Help! I’ve got an alarm bell Going off in my head!
The brain and nervous system’s alarm process, which helps us to recognise and survive danger, is fantastic!
Life Threatened

- Stress hormones are released to meet the survival demands
- The thinking part of the brain (cortex) is held back
- Sometimes the alarm continues to sound and difficulty in daily life results.
The Alarm

• We all have an alarm bell in our head, like a fire alarm, to keep us safe in emergencies. It sends off a loud signal to our body.

• To run for it

• To fight for our lives

• To pretend to be dead
Problem with the alarm ...

Shaking...
Anger...
Crying...
frozen to the spot..
Problem with the alarm ...

- Dry mouth
- Sweaty hands...
- Wobbliness ...
- Surge of energy...
- Aggression
  - Kicking, punching, swearing
Problem with the alarm ...

... dizzy

... shutting down, feeling far away or like you are disappearing
Unhelpful thoughts

If your alarm goes off you will certainly not be able to think clearly. The thoughts will be about running away, or fighting, or that something dreadful is about to happen. These unhelpful thoughts keep the alarm going, and keep all the adrenalin pumping around your body.
Switching On

The situations that switch on the alarm are different for each of us.

These situations are called triggers;
What are your triggers?
Common triggers
It can also be this way for many people who have Autism, and ADHD. The world can be too busy, scary and confusing.
Switching Off

There is good news – we can learn to switch off the alarm! There are lots of things that can help us to do this. They are simple ideas but they are not necessarily easy.

It’s like training a lively dog who is determined to protect his owner.
Dogs take time to learn new tricks; the trainer and the dog both need to keep practising!
Ideas to try ...

Remember that your reaction is a false alarm, the body sometimes needs to be reminded of this.

1. Make a reminder notice/picture
2. Carry something in your pocket to remind you
3. Put a message on your phone
Breathe

Breathe In

Breathe Out
Turn thinking back on ...

- Counting
- Name objects that begin with the same letter
- Spell your name backwards
- Think of the words to your favourite song, and say them (don’t sing them)
- Lazy eight breathing
Make yourself feel solid again

Gently push against something firm

Rub arms

Feel the ground under your feet

Feel something soft and something hard, something cold and something warm
Come Back to Now

Noticing what is around you …

• The colour of the carpet
• The feel of your jumper
• The temperature of your hands
• A picture on the wall
Concentrate on Something

That makes you happy or peaceful, or makes you laugh ...

A photo; favourite animal, family, mum?

A peaceful place

Listen to a piece of music you love
Talk to someone

- ... who will listen? Being heard is very calming. Talk to someone as soon as you begin to feel that things are getting difficult
Looking after the Alarm System

I THINK I'M GOING TO CRY..
Three Possible Danger Zones

Feelings  Mind  Body

If you feel a bit wobbly, good idea to carry out an alarm system patrol
Alarm System Patrol

If you discover trouble in any of these zones, then is likely that your brain is on the look out for emergencies and your false alarm could be getting ready to go off. By noticing what is going on you can take more control.
Danger Zone One: Your Mind

What if I get it wrong?

It’s all my fault

The ‘What ifs’ are especially dangerous!
Danger Zone Two: Your feelings

Are you angry, lonely, or worried ...? Or maybe excited or scared?
Danger Zone Three: Your Body
To keep things peaceful

For your mind

Use your imagination to help you...