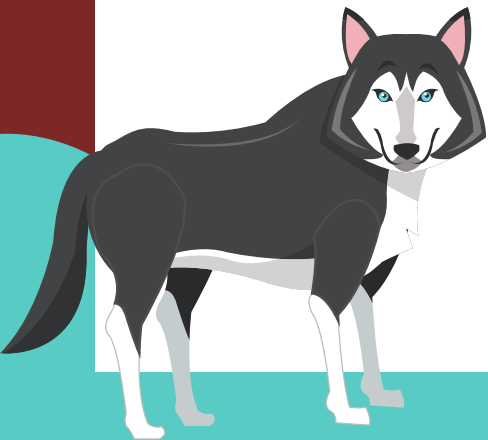


Cards for Coping with Anxiety



Welcome to Tikinagan Child and Family Services Calming Cards. With these cards, we want to provide you with easy ideas to help calming anxiety and worry thoughts. Each relaxation exercise will take a few minutes of your day. Learning to relax is like learning to ride a bike. The more you practice them the easier it gets!



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Tikinagan

Child & Family Services



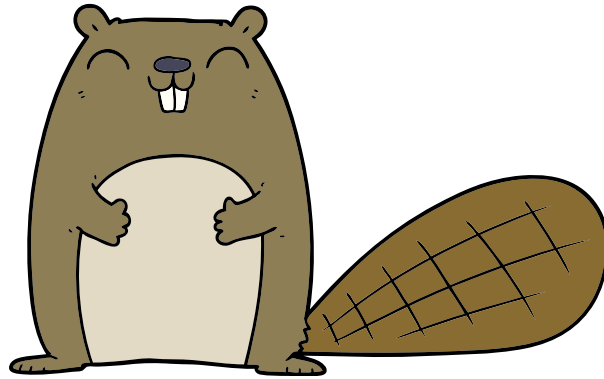
What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal feeling in our bodies that helps us to deal with difficult situations, like participating in a competition or running for safety when something dangerous happens.

How does anxiety feel in our bodies? Most times, our hearts beat faster, we breathe shallow and fast, our hands get sweaty, our faces feel hot and look red, tears can come to our eyes. We feel shaky and tingly, our muscles are tense and we have a lump in our throats. Once that difficult situation is over, our bodies calm down and go back to normal.

However, when we go through many difficult moments, these changes in our bodies don't shut down, we constantly feel like we're running from something we can't escape from and then anxiety becomes a problem.

Fortunately, there are many things we can do to help ourselves. Check out these cards to learn more!



Breathing exercises

Make yourself comfortable on your chair and take a look at your hands. Place one hand on your chest and the other one on your belly.

Just notice how they move up and down as you breathe. Take a deep slow breath counting to five and feel how your hands rise. Then breathe out counting to five and feel your hands moving down as you breathe out.

Breathe in slowly again and think of breathing in peace. Breathe out slowly and think of stress leaving your body

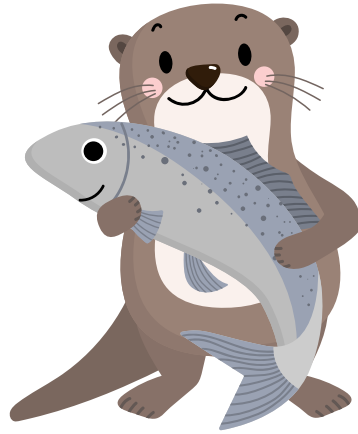


Sense of Sight

Using your sense of sight, you can go into the bush and look around you. Notice colours, sizes, textures and movements.

Watch the sunrise and the sunset, the snow or the grass depending on the season, the lake. It's like forest bathing.

What else do you notice. Can you name five things you can see?



Sense of Touch

Our sense of touch, just like your sense of hearing, never stops.

Touching things that make us feel joy can fill our hearts. Hugging a loved one, cuddling on the couch or squishing a stress ball, are things you can do to help yourself with anxiety and bring joy to your life.

Can you name four things you can touch or notice with your sense of touch?



Sense of Hearing

Our sense of hearing can bring memories. Music is one way we have to bring joy and relaxation to our hearts and bodies.

You can create playlists with upbeat songs to cheer your heart.

Can you notice three things you can hear?



Sense of Smell

Our sense of smell is very powerful. It can bring strong emotions very quickly and connect us to old memories of people we love, places we've been or situations we've experienced, like smelling freshly baked goodies.

You can use essential oils or scented candles. Can you find two things you can smell?

Sense of Taste



We can taste flavors, like sour gummies or candy, explore textures of food like a soft fruit or crunchy cereal, or their temperature, like ice cream or hot tea.

There are many places in the world where people gather together around food and share positive experiences.

Having a good meal, baking cookies or drinking hot chocolate are some examples of things you can taste to bring you joy and relaxation.

Is there a flavour in your mouth right now?



Mindful Walk

Go for a walk and feel the breeze on your face and the cold air in your nostrils. Feel the ground under your boots. Take a look at the cedar trees and how their tops move with the wind.

You can sit on a rock or a tree laying down horizontally on the ground. Take a look at how smooth the snow looks on the lake during winter time or waves in summer and the colour of the sky. You can even acknowledge the hardness of the tree, even if it's not a pleasant feeling. This is how life is, the good with the not so good.

Being mindful means being present in the moment. You will likely have thoughts about the past or future that come to mind while you are walking. When this happens, just notice them without judgement, and return your focus to the walk.



Progressive Relaxation

Squish your toes and tense your legs. Count to ten and relax them. Pay attention to how your muscles feel... all the tension going away.

Suck in you stomach like trying to squeeze it against your backbone. Let's count to ten. Then relax.

Stretch your arms up really high and hard. Stretch your hands and fingers out, count to 10 feeling all your muscles tense... and then relax, shake them and take a deep breath.

Inflate your cheeks and count to ten. Then relax and focus your attention on how your cheeks feel loose.

Wrinkle your nose and forehead, close your eyes and count to 10, and then relax them.

Always pay attention to both feelings: when you tense your muscles and when you relax them. Feel the tension melting away.

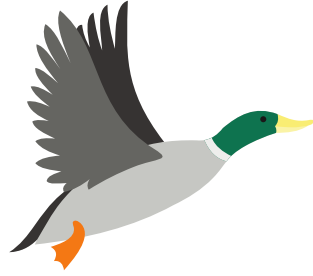


Body scan

Make yourself comfortable on your chair, close your eyes and take a deep cleansing breath. While breathing slowly, bring your attention to your feet, take in the sensation inside your shoes. Allow yourself to be curious about the sensations of the different parts of your feet, your toes, arches and heels. Then picture your ankles and the lower part of your legs all the way up to your knees all around.

You can open your eyes and take a look at your thighs and how they connect with your hips, back and front. Feel the chair under them. Putting your hands on your belly and chest, notice how they rise and fall as you breathe, you don't need to change the way you're breathing, just notice it. Also notice how your lower back feels and how the chair is supporting your mid and upper back.

Now, focus your attention in your upper arms, lower arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers. Notice your shoulders and your neck, and how your head rests on your neck. Now your chin, cheeks, mouth, nose, eyes and forehead. Do you notice any tension in any of these body parts? Finally, bring your awareness to your whole body, and notice where you feel relaxed and light or where you feel tension.



Focus Your Attention with Mindfulness

First, find your attention. Notice how you can become aware of your attention and then focus it on the trees, for example. Take a moment and bring your attention to this place in this moment.

Find the stillness around you. Find a space without distractions that you find comfortable.

Plan some time to let go of worries and anxious thoughts or emotions. It can be as short as a few minutes.



Fight back negative thoughts with acronyms. We encourage you to practise one letter a day and use the acronyms to remember the techniques we use to help ourselves.

ACCCEPTS

ACCEPTS

Activities: Engage in activities that require thinking and concentration. This could be a project, a hobby or school work.

Examples: beading, coloring, looking for medicine plants, cleaning fish



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Contributing: Focus on something or someone other than yourself. You can volunteer, do a good deed, or do anything else that would contribute to a cause or a person. Helping other will make you feel better about yourself

Example: gathering wood for Elders, cleaning yards, shovelling snow or cutting grass (depending on the season), walking someone's dog, picking up garbage, or make them supper.



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Comparisons: Remember times when you went through something harder or heard of someone going through something harder than your current situation. You've been through hard times before, you can do it again!

Example: The time you went to the dentist and you were afraid, but you still did it.



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Emotions: Do something that will create the opposite emotion.

Example: watch a funny movie when feeling sad or listen to relaxing music when you're feeling anxious, get up and do something when you feel like laying down playing video games.



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Pushing away: Pushing your negative thoughts out of your mind.

Example: write a worry on a piece of paper and then, together with an adult, burn it.
Or collect natural objects and make patterns while pushing away anxious feelings.



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ACCEPTS

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Thoughts: If your emotions take over because they are very intense, try to focus on your thoughts.

Example: read a book, count to 10, watch funny YouTube videos. Remember that you're stronger than your feelings.



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ACCEPTS

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Sensations: Find physical sensations to distract you from intense negative emotions.

Example: use your senses to help yourself. Explore your surroundings and focus on 5 things you like to see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, two things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste.

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DEARMAN



DEARMAN

Describe: use clear words to describe what you want.

Example: Try, “Please don’t grab my coloured pencils,” instead of “Leave me alone.”

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Express: Use clear words to express your feelings. The other person may not know how you feel.

Example: Use a sentence like this: “I feel _____ because _____”

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DEARMAN



DEARMAN

Assert: Say what you need to say instead of hinting at it. Other people cannot read your mind. It is okay to say “no” sometimes.

Example: Say, “I won’t be able to help you with your homework,” instead of “I’ll see if I can make some time to help you with homework.”

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Reinforce: Reward people who are nice to you.

Example: Smile when you say thank you :)

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DEARMAN



DEARMAN

Mindful: Remember the goal of a conversation, and don't get sidetracked. Also, be sure not to get swept away by your emotions, or the other person's emotions.

Example: Keep in mind a conversation about healthy boundaries, like asking back a sweater someone borrowed from you.

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DEARMAN



DEARMAN

Appear: Appear confident by using your body language. Make eye contact and be confident, but not aggressive.

Example: When talking about your needs, look at people in their eyes and keep a straight posture instead of looking down to the ground.

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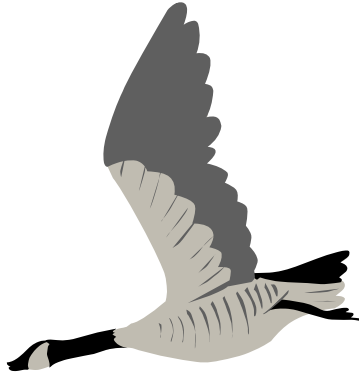
DEARMAN



DEARMAN

Negotiate: People don't always get what they want. Try to negotiate. Offer and ask for different solutions. In most circumstances, compromise is possible.

Example: Say "If you wash dishes, I'll put them away"



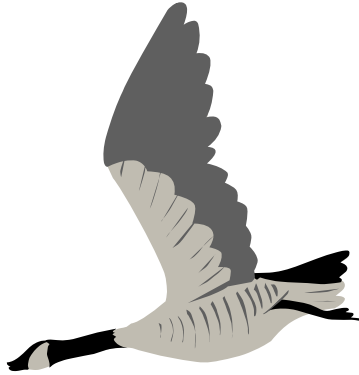
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GIVE

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Gentle: Don't attack, threaten or express judgment. Accept the occasional "no" to your requests. People are more likely to respond to gentleness instead of aggressiveness.

Example: If your friend is refusing to return your sweater, you can talk to your mom instead of getting mad at your friend.



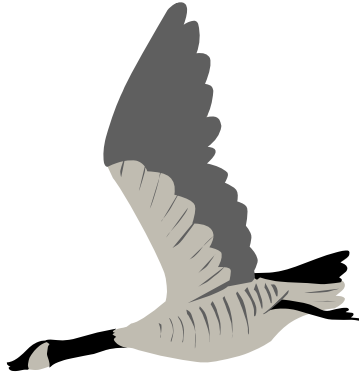
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Interested: Show interest by listening without interrupting. Don't change the subject, and ask questions about something they said you did not understand.

Example: Put your phone away when a friend is talking to you.



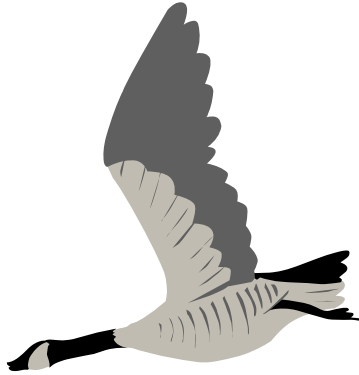
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Validate: Try to understand how other people feel, why they feel that way and their opinions. It feels good to be understood and heard.

Example: If a friend lost a ring, you can help them find it, even if the ring does not seem important to you.



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Easy: Have an easy-going attitude.

Example: Use a calm tone of voice, try a sincere compliment, give someone a little extra attention.

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FAST



FAST

Fair: Be fair to others and yourself.

Example: If you and your sister want to play a video game but only have one remote control, take turns.

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FAST



FAST

Apologies: Apologize when you do something wrong, not when you request something, express your opinion or disagreement.

Example: It's okay to ask someone to move their chair to respect your personal space if someone sits too close to you. Apologize if you raise your voice at someone.

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FAST



FAST

Stick to values: Be who you are instead of changing to be liked by others or to get what you want.

Example: It's okay to like different video games or music. People can have different likes and dislikes and still be friends.

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FAST



FAST

Truthful: Avoid dishonesty by exaggerating feelings, acting helpless to manipulate others, or lying.

Example: Ask for help with homework when you really need it, instead of asking for help when you don't want to do it.



PLEASE

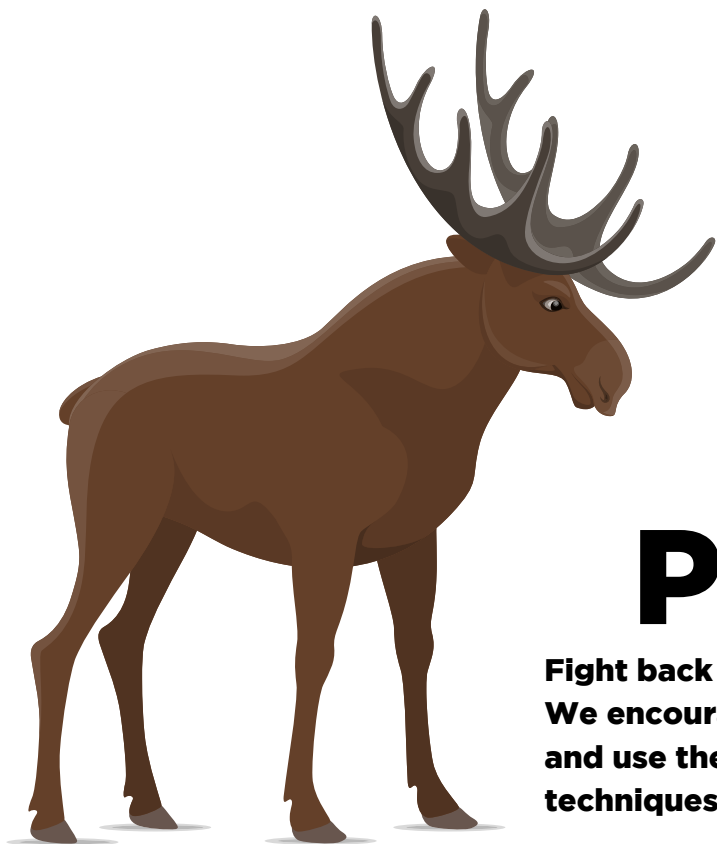
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PLEASE



Pulse & Listening: Take your body's pulse from time-to-time by listening to your body and make sure you see a doctor or a nurse if you're not feeling well.

Example: Having constant headaches, feeling tired all the time, check your eyes once a year, get a medical once a year, see a dentist.



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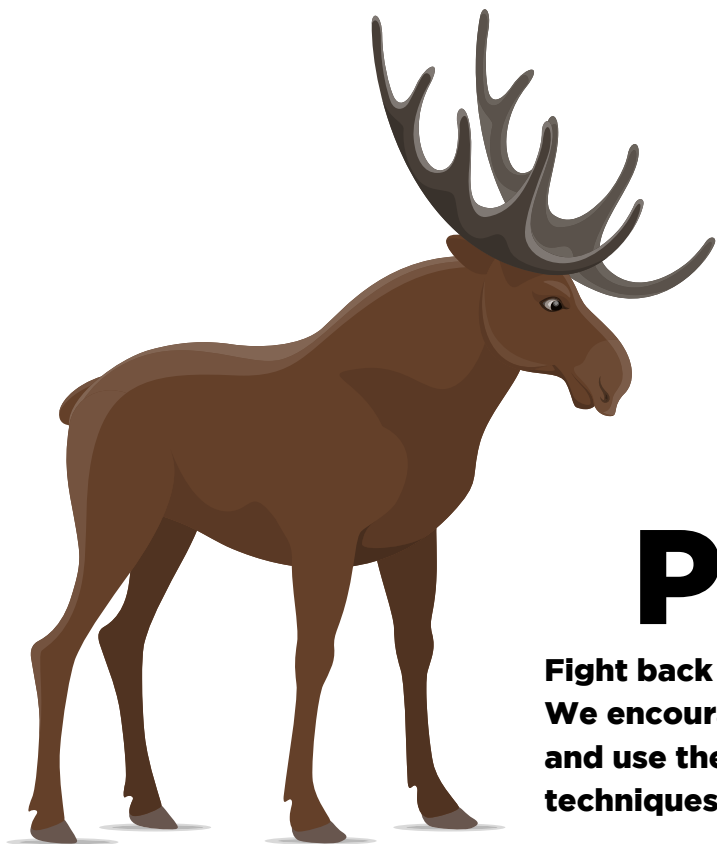
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PLEASE



Eat healthy: eating healthy is vital for having good health, especially if we can eat traditional food.

Example: Fruits and vegetables, fish, moose, deer, berries, and dairy products instead of junk food.



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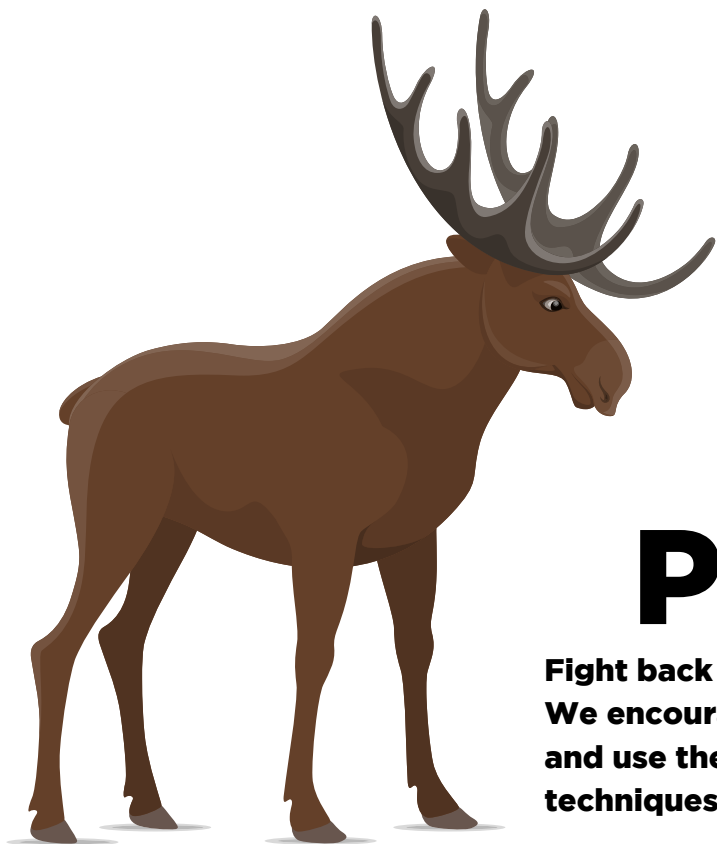
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PLEASE



Avoid mood altering drugs: Substances will affect the health of your body.

Example: Avoid taking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, and un-prescribed pills. Talk to an adult about substances.



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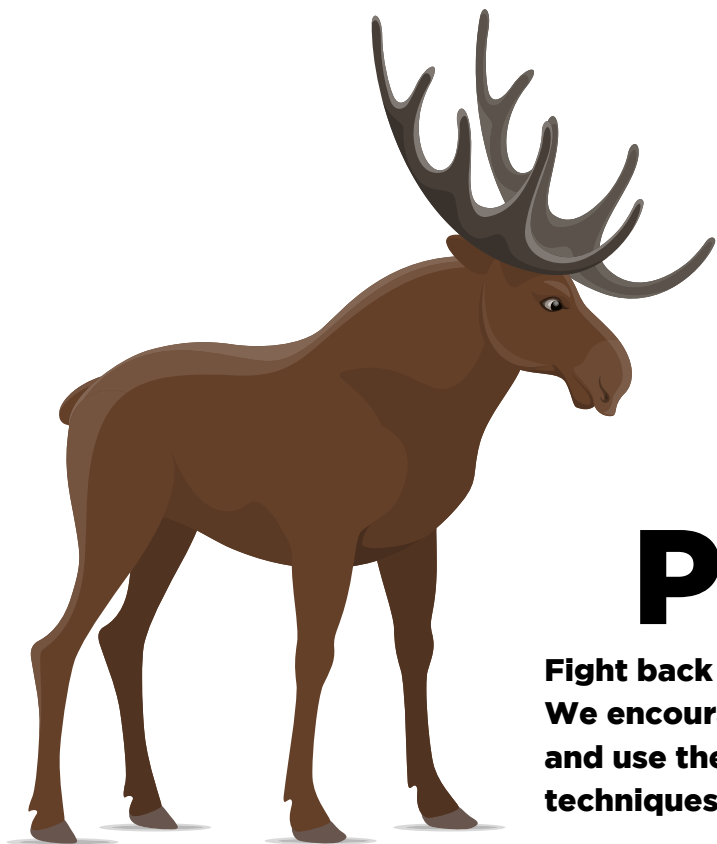
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Sleep well: Sleeping at night is important for growth and for recovering your strength.

Example: Having the same bedtime every night, sleeping in the dark, not using electronic devices one hour before bedtime, taking a bath before bedtime, using relaxing scents.



PLEASE

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PLEASE



Exercise: Exercise will help your body with anxiety, as it will help you release tension.

Example: Running, biking, dancing, yoga (you can search YouTube videos).