Interoception and Emotions

Sensory processing is how each person experiences their own world. For example, the outside world sends messages to our brains, these messages are sorted within our brains and bodies to help us learn, talk, see, interact and respond.

The first five senses are taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing.

TASTE



Helps us to know if the food tastes sweet, sour, salty or bitter.

SMELL



Helps us identify if something smells good or bad, such as perfumes or food

TOUCH



Helps us feel with our hands and skin such as a fluffy blanket, or a change of temperature

SIGHT



Helps us to see and interpret visual information using our eyes.

HEARING



Helps us to interpret noises and voices.

Did you know there are another three ‘hidden’ senses?

PROPRIOCEPTION

Helps you know where your body parts, such as arms and legs, are without looking.

INTEROCEPTION



VESTIBULAR

Helps your body know where it is in space and stay balanced when moving around, such as swinging or standing on one leg.

What is interoception?

It is our sense that helps us notice what is going on inside of our body.

How can we tell what's happening inside our bodies?

Australian Childhood Foundation

Do you ever feel...

When your STOMACH growls, do you start to feel hungry?

Butterflies in your STOMACH when you're excited or anxious?

Your HEART pounding when you're scared or running fast?

When you're feeling thirsty, does your MOUTH get dry?

A buzzing feeling in your HEAD when you're overload with information or when feeling anxious?

MUSCLE pain after playing sports or doing exercise?

Interoception helps us to notice these signals from inside the body, which are also clues to our EMOTIONS.

How do you know when you might be feeling anxious?

Perhaps you NOTICE these body signals?

Tightness in the chest?
Butterflies in the stomach?
Clenched hands?
Dizzy head?
Fast heart rate?

You can use these signals to IDENTIFY what you migt be feeling

Unpacking interoception and how it connects to our emotions?

Australian Childhood Foundation

Alex is 14 years old and is having trouble getting to school every day, this is a little bit of what they are thinking...

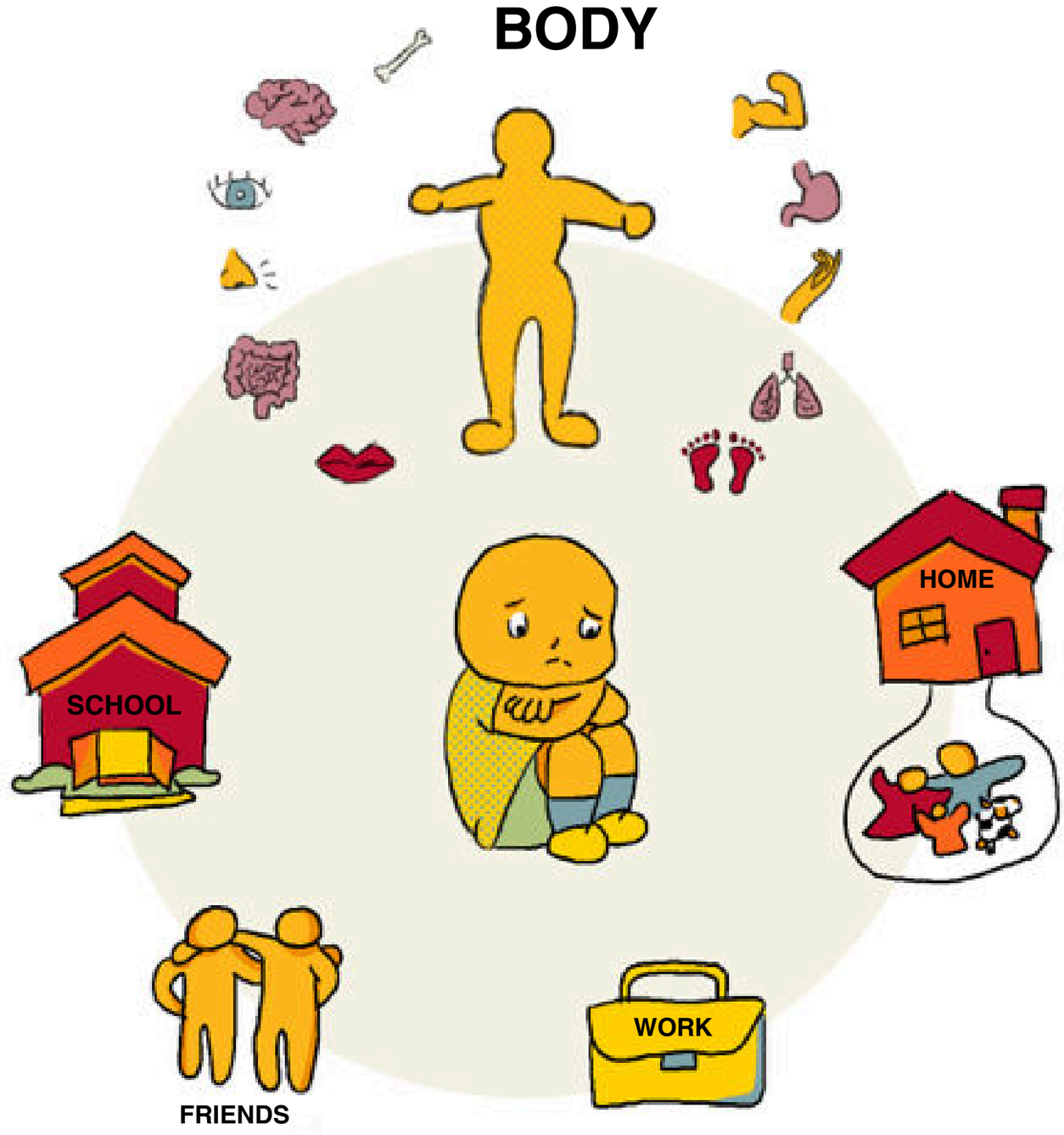
My body is acting up; my chest is tight; my hands are clenched.

The voices around me are all blending together, making me feel even more confused.
I can't understand what's going on with me. My mind keeps wandering, and I can't concentrate in class.

I'm irritated by the smallest things, my skin feels itchy, and I'm just so exhausted.
I can't focus on what anyone is saying to me, and I end up lashing out without meaning to.

If I could just have a break, maybe I could start to make sense of it all.

But for now, I'm overwhelmed and confused, trying to find my way through the chaos.



Many students, like Alex, often feel overwhelmed and have trouble focusing in the classroom.

But what signals does the body send to Alex when their skin feels itchy, their chest is tight, and their hands are clenched?

Is their body trying to give clues to Alex and guide them on how to listen to their body signals, identify their emotions and take action?

First, can we think about what are Alex's Body Signals? It sounds like the body sends signals to Alex, such as a tight chest, clenched hands, and itchy skin.

Did you know that our brain and body are connected and work together to help us understand what's happening around us?

When Alex feels tightness in their chest, clenched hands, and itchy skin, their body tries to communicate with them and give them a clue that something feels wrong.

By paying attention to these signals, Alex can recognise that they might be experiencing feelings of overwhelm, confusion, or anxiety.

Which action can Alex take to help reduce their feelings of anxiety?

Alex needs to discover what will help them to feel better when their body is feeling anxious.

There are many things that might help Alex; these could include to have a break, take deep breaths, listen to some music, move their body or find a safe quiet place in the school.



REMEMBER:
It is important to understand how our brain and body work together as it can help us handle our emotions better.

When we pay attention to what our bodies are telling us, we can get better at managing our feelings.

It's totally okay to feel confused, worried, or overwhelmed.

It might be a sign to tune into your body, or ask for help from someone you trust to unpack what might be going on for you

Using interoception, Alex experiences feelings like confusion, anxiety, and overwhelm.

FEEL SENSATION

Tight chest, dizzy head, heart beating fast.

EMOTION

Anxiety

ACTION

Ask to take a break, deep breathing, use fidget toys, listen to music, have a snack.

OUTCOME

Feeling less worry

BUT did you know that understanding how you feel or accurate INTEROCEPTION may help you to RECOGNISE and REGULATE your emotions?

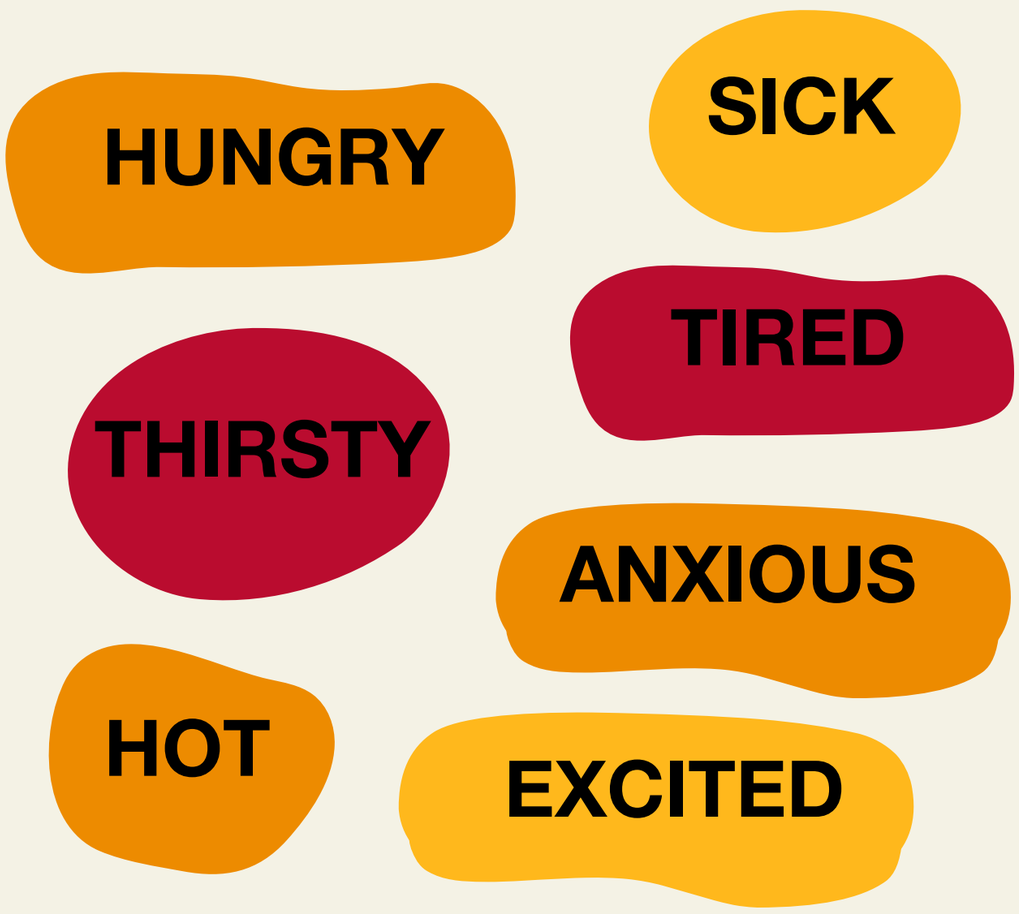
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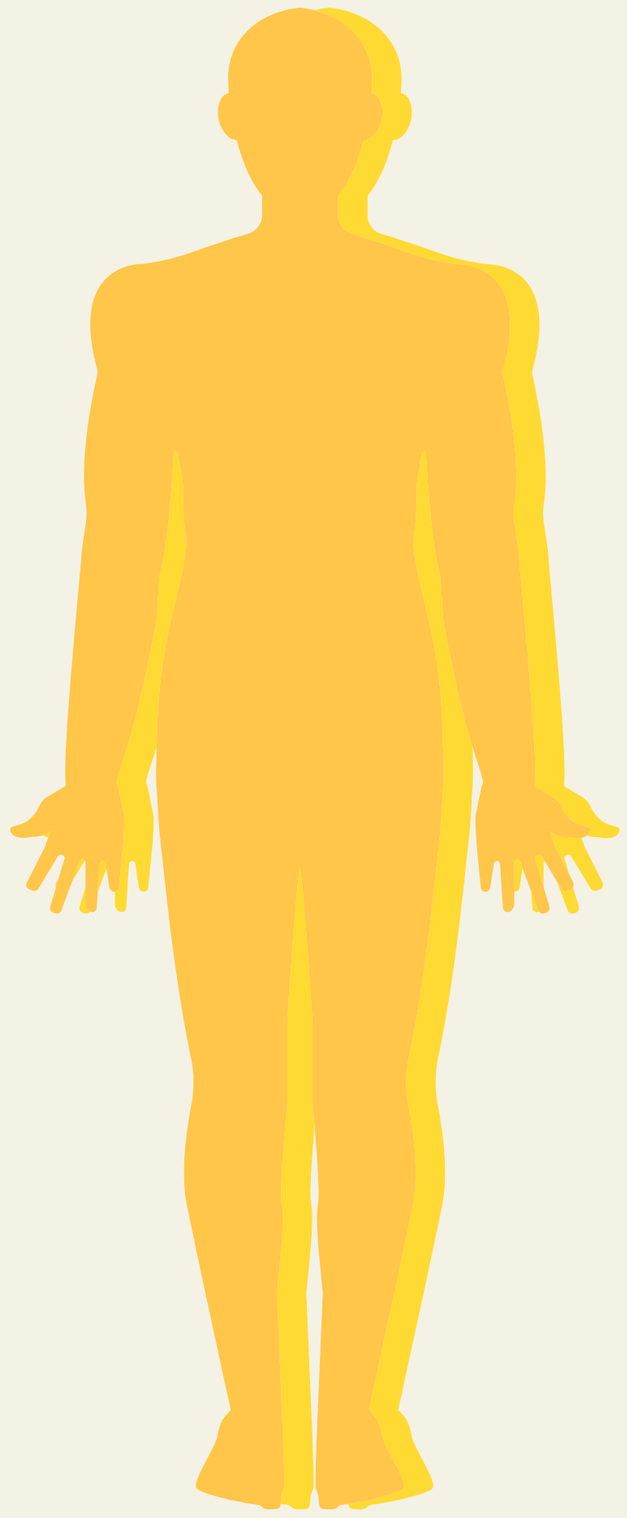
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CHECK IN

What are you feeling today?

Draw a line to where you feel them in your body or add some new ones





What sensory things I prefer and would put in my tool kit?

A sensory toolkit might have

- calming snack
- crunchy snack
- favourite songs
- photo of a happy memory
- fidget toys
- favourite scent
- noise cancelling earphones

What sensory things might overwhelm me or I prefer to avoid?

You might want to avoid

- bright lights
- too many loud noises
- too much quiet
- sticky or slimy textures