

# HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL



Beacon School Support

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School Behaviour Secrets

# BEHAVIOUR SECRETS

...search for podcast “School Behaviour Secrets”



**SCHOOL  
BEHAVIOUR  
SECRETS**

**EPISODE 211: ESSENTIALS EPISODE**

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONALLY BASED  
SCHOOL AVOIDANCE (EBSA)

**WITH SIMON CURRIGAN & JERRICAH HOLDER**

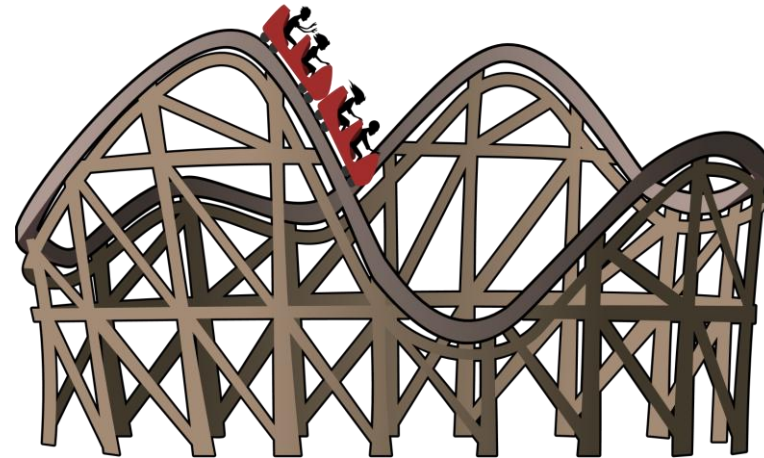
# QUICK ACTIVITY

If you had one word to describe school mornings in your home, what would it be?

# EXPECTATION VS REALITY



# EXPECTATION VS REALITY



# PARENT SURVEY

*One in five children have refused to go to school in the last year despite parents thinking they should go...*

**National Parent Survey 2024**

# COURSE AIMS

1

To understand why children might not want to come to school

2

Explore some common triggers and the link with anxiety

3

To understand some strategies we can use to support our children

# COMMON PHRASES

**I don't like school..**

**I just want to stay  
at home...**

**My tummy hurts!**

**I've got a bad  
headache..**



# COMMON BEHAVIOURS

**Refusal to leave  
their parent/carer**

**Clingy**



**Emotional  
outbursts or  
meltdowns**

**Lateness**

# WHAT'S DRIVING THESE BEHAVIOURS?

Understanding the “Why”  
behind the wobbles



# COMMON MISCONCEPTION

Defiant?

Rude?

‘Naughty’?



# MORE LIKELY TO BE..

Fear

Anxiety

Possible underlying need



# QUICK ACTIVITY

How might you tell if someone is feeling anxious? What might the signs be?

# SIGNS OF ANXIETY

Crying	Clingy	Tummy aches/ feeling sick
Constantly worrying/ negative thoughts	Lack of concentration	Lack of sleep
Not eating properly	Fidgety/ restless	Using the toilet often

# COMMON TRIGGERS

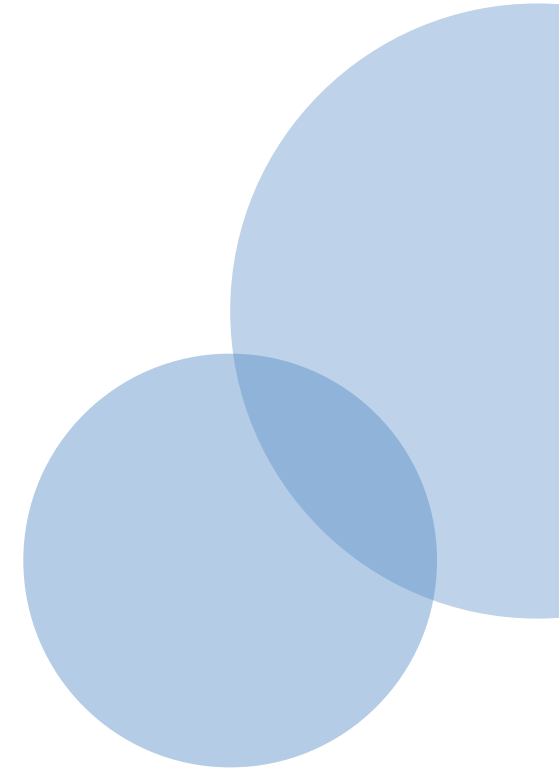
## Separation anxiety

- Natural response
- Sign of a strong bond
- Fear of what 'might' happen

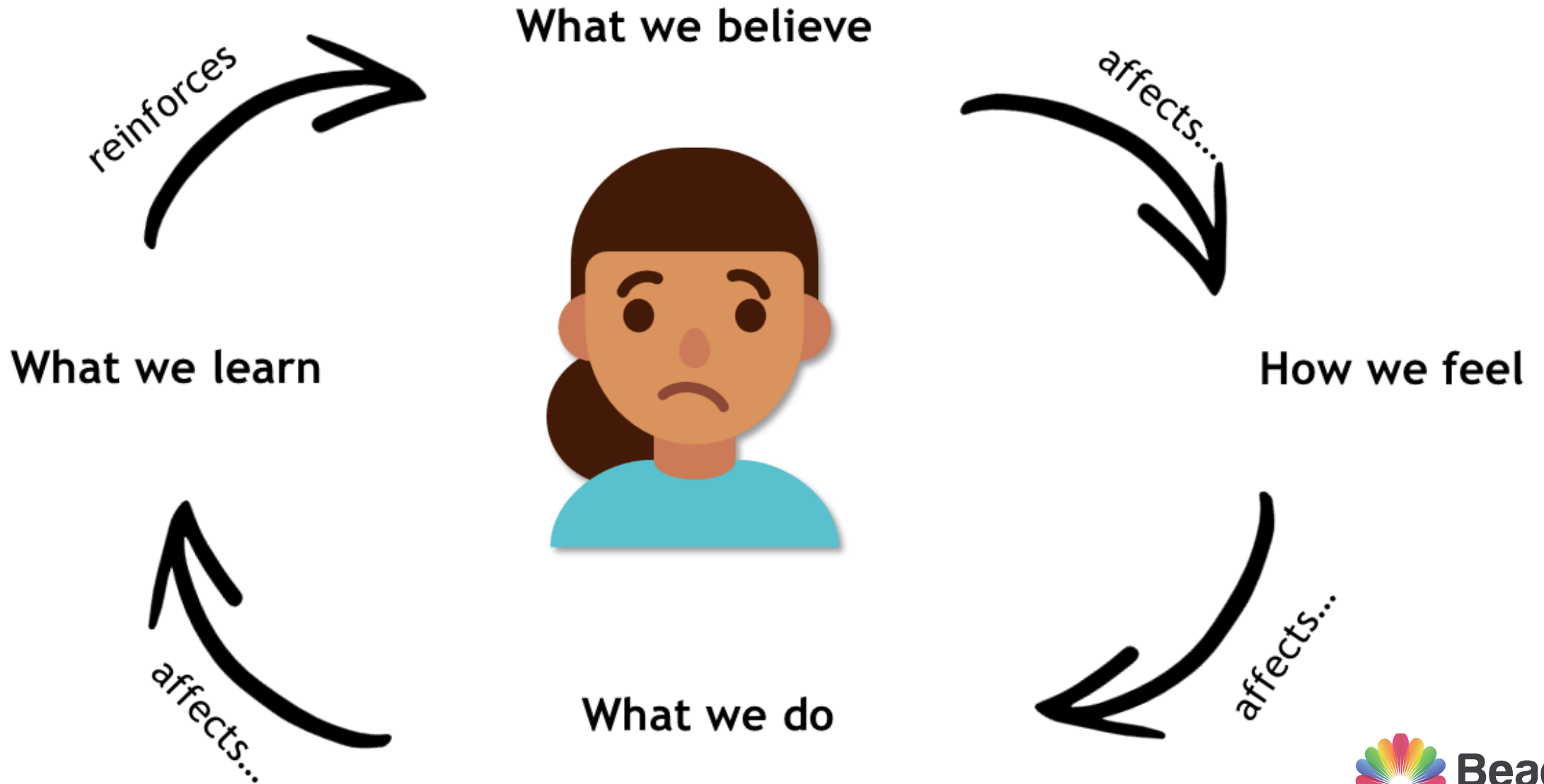


# COMMON TRIGGERS

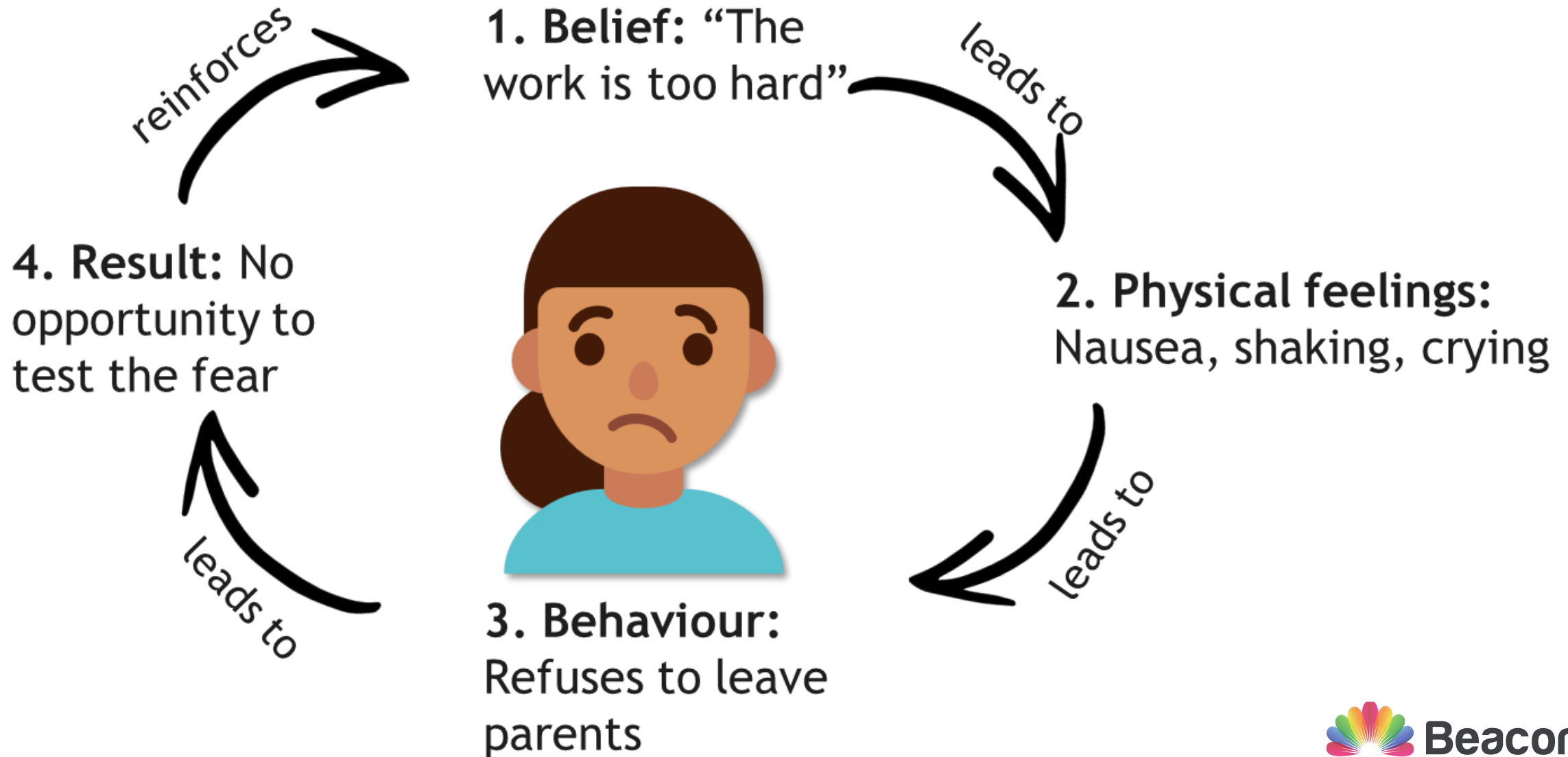
- **Friendship issues**
  - Fallings out
  - Social media
- **Learning challenges**
  - Homework
  - Assessments
- **Sensory overload**
  - Noise
  - Crowds
- **Big life changes**
  - Bereavement
  - Moving house



# VICIOUS CYCLES



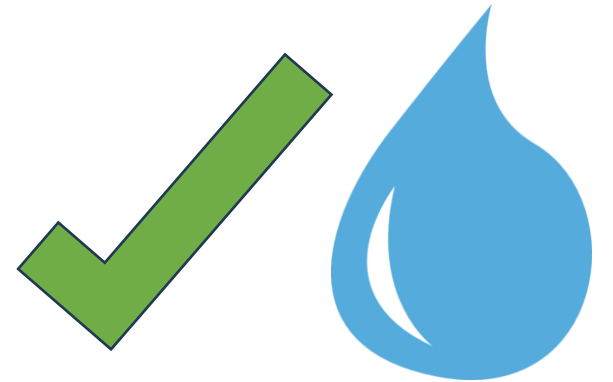
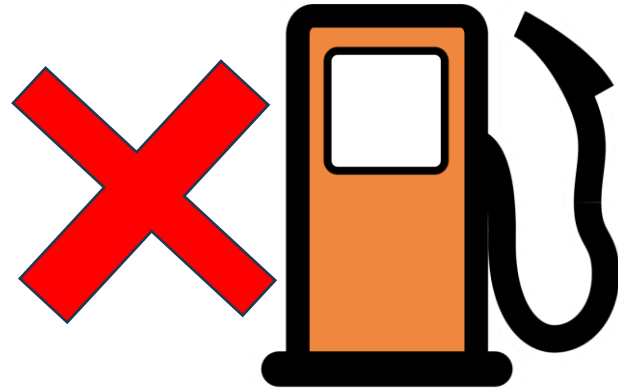
# VICIOUS CYCLES



# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES - TALK

## 1. Stay calm

Don't make the situation worse!



# WHAT NOT TO SAY AND DO

- **Avoid giving excessive reassurance**
  - *this must REALLY be something to worry about.*
- **Avoid saving or rescuing**
  - *this problem is TOO BIG for me to handle.*
- **Avoid focusing on the negatives**
  - *everyone is talking about this issue - it must be REALLY serious.*

## 2. Coach through the emotion

1. Name it to tame it!
2. Set boundaries
3. Problem solve together

# EMOTION COACHING

## 1. Name it to tame it!

- Show empathy
- Explain why

I think your  
feeling nervous  
because you find  
the work tricky in  
school.

# EMOTION COACHING

## 2. Set boundaries

- The rule is...

The rule is,  
it's not okay  
to hit.

The rule is, it's not  
okay to stay at home  
on a school day

# EMOTION COACHING

## 3. Problem solve together

- Co-regulation
- Open ended

What if we  
walked in with  
Sasha...

How about we  
go and speak  
with your  
teacher...

# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES - MAKE A PLAN

## 1. Routines

- Gentle, predictable mornings



# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES - MAKE A PLAN

## 2. Set (and stick to) boundaries



Set family rules and stick to them consistently

## 3. Pre-empt the tricky times



- Write out a timetable of their week
- Circle the times they will feel most anxious
- *Can you share yours? - act as a role model!*
- Add in things to the timetable that your child can look forward to doing

## 4. Pre-emptive strategies

- Practice saying 'goodbye'
- Regular visits at 'non school times'
- Meet a friend at the school gate
- Calming and mindfulness strategies
  - Breathing techniques



# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES - MAKE A PLAN

## 5. Work alongside the school

- Share your worries
- Transition object
  - Post it note
  - Keyring
  - Teddy
- Wider strategies



## Focus on the good

- Specific praise
  - *I love the way you put your shoes on calmly, thanks!*
- Focus on effort, not just attendance
- ‘I can’ jar or journal
  
- **Avoid praising being ‘brave’**

# THINGS TO CONSIDER...?

- Sleep patterns
- Exercise
- Diet
- Screen time
- Relationships
  - clubs / family members



# COURSE AIMS

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# FIND US...

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