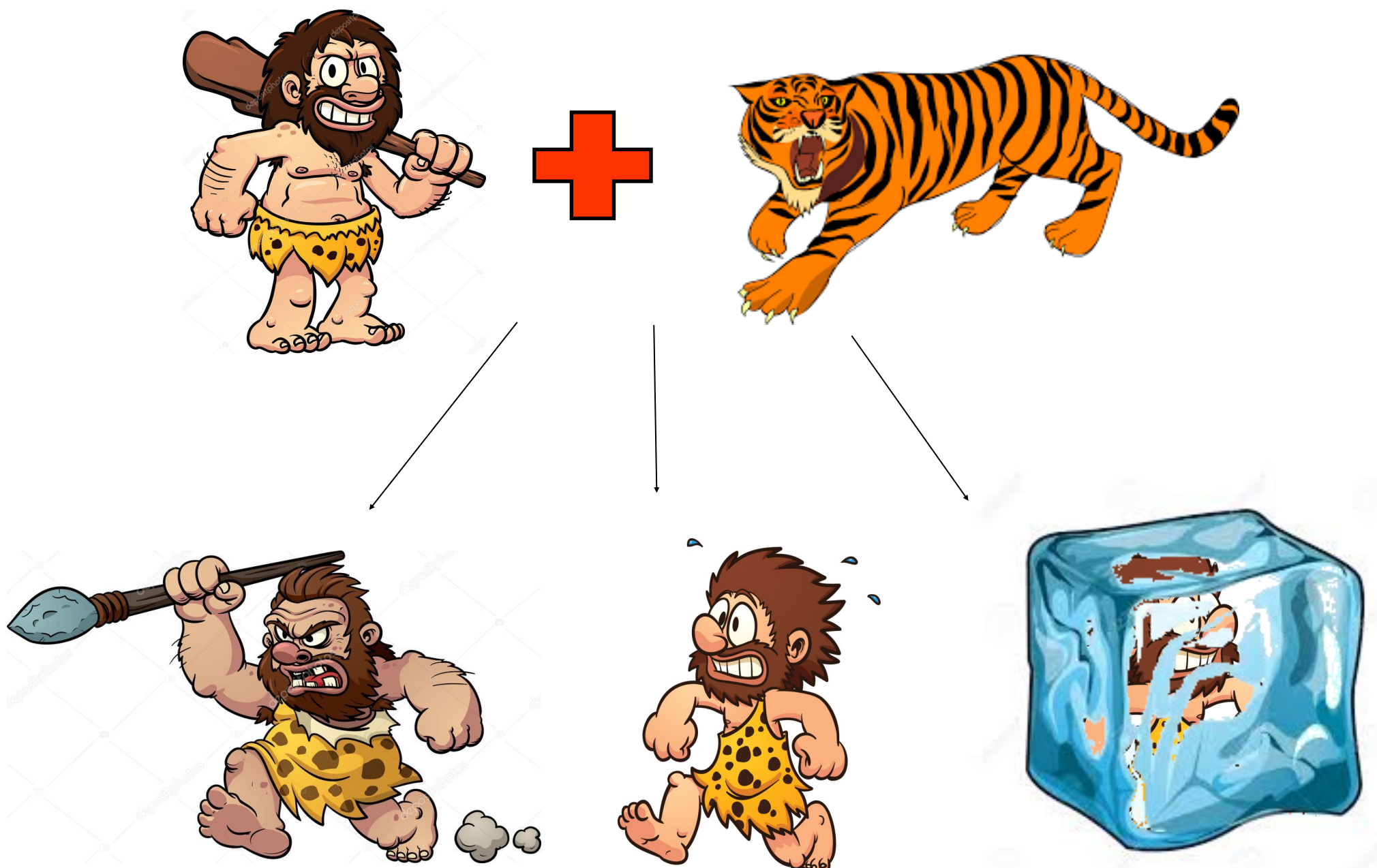


What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of intense discomfort, you can often feel threatened or afraid.

But why does it happen and where does it come from?

Fight, Flight or Freeze....



The fight, flight, freeze response is a primitive survival response. It occurs when humans face danger, and is designed to keep us alive by mobilising the brain and body. It helps us to fight off an enemy, run from an avalanche and freeze to hide from a predator.

Humans no longer face these dangers in our every day life but the fight, flight, freeze response can still happen whenever we become afraid.

You may be afraid of a difficult exam or speaking in front of your class. Your brain misinterprets this fear and sends out a **false alarm** triggering the fight, flight, freeze response **even when you are completely safe!**



Is Anxiety Normal?

Yes, anxiety is a natural human response to feeling afraid.

Anxiety can even be helpful as it can help us perform better. For example, if you were not anxious about an exam you might not revise before taking the exam and you may then fail as a result.

However, someone with too much anxiety will attempt to avoid the exam, or they may perform poorly due to their anxiety symptoms.

Situation: You are giving a presentation in front of a large group of people

No Anxiety

Moderate Anxiety

High Anxiety

A presentation you say?

Whatever -I'll wing it on the day.

I know I can do this but I need to plan and be prepared.

I will practice before the presentation.

I can't do this. I'm going to look like a fool. How can I get out of this?

I feel sick just thinking about it. What if I faint or go red or people laugh?

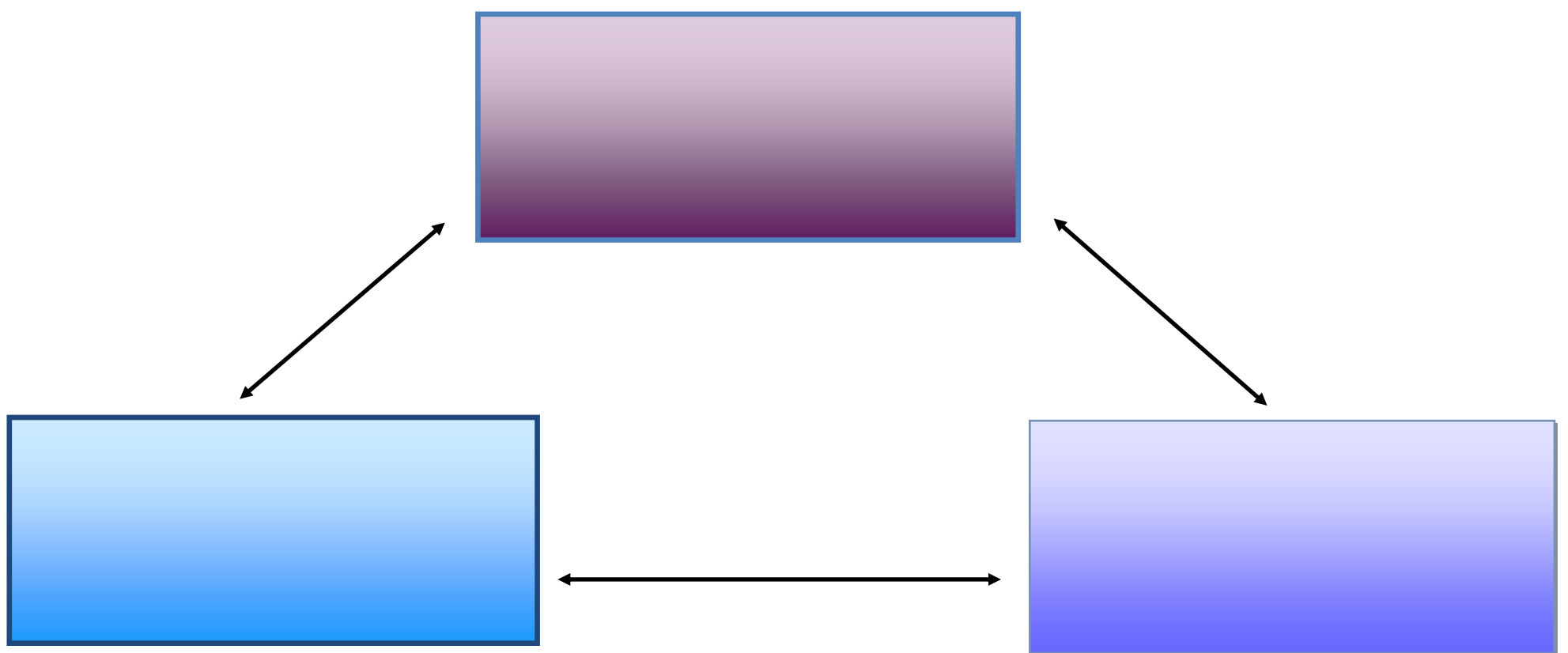
Therefore we do not want to get rid of anxiety completely but instead we want to find a healthy, moderate level of anxiety.



Anxious Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour



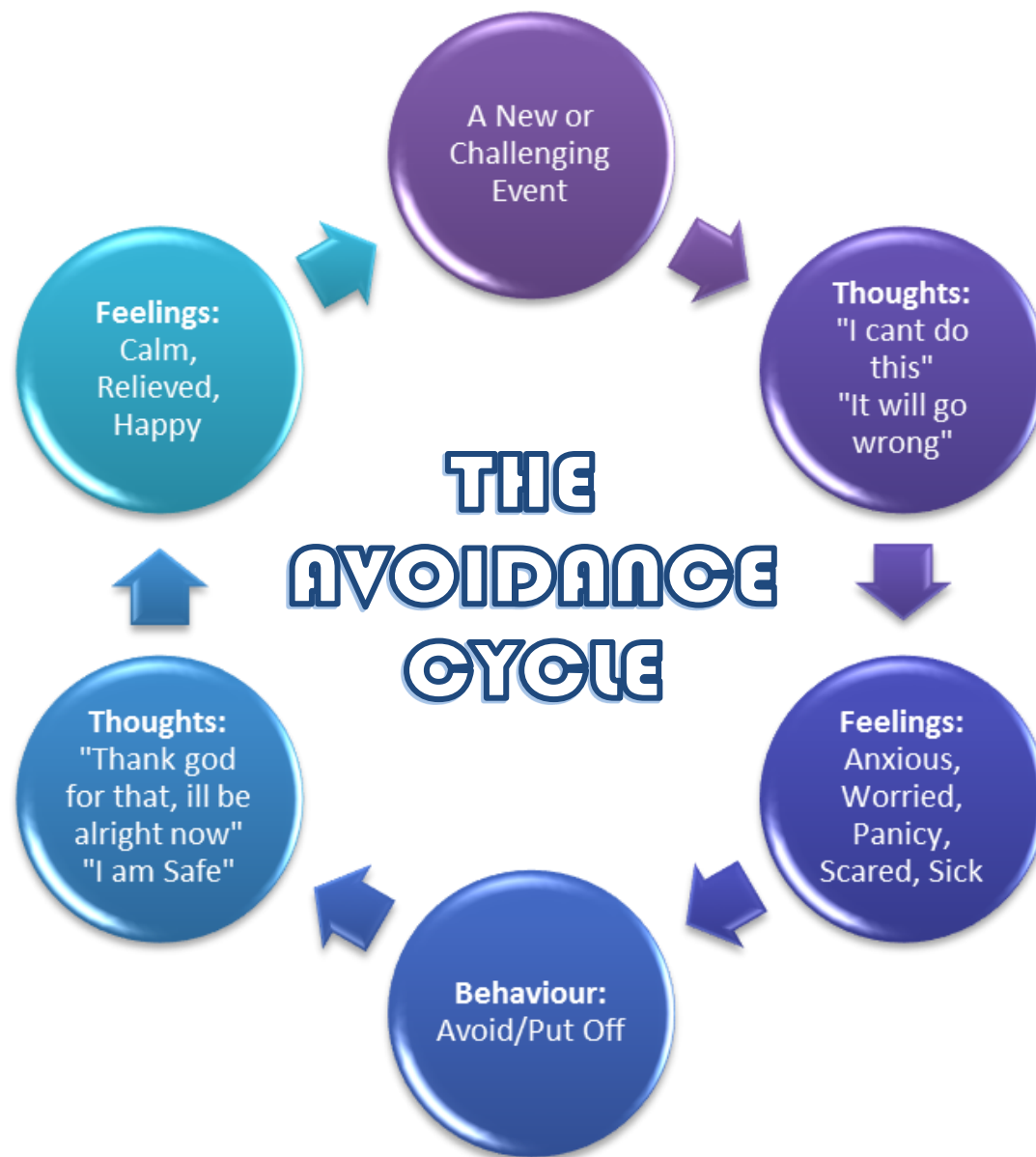
The diagram shows an anxiety trap, where anxious thoughts affect the way we feel and behave. They feed into each other and keep the anxiety continuing round in a negative cycle.



What areas on the diagram could be changed to help reduce anxiety?

How can I control my anxiety?

In order to stop feeling anxious you may avoid what is making you anxious. The cycle below shows how this can make us feel better and bring us **short term relief**.



However in the **long term** avoiding an anxiety provoking situation will only make the **anxiety worse** the next time around.

Why do you think this is?

