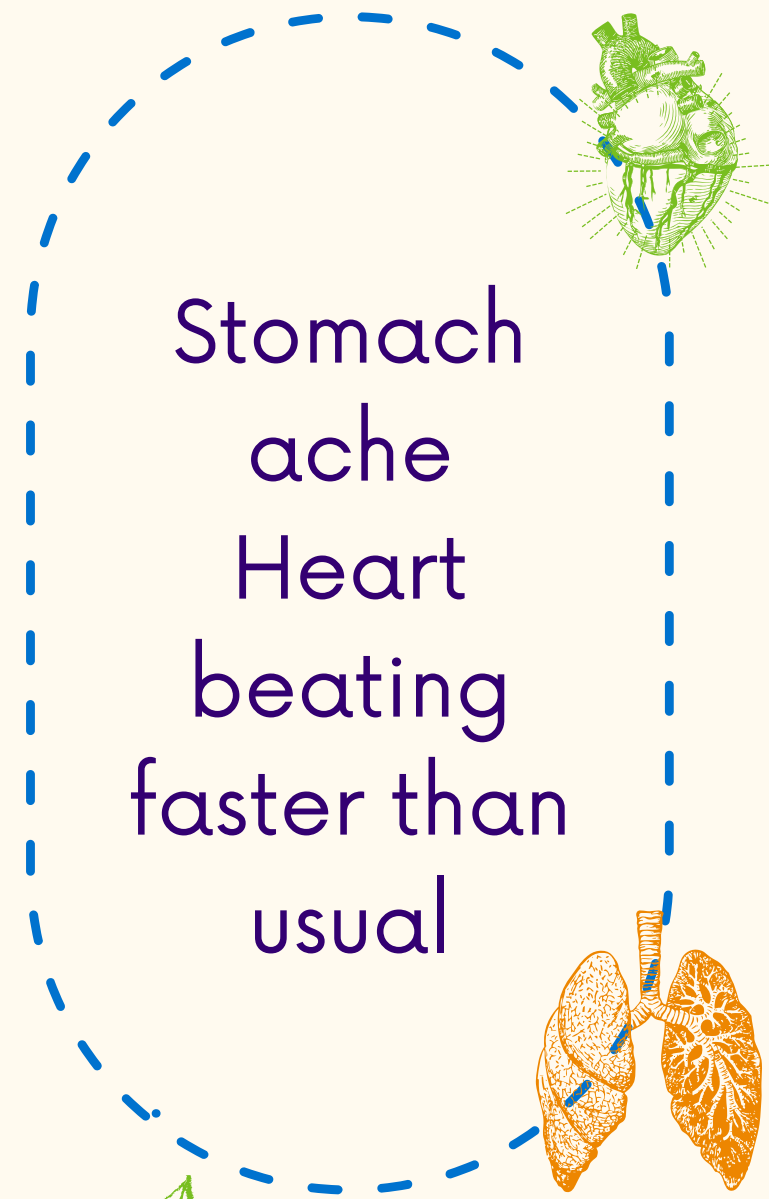
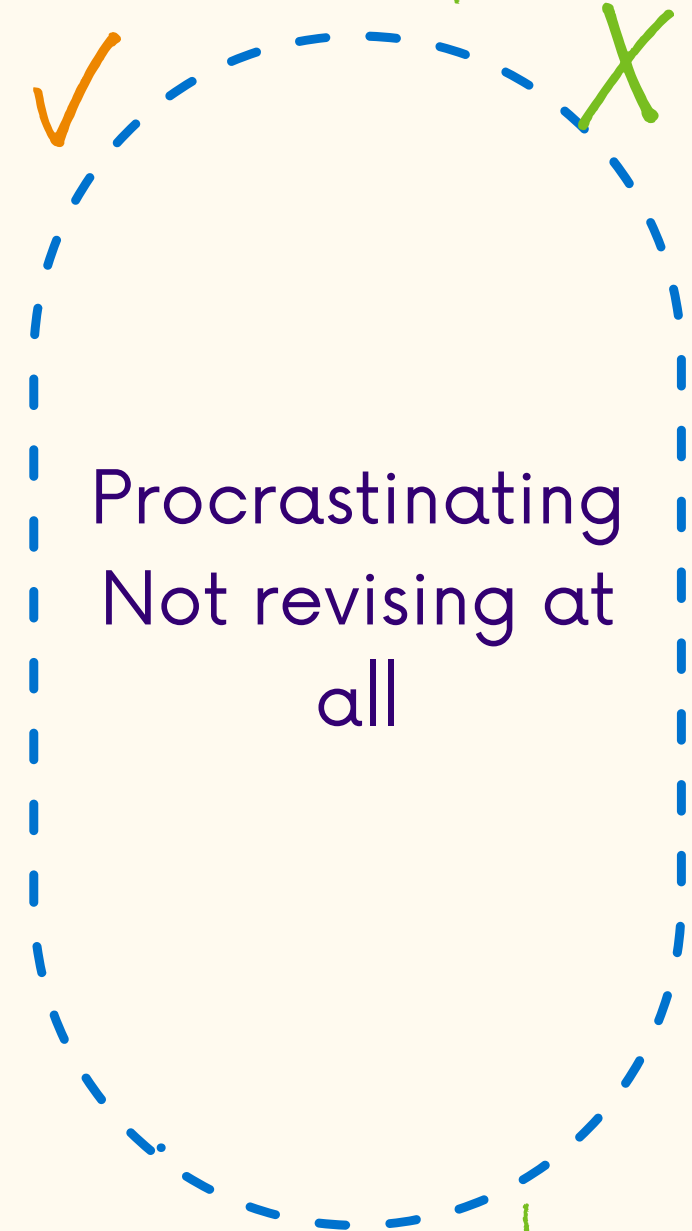
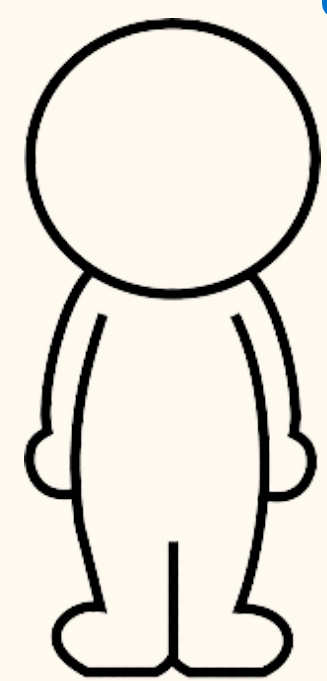


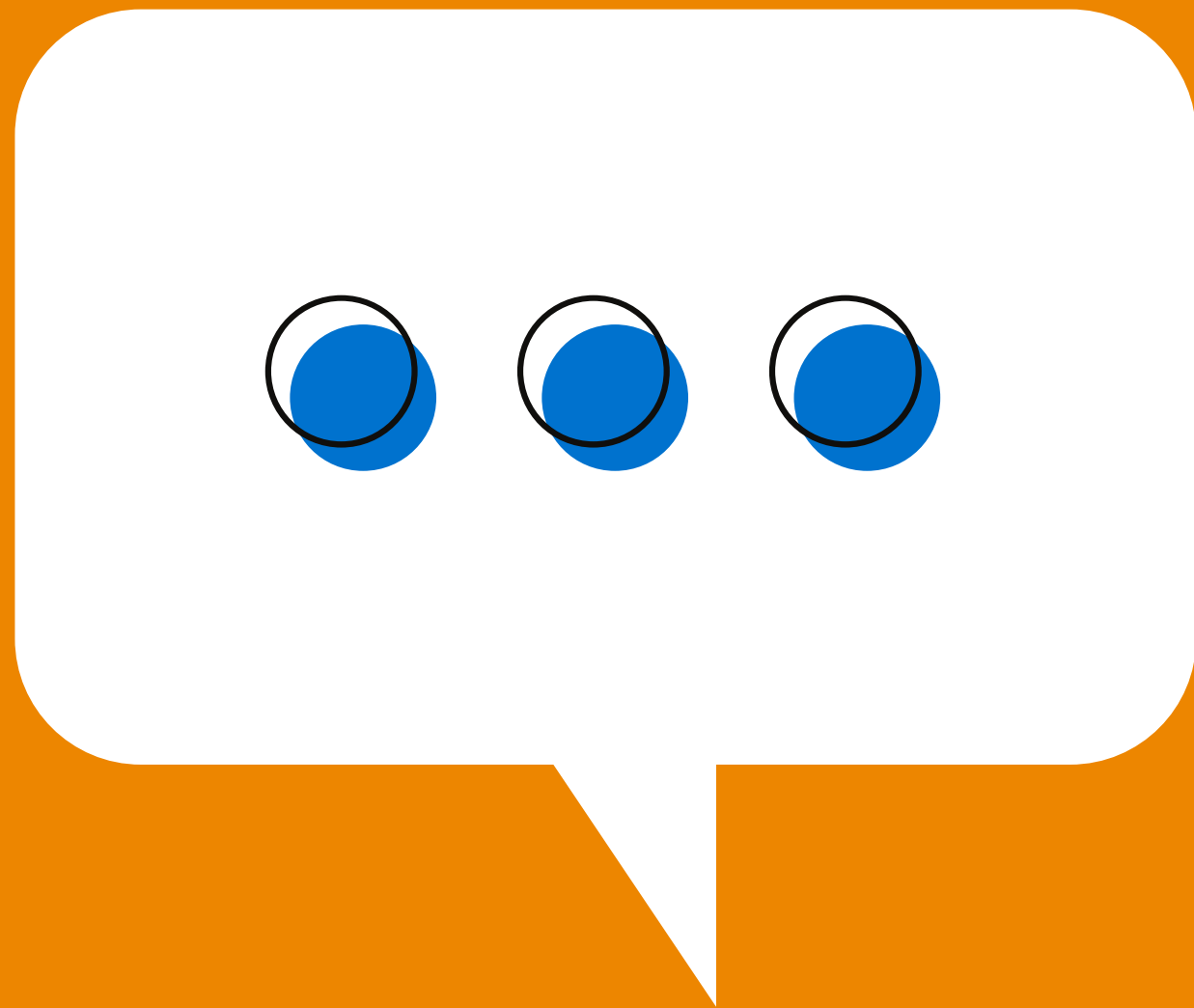
"I feel stressed!"





'I need to revise for my exams, but there is so much to learn'





What are the
signs of stress?

Feeling
on edge

Procrastination

Caffeine intake (lots of
energy drinks, coffee and
cola)

Changes in appetite
(not eating or eating
too much)

Exhausted or
very tired
Lack of
motivation and
energy

Skin flare
ups

Trouble
Concentrating

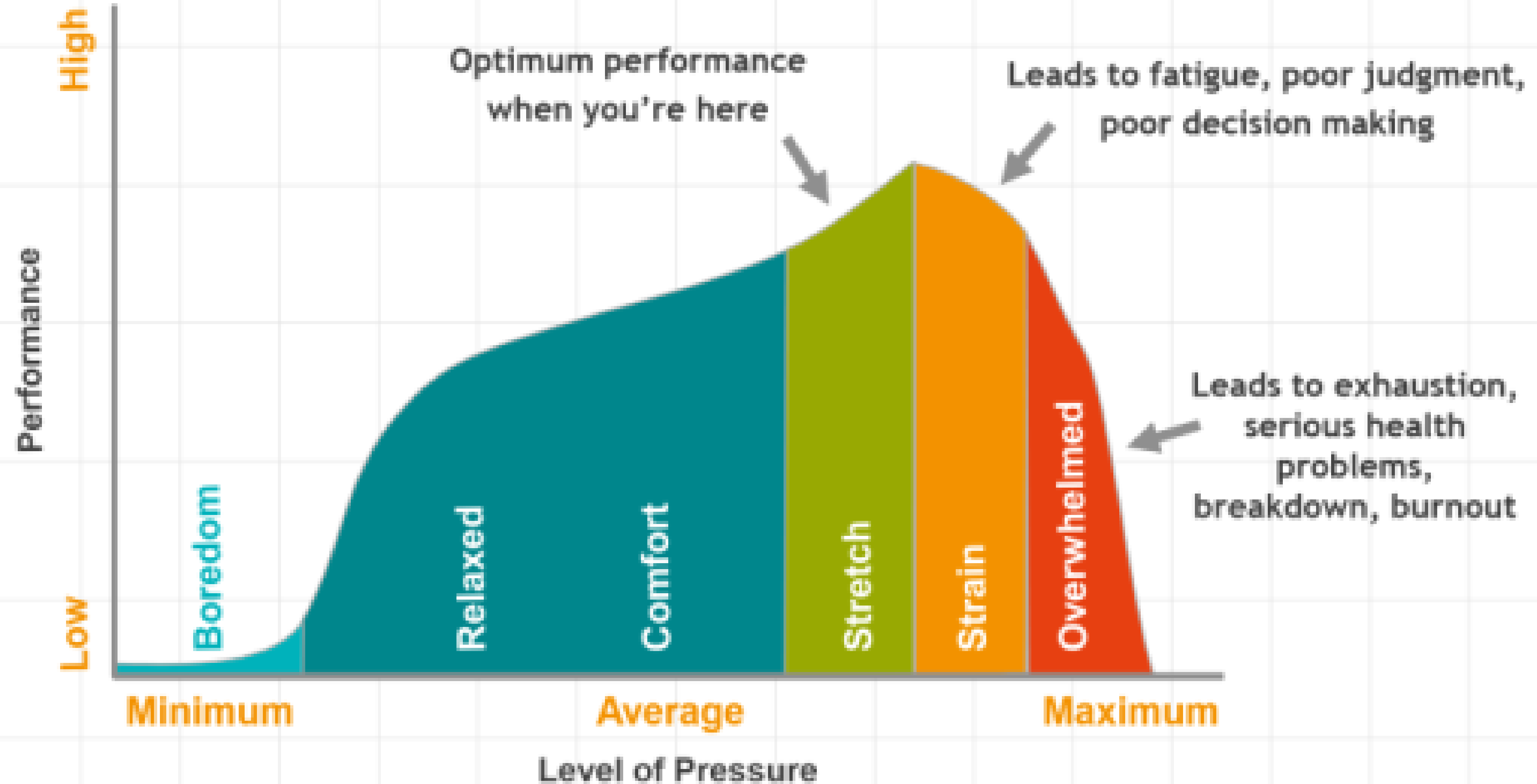
Disorganised

Irritability
and mood
swinds

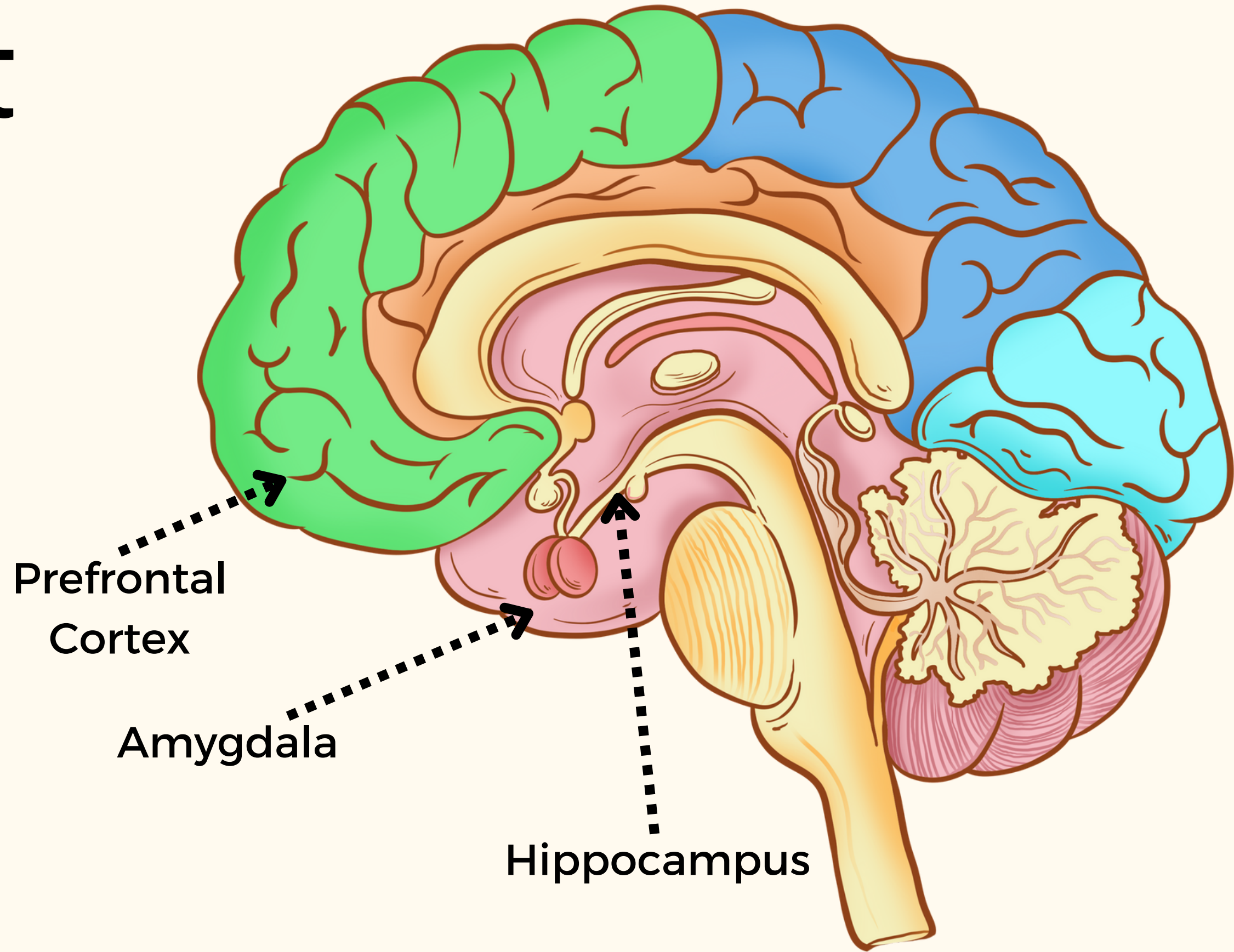
Self-medicating (alcohol,
smoking, recreational
drugs, binge watching)

changes to
sleep -
less/more

Is there a helpful amount of stress?



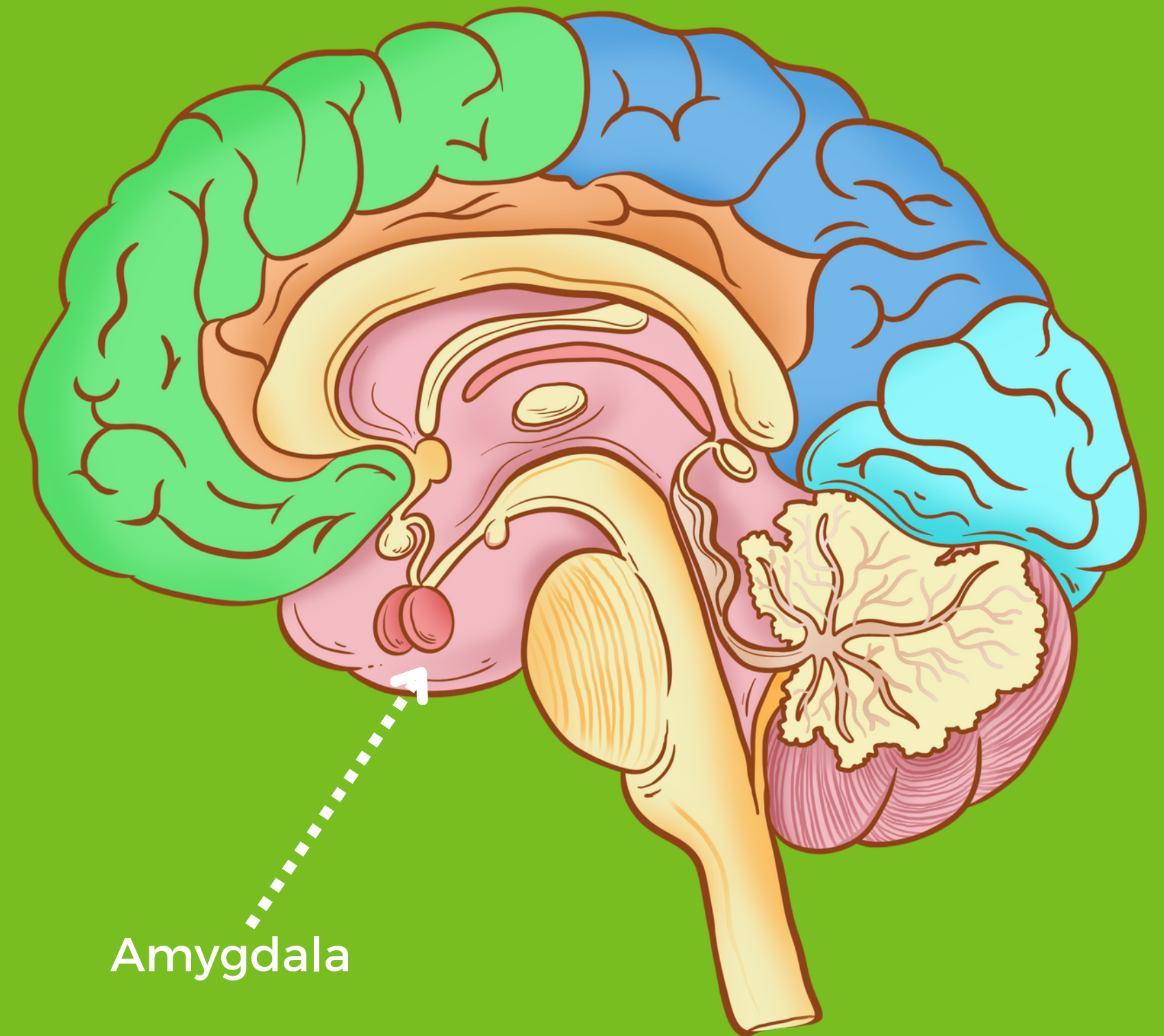
The different parts of the brain



Amygdala

Significance:

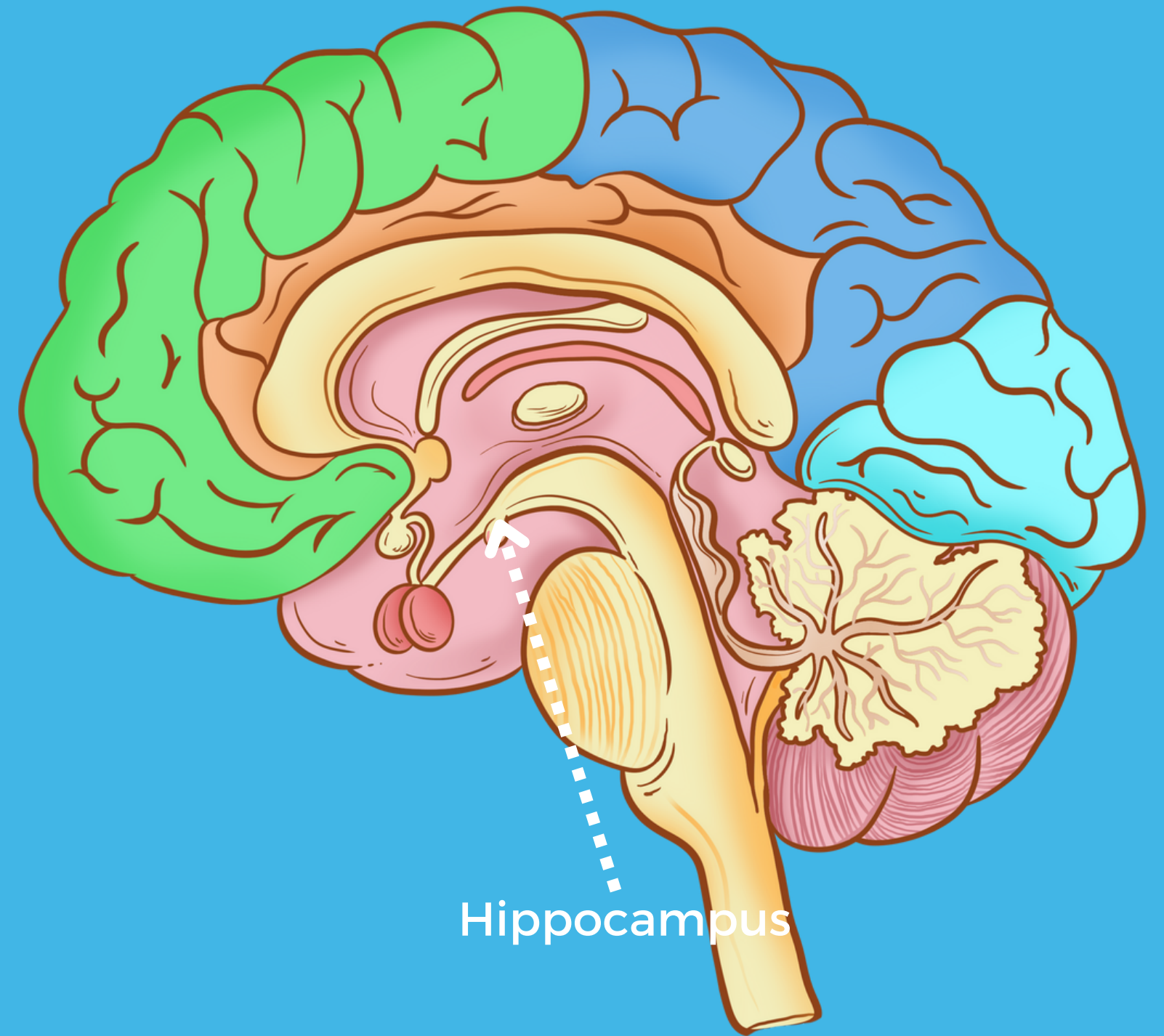
- Detects threat,
- constantly surveying
- picks out threat and sends signals to the rest of the body
- This area is particularly responsible for:
 - Fight
 - Flight
 - Freeze



Hippocampus

Significance:

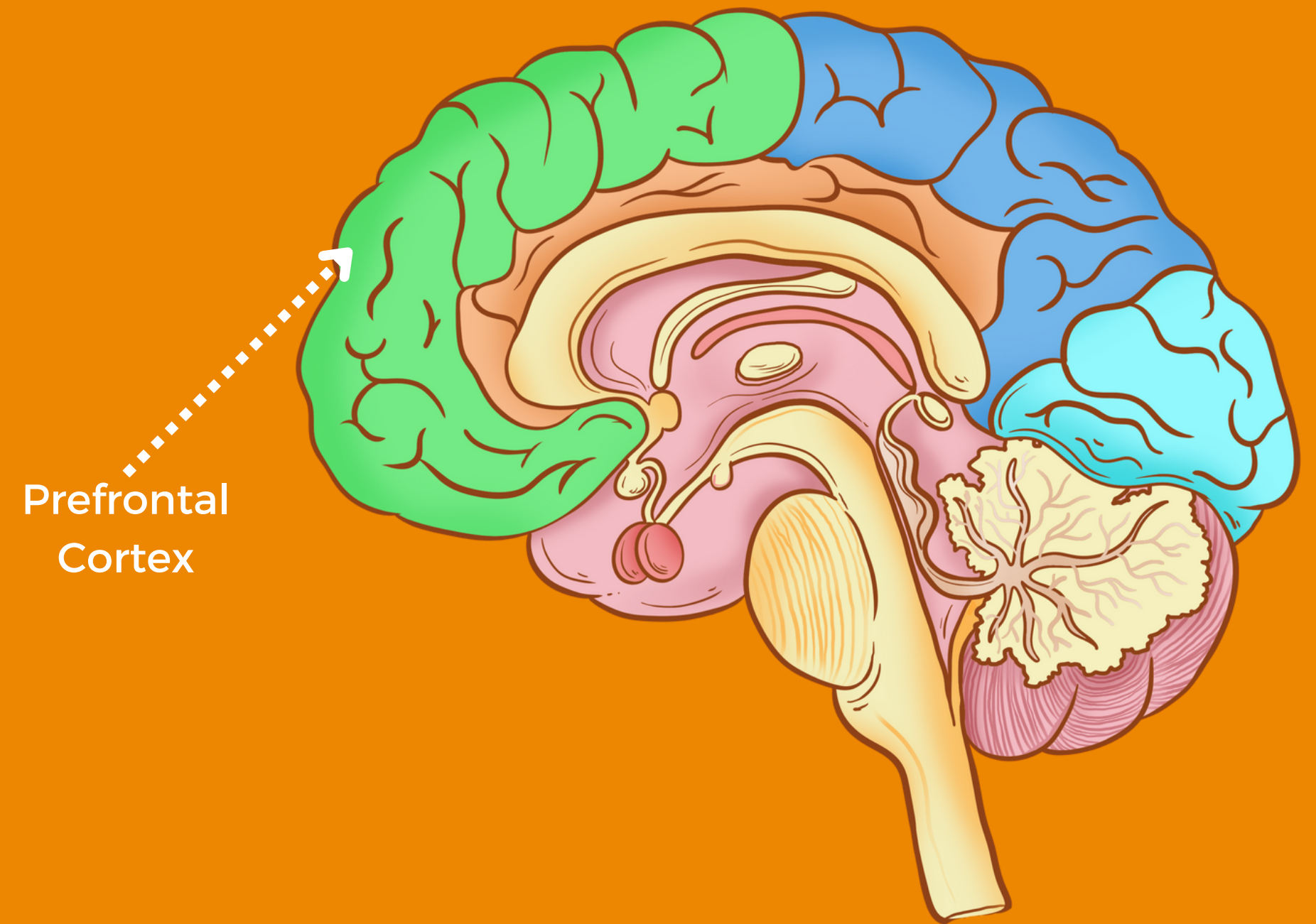
- Crucial for learning and memory.
- Helps us form and consolidate long-term memories.
- Helps with spatial navigation, and learning where new things are.
- Emotional memories are stored here.



Prefrontal Cortex

Significance:

- Planning
- Making choices (big or small!)
- Predicting consequences
- Process information
- Follow rules
- Risk taking
- Managing emotional reactions



This is often the first part of our brain to go offline when faced with stress, worry or upset.

5-year-old brain

Preteen brain

Teen brain

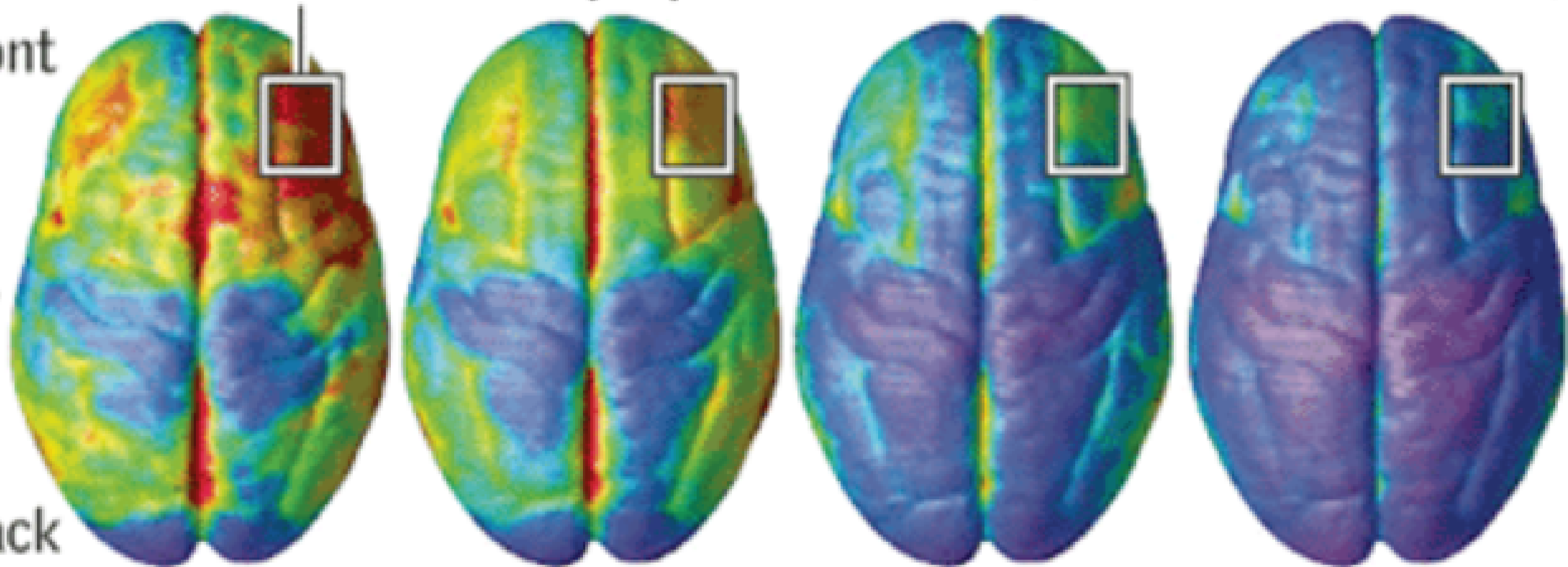
20-year-old brain

Dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex ("executive functions")

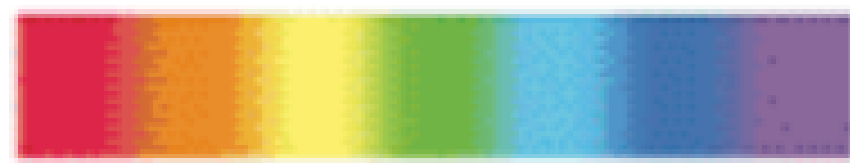
Front

Top
view

Back



Red/yellow: Parts of brain less fully mature



Blue/purple: Parts of brain more fully matured

Fight

Wanting to "attack"

Aggressive

Irritable

Controlling

Yelling

Demanding

Kicking

Hitting

Offended

Angry

Flight

Wanting to Escape

Procrastination

Anxious

Hard to pay attention

Fidgeting

Restlessness

Panicked

Overwhelmed

Hyperactive

Unfocused

Freeze

Urge to hide

Zoned out

Depressed/numb

Shutting Down

Isolates self

Difficulty

completing tasks

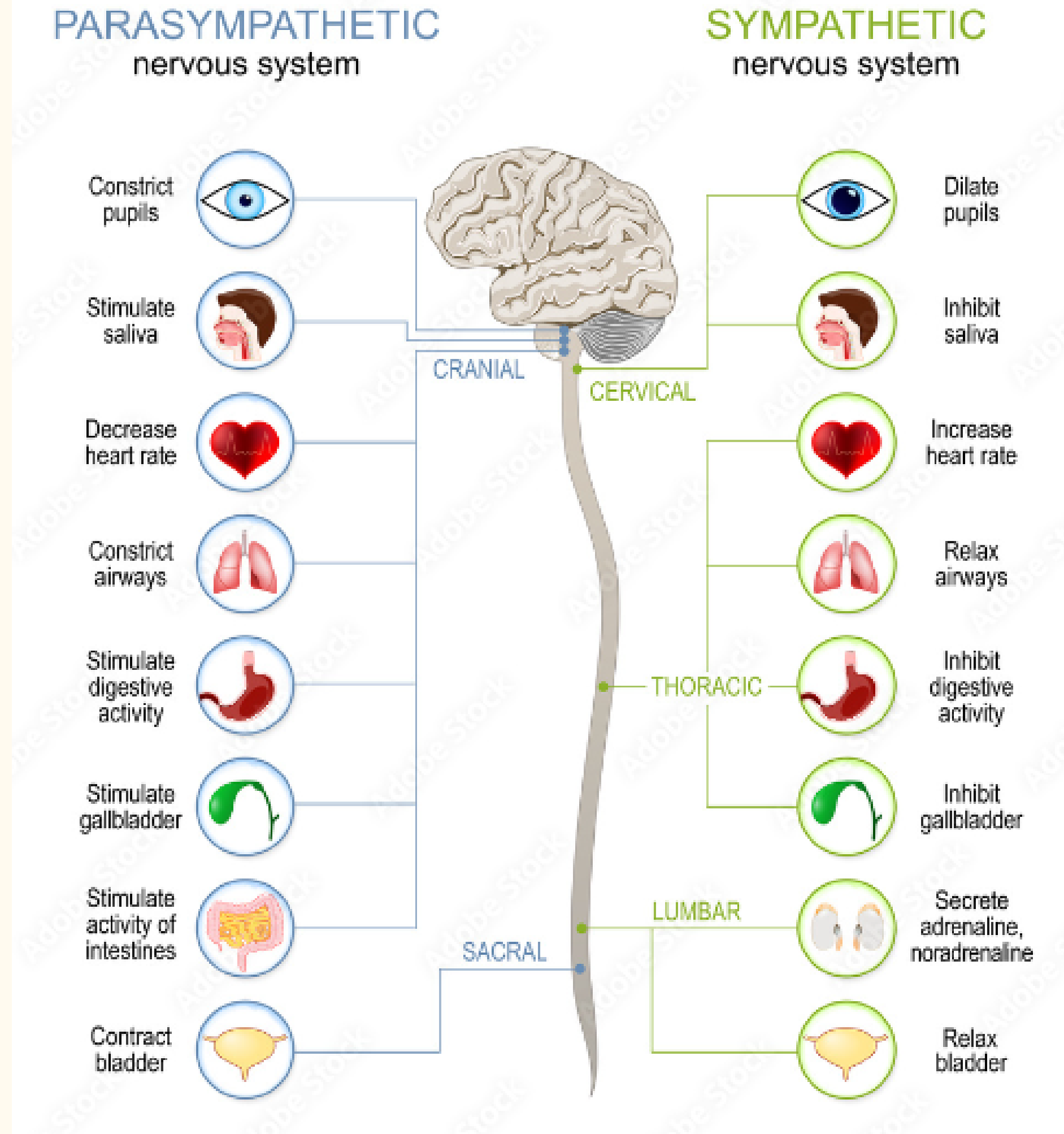
Verbally unresponsive

Feeling stuck

Unable to move

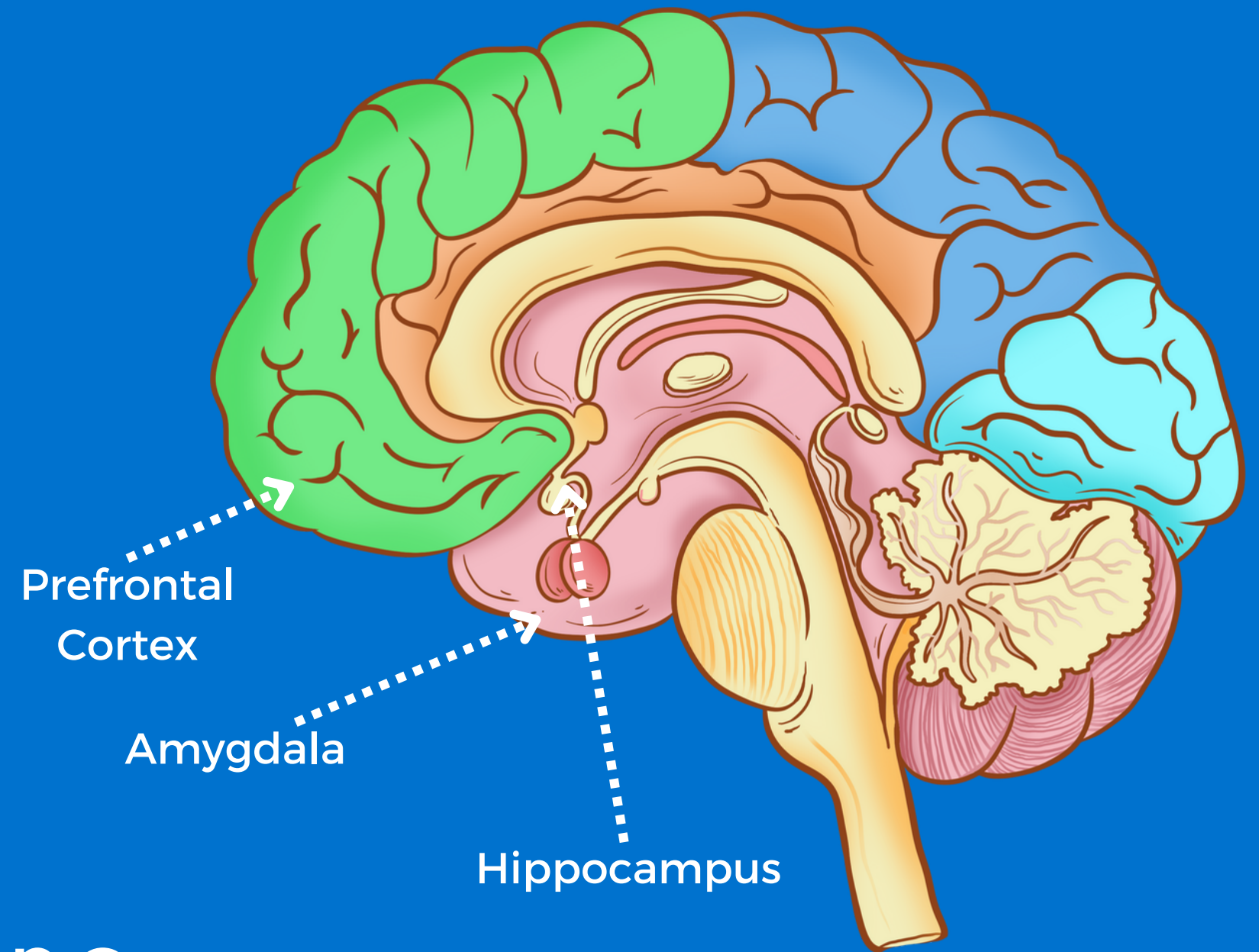
Mind Goes Blank

What happens to our body when we feel anxious?



Stress Brains

Amygdala is activated
Prefrontal cortex goes offline
Hippocampus is not able to
function



Amygdala is
activated



Fight/Flight/Freeze
response happens

Prefrontal cortex
goes offline

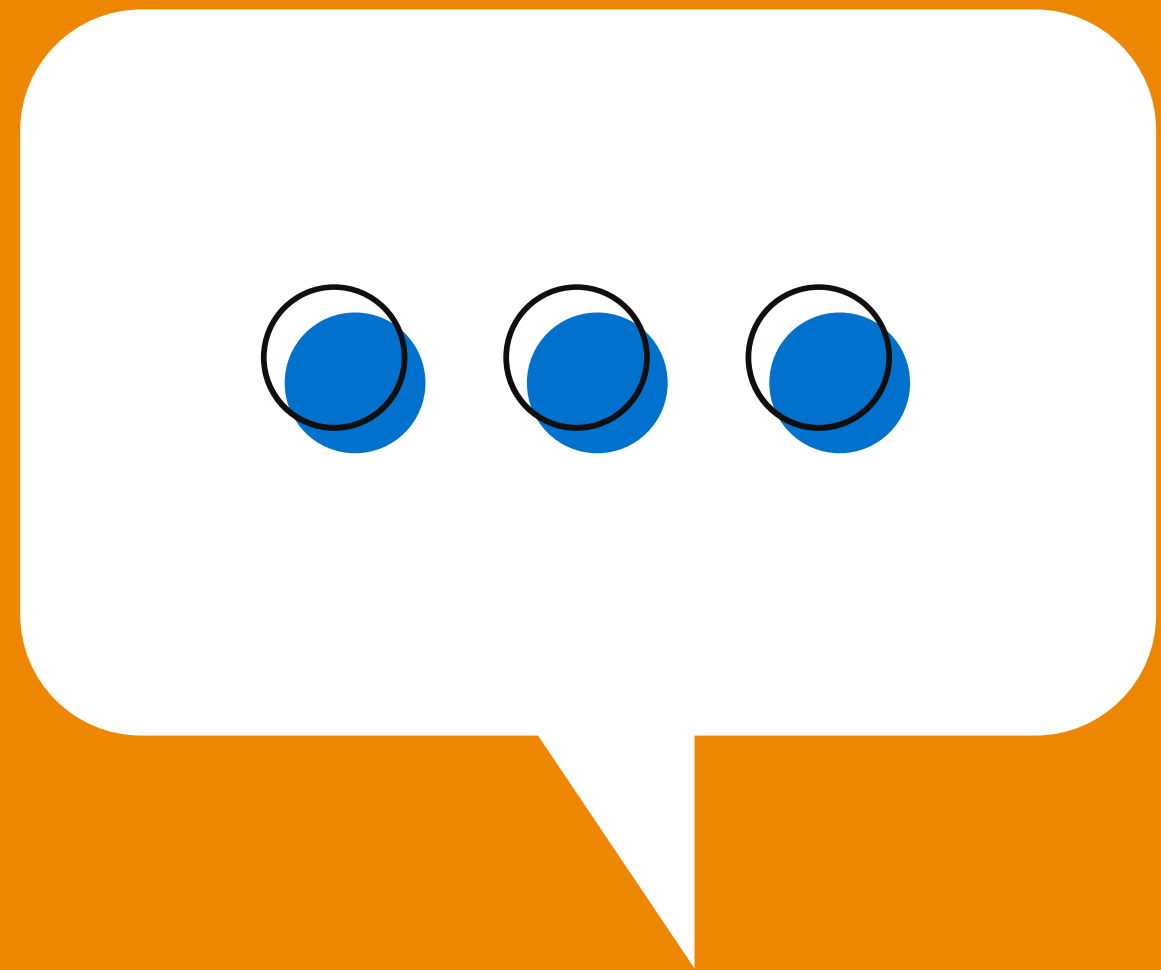


Lose ability to plan, think
clearly, manage your
emotional responses

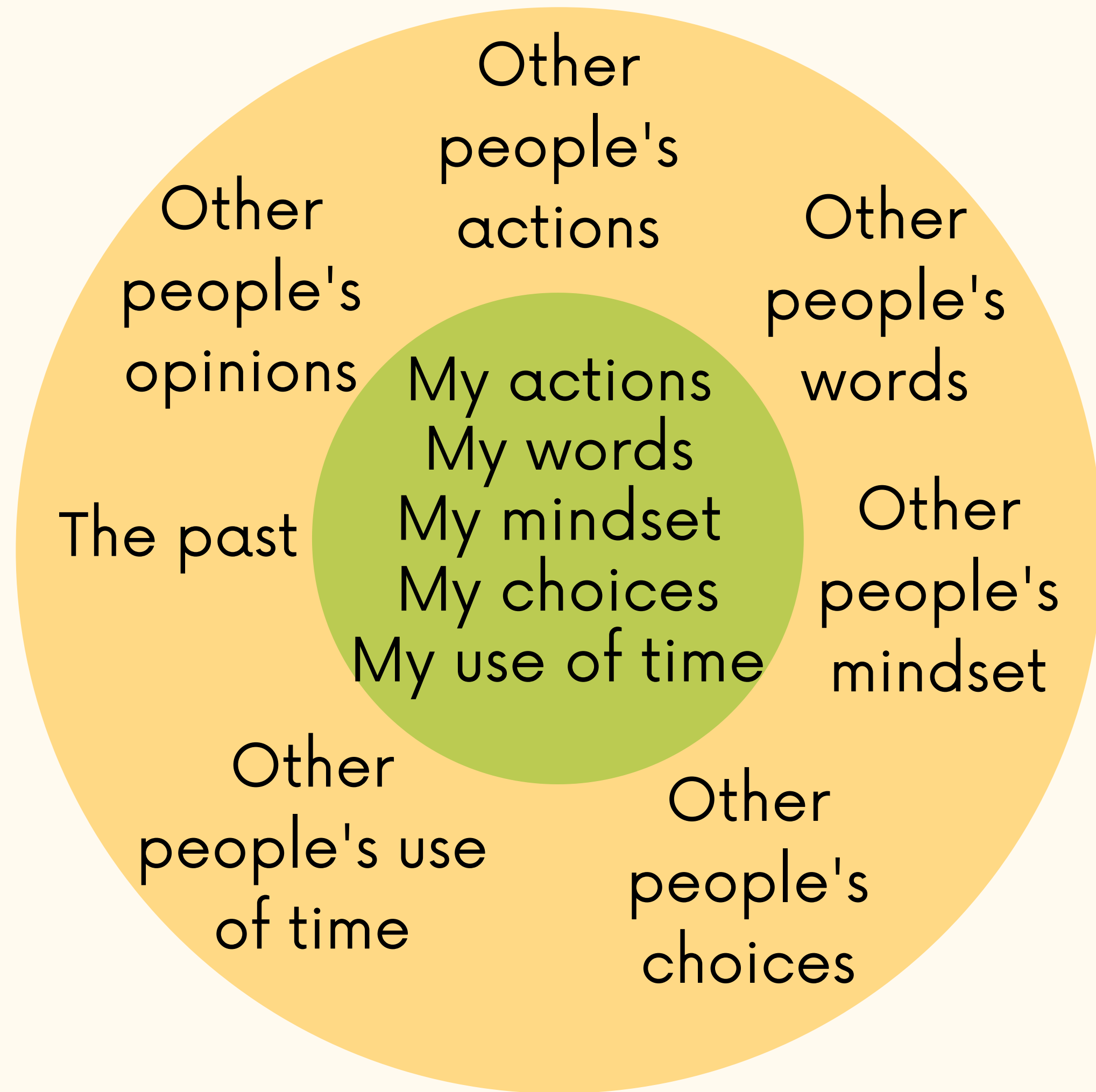
Hippocampus is
not able to
function

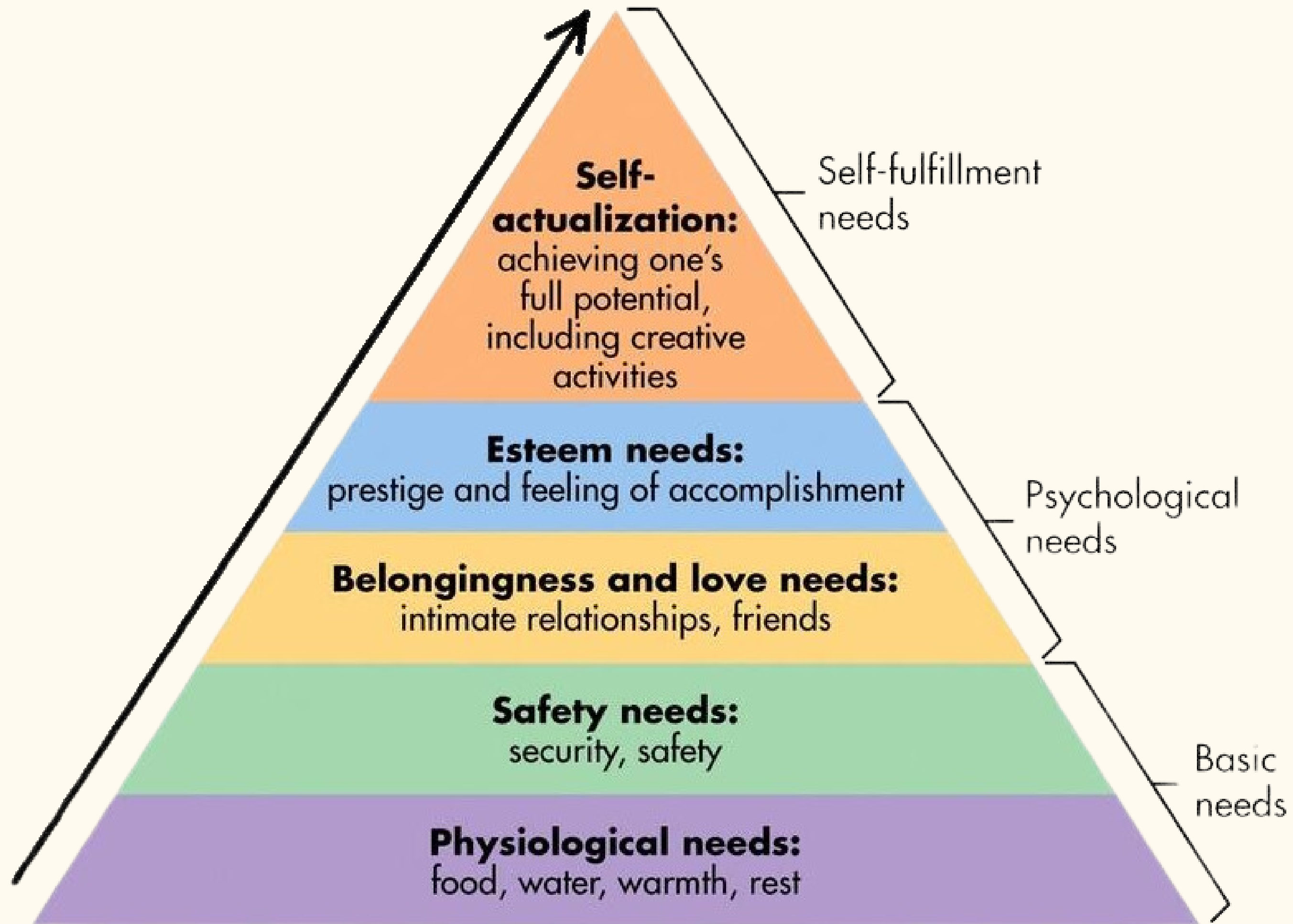


Struggle to remember
things



What can you
do to support
managing
stress?





Safe

Seen

Soothed

Secure

4 pillars of wellbeing



Wellbeing



Dopamine



Oxytocin



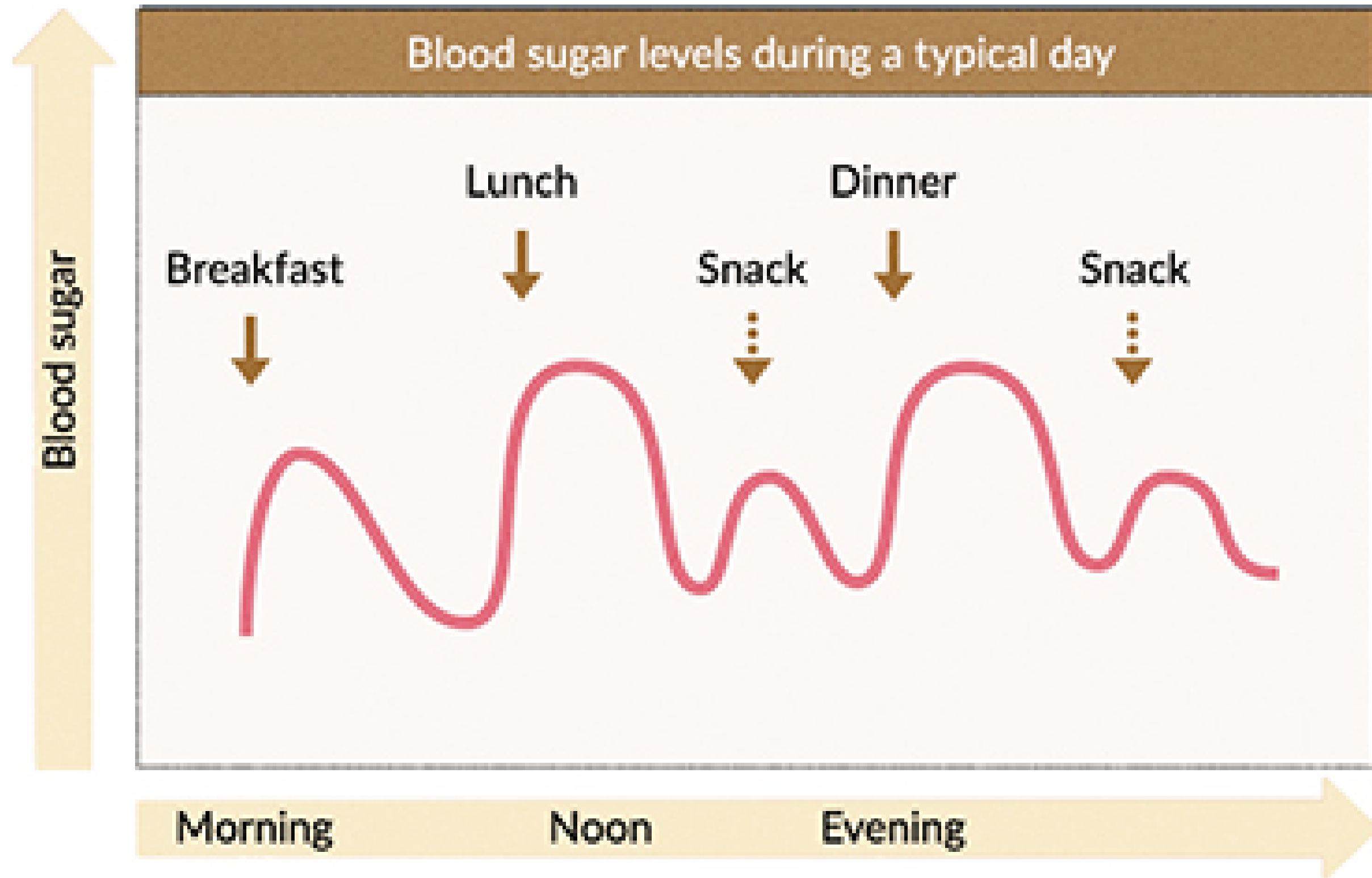
Serotonin



Endorphins



Nutrition



Sleep

12- 13 years
old



9 1/2 hours

14 years old



9 hours

15 - 16
years old



8 hours

Sleep

Get a routine going

Do 20 minutes of exercise a day

Avoid caffeine!

Get the bedroom environment right and practice relaxation techniques

Avoid technology before bed

Movement

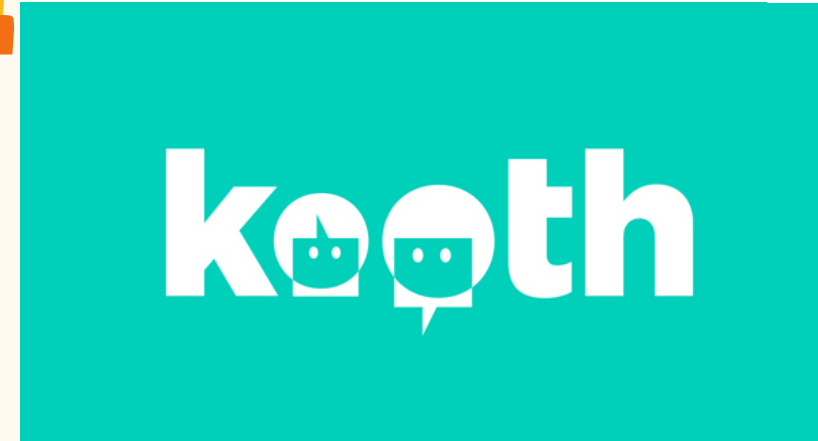
Improves sleep

**Releases cortisol
(stress hormone)**

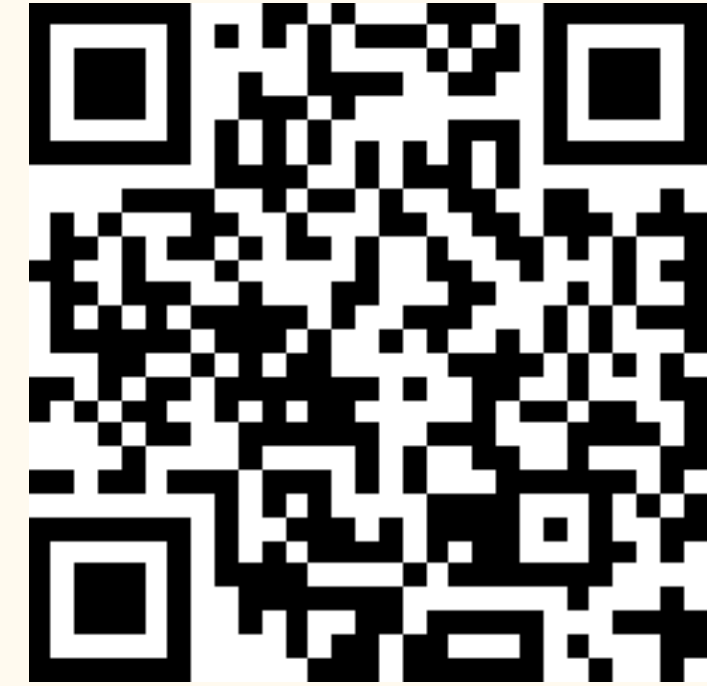
**Increases endorphins
(reward hormone)**

**Allows brain to relax and
not focus on exam work**

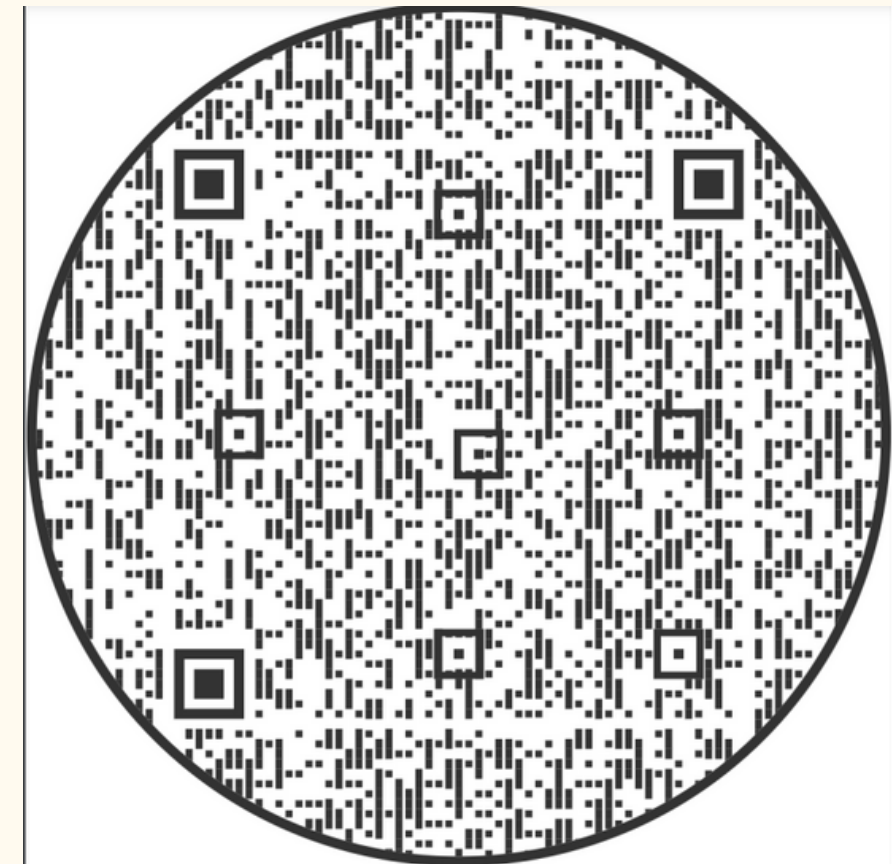
Where can I get further support?



QR Code for Feedback:

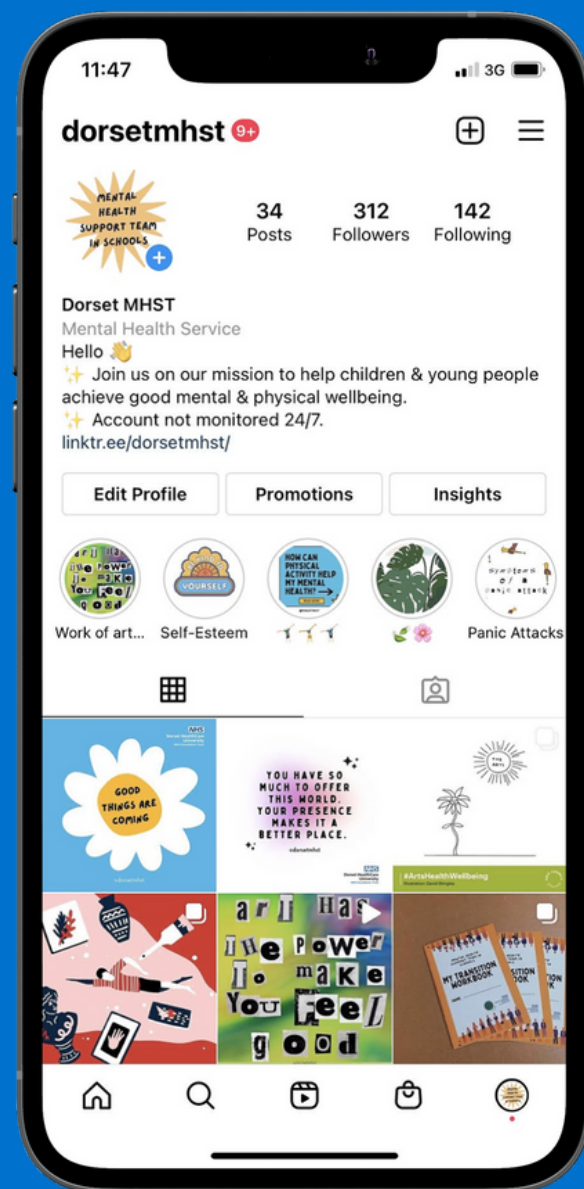


QR Code for Slides:



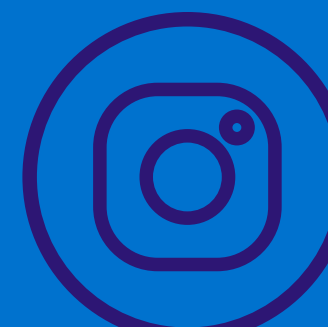
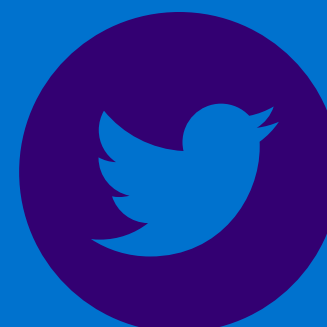


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