

## **Managing Anxiety At School and Home:**

### **An Umbrella Approach to Managing Worry**

Presented by Lynn Lyons, LICSW  
lynnlyonsnh.com

The question I want you to ask yourself:

Are you as clinicians...

***DOING THE DISORDER?***

## **Overlapping Cognitive Patterns**

- Global: *never, always, no one, everyone*
- Catastrophic: *worst case scenario*
- Permanent: *things won't change*

**Your words matter!**

## ***FAMILY FRONTLOADING***

with  
psycho-babble-free  
psycho-education

What percent of children living with an anxious parent meet the criteria for an anxiety disorder?

Lead researcher Golda Ginsburg reports data showing that the children of parents diagnosed with an anxiety disorder are up to seven times more likely to develop an anxiety disorder themselves, and up to **65 percent of children living with an anxious parent meet criteria for an anxiety disorder.**

*Ginsburg, et al., The Child Anxiety Prevention Study: Intervention Model and Primary Outcomes. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 77(3), June 2009, 580-587.*

Children of anxious parents are more likely to...

perceive ambiguous situations as more threatening

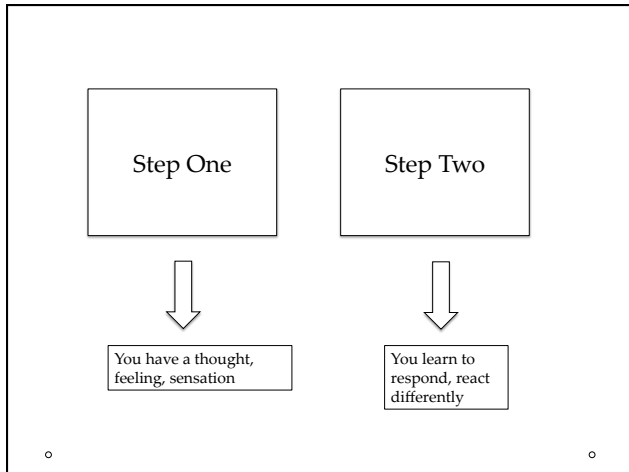
engage in all-or-nothing thinking (perfectionistic)

have lower estimates of competency to cope with such situations

become masters of negative expectancy

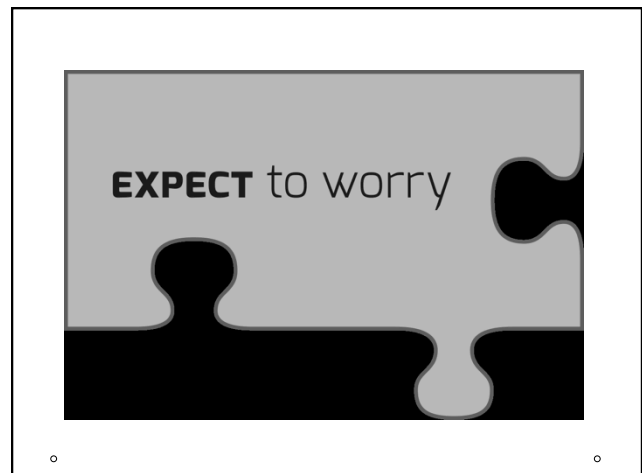
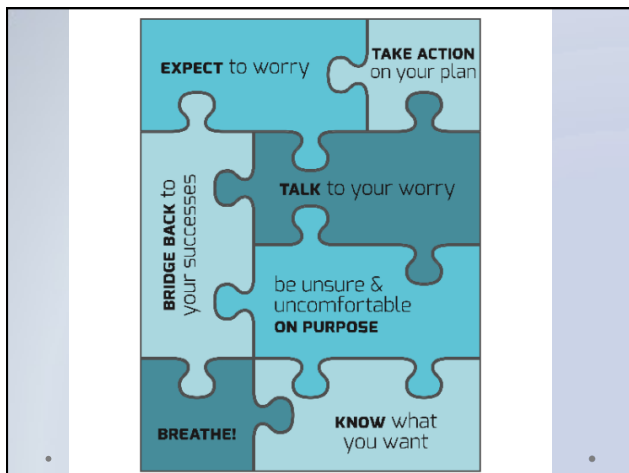
To be uncertain is to be uncomfortable, but to be certain is to be ridiculous.

Chinese Proverb



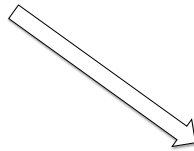
## Seven Puzzle Pieces

Each teaches a skill that helps kids & parents shift their response to anxious thoughts, sensations, & beliefs



We want to demote  
anxiety & worry...

- **CRISIS**



- Normal
- Part of Growing
- Even Annoying!



**CRITICAL ATTITUDINAL SHIFT!**

If I'm uncomfortable or unsure or nervous  
as I'm learning something new, I'm on the  
right track...

We are NOT eliminating or avoiding physical symptoms

We are perceiving & managing them through a different lens



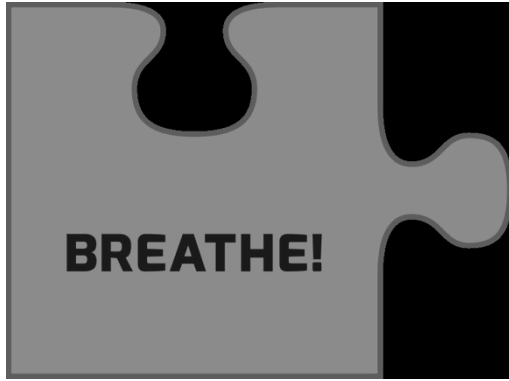
If you will stop telling your alarm center that there's danger, it will learn on its own not to push that danger button

### These are messages to try out

- "I'm willing to feel uncomfortable"
- "I'm willing to feel unsure & to not know what will happen"
- "I'm willing to grab onto my courage & do it"

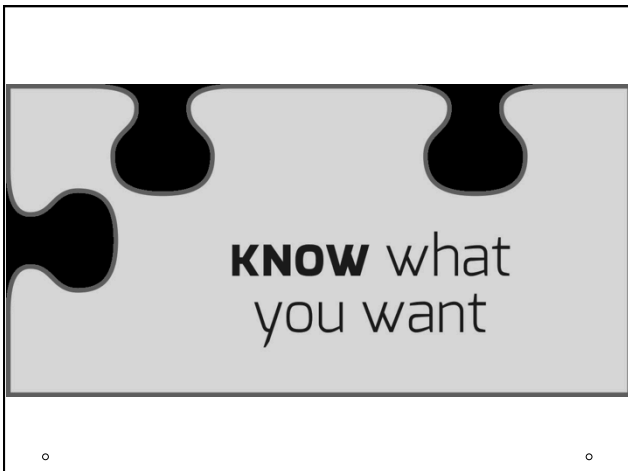
### Step into unknown territory, &...

- **Stop** saying, "I've GOT to know that everything will turn out just right"
- Start saying, "I'm WILLING to NOT KNOW how things are going to turn out"
- **Stop** saying, "I've got to feel comfortable"
- Start saying, "I'm WILLING to feel UNCOMFORTABLE"



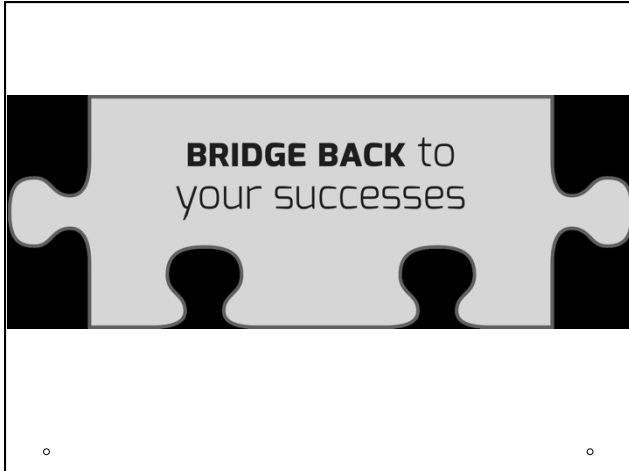
#### 4. Breathe!

- Simple, brief relaxation skills to REBOOT as brain relearns
- Parents get to practice staying calm when their child escalates
- Helps with the mind/body connection
- Creates mastery & the experience of malleability



#### Important Points:

- Rewards are short term
- Rewards happen when they practice and “step in”
- WHY you are rewarding is clearly explained
- Never “in a row”



## 6. Bridge back to your successes

- anxious children suffer from amnesia
- learn from new experiences & create pattern of remembering (reminder bridges)

Helping kids connect to the **PROCESS**  
*of moving toward mastery:*

- What can you do now (automatically) that you couldn't do a few years ago?
- Can you remember something that was *really* challenging when you first tried it but now seems simple?
- Make a list of accomplishments that make you proud.
  - Holding a pencil? Writing some letters? The alphabet
  - Learning to walk?
  - Sleeping in your own bed?



## 7. Take Action on Your Plan

- pieces of puzzle are assembled
- a written, step-by-step plan
- emphasis is on problem solving
- movement away from CONTENT of each worry & focus on PROCESS

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### Remember:

#### **BEWARE over-thinking and over-talking** **Ruminating and the Trouble with *WHY?***

“Although such questions are reasonable and may be useful in many circumstances, people who are frequent ruminators may have difficulty settling on satisfying answers to these questions either because of circumstances in their lives or **because they desire an excessive level of certainty before settling on an answer to such questions.**”

Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, The role of rumination in depressive disorders and mixed anxiety/depressive symptoms, 2000

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## Normalize and Activate



- This is what I'm experiencing.
- I don't like it, but I can handle it.
- I can figure out what to do next.
- And I'm going to DO something.

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## Information Stuff

- [lynnlyonsnh.com](http://lynnlyonsnh.com)
- [playingwithanxiety.com](http://playingwithanxiety.com)
- Email: [Lynn@lynnlyonsnh.com](mailto:Lynn@lynnlyonsnh.com)
- Facebook: Lynn Lyons Psychotherapist, Anxiety and Children
- To get my newsletter: Go to FB page and click on EMAIL SIGN UP, or email me and ask.

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