

# *Stress and Anxiety*

**Any questions/Want to talk: Email us!  
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# What is stress?



- **Stress refers to your physical and psychological response to demands, difficulties, or challenges.**
- **It is how we react when we feel under pressure or threatened. IT usually happens when we are in a situation that we don't feel we can manage or control.**

**We experience stress, and it can be as:**

- **For e.g.: an individual has lots of responsibilities that you're struggling to manage**
- **Part of a group, if your family is going through a difficult time**
- **Part of you community, example, if you belong to a religious group that might be experiencing discrimination**
- **A member of society, for example, during natural disasters or events like covid pandemic**

- **If you feel stress as part of a bigger group, you may all experience it differently. This can happen even if the cause of your stress is the same.**



# What is anxiety?



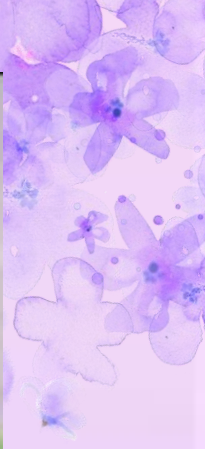
- **Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – especially about things that are yet to happen, or which we think could happen in the future**
- **It is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.**

**Most people feel anxious at times. It's common to experience anxiety while coping with stressful events or changes, especially if they could have a big impact on your life.**





Who helps the helper?



# Symptoms!!

## STRESS

- Muscle tension
- Chest pain
- Rapid heartbeat
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Memory problems
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue
- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty with planning and decision-making

## ANXIETY

- Feelings of fear, dread, worry and/or discomfort
- Restlessness
- Confusion
- Excessive sweating
- Muscle tension
- Rapid speech
- Racing heart
- Chest pain
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Difficulty concentration, planning and making decisions





# Types of anxiety

Anxiety is the main symptom of several conditions, including:

- Panic disorder
- Phobias
- PTSD – Post traumatic stress disorder
- Social anxiety disorder (social – phobia)

## **Generalized Anxiety disorder [GAD]:**

People with GAD feel anxious most days and often struggle to remember the last time they felt relaxed. As soon as one anxious thought is resolved, another may appear around a different issue

## **Social Anxiety disorder:**

Also known as Social phobia, is a long term and overwhelming fear of social situations. It's common and usually starts during teenage years. It can be distressing and have a huge impact on your life. For some people it gets better as they get older. But for many people it doesn't go away on its own without treatment.

## **Health Anxiety:**

Is when you spend so much time worrying, you're ill, or going to get ill, that it starts to take over your life. It's related to obsessive compulsive disorder [OCD]

**It's important you get help if you're having symptoms. There are treatments that can help you manage it**





# Difference

The big difference between stress and anxiety is the presence of a specific trigger.

Stress is typically tied to a specific situation. Once that situation resolves, so does your stress.

Maybe you have an upcoming exam that you're worried about taking. Or you're trying to juggle working from home with three small children who are competing for your attention. In both cases, there's a specific root of your stress. Once the exam is over or your children return to daycare, your stress starts to go away. That doesn't mean stress is always short-lived, though. Chronic stress refers to long lasting stress that occurs in response to ongoing pressure, like a demanding job or family conflict.

Anxiety, by contrast, doesn't always have a specific stressor.

While stress and anxiety are different things, they're closely connected.

In some cases, stress might trigger anxiety. If you're stressed about a big upcoming move, for example, you might find that you start to feel generally nervous about nothing.





# Exam pressure – Stress and anxiety

Lots of us know what it's like to feel stressed, but it's not easy to describe what stress is.

There's no single definition of stress, and it might feel different for you than it does for someone else. How we experience stress can feel different at different times. It can also depend on what's causing it.

Feeling stressed, worried, or under pressure around exams can be difficult to manage. But there are things that can help – it's about finding what's right for you.

Exam stress can be more than feeling nervous on the day of an exam. It can also be how you feel building up to exams, during exams and when waiting for results.



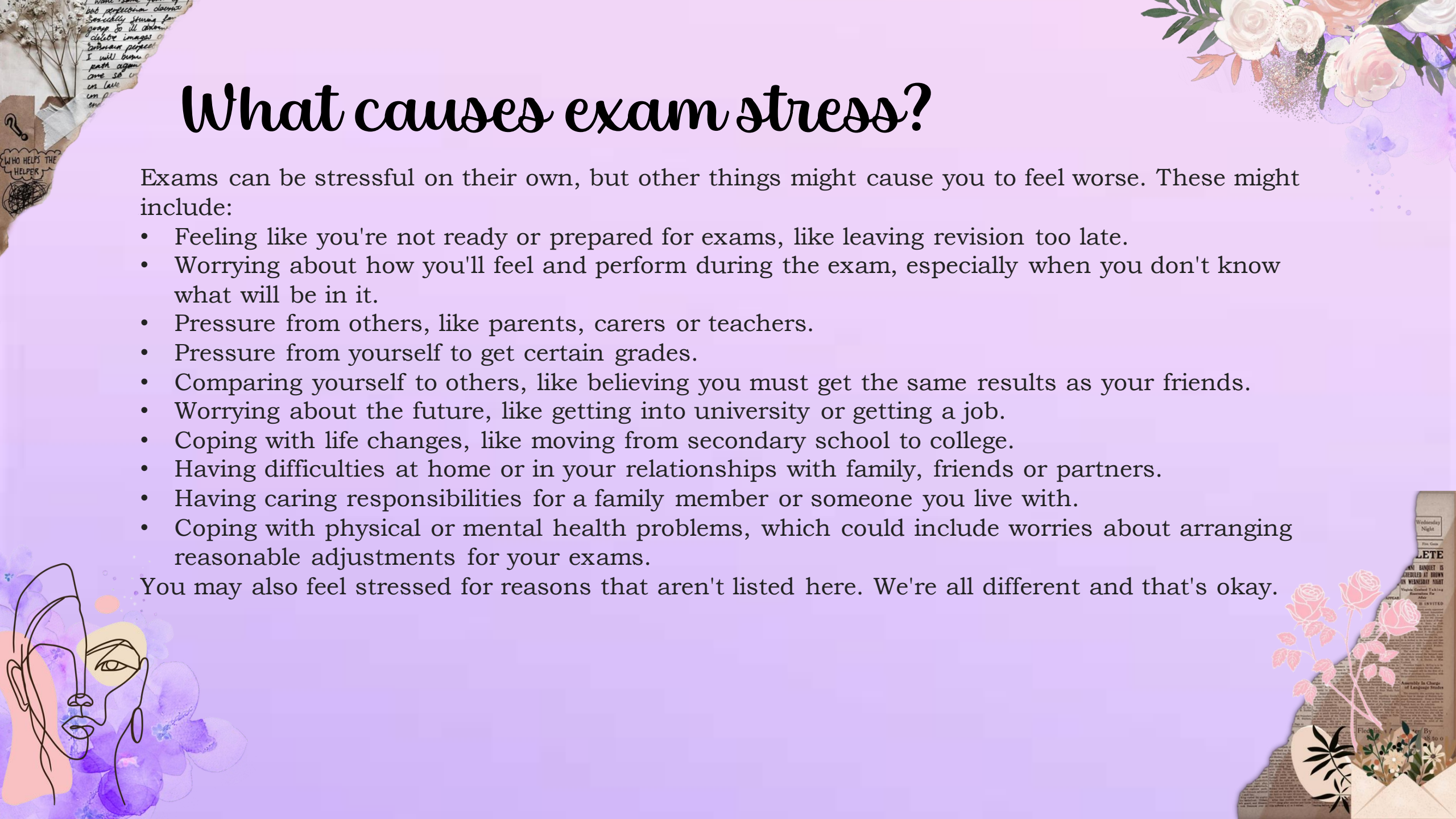


# What causes exam stress?

Exams can be stressful on their own, but other things might cause you to feel worse. These might include:

- Feeling like you're not ready or prepared for exams, like leaving revision too late.
- Worrying about how you'll feel and perform during the exam, especially when you don't know what will be in it.
- Pressure from others, like parents, carers or teachers.
- Pressure from yourself to get certain grades.
- Comparing yourself to others, like believing you must get the same results as your friends.
- Worrying about the future, like getting into university or getting a job.
- Coping with life changes, like moving from secondary school to college.
- Having difficulties at home or in your relationships with family, friends or partners.
- Having caring responsibilities for a family member or someone you live with.
- Coping with physical or mental health problems, which could include worries about arranging reasonable adjustments for your exams.

You may also feel stressed for reasons that aren't listed here. We're all different and that's okay.



# Exam pressure – Stress and anxiety





# Disorders-related to stress and anxiety

- **Panic disorder:**

- This condition causes panic attacks, which are moments of extreme fear accompanied by a pounding heart, shortness of breath, and a fear of impending doom.

- **Post traumatic Stress disorder [PTSD]:**

- This is a condition that causes flashbacks or anxiety as the result of a traumatic experience.

- **Social anxiety disorder:**

- This condition causes intense feelings of anxiety in situations that involve interacting with others.

- **Obsessive-compulsive disorder: [OCD]**

- This is a condition that causes repetitive thoughts and the compulsion to complete certain ritual actions.

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING ANY OF THESE DISORDERS – PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP.



# How to cope with stress?

➤ **Create a healthy daily routine:** During times of stress, it can be tempting to rest less often. But it's when you're under pressure that breaks are especially key. Set boundaries around your time to preserve your mental energy. Build into your daily routine time for physical activity, ample sleep, nutritious meals, and shutting off your phone.

➤ **Set realistic goals:** If you're feeling overwhelmed, try to break your larger goals down into smaller, more manageable ones. Setting (and meeting) your goals will help to build your self-esteem and keep your stress under control.

➤ **Open-up:** If you're having trouble deciding or resolving a conflict, the first step is to open-up and talk about it. Don't be afraid to ask for advice from your loved ones, mentors, or friends. They may even be able to help you find a solution to your problem.

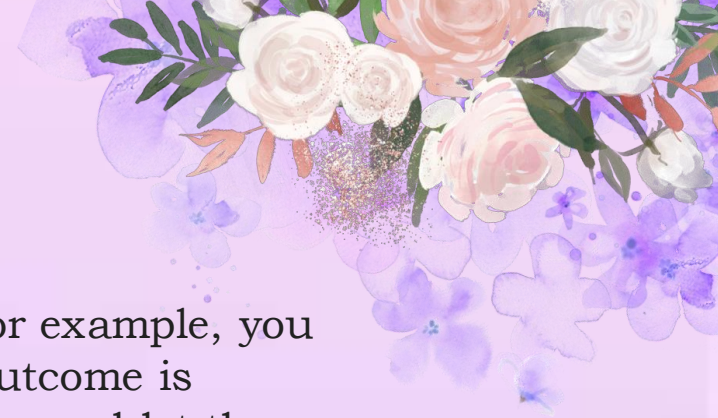
➤ **Build your support system:** A healthy support system of family, friends, neighbors, and loved ones can help you manage your responsibilities during life's stressful moments. If you don't feel like you're part of a community yet, start by volunteering with local organizations or picking up a new hobby





# How to cope with anxiety?

- **Adjust your thinking:** Anxiety is often rooted in unhealthy thought patterns. For example, you may tell yourself that you'll “always” be a certain way or that a certain negative outcome is inevitable. When you notice yourself having negative thoughts, try to observe them and let them pass without judgment. Over time, you can start replacing them with more positive, realistic thoughts.
- **Face your fears:** To take control of your anxiety, it's important to confront your fears. You don't have to throw yourself headfirst into an anxiety-inducing situation but taking baby steps—such as introducing yourself to one person at a party or trying a new activity—can be empowering.
- **Avoid caffeine:** Studies have found that excessive caffeine use is linked to symptoms like high blood pressure, panic, and insomnia. Limit your caffeine intake as much as possible to prevent your anxiety symptoms from getting worse.
- **Use a self-care app:** A self-care or anxiety reduction smartphone app can help you monitor your anxiety symptoms over time, identify your usual triggers, and establish a consistent routine to improve your mental health.
- **Try relaxation exercises:** If you experience anxiety frequently, it can be hard to relax. Deep breathing techniques, soothing music, guided imagery exercises, and calming activities like painting can help you train your body and mind to press pause.
- **Practice mindfulness techniques:** Anxiety is often focused on the hypothetical future. Mindfulness techniques, such as meditation, can help you learn to stay present in the immediate moment.





# TIPS TO HELP YOU BE PROACTIVE WITH YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



# Box - Breathing

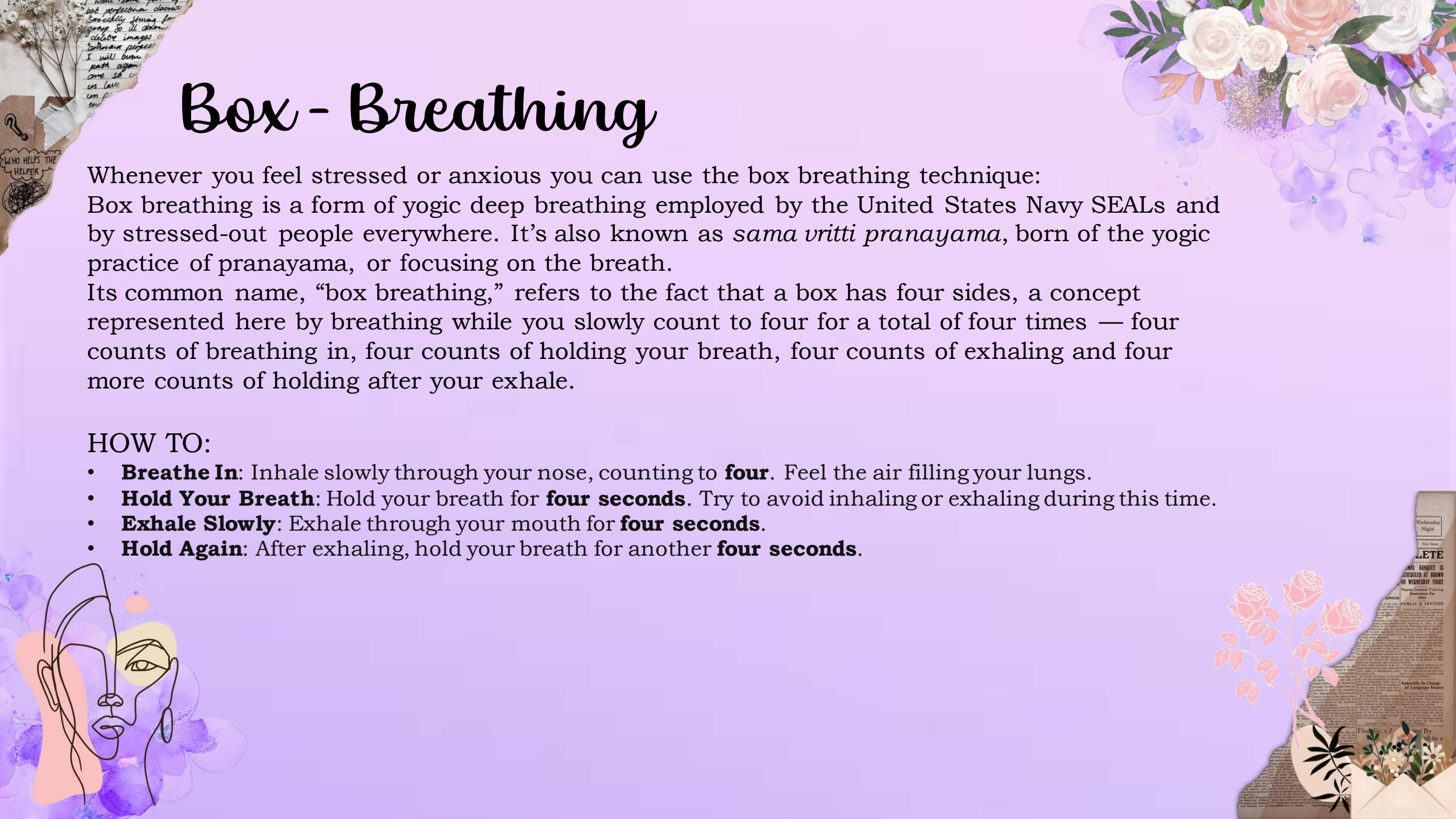
Whenever you feel stressed or anxious you can use the box breathing technique:

Box breathing is a form of yogic deep breathing employed by the United States Navy SEALs and by stressed-out people everywhere. It's also known as *sama vritti pranayama*, born of the yogic practice of pranayama, or focusing on the breath.

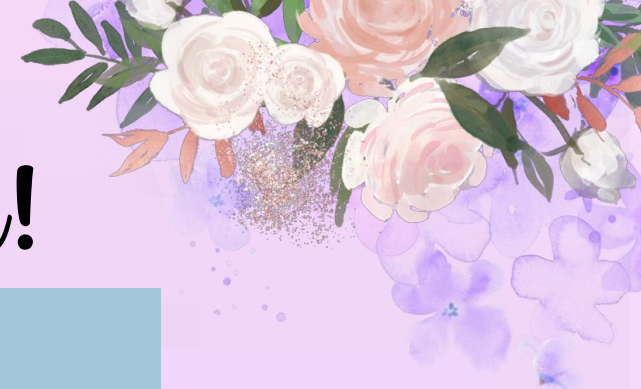
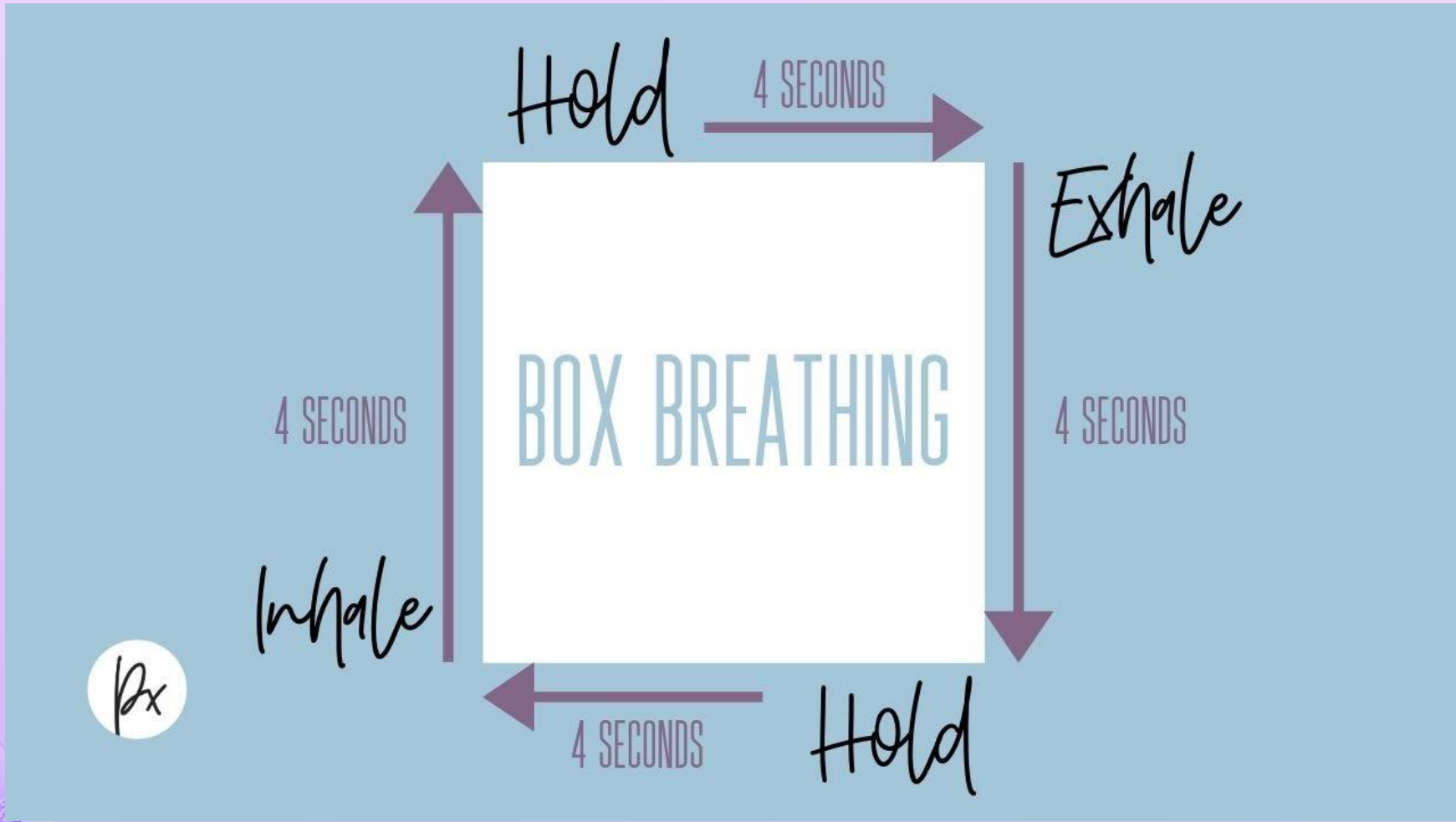
Its common name, "box breathing," refers to the fact that a box has four sides, a concept represented here by breathing while you slowly count to four for a total of four times — four counts of breathing in, four counts of holding your breath, four counts of exhaling and four more counts of holding after your exhale.

## HOW TO:

- **Breathe In:** Inhale slowly through your nose, counting to **four**. Feel the air filling your lungs.
- **Hold Your Breath:** Hold your breath for **four seconds**. Try to avoid inhaling or exhaling during this time.
- **Exhale Slowly:** Exhale through your mouth for **four seconds**.
- **Hold Again:** After exhaling, hold your breath for another **four seconds**.



# Try Box Breathing now together!





# Gratitude Journal/jar

## WHAT IS A GRATITUDE JOURNAL?

A gratitude journal is a diary of things for which someone is grateful. Keeping a gratitude journal is a popular practice in the field of positive psychology.

## WHAT IS A GRATITUDE JAR?

A gratitude jar, sometimes called a thankful jar, is simply a jar used to collect your gratitude. Most often, this gratitude activity involves writing different things that you're thankful for on slips of paper and placing them in a designated jar. A "gratitude jar" can take on many different forms, from a simple mason jar that sits on your dining table to a decorative fall themed jar with paper leaves for writing your blessings down on.

Keeping a gratitude journal will help you stay focused and positive, as whenever you feel low, you can go back and read what you are grateful for and how lucky you are to be who and where you are. This will help you stand back up and push away negative thoughts.



CREATE YOUR OWN GRATITUDE JAR

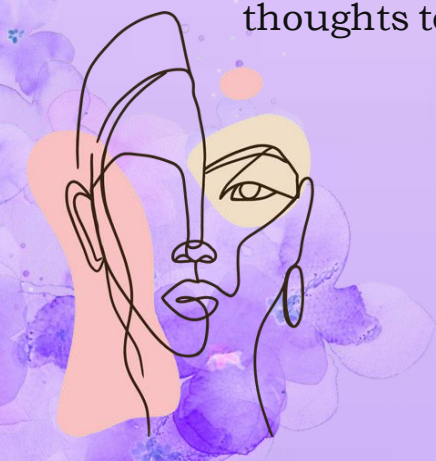
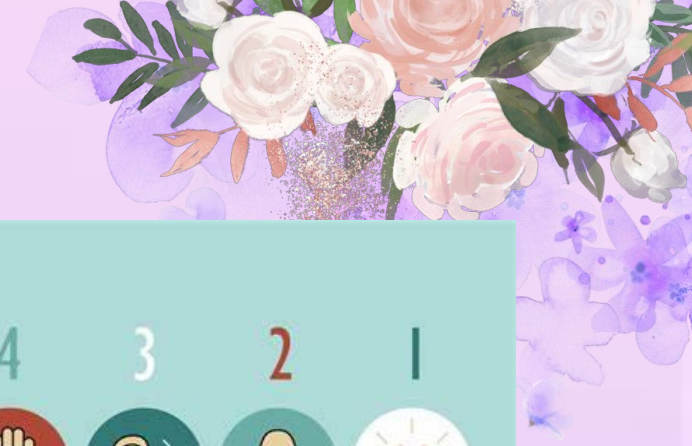


# Five senses exercise

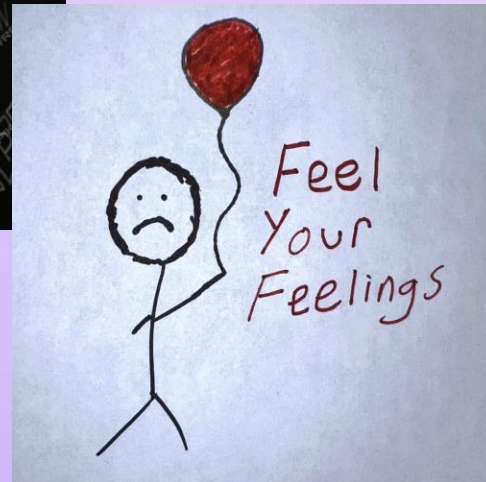
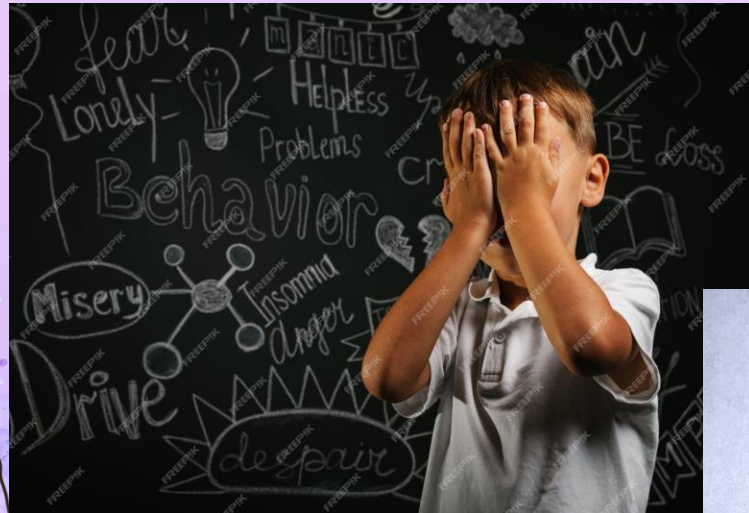
The **54321** (or 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) method is a grounding exercise designed to manage acute stress and reduce anxiety. It involves identifying

- **5 things you can see:** Look around and name five things you can see, such as a chair, a window, a plant, etc.
- **4 things you can touch:** Feel four things around you, such as your clothes, your hair, a pillow, etc.
- **3 things you can hear:** Listen and name three sounds you can hear, such as a clock, a bird, a car, etc.
- **2 things you can smell:** Notice and name two smells you can detect, such as coffee, perfume, etc.
- **1 thing you can taste:** Taste something and name it, such as gum, water, chocolate, etc.

This exercise can help you shift your attention from anxious thoughts to the present moment.



- You could try **reading** something, to help you calm down when your stressed and take your mind away from the things that is making you anxious or stresses



**Talking about your feelings** can provide a cathartic release, offering a pathway to understanding and managing stress and anxiety. Sharing your emotions with a trusted individual creates a supportive environment where you feel heard and validated, fostering emotional well-being.



# Well-being DROP-IN

Games



Meditation

DREAM BIG.  
WORK HARD.  
MAKE IT  
happen.

Mindfulness

Truth circle!!

be  
yourself

Colouring

Bingo!!



**Location: T-Block [Upstairs]**

Wednesday 6th March



Questions:

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REMINDER: THE WELL-BEING DROP-IN IS ON WEDNESDAY 6TH MARCH. YEAR 12S OR 13s are welcome to drop by!