

Learning Notes

A step towards Think Well, Live Well

#03 Deal with Anxiety

~ Part 1

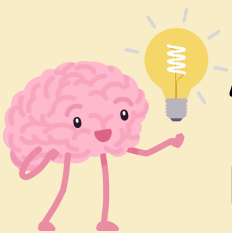




Learning Topic: Stress & Anxiety

Lazarus and Folkman's Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Stress proposes that stress is not simply a reaction to events, but rather a result of how *we interpret (appraise) those events*.

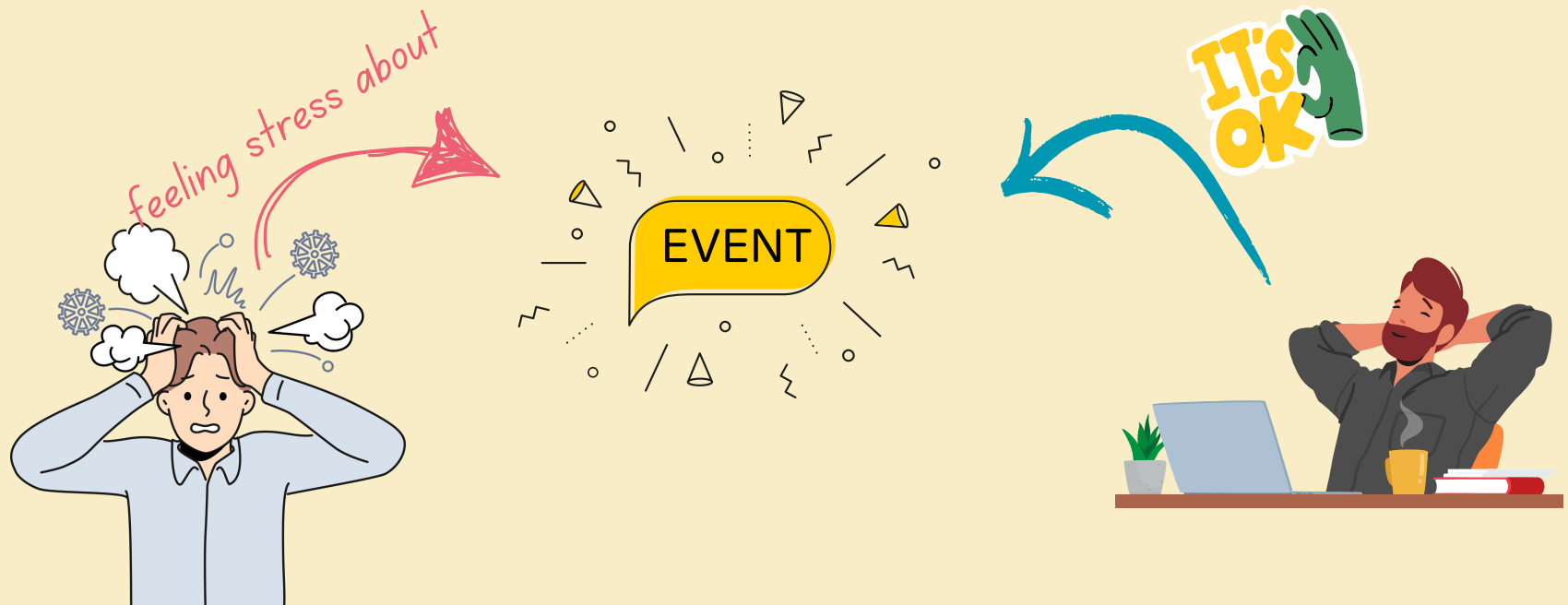
In other words, stress is **psychological**, arising from the interaction between the person and the environment



“Stress arises not from the event itself, but from how the person **appraises** the event and their **ability to cope** with it.”



Learning Topic: Stress & Anxiety



How two persons respond differently to a same event



Two Key Appraisal Stages

1

Primary Appraisal: "Is this important to me?"

- The person evaluates whether the situation:
 - Is irrelevant, positive, or a potential threat, harm, or challenge
- If the event is seen as irrelevant, no stress results.
- If it's important or threatening, stress may occur – leading to secondary appraisal.

2

Secondary Appraisal: "Can I cope with this?"

- The person assesses their resources, abilities, and options for handling the situation:
 - Internal: skills, strength, experience
 - External: social support, tools, time
- If the perceived resources are adequate → manageable or motivating challenge
- If inadequate → feelings of stress, helplessness, or anxiety



Stress Process Flow



Potential Stressor/Event

1

Primary Appraisal

"Is this important to me?"

"Is it a threat/harm?"

Yes

2

Secondary Appraisal

"Can I cope with this?"

"Do I have the ways/skills"

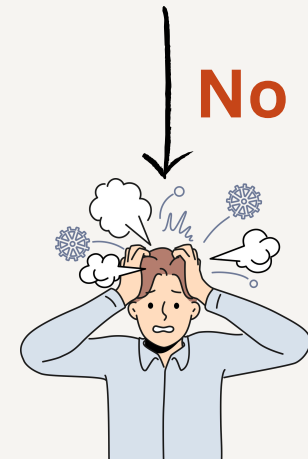
No



No Stress/Manageable

Yes

No



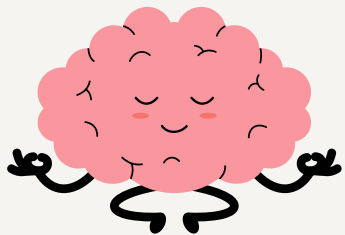
Stress/Anxiety



What can I do?

- Clam down your nervous system, sends a "safety signal" to the brain, so that you don't treat everything as a threat that triggers the anxiety. (Appraisal Stage 1 = No)
- Breathwork
- 3-2-1 Reset:

<https://thinkwe.com.my/wp-content/uploads/sites/62/2025/04/Learning-Notes-3-2-1-Reset-Breathing.pdf>



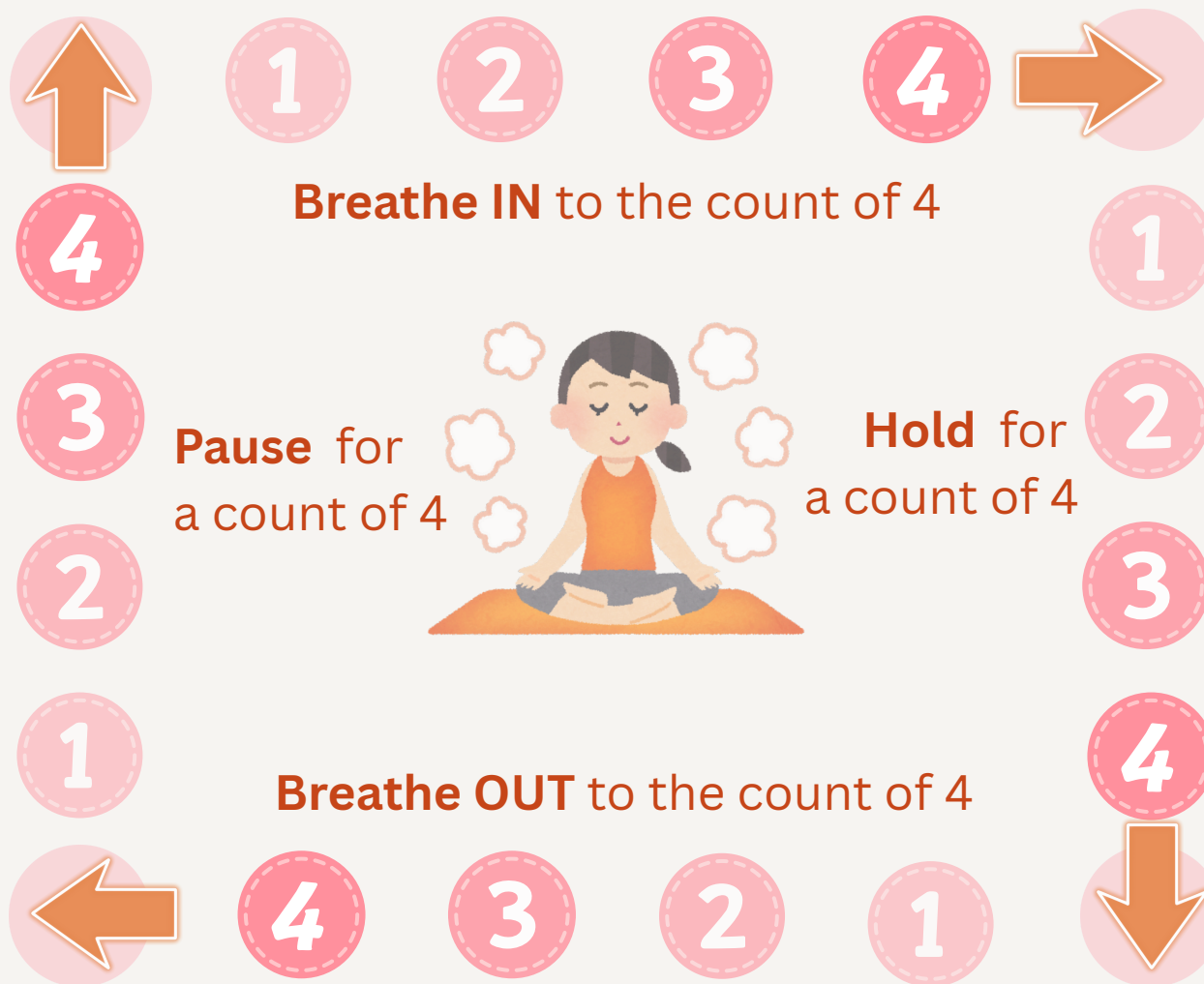
- "Calm the body, then guide the mind."



#1 - Breathwork: Box Breathing

Pattern:

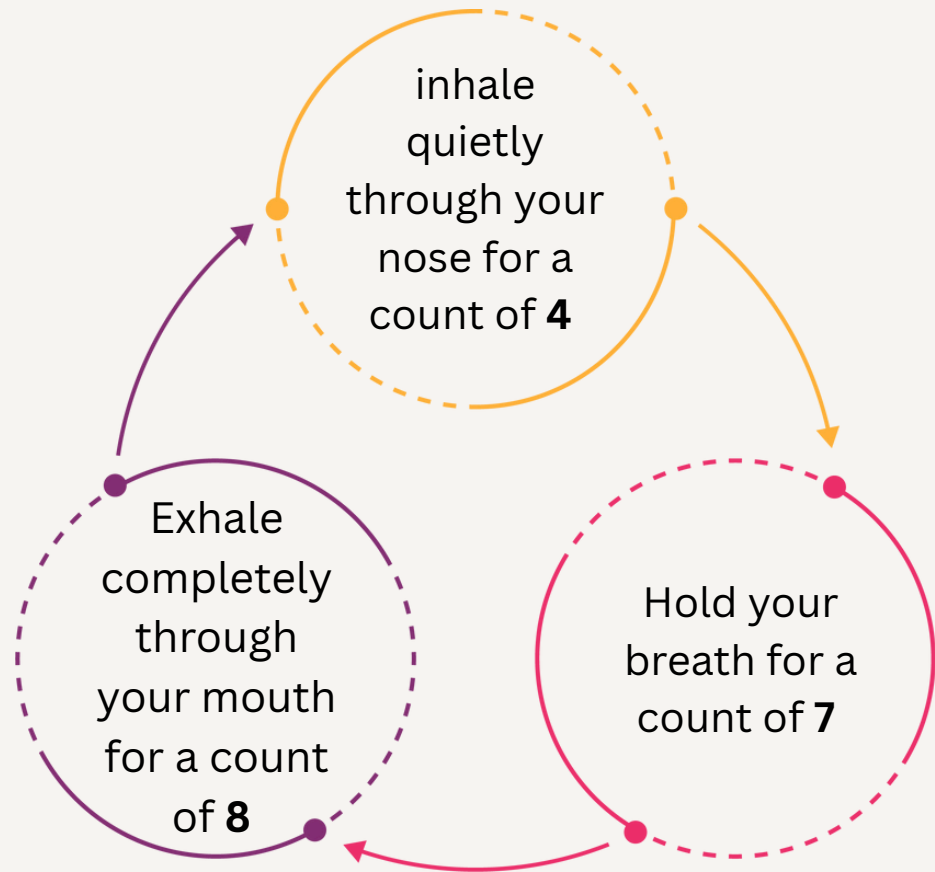
- Inhale 4 seconds
- Hold 4 seconds
- Exhale 4 seconds
- Hold 4 seconds



#2: 4-7-8 Breathing



(Longer exhales promote more vagal tone)



Reference & Resources -

- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, appraisal, and coping. Springer Publishing Company.
- Box breathing technique, popularized by Navy SEAL
- Weil, A. (n.d.). Breathing: Three exercises. <https://www.drweil.com/videos-features/videos/breathing-exercises-4-7-8-breath/>

