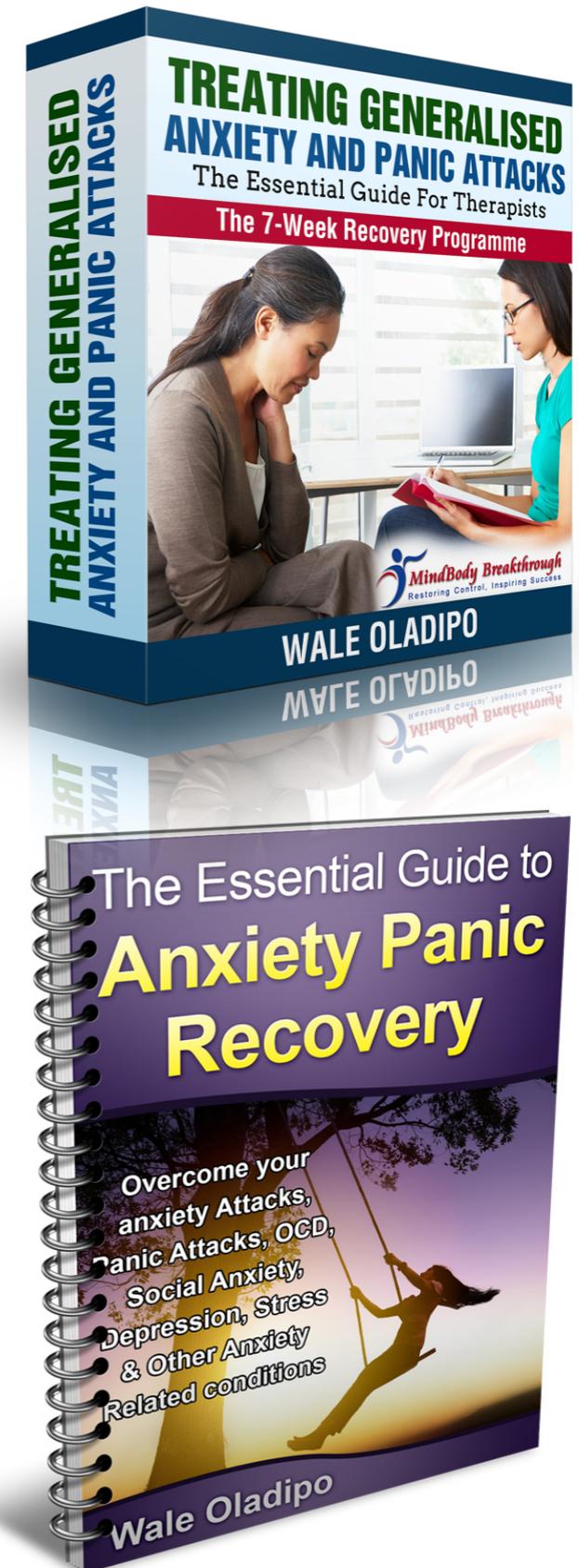


Understanding & Managing Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Panic Attacks



Course Outline

- Introduction/Basic Understanding
- The Amygdala Paradox and The Biochemistry of GAD and Panic
- Recovery Tips



Introduction/Basic Understanding

What is Generalised Anxiety Disorder?

GAD is a condition that causes people to excessively **worry** and feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than one specific event. It involves overestimating one's worry-induced threats (Buhr & Dugas, 2006).

Worry is a disproportionate attempt of the mind to eliminate all **uncertainties**. In GAD, **uncertainty** is subconsciously perceived as dangerous, stressful, distressing, unfair, negative, and should be avoided. Hence, the popular **Intolerance of Uncertainty (IU) Theory** in GAD (Dugas et al., 2001; Buhr & Dugas, 2006)



Diagnostic Criteria (DSM) for GAD

- Excessive anxiety or worry occurring more days than not for at least 6 months about a number of events or activities
- Difficulty controlling worry
- 3 of 6 symptoms are present for more days than not: restlessness, easily fatigued, difficulty concentrating (including mind going blank), irritability, muscle tension, sleep disturbance

Somatic symptoms for GAD may include:

- Sweating, dry mouth, palpitations, urinary frequency,
- Gastrointestinal discomfort and frequent and/or loose bowel motions
- Hyperventilation may result in feelings of shortness of breath and dizziness
- Increased muscle tension, restlessness, inability to relax, headaches and aching pains, particularly in the shoulders and back (Gelder et al., 2006)



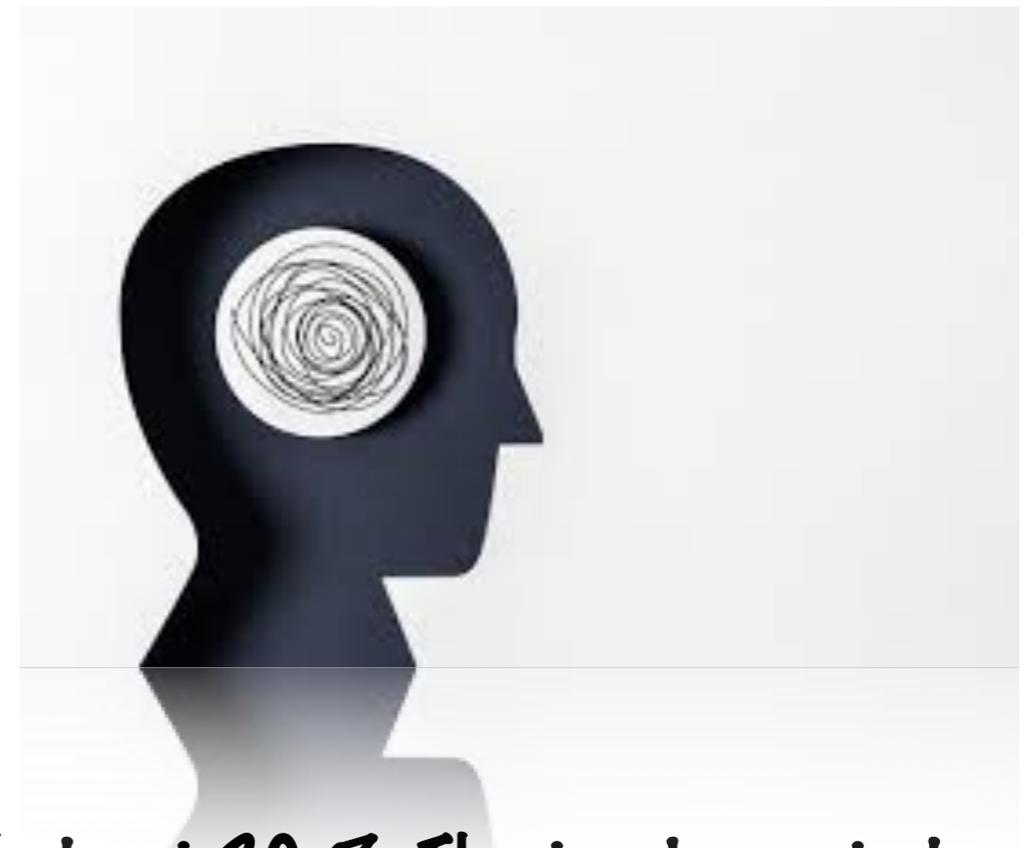
GAD coping mechanisms may include:

- Reassurance seeking, excessive information seeking, excessive list-making, doing everything yourself (refusal to delegate tasks), double-checking, over-preparing, avoidance of novel/uncertain/spontaneous situations, procrastination, maintenance of a predictable routine, asking others to make decisions for you, impulsive decision-making, distraction/keeping busy, social avoidance, OCD, smoking, eating, alcohol, drugs, etc)

What Causes GAD?

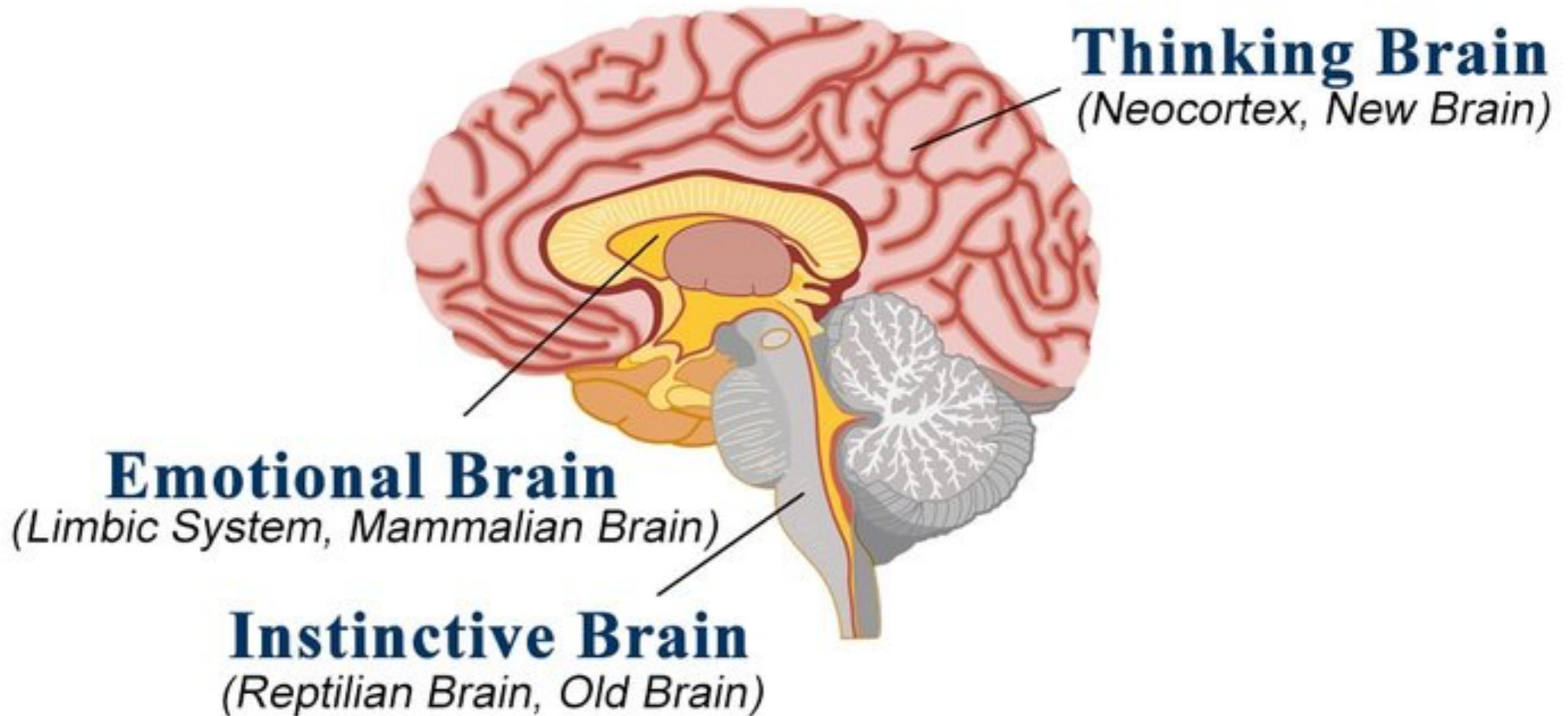
GAD is understood to be caused by a combination of many factors which may include any one or more of the following: (Kendler et al., 2003; Barlow, 2000)

- **A history of stressful or traumatic experiences, such as domestic violence, painful long-term health conditions, child abuse, bullying, etc.**
- **A history of drug or alcohol abuse**
- **Overactivity in the brain areas involved in emotions and behaviour.**
- **An imbalance of the brain chemicals which are involved in the control and regulation of mood**
- **Genetic predisposition; heritability estimate of about 30 %. The tendency to be anxious tends to be inherited rather than GAD specifically**
- **Head injury**

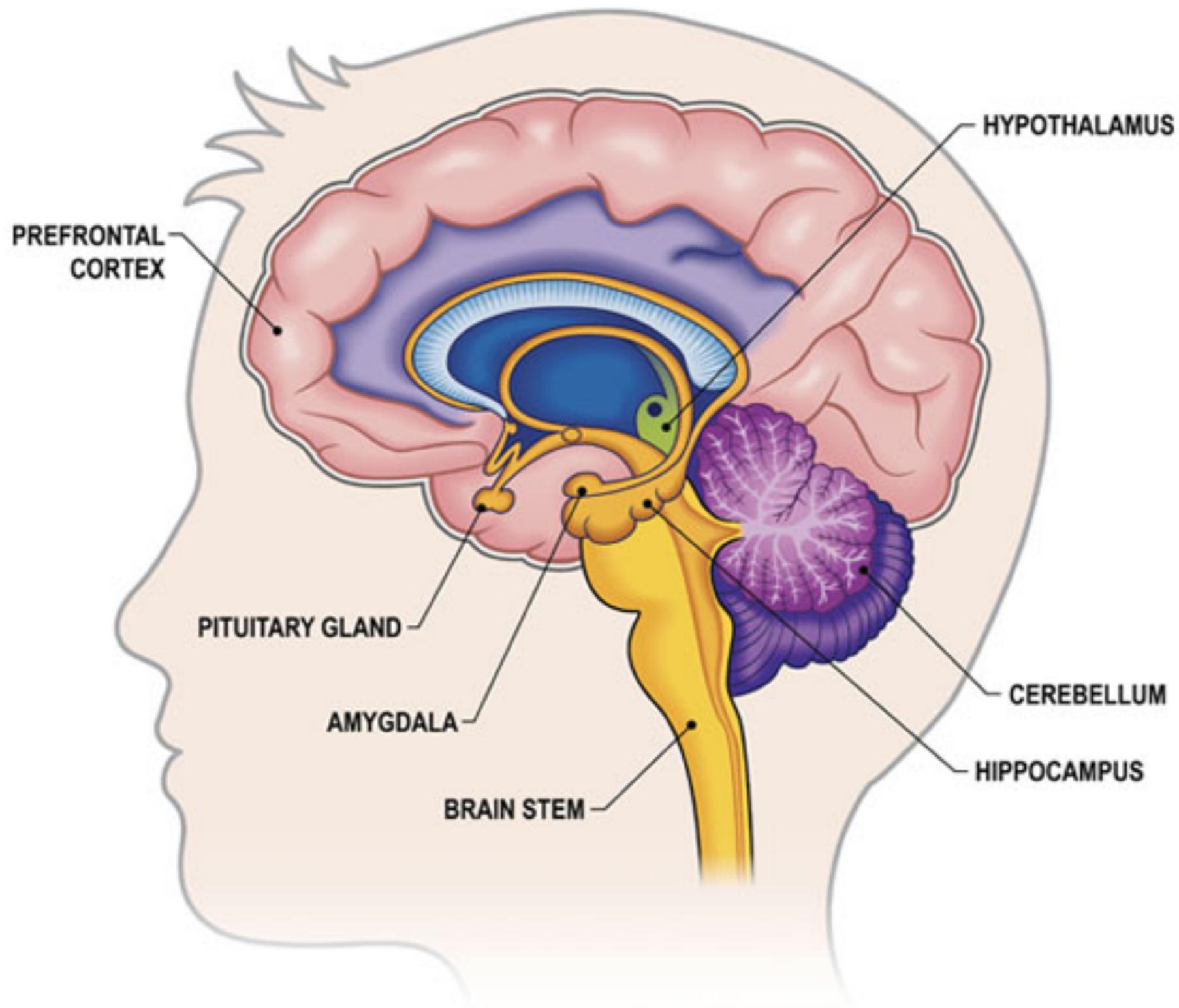


Session 1

The Amygdala Paradox and the Biochemistry of GAD and Panic

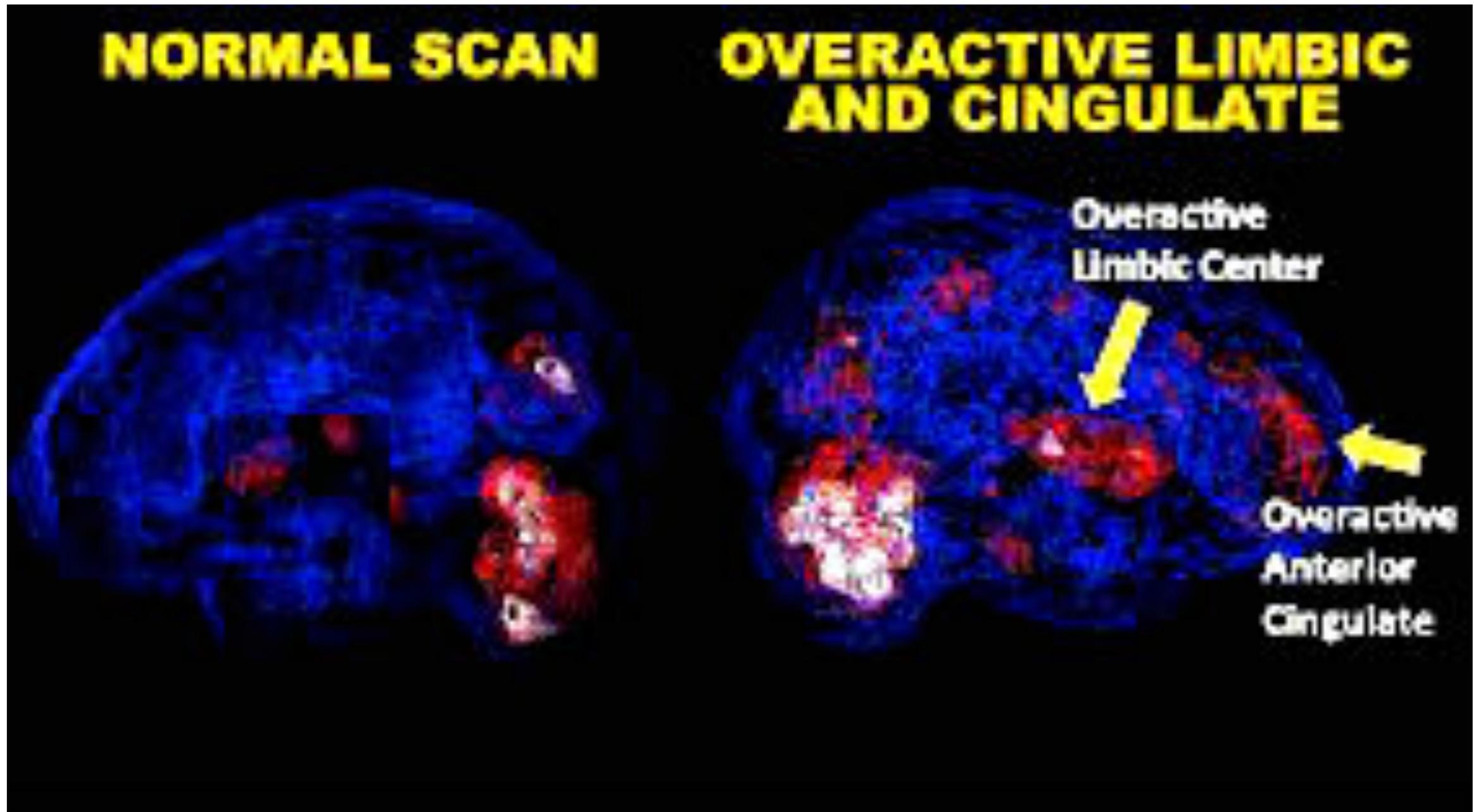


MacLean P, 1949; Ploog D.W et al.(2003)



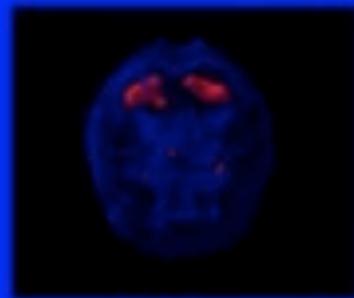
Brühl A.B. et al., 2014: Nakao T, et al., 2011

SPECT Brain Imaging Study on GAD and Panic



SPECT Brain Imaging Study on Anxiety and Depression

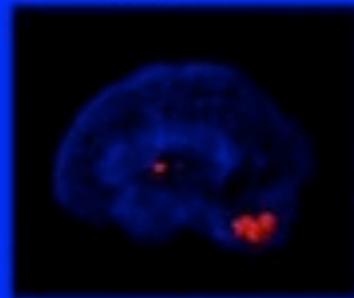
3-D Active SPECT Healthy Brain vs Anxiety and Depression



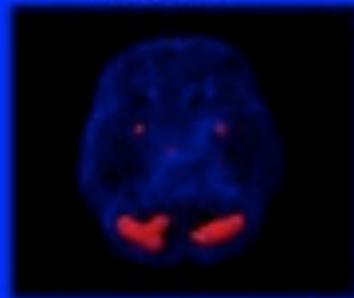
Top-down



Front-on



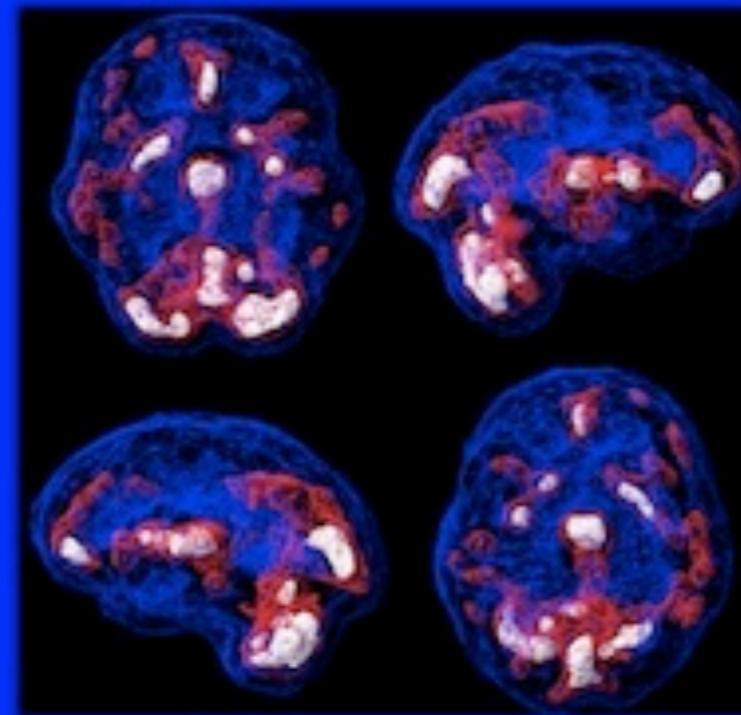
Side View



Underside

3-D Active SPECT of a Healthy Brain

Image: Amen Clinics, www.amenclinics.com.
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3-D Active SPECT of Brain With Anxiety and Depression – increased anterior cingulate and deep limbic activity.

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Session 2

Recovery Tips

First Aid Treatment During a Panic Attack Episode

- ❖ Reassure the sufferer
- ❖ Regulate the breathing
- ❖ Reach out and hold hands
- ❖ Resist struggling
- ❖ Ride out the attack
- ❖ For hyperventilation, reduce the oxygen intake by increasing the amount of carbon dioxide in the lungs. Breathe into cupped hands if no paper bag is available (avoid plastic bag)



Anxiety Recovery Tips

1. Diaphragmatic breathing: Breathe slowly and deeply with your belly. Take 5 seconds to inhale, then hold it for 2 seconds. Then 5 seconds to exhale, and 2 seconds to hold your exhalation. Repeat for 10 breathes. Do this several times a day.



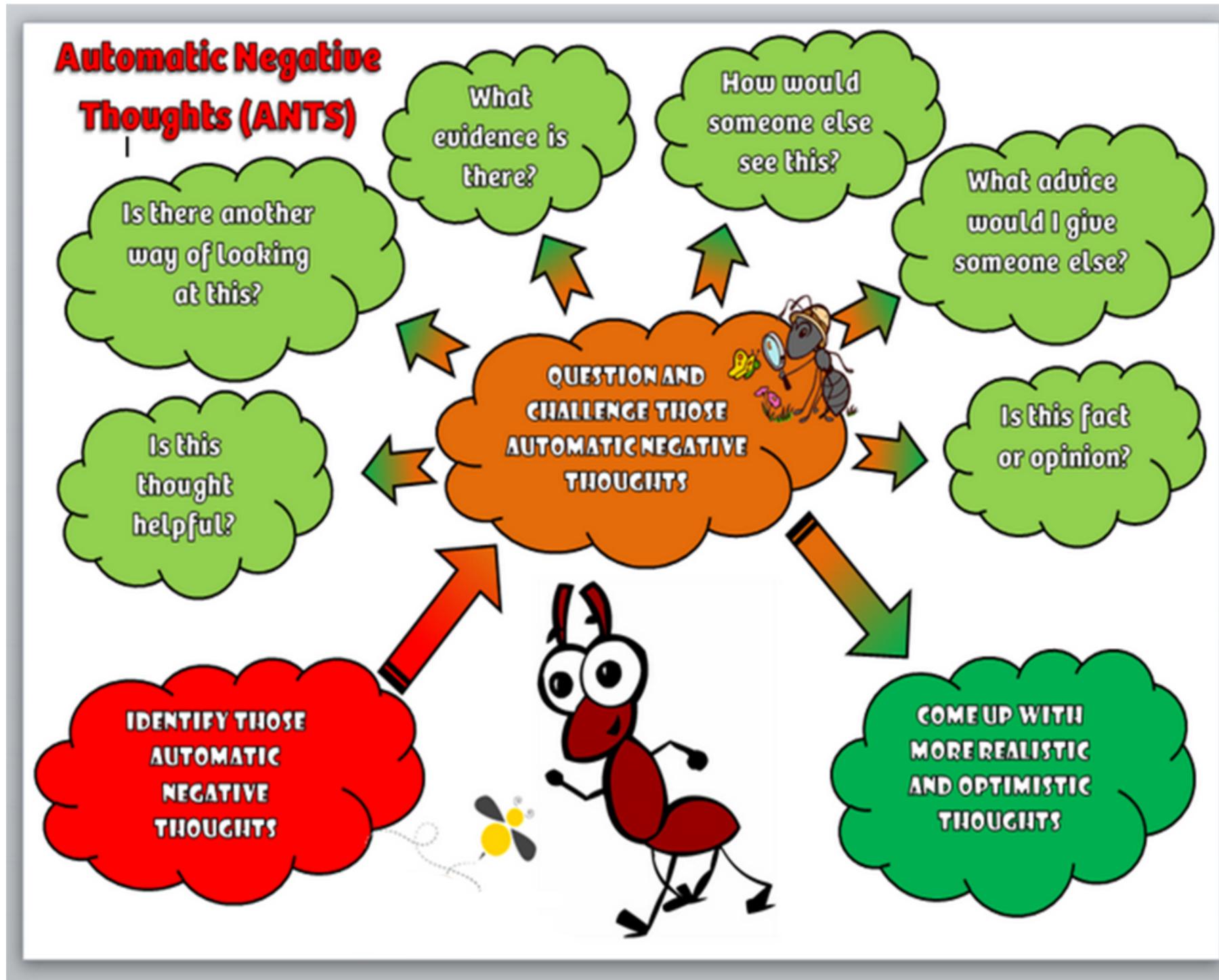
Anxiety Recovery Tips

2. Learn to warm your hands with your brain. Use the power of imagery to warm your hands by imagining activities that warm your hands (such as putting your hands in front of a warm fire, holding a cup of hot green tea, sitting in a hot tub, putting your hands in the warm sand etc)



Anxiety Recovery Tips

3. Write down your automatic negative thoughts (ANTS). Talk back at them, and kill them by reframing them into positive.



Anxiety Recovery Tips

4. Eat small meals through out the day to stabilise insulin (Bruggink S.M et al.,2019)

5. Quit smoking and reduce alcohol and caffeine intake (Espinosa Jovel C.A et al.,2017; Fluharty M et al., 2017)

6. Find purpose and passion or deep spiritual belief (Musumari P.M et al., 2018; Strinnholm S. et al., 2019)

7. Exercise regularly (aerobic (4 times a week), anaerobic (once a week)) (Carek PJ et al.,2011)

8. Helpful supplements. Supplements for high basal ganglia and anxiety include, magnesium, L-theanine from green tea, B complex vitamins, calming scents from essential oils of lavender and chamomile, and fish oil/omega 3 fatty acids (Dagnino-Subiabre A. 2019; Pérez M.Á. et al. 2018)

9. Stimulate the vagus nerve regularly



Guided Meditation and Brain Rewiring

- Starting with 'I' or 'I AM,' write down in a short paragraph about how you would like your brain to wire itself in the next 21 days.
- Express your intentions as though they are already your realities.
- Feel the feeling for at least 21 days to rewire the brain for calm and confidence.



Q&A Session

For Online Anxiety Recovery Courses & Materials

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“There are no constraints on the human mind, no walls around the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect.”

—Ronald Reagan, 40th U.S President