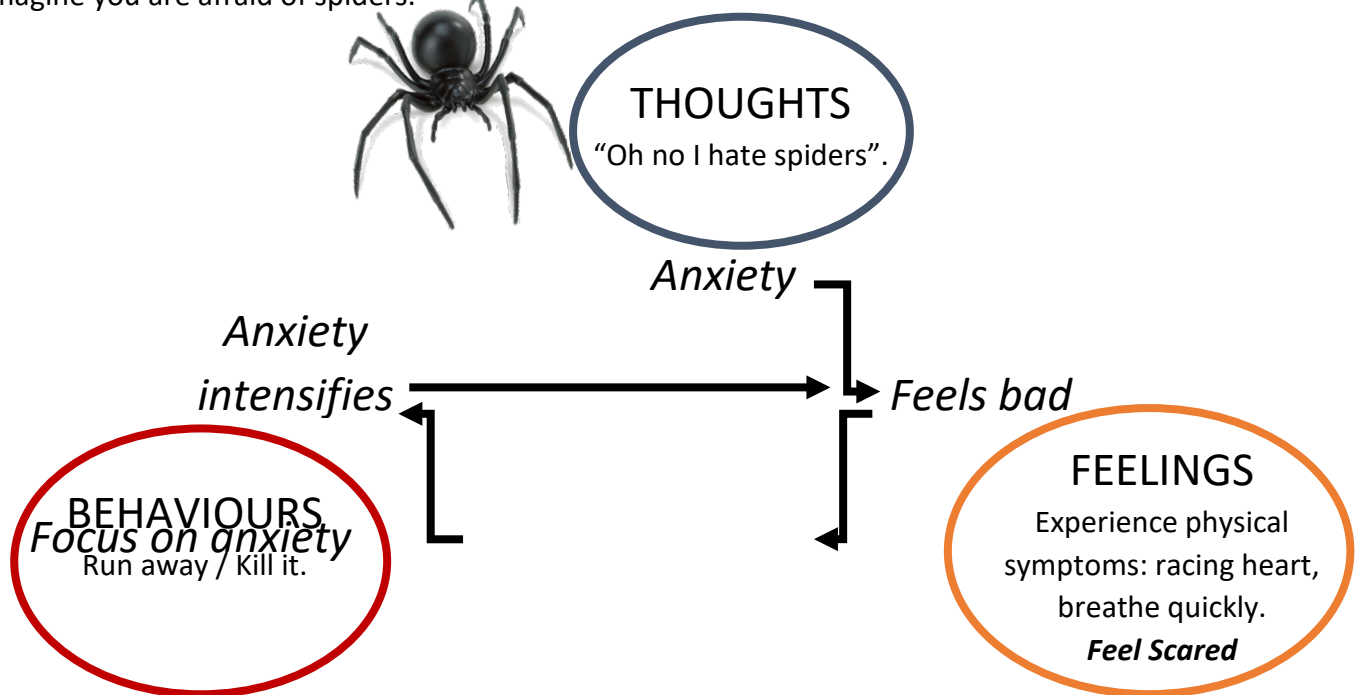


## Negative Thought Cycle - Vicious Circle of Anxiety.

Imagine you are afraid of spiders.



## Safety Behaviours.

It is very easy to develop 'safety behaviours', these are behaviours that can make you feel better temporarily but will lead into the vicious circle of anxiety.

Safety behaviours include :

- Avoiding situations.
- Needing someone with you for reassurance.
- Avoiding eye contact.
- Not going out.

Safety behaviours will keep your anxiety going and so it is important to try and face your anxieties. This can be done by challenging your thought processes. One strategy is the 'Traffic Light Approach'.

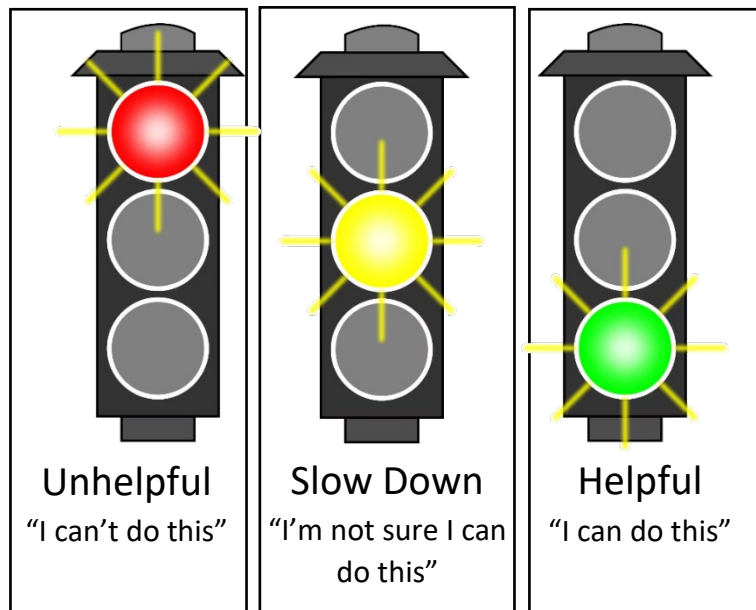
## Traffic Light Approach.

Think of helpful thoughts as the 'green' light. These are the thoughts you should listen to and act upon because they are positive and help you move forward.

Now think of the unhelpful thoughts as the 'red' light. These are thoughts that are negative and so STOP you from moving forward.

Thoughts that could go either way are the 'amber' light. This is when we need to pause and think about it. This pause will give you time to challenge it and then turn it into a 'green' thought that will help you go.

## The 'Red' Stage.



Write examples of thoughts for each light below that you have had.

**Red**

**Amber**

**Green**

Now think of times when you have had negative red thoughts, how did they make you feel and how did you behave?

## The 'Amber' Stage & STOPP Strategy.

Recognising red thoughts is the first step towards improving your resilience. Challenging that thought is one way to do this. Red thoughts can often be untrue or exaggerated. When you have a red thought you need to stop and ask yourself some questions to see if these thoughts are accurate. By questioning or challenging your thoughts, you move them to the amber stage which will in turn help to move it to the green stage. Try following the STOPP strategy below.

**S** – Stop,

**T** – Take a break,

**O** – Observe: What am I thinking? What am I reacting to? What am I feeling in my body?

**P** – Pull back: Put in perspective. See the bigger picture. Fact or opinion? How would someone else see this?

**P** – Practice what works: What's the best thing to do for me, for others, for this situation?

Look at your previous answers above. Could this of helped and how?