

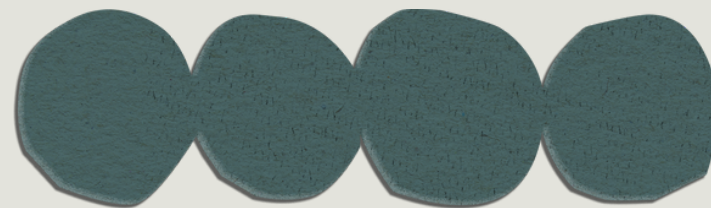
THE ANXIETY TRAP



Presented by Trent Morrow, LCSW



- 1.The Problem
- 2.What does the villian look like?
- 3.What does the villian do to us?
- 4.Things that empower the villain
- 5.What happens if you let the villain win?
- 6.How to fight back and win?





HOW BAD IS THE PROBLEM?

- Twelve states now allow mental health days as an excused absence.
- Two-thirds of parents say their child experienced emotional challenges during the pandemic.
- Anxiety & Depression rose significantly but has come down
- 19% of adults are impacted by anxiety and 32% between the ages of 13 and 18.

BUT FIRST, WHAT DOES THE VILLAIN LOOK LIKE?



SIGNS VERSUS SYMPTOMS

SIGNS

PHYSICAL:

Pounding heart

Sweating

Frequent urination

Diarrhea

Shortness of breath

Twitching/shaking

Insomnia

Tightness of throat

Vomiting/lack of appetite

Self harm

Withdrawn

MENTAL:

Pressured speech

Paranoia

Preoccupation

Avoidance

SYMPTOMS

PHYSICAL:

Headaches

Stomach aches

Dizziness

Muscle tension

Fatigue

MENTAL:

Racing thoughts

Over-thinking (hypotheticals)

Poor concentration

Impending feeling of doom

Irritable / angry

Heightened alertness

WHAT DOES THE VILLAIN DO TO US?



FLIGHT, FREEZE, OR FIGHT

FLIGHT: RUN AWAY FROM THE SITUATION AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE

FREEZE: LOCK UP AND STAY WHERE YOU ARE

FIGHT: STAND UP AND RUN TOWARDS THE SITUATION OR CHALLENGE

THE TRAP OF ANXIETY



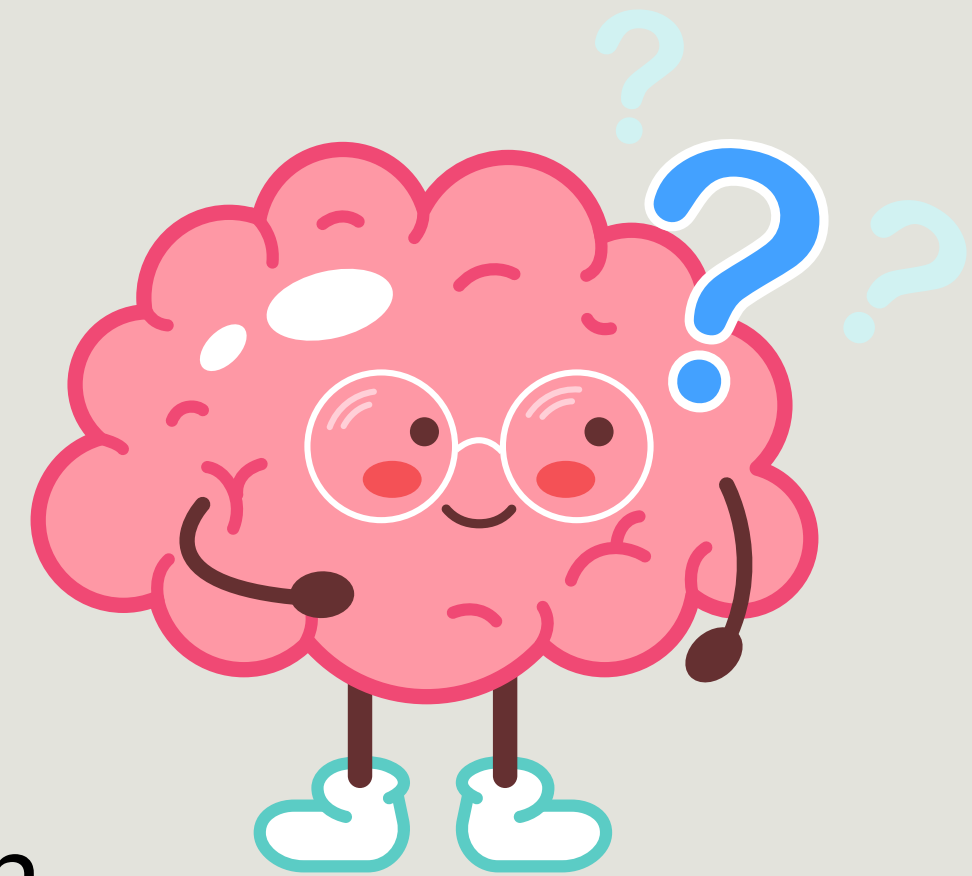
THINGS THAT EMPOWER THE VILLAIN



- Lack of sleep, sunlight, exercise, socialization
- Poor Diet
- Technology
- Hereditary
- Substances
- Grief
- Depression
- Grit
- Family & Social Systems

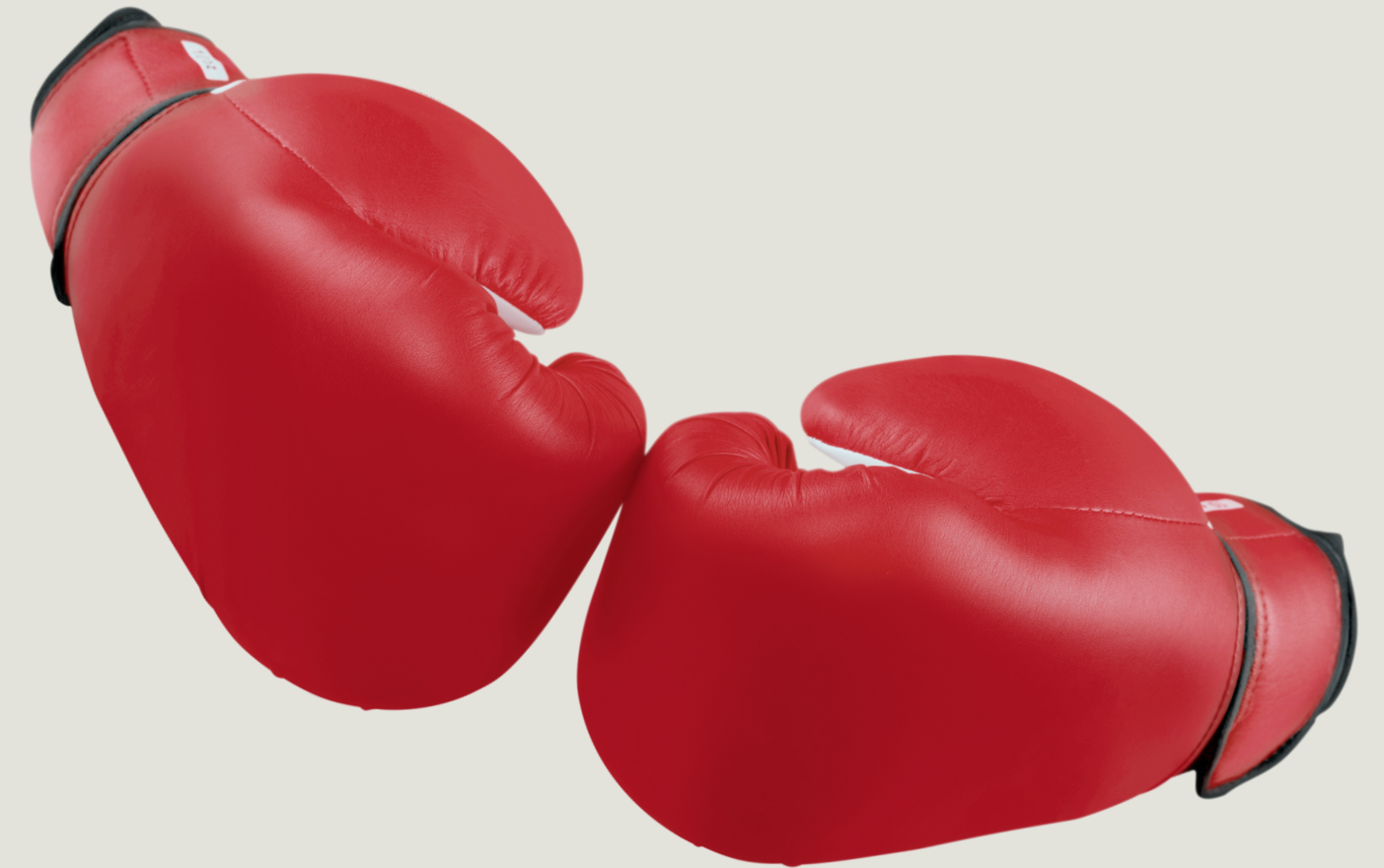
WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU LET THE VILLAIN WIN?

- Develop Haunted House Syndrome
- Mood Disorders
- Build unhealthy neural pathways (roads) in the brain
- World gets smaller
- Constant internal chatter

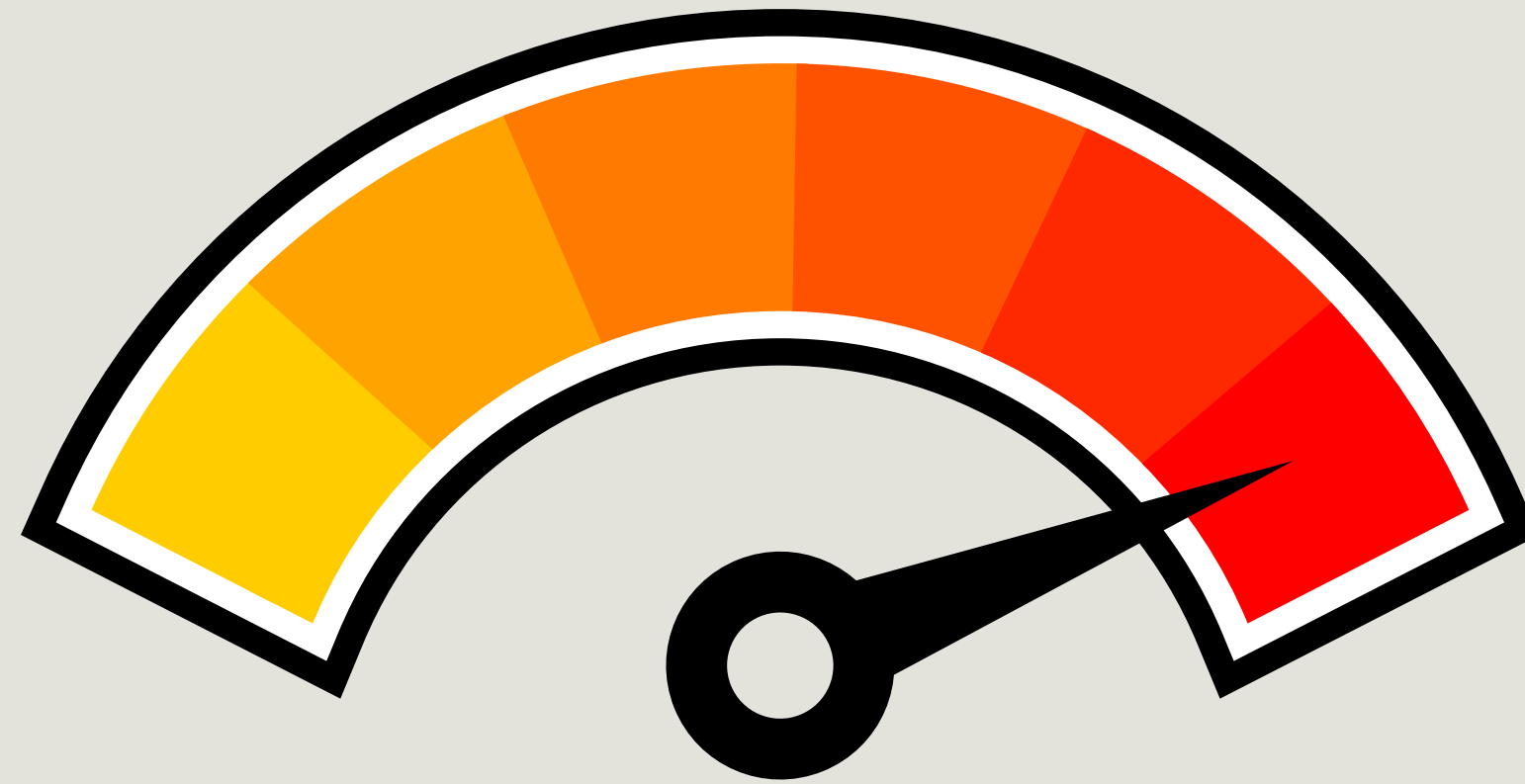


HOW TO FIGHT BACK & WIN

- Emotional Temperature gauge
- Decision Tree
- Shoulder Technique
- Tools to use when you do not want to face the anxiety



EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE GAUGE



As your temperature rises,
your intelligence level drops

THE DECISION TREE

Step back & ask what do you feel?



Worry

Is this a real problem supported with facts?

(The brain gives you the right facts)

Ex: Fire alarm goes off or you have an upcoming test

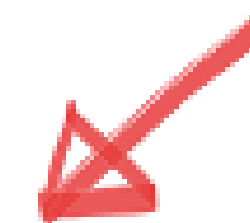
The logical thinking part of the brain allows you to use decision making skills and reasoning to create a plan with a solution.

Anxiety

Feels like a real problem but there are no facts to support the feeling.

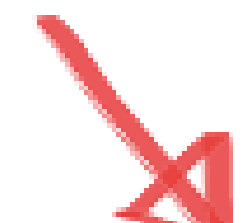
Ex: If I go into the ocean, I will get bit by a shark.

If the feeling is anxiety, the next step is to make a decision to attack or not to attack



ATTACK

Invite the anxiety in and use the shoulder technique /



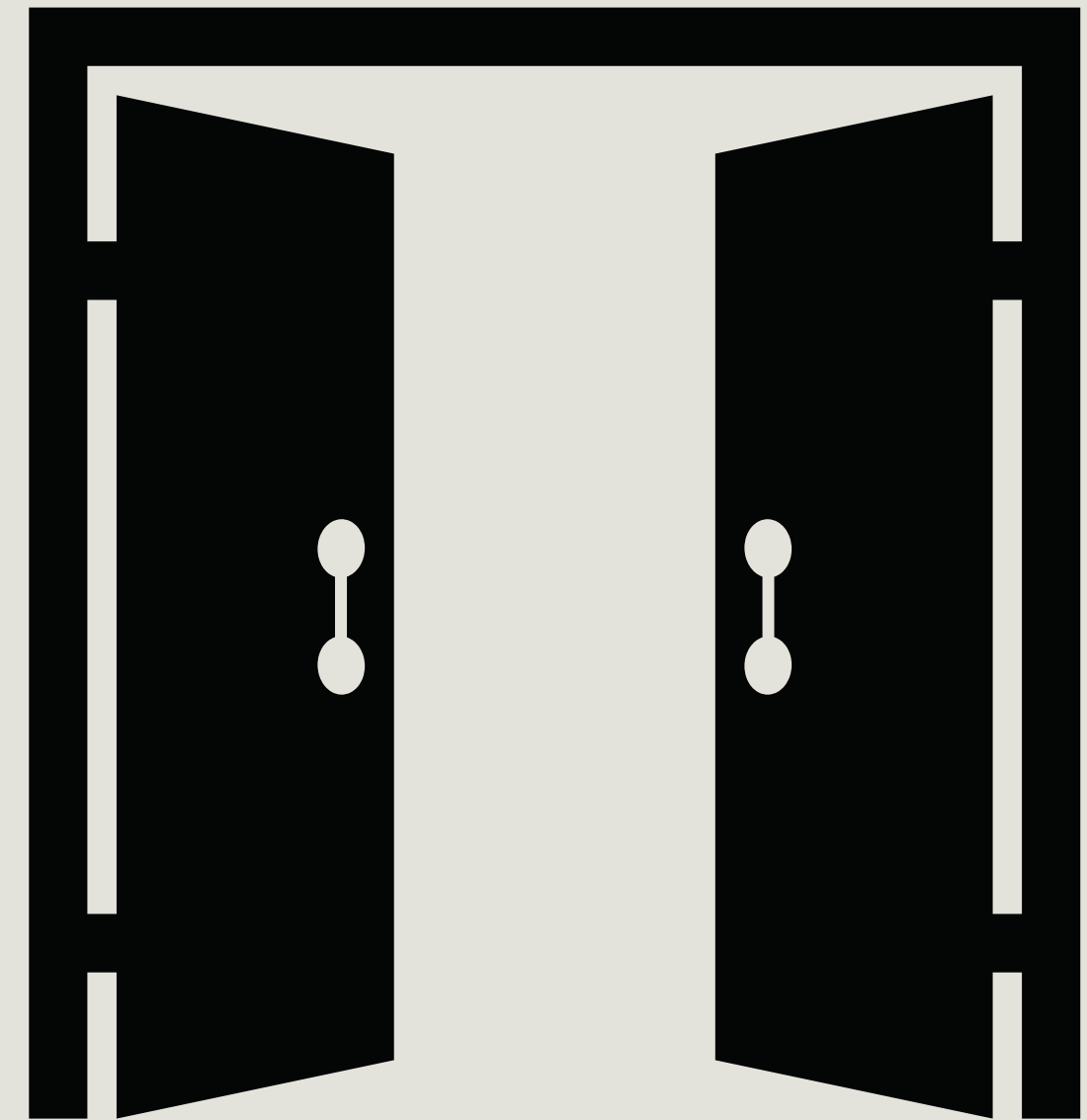
DON'T ATTACK

You avoid facing the anxiety and instead use coping tools /

THE SHOULDER TECHNIQUE

This involves opening the door to your anxiety and inviting it into your life. When you face anxiety, you are taking control rather than the anxiety controlling you.

Remember you do not have anything to fear because you do not have any facts. You allow your emotional temperature to rise (because it is supposed to be uncomfortable).



How to use the shoulder technique:

- 1- Pick a scary image on your right shoulder.
- 2- Pick a strong & powerful image on your left shoulder.
- 3- The right shoulder (Anxiety) tells you hypothetical/interesting stories and your left tells you the **TRUTH** about the situation.
- 4- The left shoulder tells you that there are no facts to support the right shoulder.
- 5- *The left shoulder tells you that you are winning, and you elevate your left shoulder to be the louder shoulder over time.*



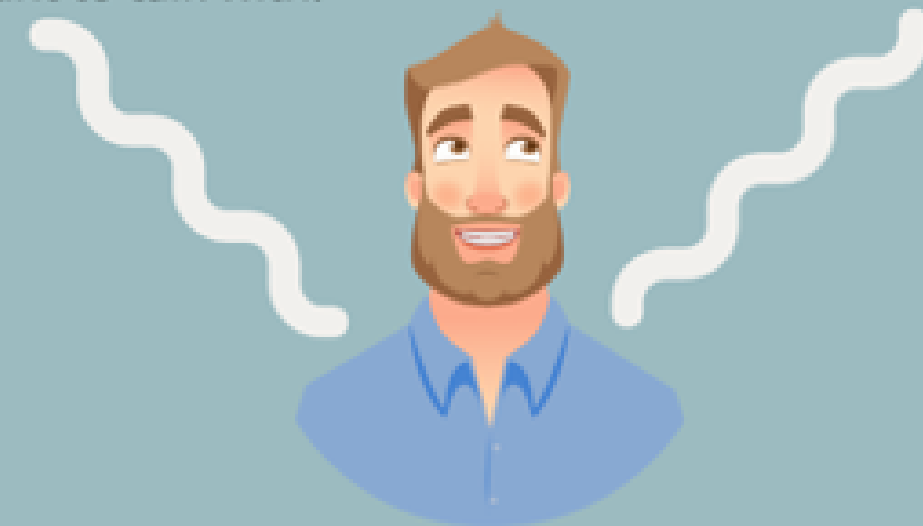
The LEFT Shoulder

Even though you are nervous no one can see that. There are no facts to prove that people are laughing at you. They are laughing at a funny joke that was just told. You are a kind and friendly person that people want to talk with.



The RIGHT Shoulder

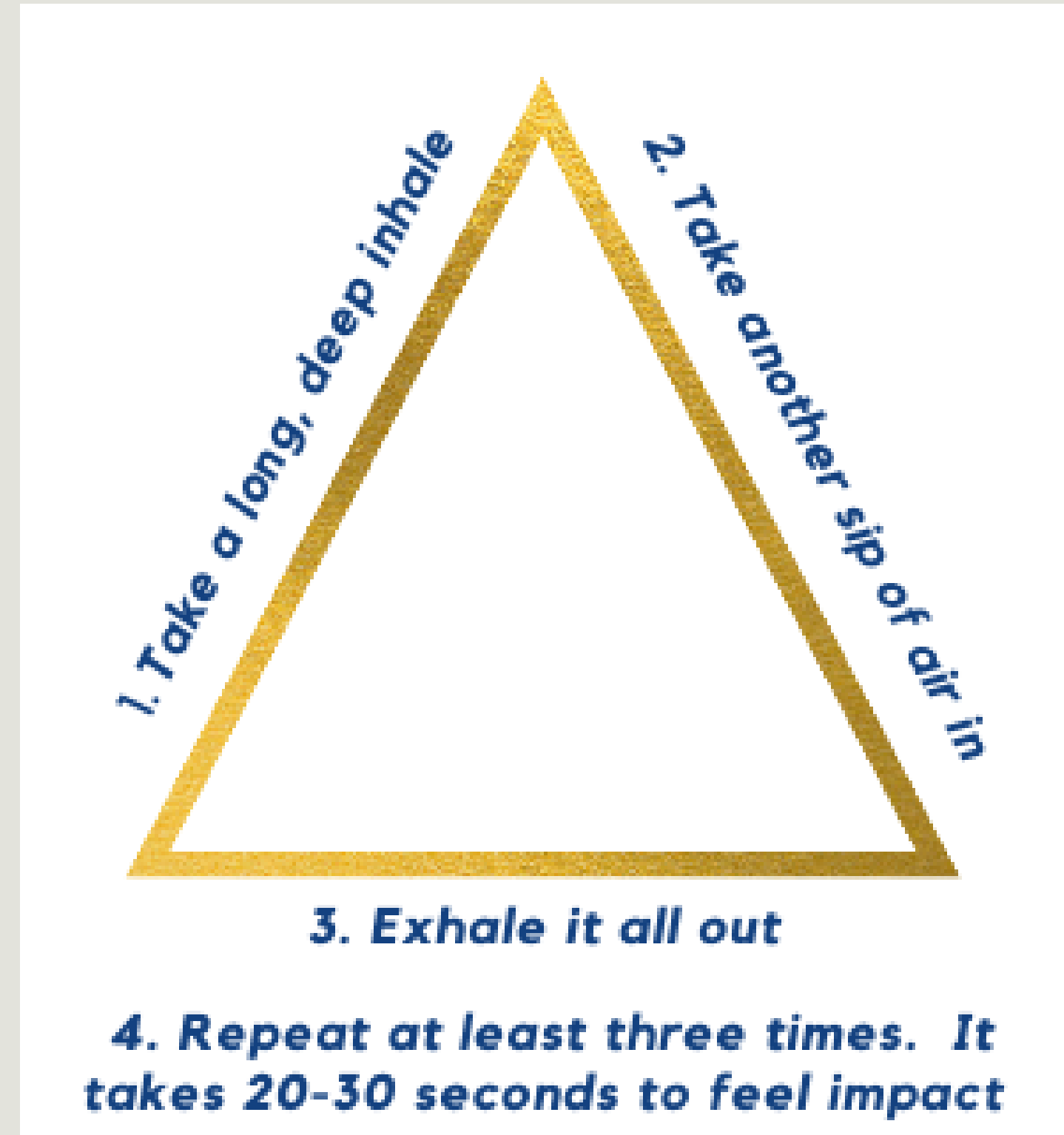
Are they laughing at you? I see people talking quietly, I just know they are talking about YOU. I hope you don't mess this up. I hope you don't say the wrong thing. No one likes you here at this party.



DOUBLE BREATH TOOL

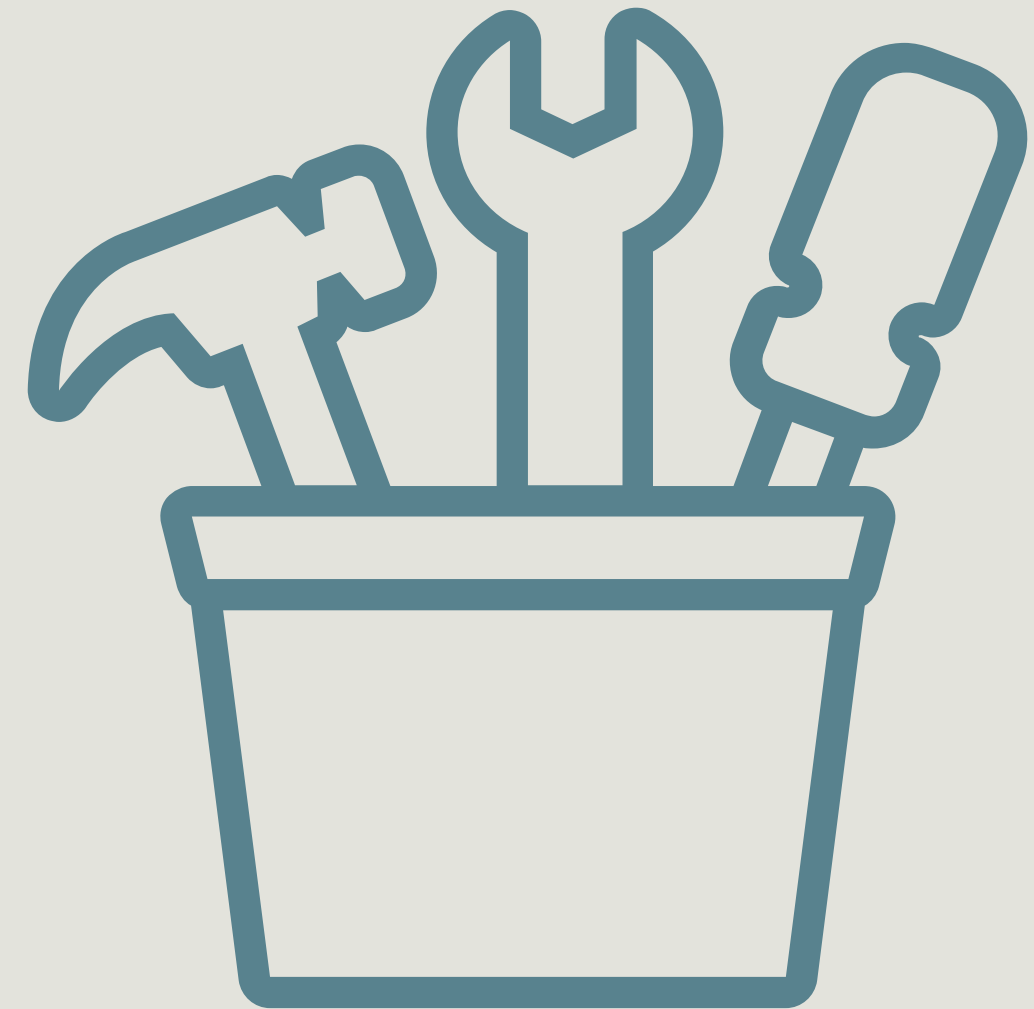
Deep breathing through your diagram can help you to avoid the "fight-or-flight" response to stressful situations.

The likelihood of spiraling into a panic attack or feeling anxious emotions can be reduced by becoming aware of your breathing and regulate its depth and rate.



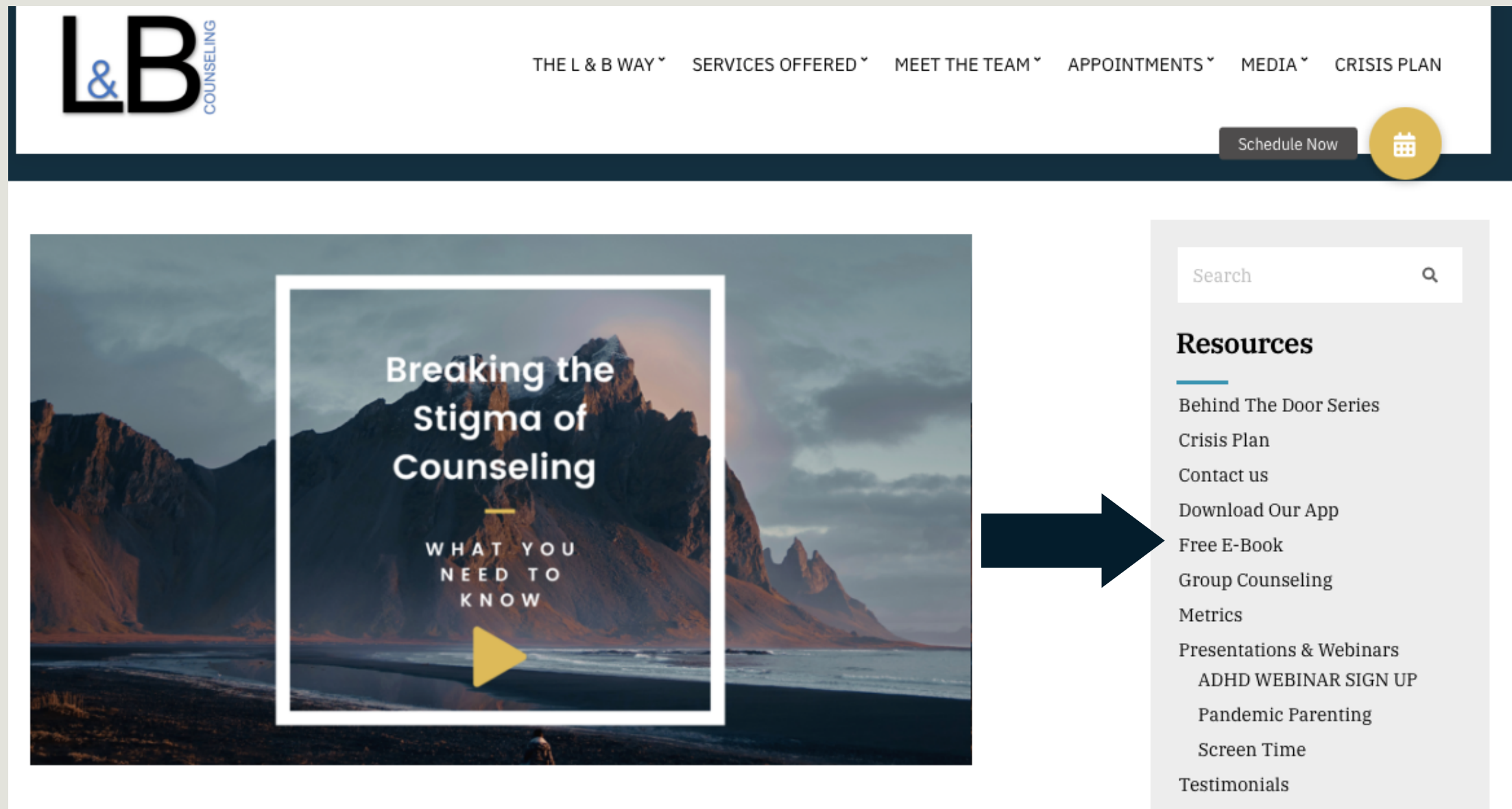
Other tools:

- Belly Breathing
- 54321 Grounding Technique
- Star Breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Watch a guided mediation on YouTube
- Draw/Color
- Journal/Write
- Attend a yoga class or find one online
- Take a walk and look closely at nature
- Practice gratitude, either mentally or write it down in a journal



Visit our website at www.landbcounseling.net/tools

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THANK YOU!



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