

# Strengthening Resilience in Education – PCT Conference 2025

UMBRELLA

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# Today's objectives

1. Understand the impact of uncertainty
2. Introduce a model for balancing emotions
3. Skills for Running a Marathon.....
4. Action plan

# Strong triggers for stress are situations that are..

**Ambiguous**

Open to different interpretations

**Novel and new**

So we don't have any experience to fall back on

**Unpredictable**

Unclear how things will turn out

**Uncertainty = threat**

# How can uncertainty impact us?



Stress

Confusion

Difficulty planning

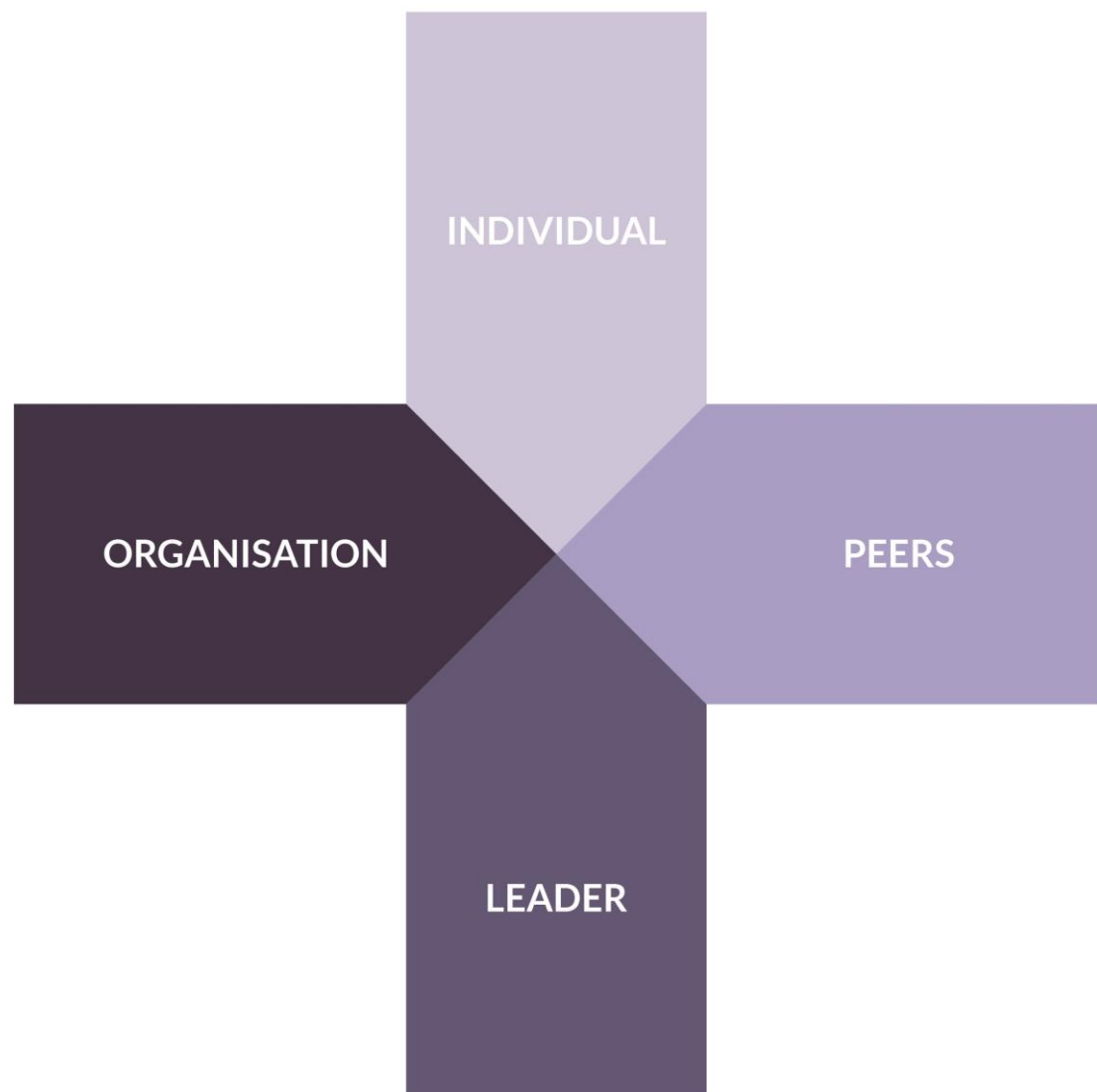
Worry about more frequent  
change

Unwelcome surprises

Knocks to our optimism

Lack of tolerance

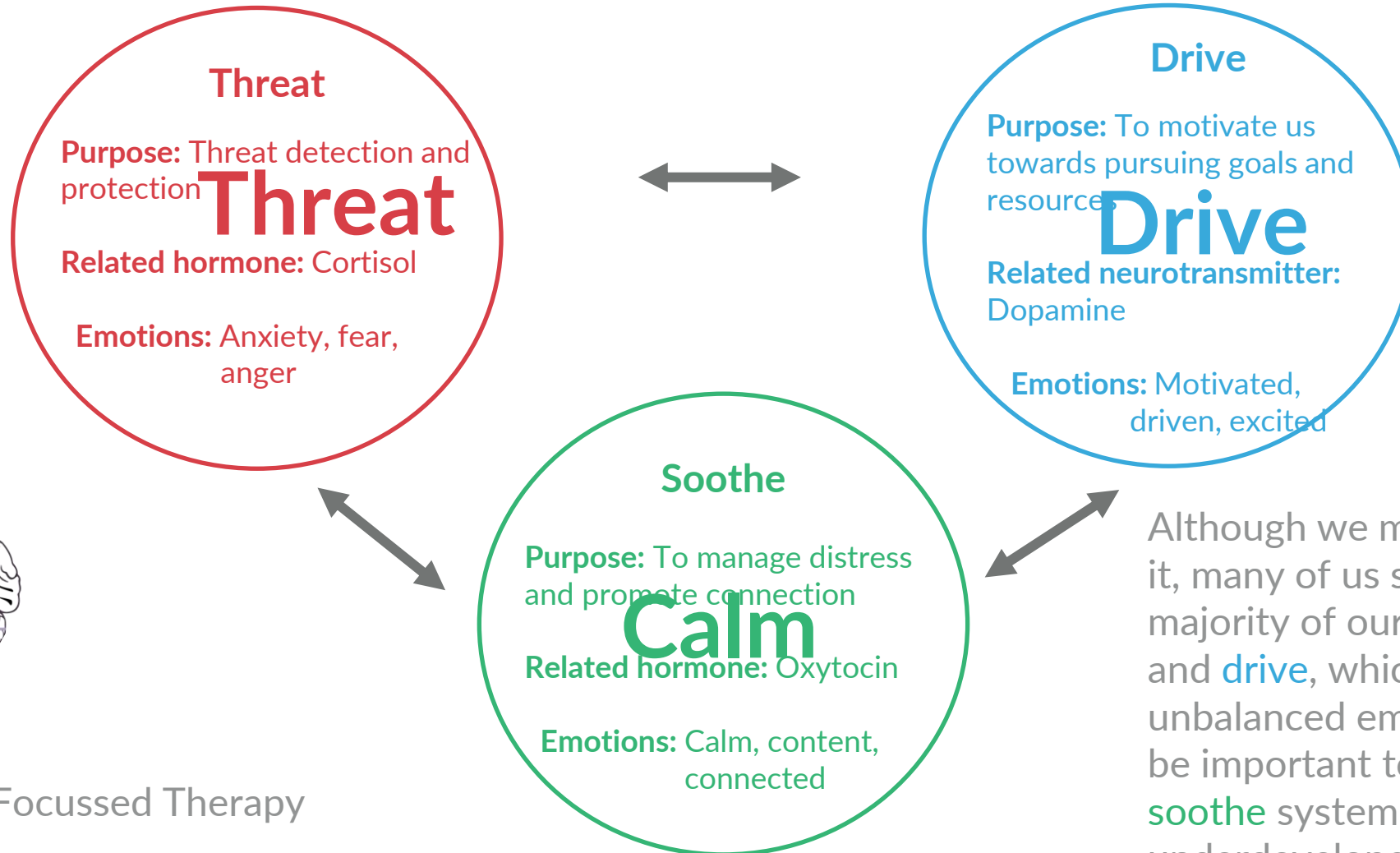
Tired/ Exhaustion



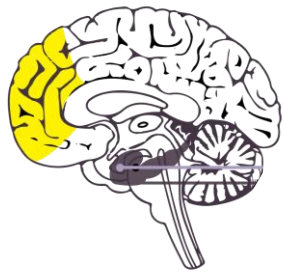
# Organisational mental health and wellbeing

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# Three circles model of emotion



Although we might not realise it, many of us spend the majority of our time in **threat** and **drive**, which can lead to unbalanced emotions. It can be important to notice if your **soothe** system is underdeveloped.



Paul Gilbert  
Compassion Focussed Therapy



# The Threat System

Manage stress and difficult emotions

## Threat

**Purpose:** Threat detection and protection, safety seeking, activation

**Related hormones:**  
Cortisol and Adrenaline

**Emotions:** Anxiety, fear  
anger, frustration

Skills for running a marathon



# Understanding Stress

## Fight or Flight

Modern day stress is the same as fight or flight, our automatic physiological response to an acute threat to survival.

It is marked by physical changes that prepare a human or an animal to react or to retreat.

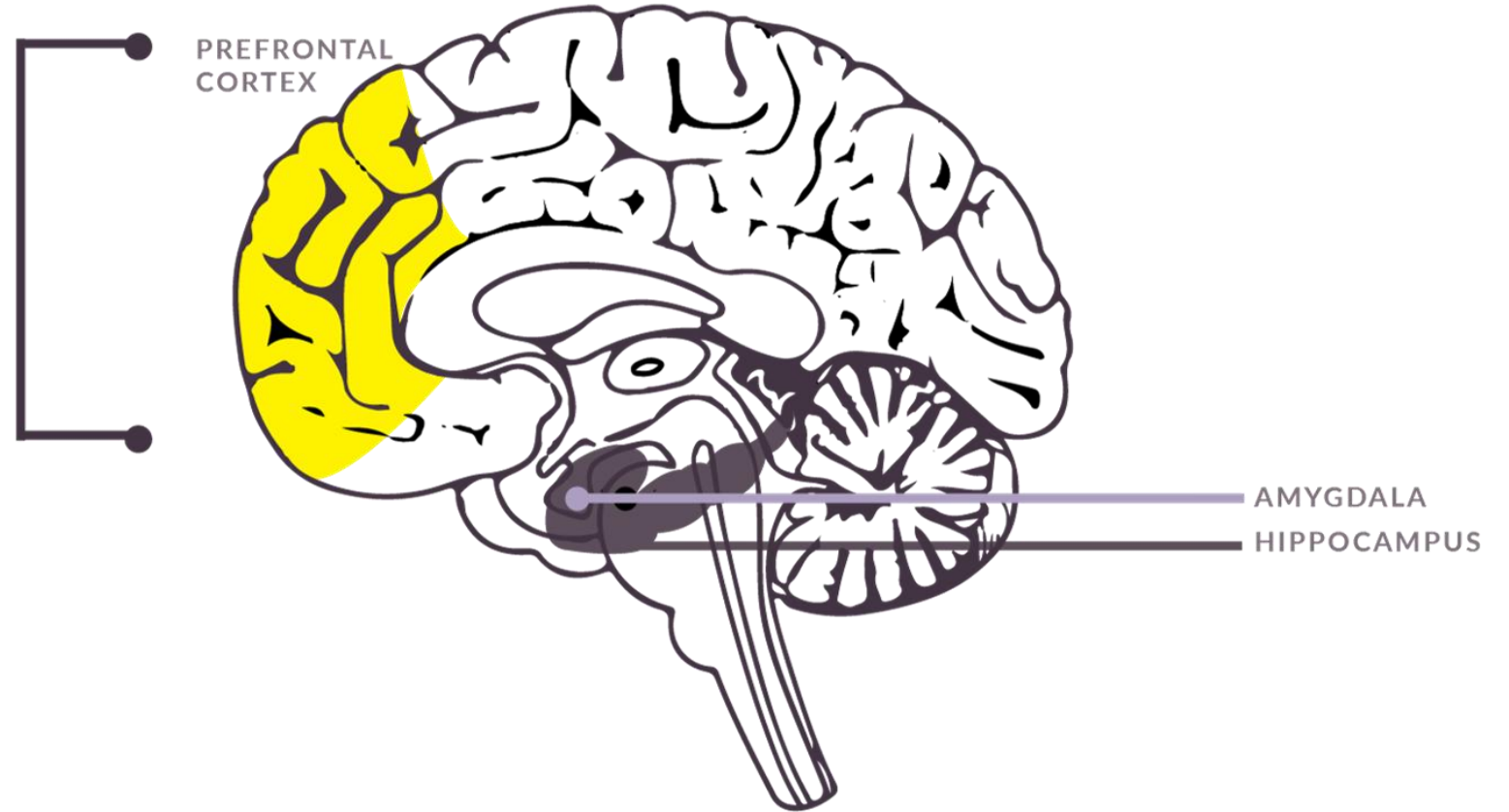




# Stress and your brain

7

- Selective attention
- Managing impulses
- Organising
- Prioritising
- Decision making



Threat

# Stress is a complete body reaction

### Emotions

- Anxious
- Frustrated
- Irritable
- Angry
- Stressed
- Sad
- Dread

### Behaviours

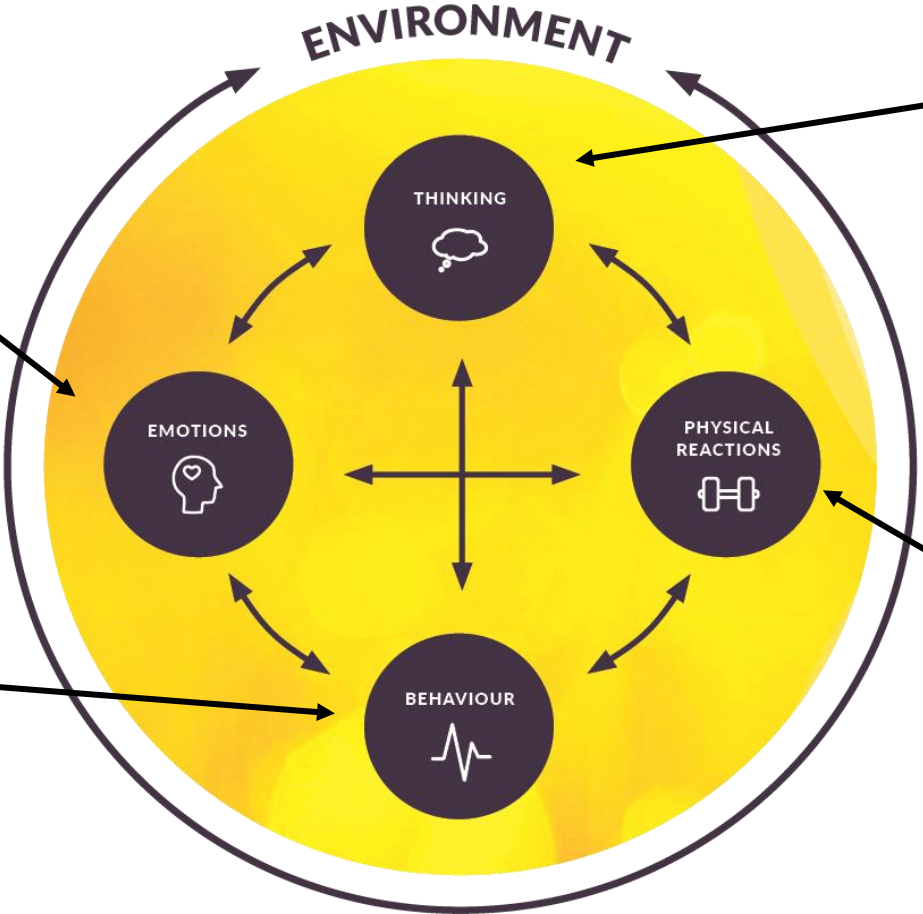
- Avoiding
- Procrastinating
- Overworking
- Withdrawing socially
- Drinking

### Thoughts

- Thinking the worst (catastrophising)
- Focus on "what ifs"
- Worry, rumination –
- Intrusive thoughts
- Can't concentrate
- Forgetful

### Physical

- Can't sleep
- Tired
- Tight chest
- HR increase
- Churny stomach

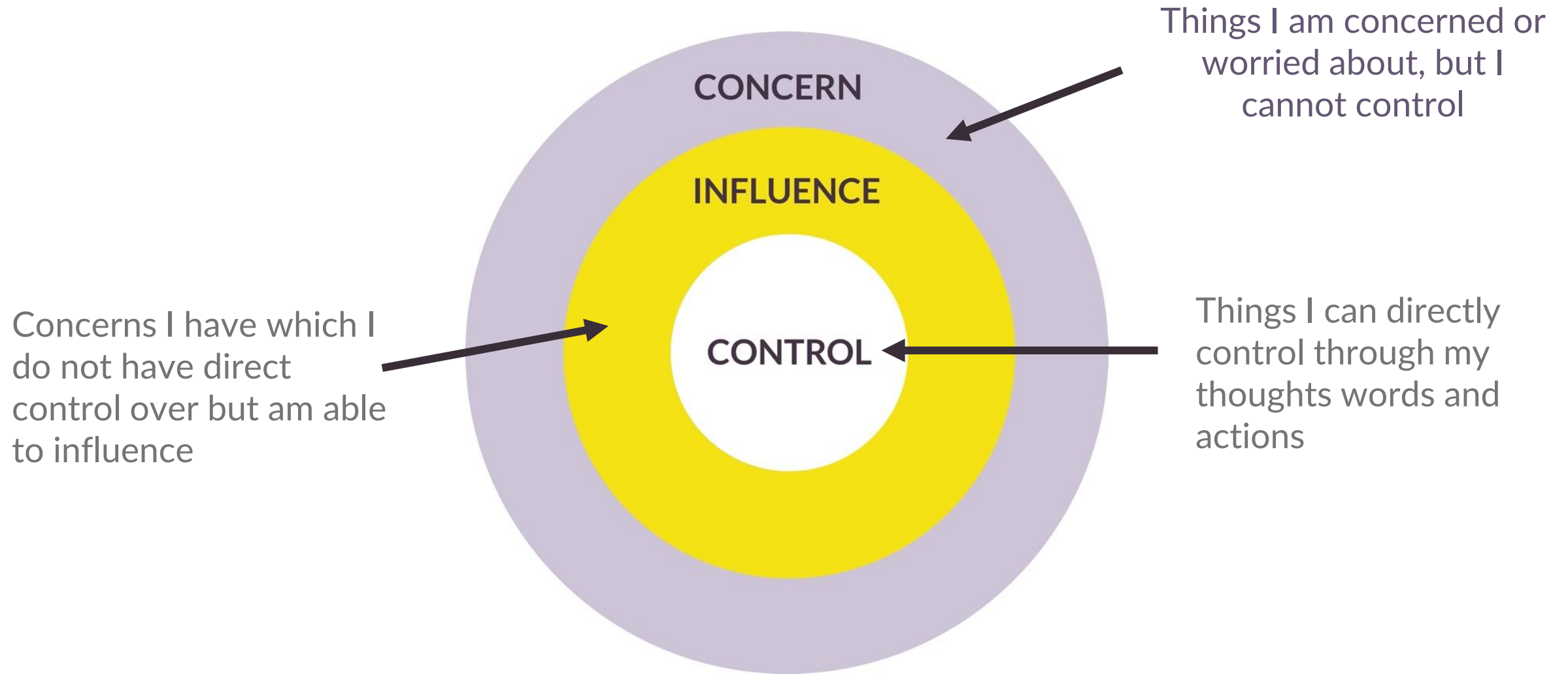


The cognitive behavioural model of stress



# Skills for running a marathon

# Circles of Control





# Think about a change you're facing

What concerns do you have?

Which of these are in your control and which of these are outside your control?

Threat



# Dial down your stress response

Activity

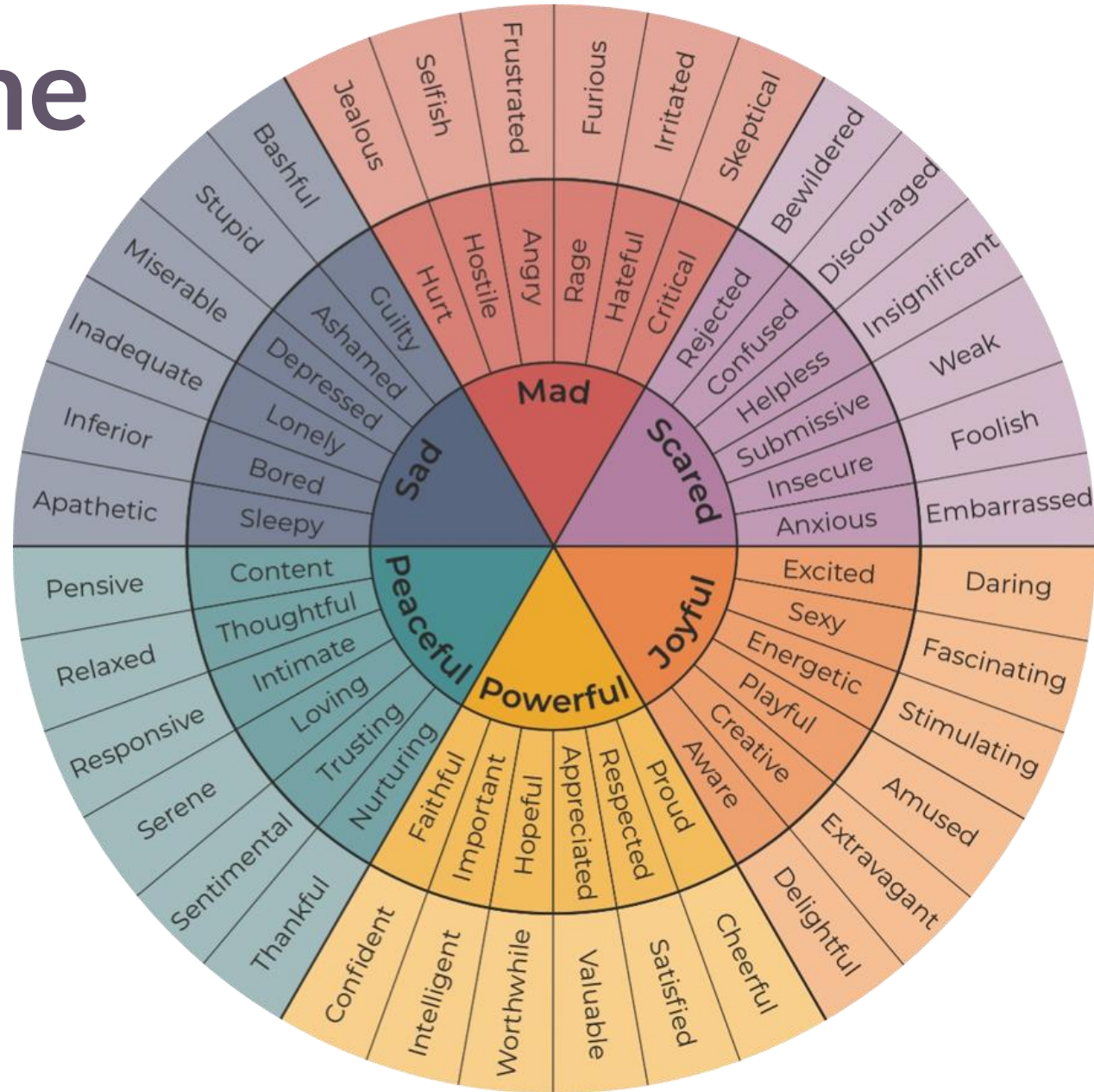


# The Three 'N's



Threat

# Name







Threat

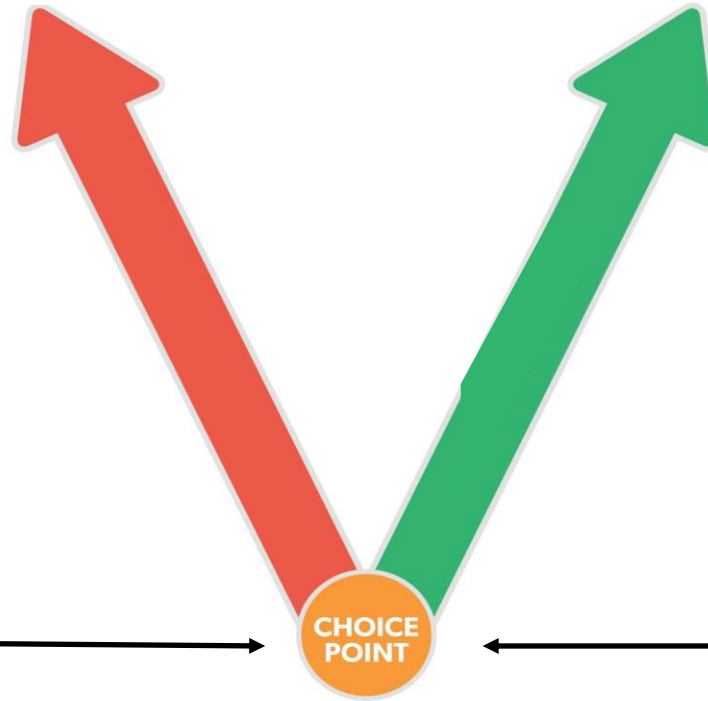
# Navigate



Drive

Unhelpful moves

Helpful moves



## Name

Threat-focused thoughts and feelings

## Navigate

Values  
Skills  
Strengths

Uncertain times

## Notice

Dr Russ Harris  
Choice Point model



# The Drive System

What keeps you going?

## Drive

**Purpose:** To motivate us towards pursuing goals and resources

**Related neurotransmitter:**  
Dopamine

**Emotions:** Motivated, driven, purposeful

Skills for running a marathon

# How are you going to show up today?

ACCEPTANCE	COOPERATIVE	FAIR	HELPFUL	RELIABLE
ADVENTUROUS	COURAGEOUS	FRIENDLY	HONEST	RESPECTFUL
ASSERTIVE	CREATIVE	FORGIVING	KIND	RESPONSIBLE
AUTHENTIC	CURIOUS	HUMOROUS	LOVING	SELF-CARING
CARING	EFFICIENT	GENEROUS	MINDFUL	SINCERE
COMMITTED	EMPATHIC	GENUINE	OPEN	SUPPORTIVE
COMPASSIONATE	ENGAGED	GRATEFUL	PLAYFUL	TRUSTING

# Values and behaviours

VALUES AT WORK	
<p>Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Growth</li></ul>	<p>Behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Space for everyone to talk</li><li>- Sharing ideas openly</li><li>- Curiously wondering about mistakes</li></ul>



# The Calm System

## Calming and Connecting

### Calm

**Purpose:** To manage distress and promote connection

**Related hormone:** Oxytocin

**Emotions:** Calm, content connected



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Skills for running a marathon

Calm

# Activating my calming system...

## 1 Diaphragmatic breathing

60 sec breath between zoom meetings

## 2 Relaxation and enjoyable activities

Plan for, and permit yourself, some downtime

## 3 Escape to another world for a while

Read a good book or immerse yourself in a film

## 4 Mindfulness practice

Experiment with Headspace or Calm

## 5 Use creativity

Plan pockets of time to paint, play music, crochet, knit, write, draw

## 6 Show compassion towards myself

Be kind and gentle in what do and say to myself (inner voice)

## 7 Acceptance of Being human

Recognise it's normal to have a hard time, everyone has difficult times

## 8 Treat myself as a close friend

If someone you cared for was struggling, what would you say to them?  
Be kind

## 9 Centering and grounding myself

Drop anchor  
Connect with your senses



# Promote social connections

Skills for running a marathon

Calm

# Connect with your crew

1

## Base training (daily habits)

Make connecting with colleagues part of your daily work routine

2

## Warm up sessions (fun)

Bring in doses of fun to energise connections

3

## Cross training (collision points)

Create intentional opportunities to connect in breaks/collaborative spaces

4

## Team huddle (informal chat)

Set up a group chat for your team where fun/informal interactions can take place

5

## Virtual track meet

Schedule online catchups/digital coffee breaks to maintain team energy and connection

6

## Group training

Co-ordinate work lunches, informal social gatherings and office networking opportunities.

7

## Real-time running partners

Use phone and video calling over email

8

## Support your team--mates.

Check in if you are concerned about a colleague, listen, offer support

9

## Victory lap

Take time to celebrate team wins  
Express gratitude



<b>KEEP</b>	<b>STOP</b>	<b>START</b>	<b>WHAT WOULD HELP?</b>
<p>What are you doing a great job at right now?</p>	<p>Anything you are doing that isn't helpful?</p>	<p>What would make the most difference right now if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learnt new skills</li><li>• Have strategies effectively in place?</li></ul>	<p>What could your organisation do to help you feel more confident and competent in leading wellbeing during this time?</p>