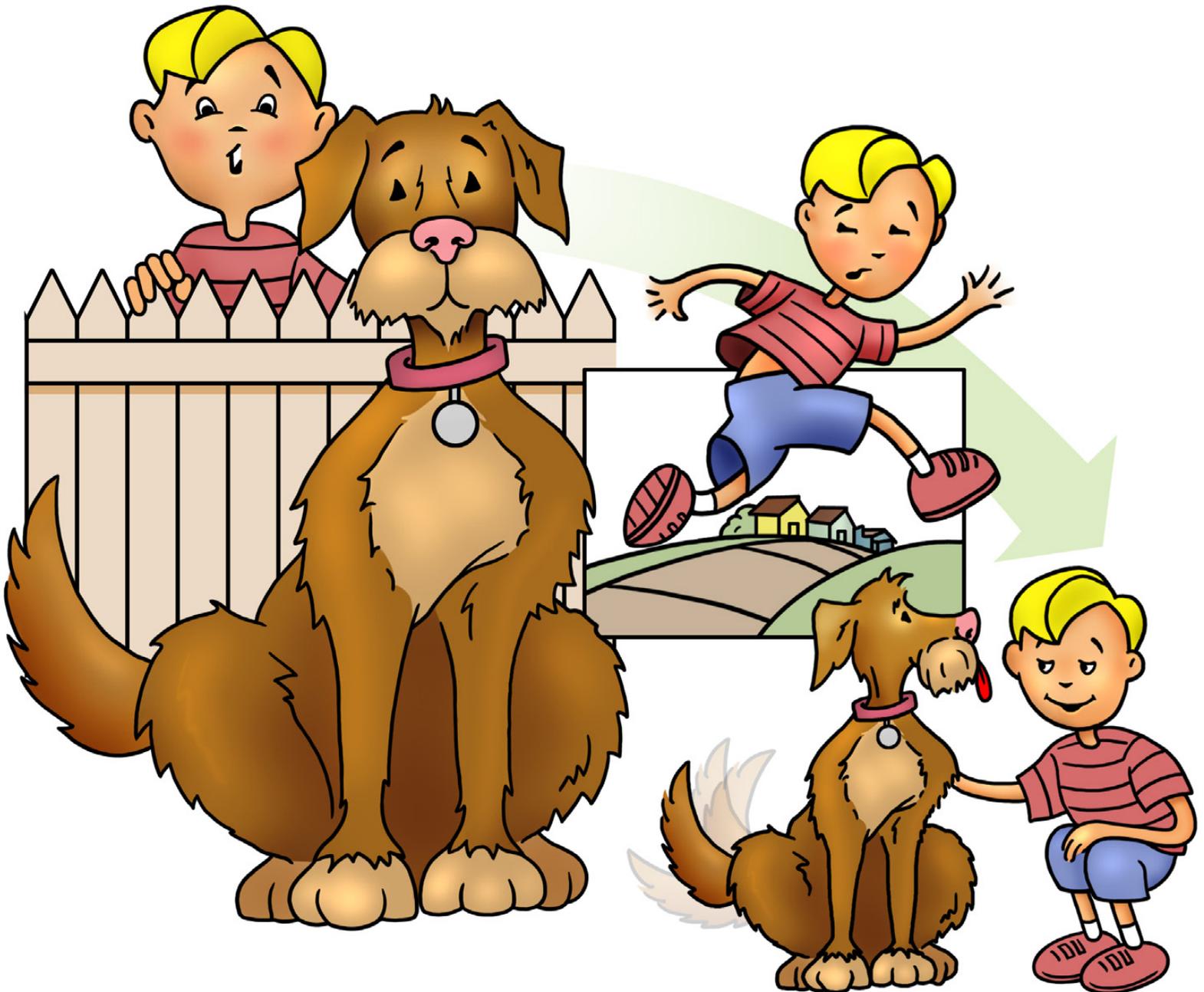




# Kids!

## Face Your Fears: Take Control of Anxiety





Everyone gets a little worried sometimes  
— and that's OK.

Feeling nervous, scared or worried is called anxiety.  
Anxiety can sometimes help you do your best at school  
and at home and that's good.

But too much worry for too long is  
not good.

Feeling anxious should not keep you from doing what you  
want or need to do.

If you think anxiety is getting in the way of your daily life,  
tell your parents, doctor or someone you trust.

Ask for help  
if you feel  
worried

## How do you know if your anxiety is a problem?

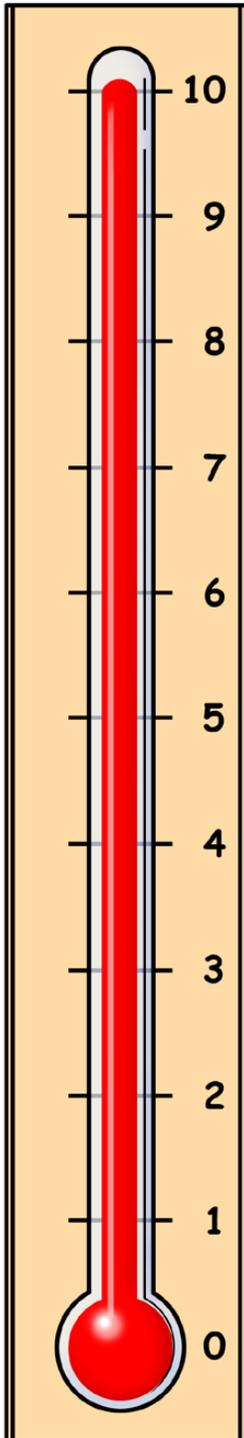
If you:

- ↳ Become anxious even when you are safe.
- ↳ Worry about things that will probably not happen.
- ↳ Are more afraid of something than most people.
- ↳ Feel nervous most of the time.
- ↳ Do something over and over to prevent something bad from happening.
- ↳ Avoid doing things or going places.

If you are feeling or doing any of these things, anxiety might be a problem for you.

# Which describes how you've been feeling?

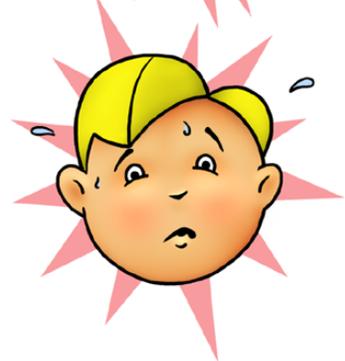
## Anxiety Scale



Most anxiety ever



A lot of anxiety



Some anxiety



A little anxiety

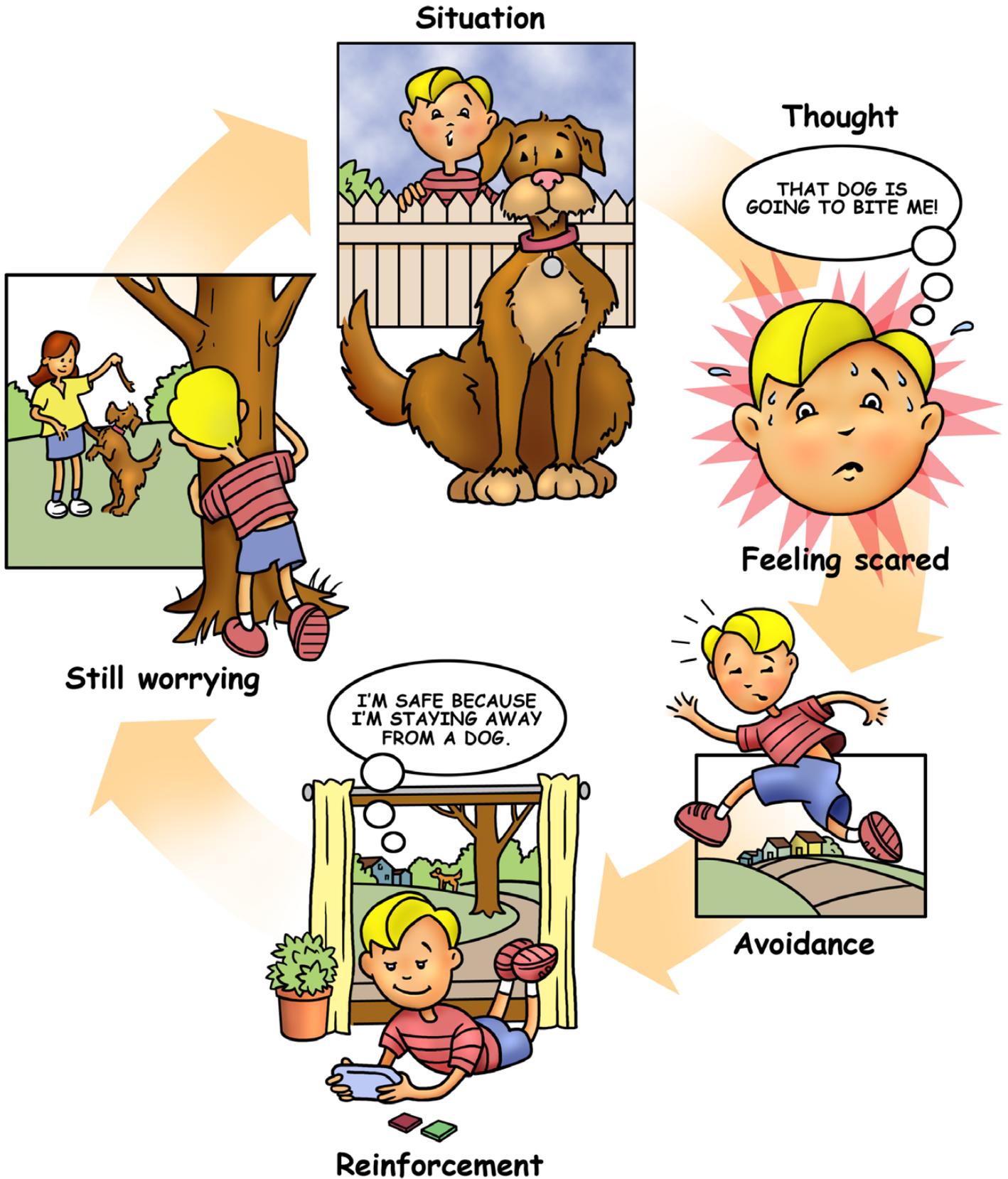


Relaxed, no anxiety



If your anxiety is a 5 or higher, then anxiety may be a problem for you.

# Anxiety doesn't go away on its own. Here is how it works.



**Situation** – The boy sees the dog.

**Thought** – He thinks he is in danger.

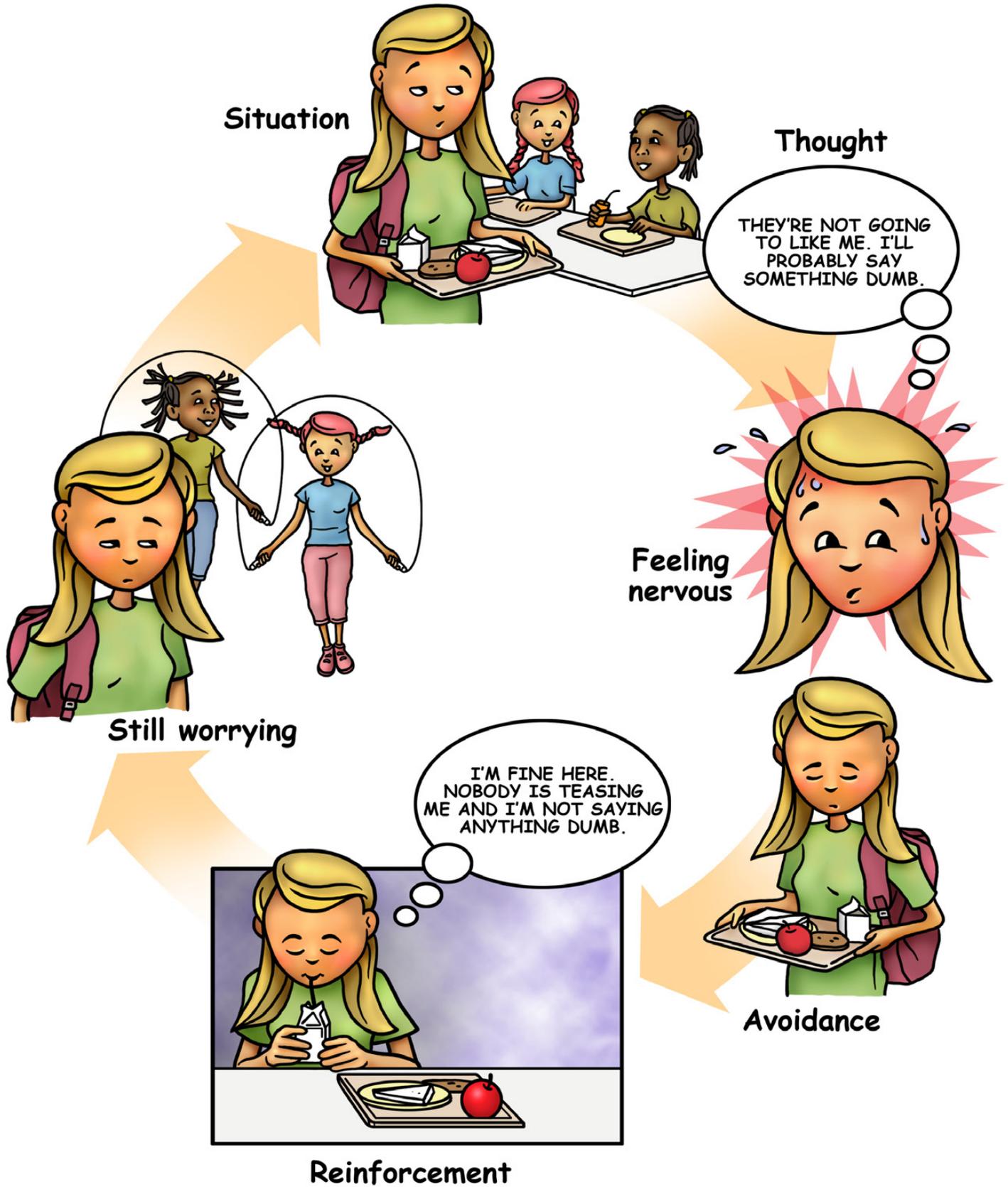
**Feeling** – The boy feels scared.

**Avoidance** – Because he avoids the dog by running away, he doesn't learn that dogs are pretty safe.

**Reinforcement** – He will keep running away from dogs since that helps him feel better for a little while.

**Still worrying** – The boy is still afraid of dogs because he continues to believe they will bite him.

# Feeling shy works the same way.



**Situation** — The girl walks into the lunchroom and sees a group of girls.

**Thought** — She thinks she might say something dumb if she sits with them.

**Feeling** — She feels nervous.

**Avoidance** — Because she sits by herself, she doesn't learn that everything would have been okay.

**Reinforcement** — Sitting alone relieves her anxiety at that moment.

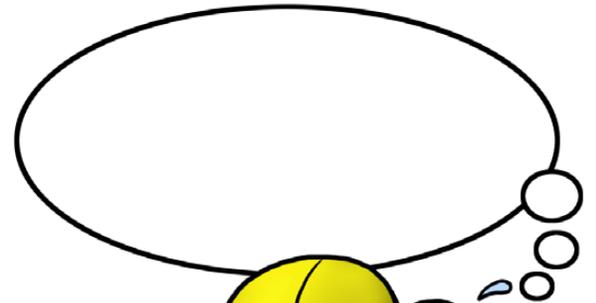
**Still worrying** — Next time she sees a group of girls, she is still anxious about joining the group and she avoids them again.

# My Anxiety Cycle

Situation



Thoughts



Feeling



Avoidance



Reinforcement



Still Worrying



Now that you see how anxiety works, think about what makes you anxious.

In the blank cycle, write down the main things that make you feel scared or worried. Think about...

What are you afraid is going to happen?



What do you do to stay away from the things you are afraid of?



Your parents can help you fill in the blank cycle.

It's time to make a plan to help you feel better.

The way to help you feel better is doing something your doctor calls "exposure therapy."

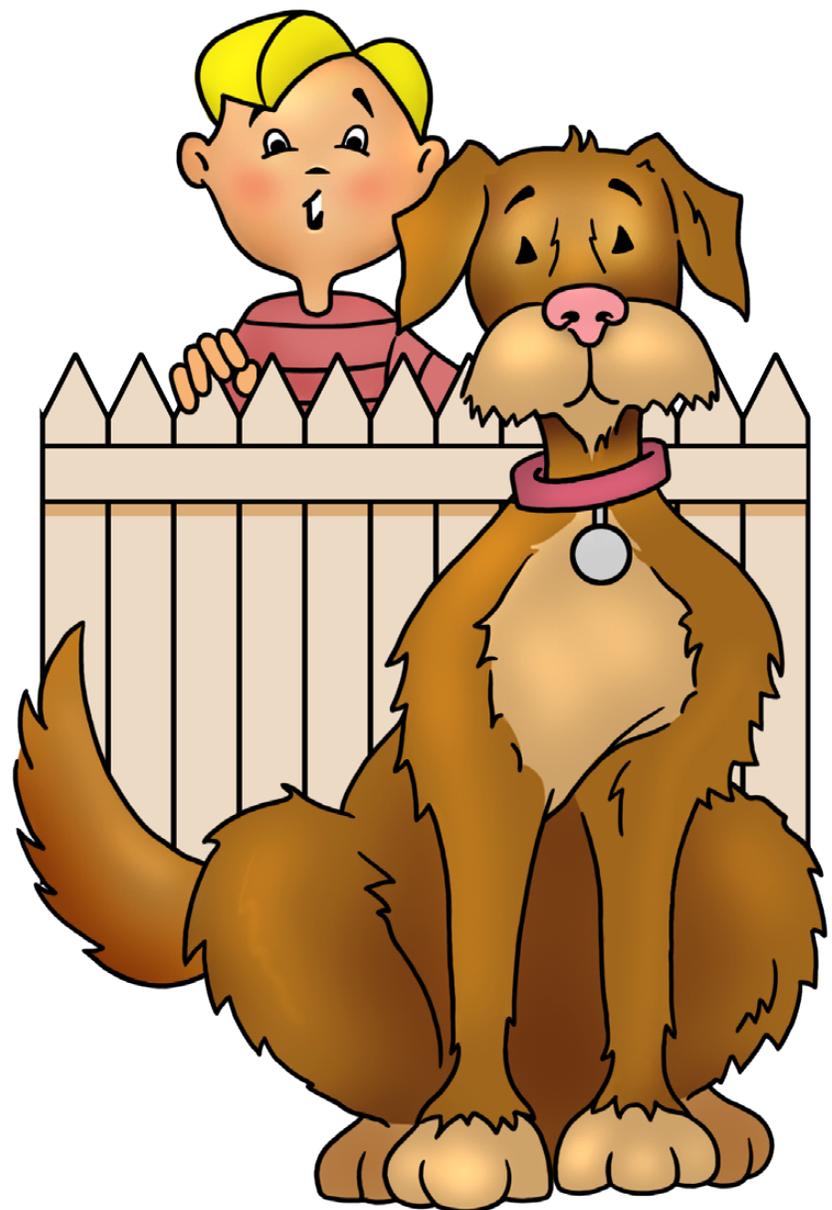
During exposure therapy, you slowly face your fears over and over until you are less afraid.

*Start slowly.*

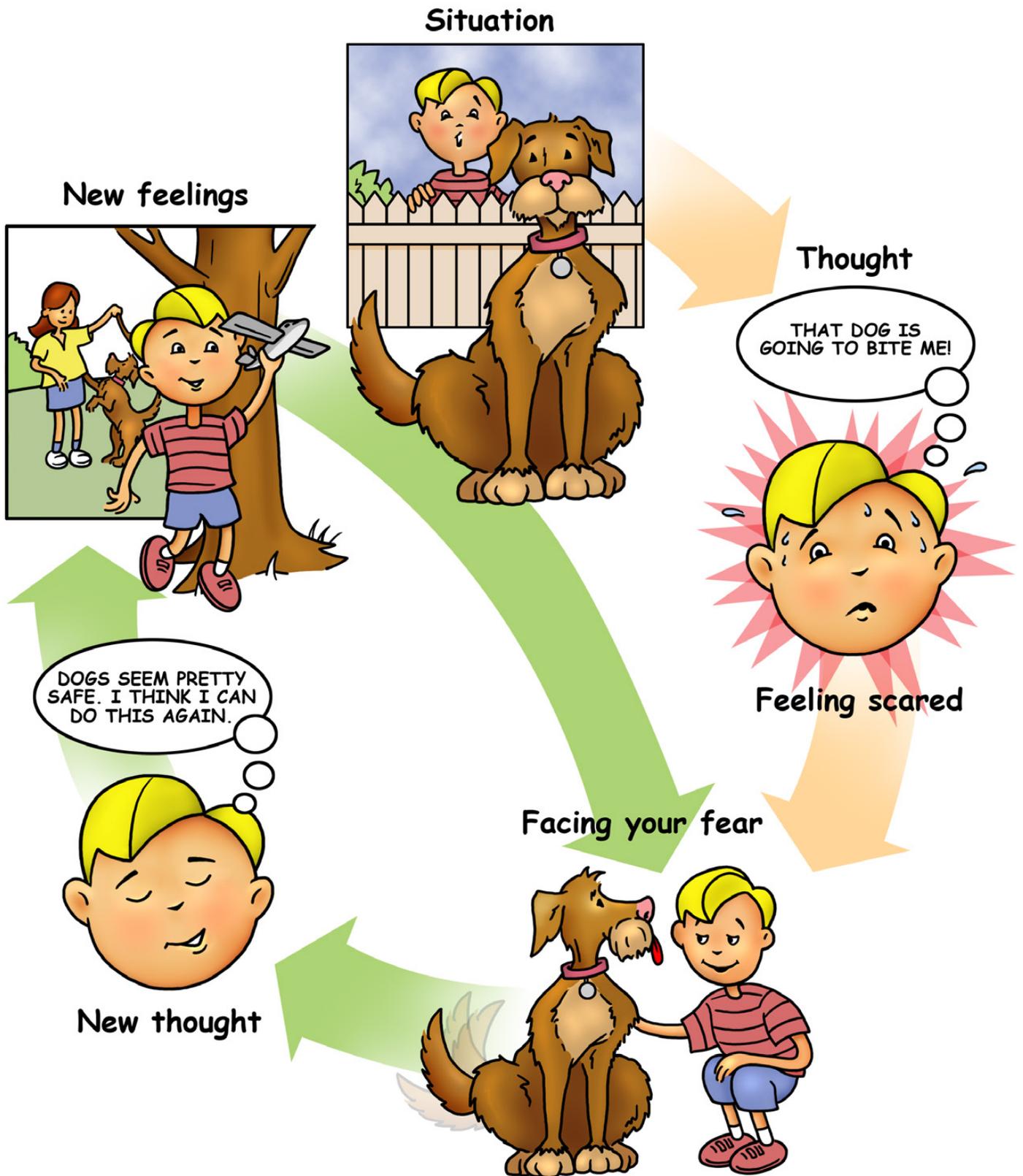
*Stick with it and it will get easier.*

It sounds simple and it works well, but it can be hard work too.

Let's go back to the boy who was afraid of dogs to see how exposure therapy works.



# Exposure therapy works like this ...



**Situation** — The boy sees the dog.

**Thought** — He still thinks he is in danger.

**Feeling** — He is still scared.

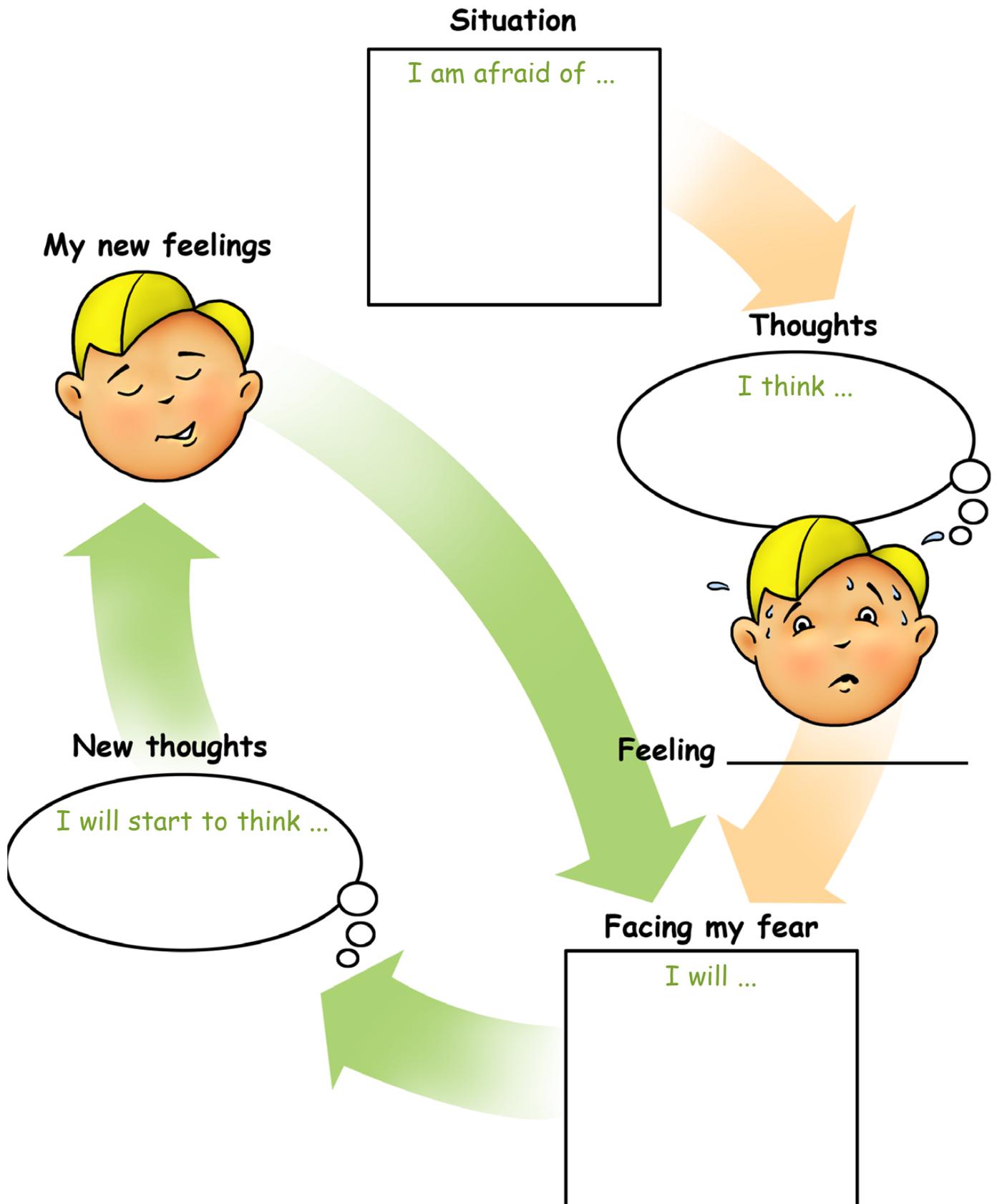
**Facing his fear** — This time, instead of running away, the boy stays and pets the dog even though he feels scared.

**New thoughts** — The boy learns that dogs usually don't hurt him and he doesn't need to run away.

**New feelings** — Now when he sees a dog, he feels more confident.

**New cycle** — The more time he spends with dogs, the braver he feels, and the easier it is to be around dogs. Over time, this new cycle gets easier and easier.

# My Exposure Therapy Cycle



Facing your fears is hard work and takes patience.

It can help to talk about your fears and worries with your parents. They can help you use this book to make your own exposure plan.

Sometimes anxiety is too strong to handle on your own.

If that is true for you, talk to your doctor about seeing a therapist to help with your anxiety. Bring this book with you to help get things started.

DOGS SEEM PRETTY SAFE. I THINK I CAN DO THIS AGAIN.



You can take control of your anxiety.







### BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

Mrs. Lips, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, was a loyal patient of Mayo Clinic for more than 40 years. She was a self-made business leader who significantly expanded her family's activities in oil, gas and ranching, even as she assembled a museum-quality collection of antiques and fine art. She was best known by Mayo staff for her patient advocacy and support.

Upon her death in 1995, Mrs. Lips paid the ultimate compliment by leaving her entire estate to Mayo Clinic. Mrs. Lips had a profound appreciation for the care she received at Mayo Clinic. By naming the Barbara Woodward Lips Patient Education Center, Mayo honors her generosity, her love of learning, her belief in patient empowerment and her dedication to high-quality care.

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