

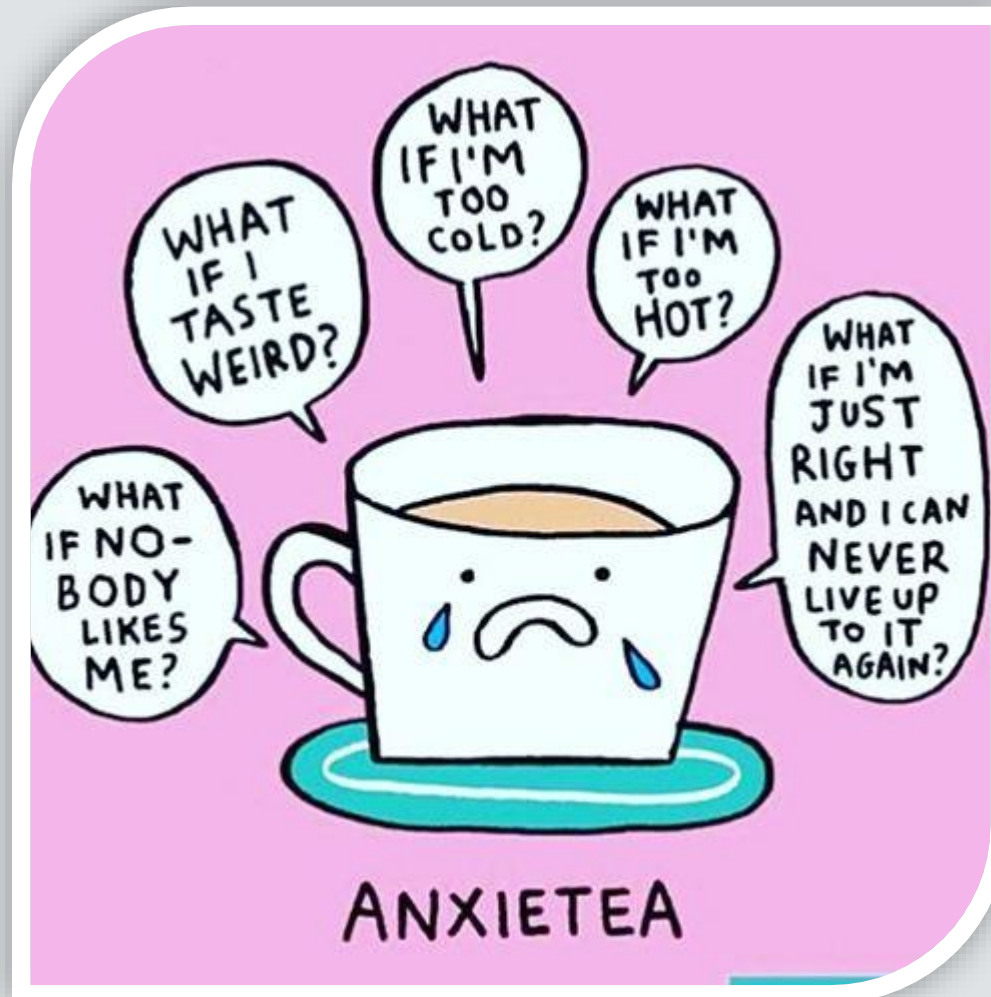
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Aims & Objectives

- ▶ Today we are going to look at:
 - How anxiety impacts our thoughts
 - How anxiety affects our behaviour
 - How avoidance affects how anxious we feel



How Does Anxiety Impact our thoughts?



What do you see?



Thought Distortions

- **Mental Filter**
- **Prediction and Catastrophizing**
- **Mind reading**
- **Compare and Despair**

Thought Distortions

Mental Filter

When we see what anxiety wants us to see, we filter out anything positive and sponge up anything that's negative. If you find yourself thinking very black and white statements such as "I completely messed that up" "Everything I do goes wrong" "Nobody likes me" then you are doing mental filter.

Thought Distortions

Mind reading

When we assume we know what others are thinking. We may assume we know that people don't like us, are looking at us or talking about us. We may overthink a situation that has happened, second guessing other people and what they think of us.

Thought Distortions

Prediction and Catastrophizing

Anxiety can make us ask a lot of “what if?” questions and try to predict what might happen. Our predictions are often negative and can easily become catastrophizing, where you predict the worst case scenario.

Thought Distortions

Compare and Despair

Due to anxiety creating mostly negative thoughts, we can easily start comparing ourselves to other people and assuming they are better than us. Thoughts such as “they are so clever. I’m stupid” or “they look nicer than me. I look really ugly” are examples of compare and despair.

Scenario

Kate is going to an interview. On the way there she thinks to herself:

“I’m going to be late and they will turn me away. I can’t do anything right. Everything goes wrong for me.”

Kate arrived early and while she is waiting in the waiting room she sees another person waiting to be interviewed and thinks:

“They look smarter than me. I bet I won’t get the job.”

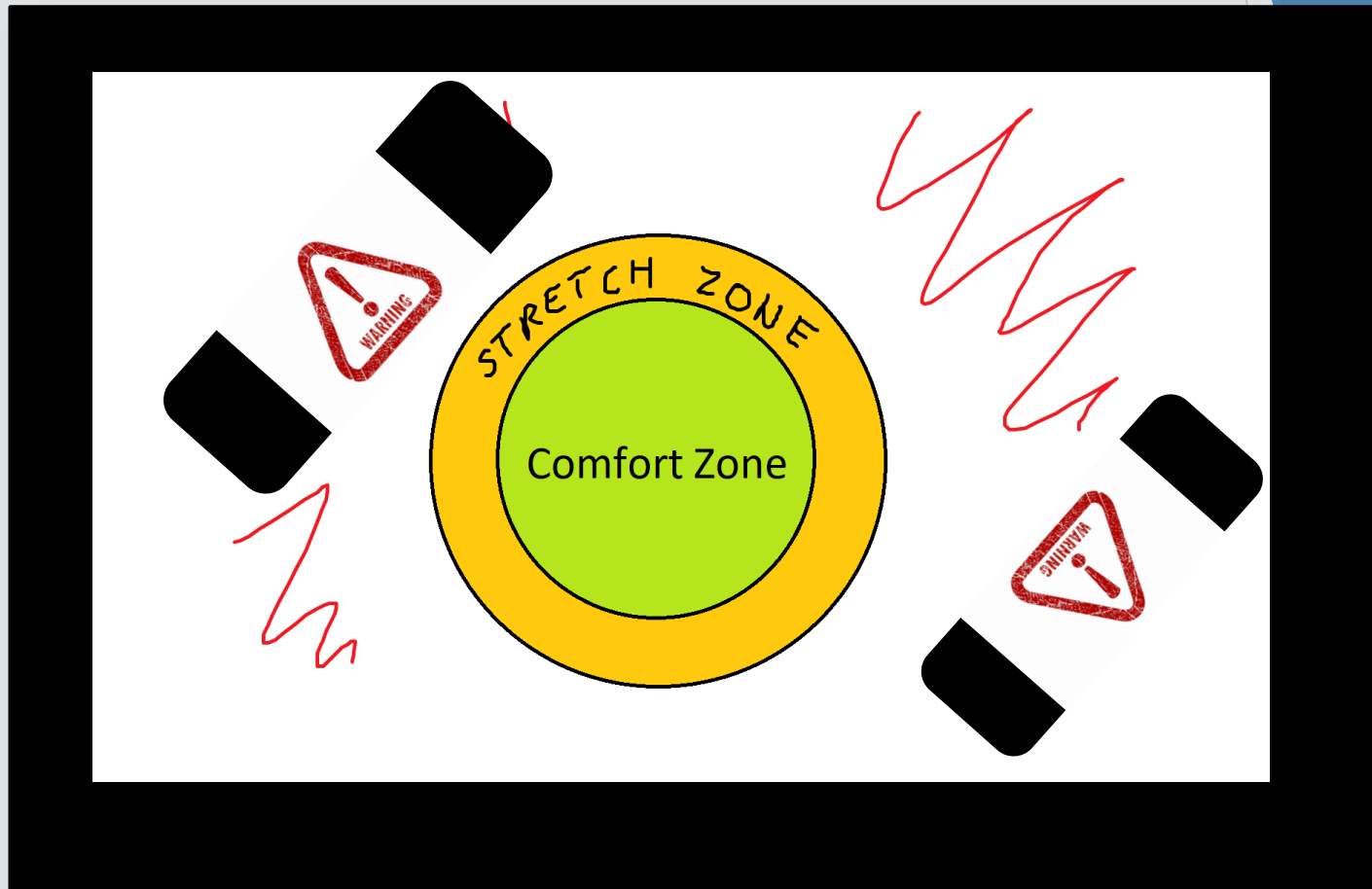
Can you identify the thought distortions that Kate is having?

How does anxiety impact your behaviour?

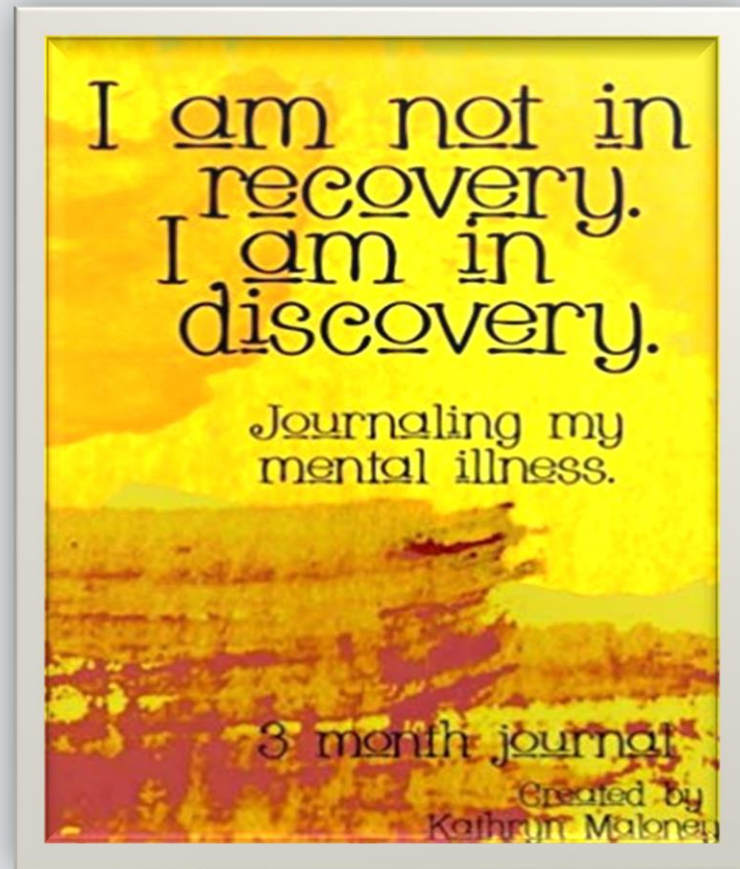
Take 5 minutes to reflect and write notes on the way that anxiety personally impacts your behaviour



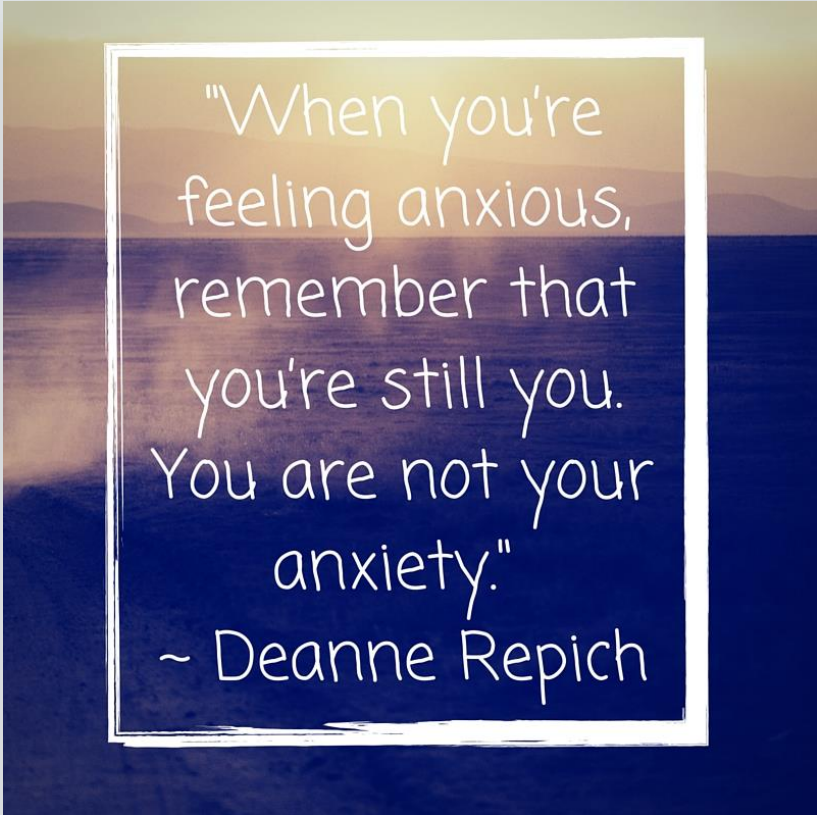
Comfort zone & stretch zone



Can People With Anxiety Ever Have the Life They Want?



Uplifting words...

A square graphic with a sunset background. The top half shows a bright orange and yellow sky over a dark blue sea. The bottom half is a solid dark blue. A white rectangular border is centered on the image, containing the text.

"When you're
feeling anxious,
remember that
you're still you.
You are not your
anxiety."
~ Deanne Repich