

Dr. Caroline Buzanko

The Anxiety Compass: The Ultimate Process to

Help Children & Teens Tame Anxiety Gremlins

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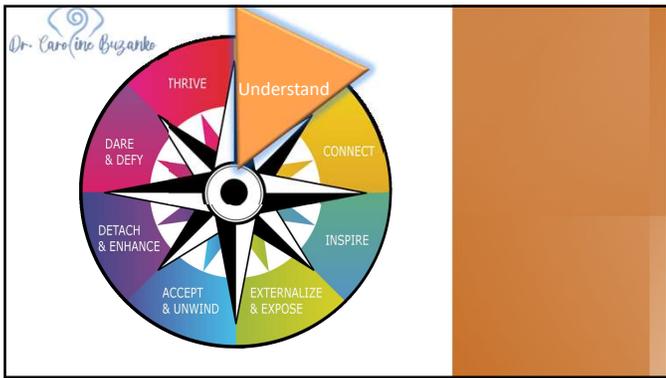
Why is this important?

- Anxiety is the most common mental health problem in kids K-12
- Anxiety leading reason for children's emergency room visits and hospitalizations

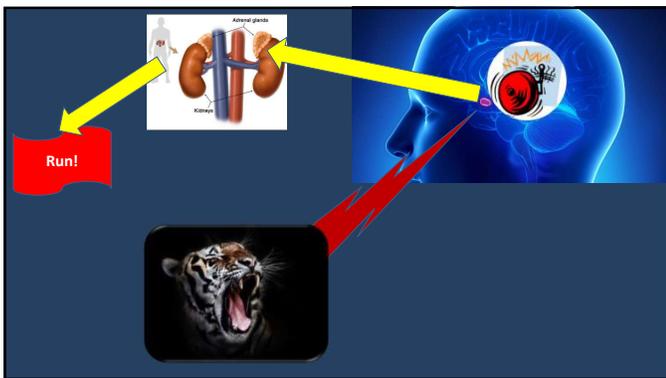
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- Not something you outgrow. Worsens over time
- Teens are extremely susceptible for developing anxiety
- Untreated anxiety is the leading predictor of depression in teens & young adults
- 70% of all mental health problems begin in childhood and adolescence
- Early intervention helps minimize later problems with depression
- Most go without effective support
- BUT, its highly treatable!!!!

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Worries are here to stay

- Normal, protective feeling
- Necessary for survival
- Helps us perform our best
- Helps motivate us

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Worries are here to stay

- Its ok!
- Temporary in the moment
- Not dangerous
- Not to be eliminated or avoided



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Normal vs. Disordered Worries



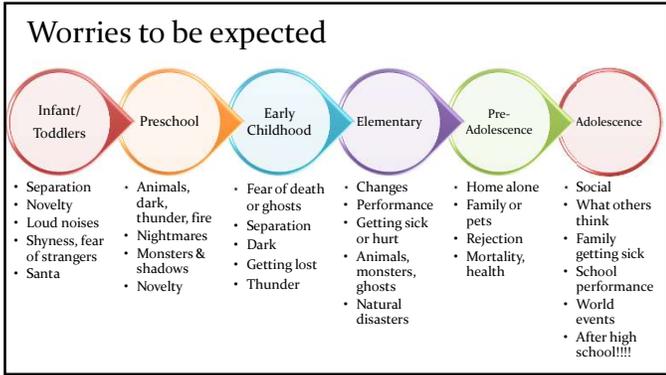
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Worries to be expected

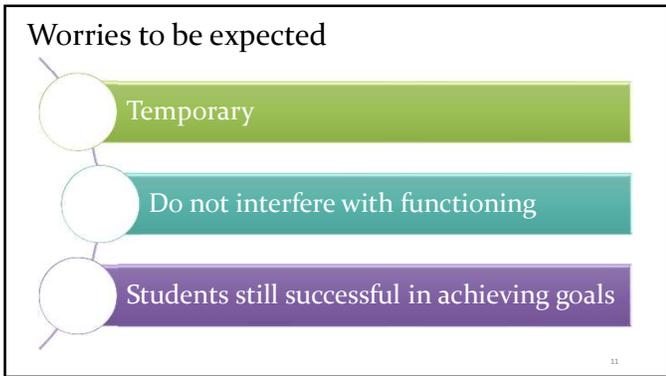
- Developmentally appropriate fears
 - Survival: separation, danger
- Life transitions
 - New school, graduation, change in family composition, teenage years
- Stressful experiences
 - New or unfamiliar situations



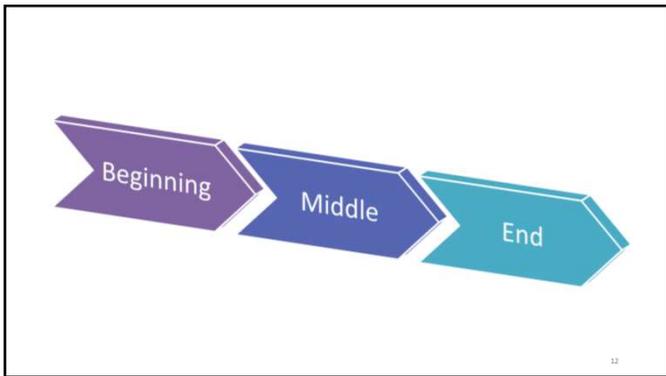
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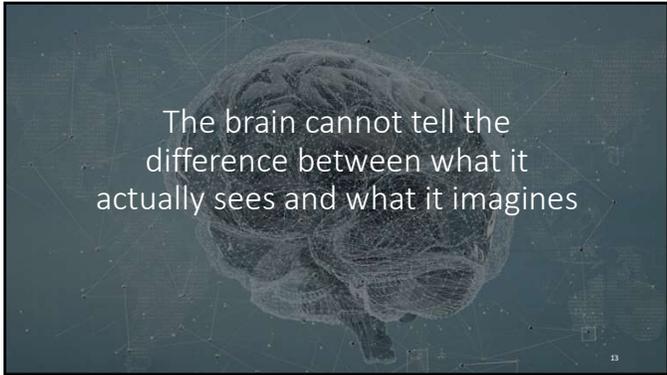
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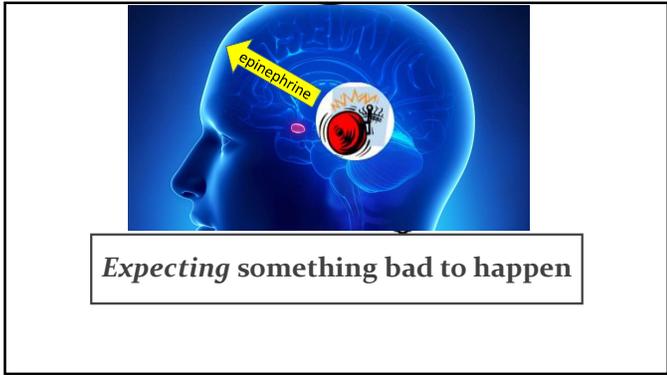
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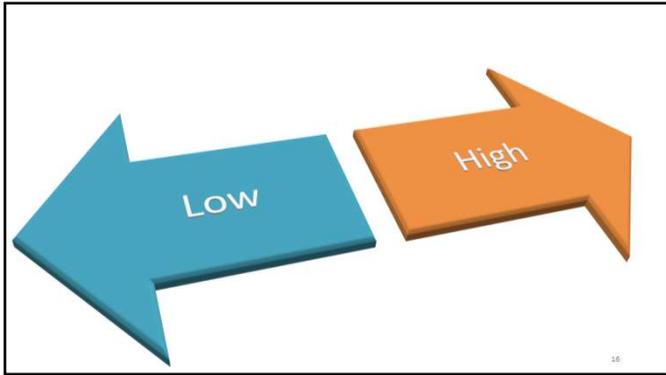
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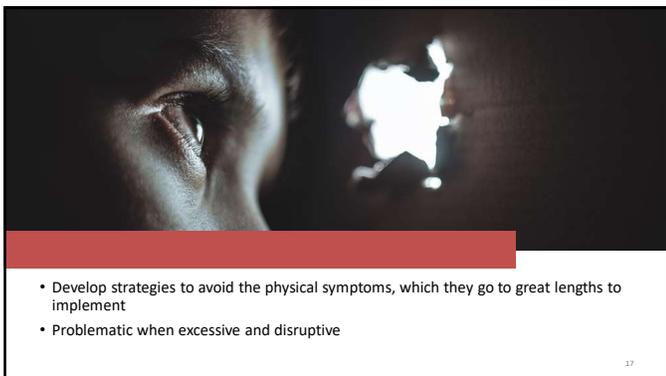
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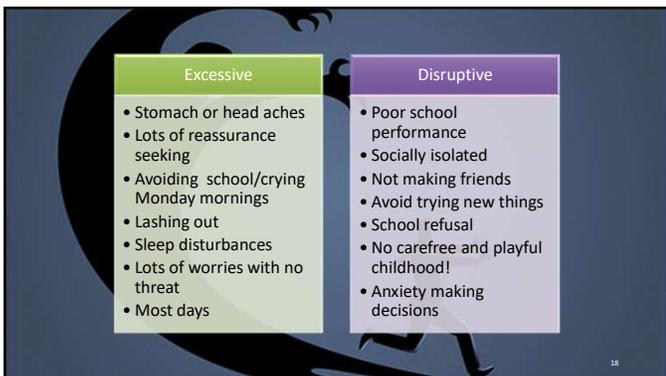


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- Develop strategies to avoid the physical symptoms, which they go to great lengths to implement
- Problematic when excessive and disruptive



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- Excessive**
- Stomach or head aches
 - Lots of reassurance seeking
 - Avoiding school/crying Monday mornings
 - Lashing out
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Lots of worries with no threat
 - Most days

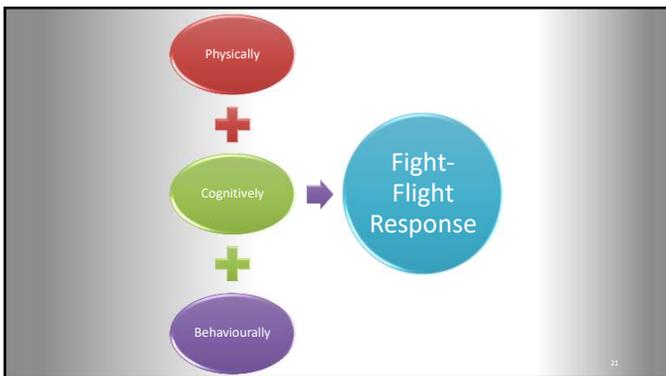
- Disruptive**
- Poor school performance
 - Socially isolated
 - Not making friends
 - Avoid trying new things
 - School refusal
 - No carefree and playful childhood!
 - Anxiety making decisions

This is too much
And I can't handle it
Anxiety-Based Schemas

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The many faces of anxiety

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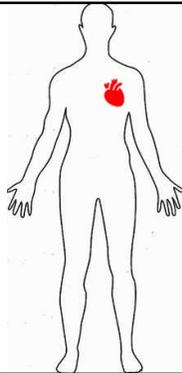
How Anxiety Manifests: **Affect**

- Emotion
- Physical symptoms
 - Greater sensitivity to symptoms
 - Frequent doctor visits
 - Poor school attendance



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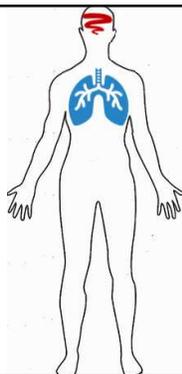
...What it feels like...



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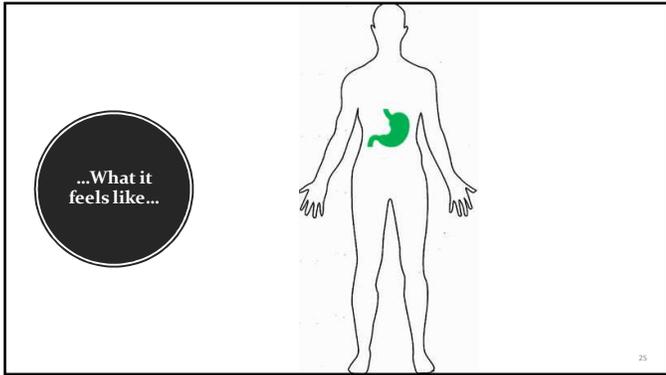
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...What it feels like...

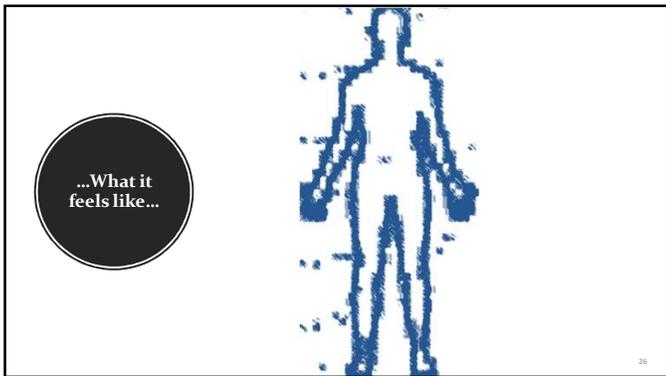


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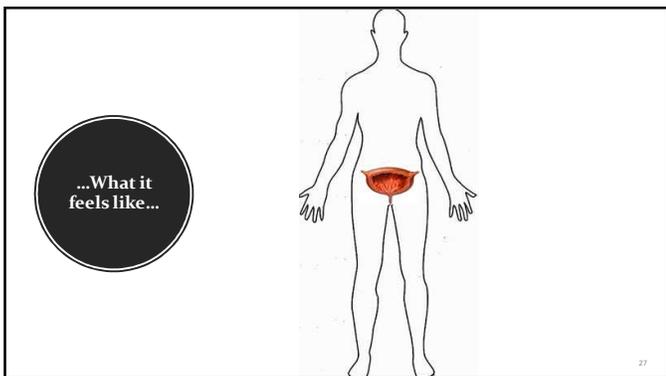
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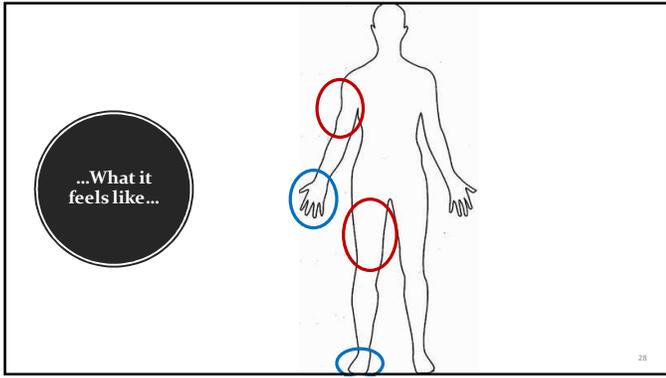
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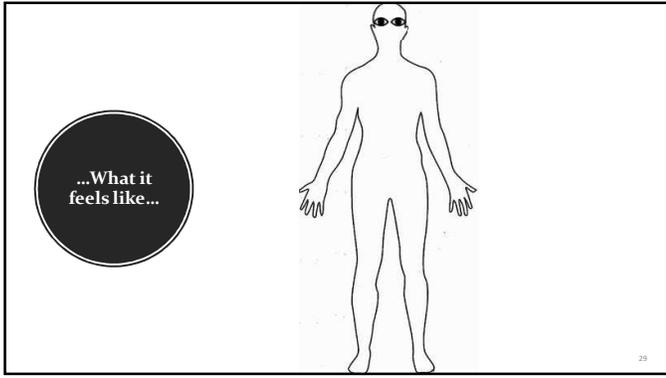
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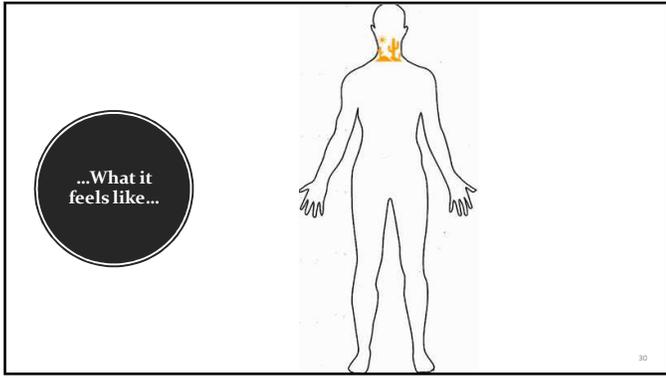
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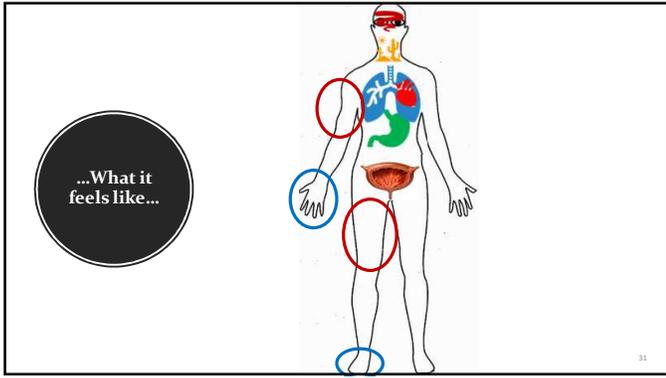
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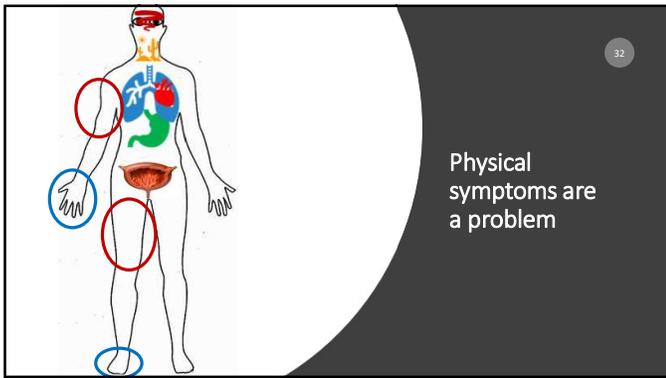
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**How Anxiety Manifests:
Thoughts**

- Unrealistic, extreme
 - What if's...
 - Everyone is going to laugh
 - The world is dangerous
 - Catastrophic thinking



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**How Anxiety Manifests:
Thoughts that lead to behaviours**

- I can't handle it!
- Believe they are incompetent
 - Dependency behaviours
 - Reassurance
 - To do things for them
 - Repetitive questions
 - Prepare unnecessarily
 - Clingy
 - Co-sleeping, call home



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Behaviours: Internalizing

- Withdrawn/isolated
- Shy
- Sad/irritable
- Head/stomach-aches
- Eating issues (under- or over-eating; food intolerances)
- Sleep problems/Fatigue
- Low self-esteem and confidence
- Rejection
- Repetitive behaviours/obsession
- Difficulties concentrating, fidgety
- Avoidance
- Disorganized
- Cry



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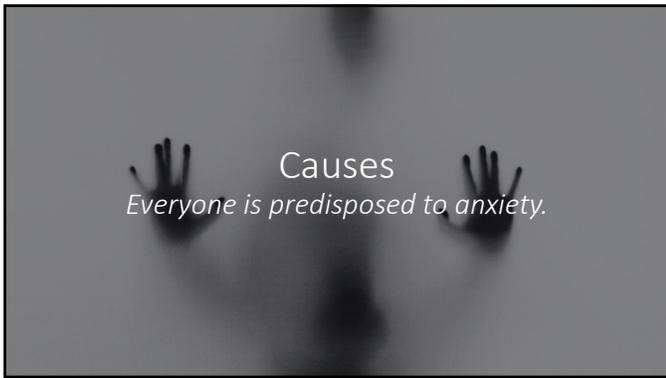
Behaviours: Externalizing

- Easily triggered
- Disrespectful
- Oppositional and defiant
- Difficulty transitioning
- Aggression/intimidation
- Difficulties concentrating
- Lies or steals
- Temper outbursts
- Restless/fidgety
- Interrupts/Intrudes
- Impulsive
- Give up easily
- Argumentative
- Yell
- Repetitive questions
- Seek constant approval
- Substance use

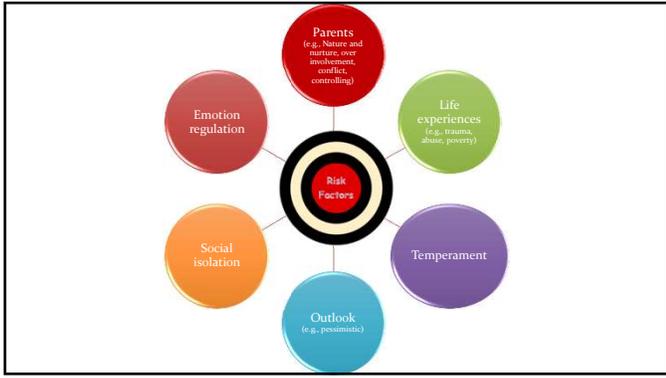


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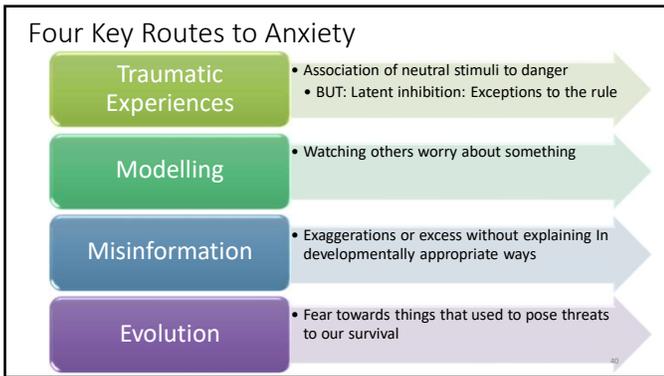
Causes
Everyone is predisposed to anxiety.



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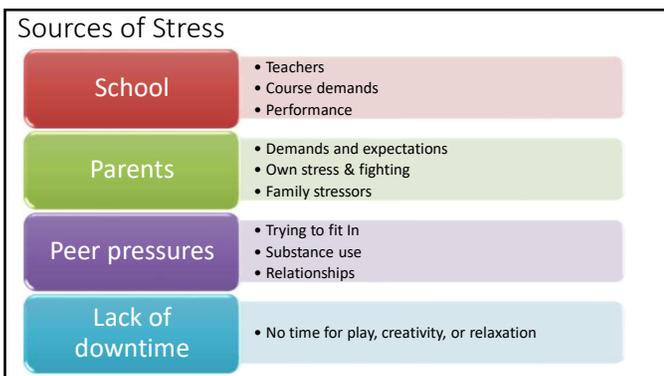
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Effortlessly Perfect

-  Overachieve academically
-  High expectations in all areas of life
-  Expectations to be happy



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Self-esteem

False messages to avoid rejection

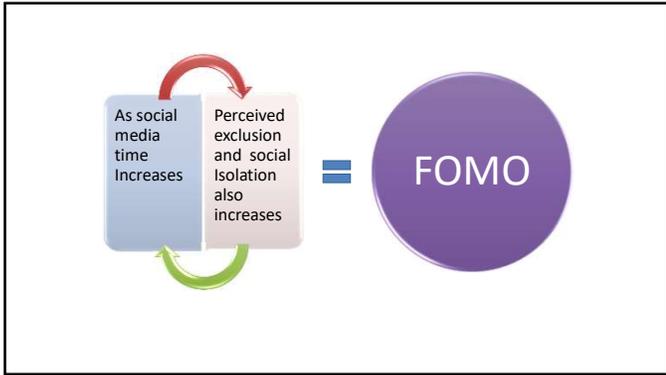
- So happy!
- So beautiful!

“Likes” worsens self-esteem

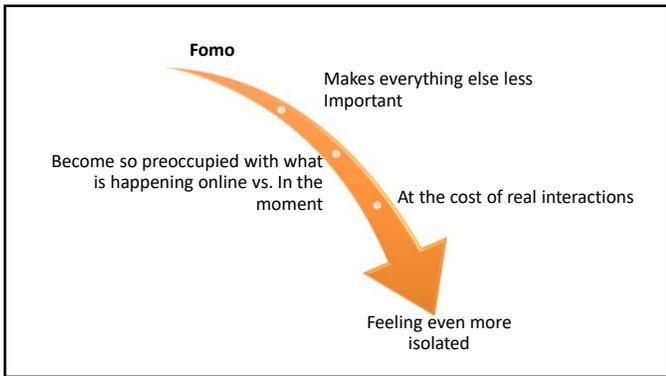
- Others won’t like the “real” them.



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Most important relationship for bonding and overall development

- Discovering:
- Self
- Values
- Personality
- World

Family Connection

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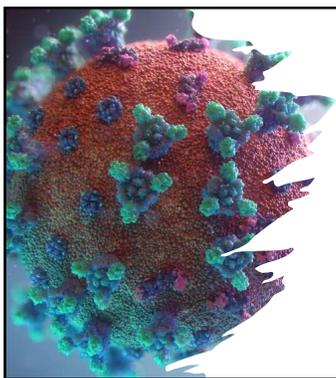
Technoference



No longer turning to parents to debrief day and hurts

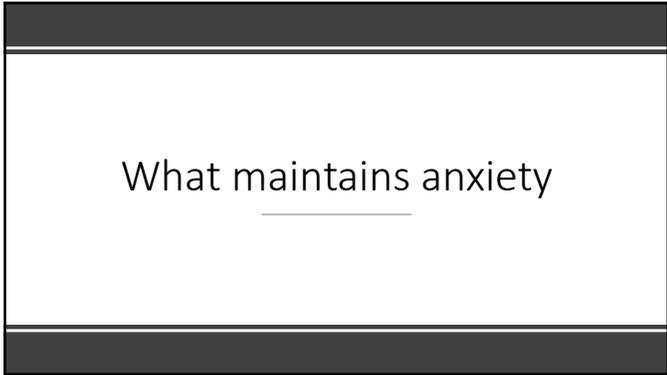
Screens are replacing parents and disrupting family development

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- Depression and anxiety doubled since COVID
- Worsen with restrictions
 - Social isolation
 - Disrupted routines
 - Missed milestones
- Symptoms compound over time

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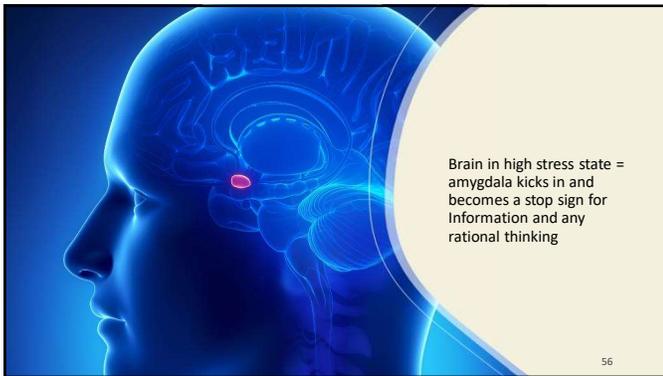
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Maintaining Traps:

- Pranks
- Catastrophic language
- No risks with lots of be careful's
- Over correction
- Self-critical and/or anxious models
- Blame genetics
- No!
- Focus on outcomes and winning
- Rushing
- Pushing
- Asking leading questions
- Answering anxiety related and/or why questions
- Trying to get them to calm
- Reassurance
- Trying to convince it's ok

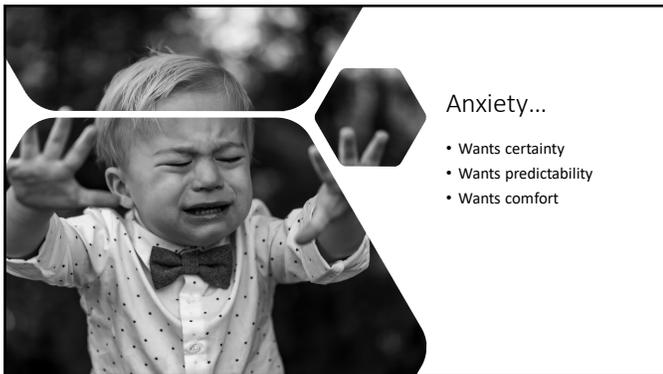
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Accommodation Behaviours

The diagram features a central circular image of a child with a teddy bear. Two blue circles branch out from this image: 'Participation' and 'Modification'. 'Participation' is linked to a list of three bullet points: 'Assist in checking behaviours', 'Assist in avoidance', and 'Reassure'. 'Modification' is linked to a single bullet point: 'Prevent anxiety provoking situations'.

- Assist in checking behaviours
- Assist in avoidance
- Reassure

- Prevent anxiety provoking situations

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Accommodations worsens anxiety long-term

A funnel-shaped diagram with three circles inside, each labeled 'Accommodation'. An arrow points downwards from the narrow end of the funnel to the text 'Anxiety more impairing and severe with poorer treatment outcomes'.

Anxiety more impairing and severe with poorer treatment outcomes

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Accommodations worsens anxiety long-term

- Allow them to be excused
- Distract them or stop thoughts
- Adjusting routines, alternative place for lunch
- Fixed schedules and transition warning
- Stress balls
- Sleep together
- Pre-warnings



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Safety Behaviours!

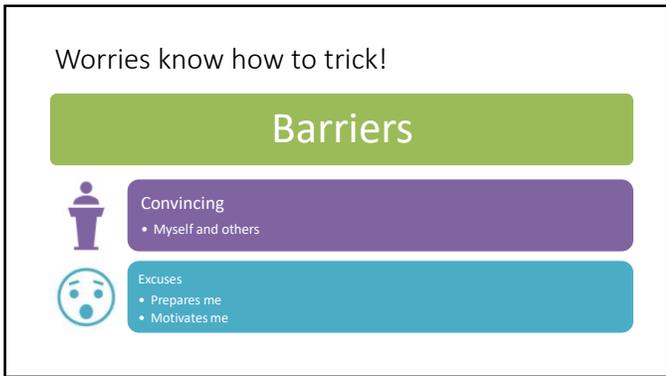


- Avoidance
- Excessive checking
- Seeking reassurance
- Rituals
- Safety aids

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Persistent fears

- Catering to the fears.
- Reassuring the fears.
- Avoiding the fears.
- Talking about the fears.

Anything you do that makes them feel better!!!!

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The # 1 thing they need to learn?

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How they manage the experience of anxiety is related to anxiety disorder

Not the actual trigger

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A glowing brain in shades of blue and green is shown next to the profile of a child's face, looking towards the brain.

Avoid traps

- Adults jumping in harms kids:
 - Changes brain development & ingrains anxiety
 - Makes kids vulnerable: no opportunities to experience manageable amounts of stress
 - Confidence and resilience stunted

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Saying “Don’t worry” doesn’t work

Get stuck in constant need for reassurance

No skills developed

Minimizing

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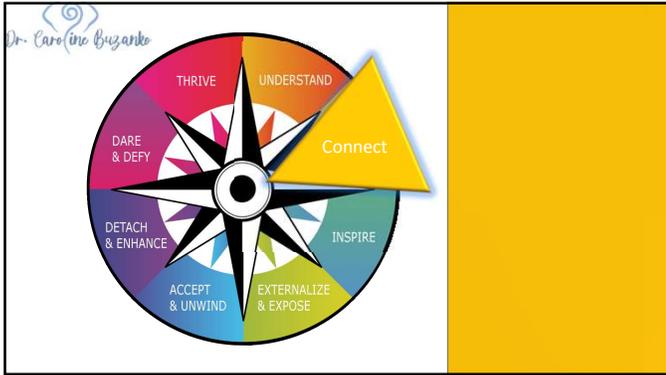
Watch out for dependency traps



A man in a plaid shirt is hugging a child from behind. The child is wearing a dark jacket.

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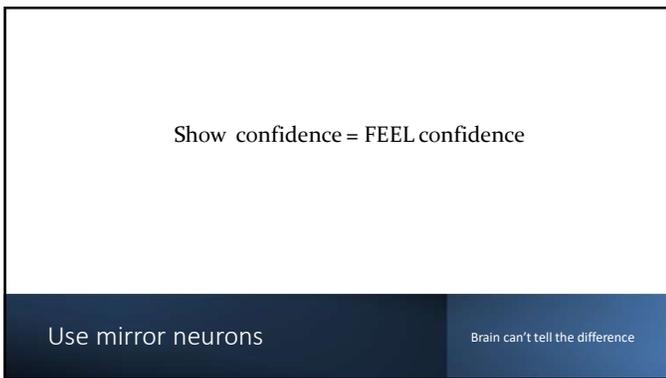
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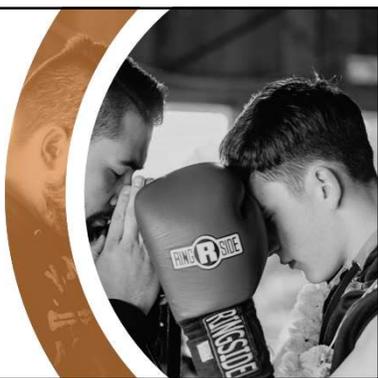


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Emotion Coach



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ODD vs. Anxiety?



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No such thing as bad kids.



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Function of Emotions



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Steps of an Effective Emotion Coach



- Awareness**
- Of your child's emotions
 - Of your own emotions

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Steps of an Effective Emotion Coach



- Awareness**
- Of your child's emotions
 - Of your own emotions



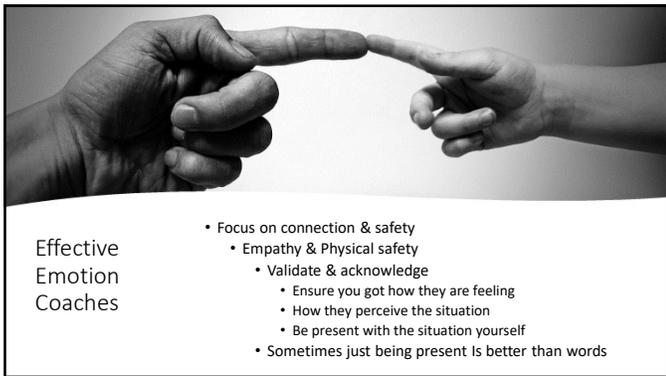
- Recognize opportunity**

81

81



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Labelling Emotions

- Name it to tame it
 - Builds confidence
 - Helps calm

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Fold along the dotted line so the two stars touch.

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Labelling Emotions

- Model
- Build emotion vocabulary
- Foresight

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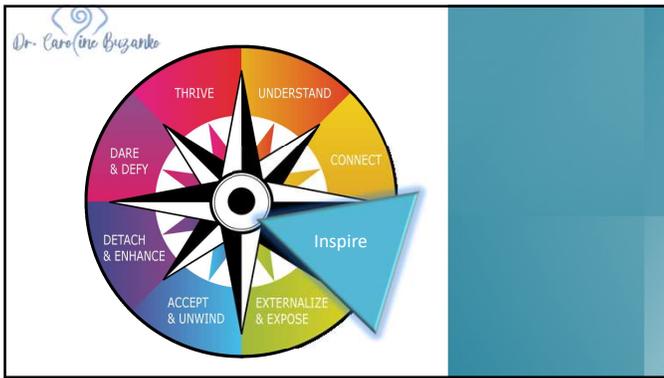
Effective Emotion Coaches

- Keep the waters calm!
- Not personal
- Thank you!
 - Do the process yourself
 - Physiologically
 - Emotionally
 - Function of emotion
- Focus on goal: Connect & Confidence they can cope

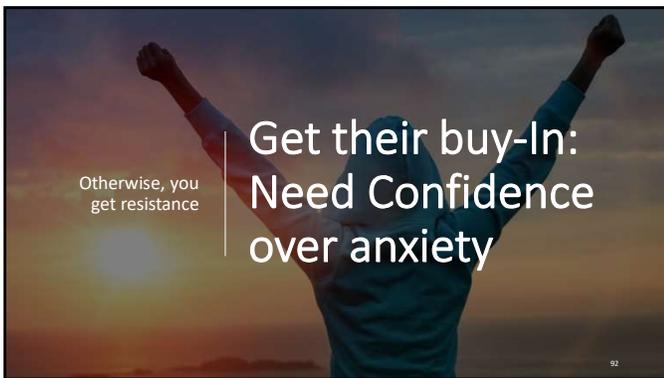
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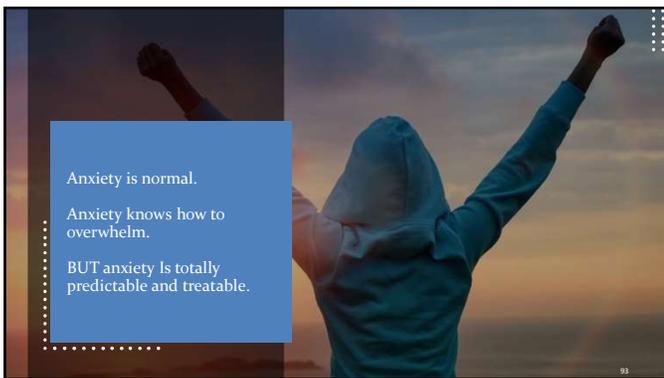
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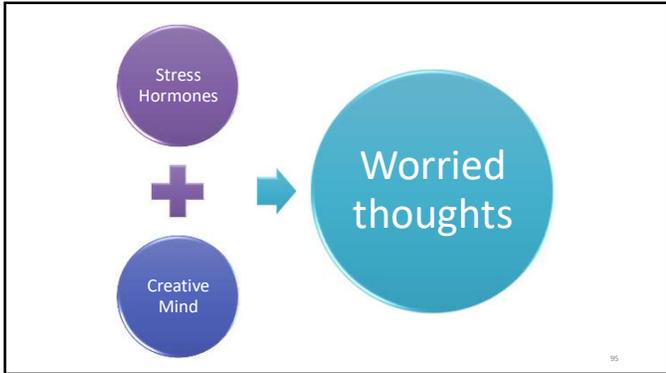
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Brain Experts

- Every thought secretes a chemical & creates a feeling
- Fearful thought = fearful emotion
- Loving thought = loving emotion



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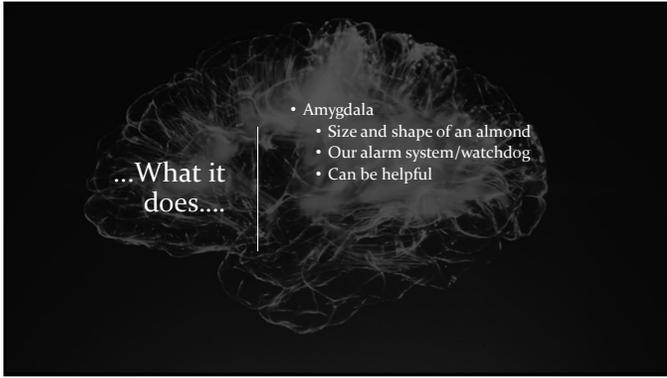


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Anxiety Experts

- Normalizes anxiety
 - Temporary
 - Not dangerous
- Not alone!
- Always with us
 - Ways to learn to tolerate it
- Confidence

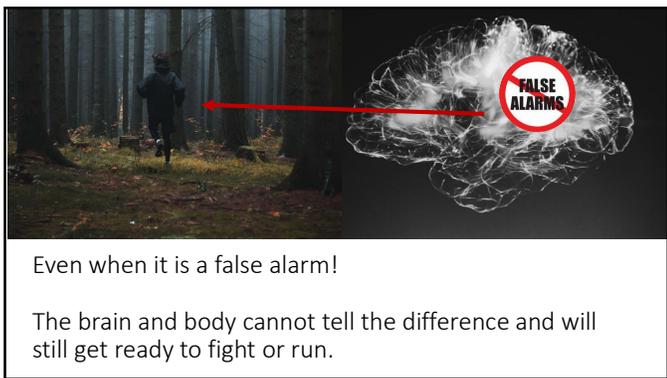
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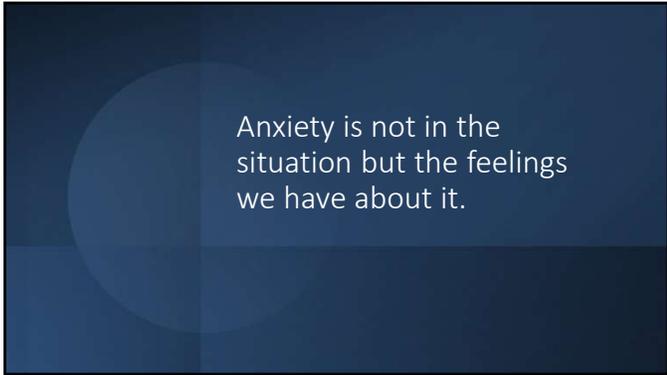
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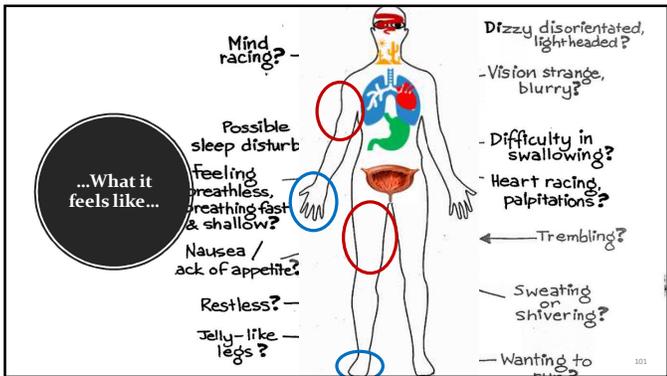
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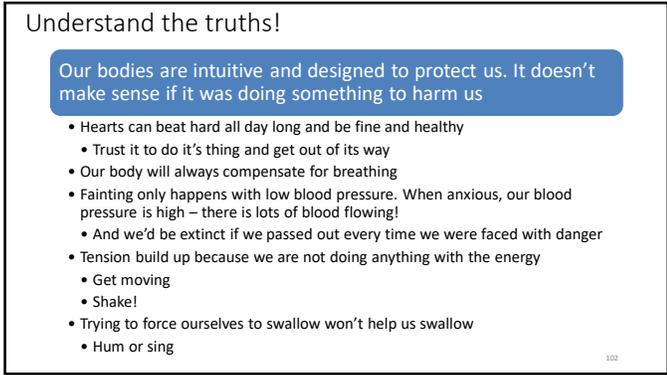
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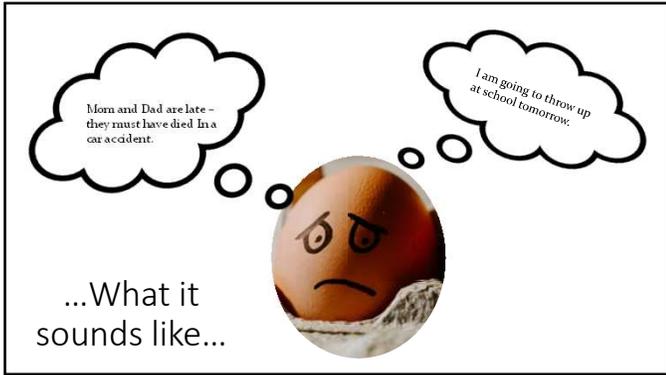
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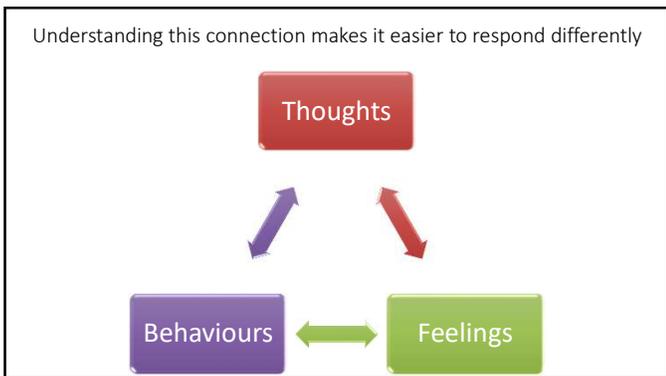
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I understand what my body is doing

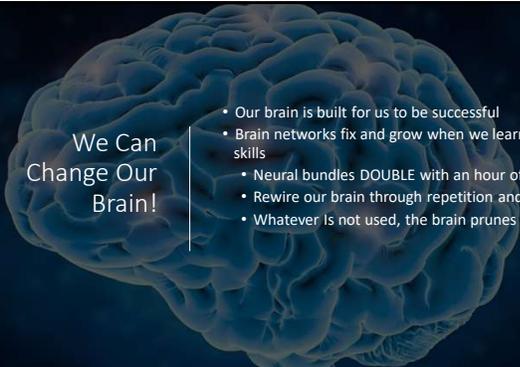
I can handle what my body does

I can handle discomfort

I know I can breathe to make my brain and body calm down

Expecting physical sensations helps reduce signals to amygdala

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We Can Change Our Brain!

- Our brain is built for us to be successful
- Brain networks fix and grow when we learn new skills
- Neural bundles DOUBLE with an hour of practice
- Rewire our brain through repetition and practice
- Whatever is not used, the brain prunes itself

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We Grow Our Brain Whenever we:

- Take on new challenges
- THINK we can learn something hard
- THINK we can learn from our mistakes

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Keys to success:
Self-efficacy

I believe I can (cognitive)

I feel good about trying (emotions)

I have a plan and going to do my best (behaviour)

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What is Important

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Write Reminders

- Why they want to control their own life
- Tired
- How life will be different
- What they are missing out on

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Get their buy-In

- Social goals
- Make good choices
- To learn effectively
- Have fun
- External rewards

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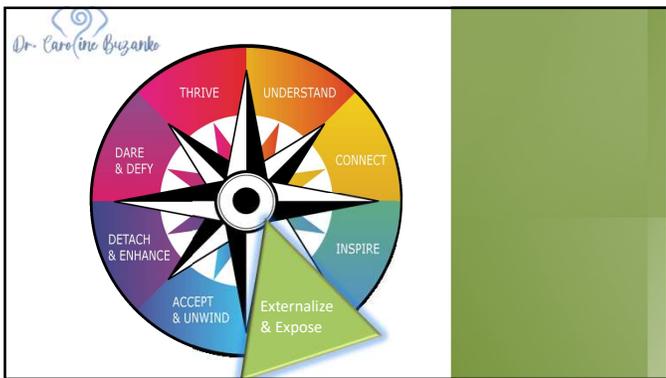
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Cost Benefit Analysis	
Benefit of being slave to anxiety	Cost/Downside of being slave to anxiety
People tell me when things are going to change	Nothing is always predictable and I will be overly upset if something unexpected happens
I can take a break whenever I want	I overreact/cry – kids make fun of me
Easier	I can't go to sleepovers
More comfortable	Mom always has to come on field trips
Won't make a mistake	Can't do anything on my own
	Feel like a baby
	Other kids are getting better and I am still stuck

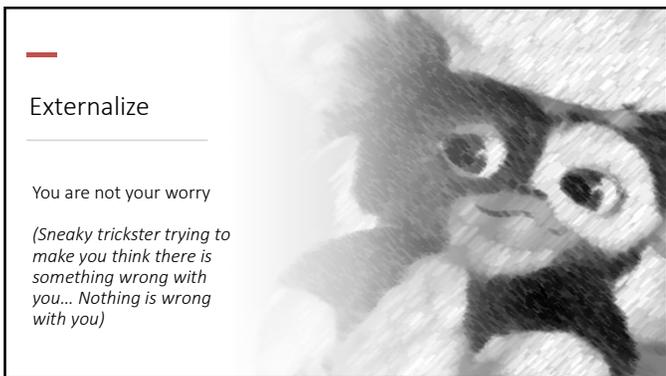
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Externalize to take control

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Expose it

- Remind how anxiety works
 - Yep, there's Bob, that's what it does.
 - Wow, it is really working hard to make me think the worst today!
 - Yeah, we knew it'd show up now. It doesn't want me to go to my sleepover.
 - It wants us to avoid new things.
 - It really knows how to try to stress people out.

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Overcoming Normalized Stress: Starts with Awareness

Triggers

- Worries about a panic attack
- Worries about being embarrassed
- Worries about something happening
- Worries about facing something scary
- Worries of having bad thoughts

Intensifiers

- Context variables
 - Who
 - What
 - Where
 - When

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Starts with Awareness

What's the problem?	When does the gremlin shows up?	What makes it worse?

121

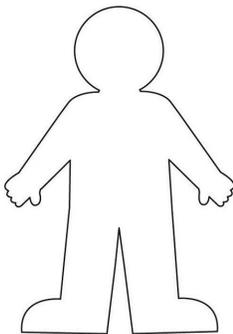
Starts with Awareness



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- Dizzy
- Racing
- Tension
- Achy
- Sore
- Hot
- Cold
- Tingly
- Relaxed
- Trembling
- Numb
- Sharp
- Nausea
- Breathless
- Shivering
- Sweating
- Trouble swallowing
- Tired



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Recognizing Anxiety
in our body

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Feels Like

- Panic! Terror!**
(I am outta here)
- Really, Really Nervous**
(Ack! Help!)
- Really Nervous**
(Not sure how I am going to do)
- Starting to feel nervous**
(But I think I got it)
- Cool and Calm**
(I got this)

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	Feels like
Panic! Terror! <i>(I am outta here)</i>	Can't breathe Sweating Vomiting
Really, Really Nervous <i>(Ack! Help!)</i>	Nausea Short breathes Pounding chest
Really Nervous <i>(Not sure how I am going to do)</i>	Quicker heartbeat Clammy hands Muscle tension and headache
Starting to feel nervous <i>(But I think I got it)</i>	Quicker heartbeat Neck tension Restless
Cool and Calm <i>(I got this)</i>	Relaxed muscles. Deep breathing. Slow heartbeat

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Panic! Terror!
(I am outta here)

Really, Really Nervous
(Ack! Help!)

Really Nervous
(Not sure how I am going to do)

Starting to feel nervous
(But I think I got It)

Cool and Calm
(I got this)

Feels like	Sounds like	Looks like

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Recognizing Anxiety in our thoughts

Distant Past Present Distant Future

Near Past Near Future

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Recognizing Anxiety in our behaviours

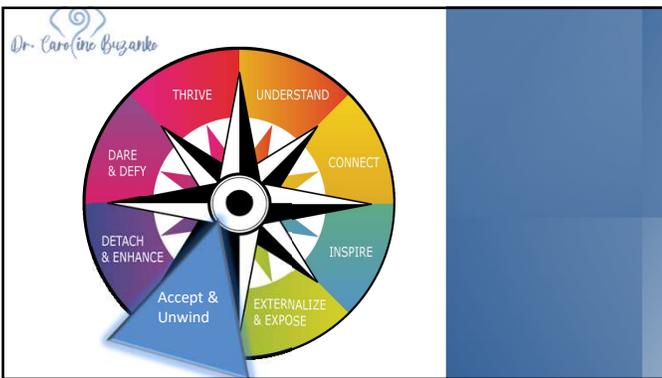
- I avoid dogs because I might get bit
- I void going to BF's house because she has a dog
- I avoid putting my hand up in class because It might sound dumb
- I avoid sleepovers because I am worried I will have to go to the bathroom
- I avoid being alone because something might happen
- I avoid school because I might throw up
- I avoid ordering food because I might mess It up

129

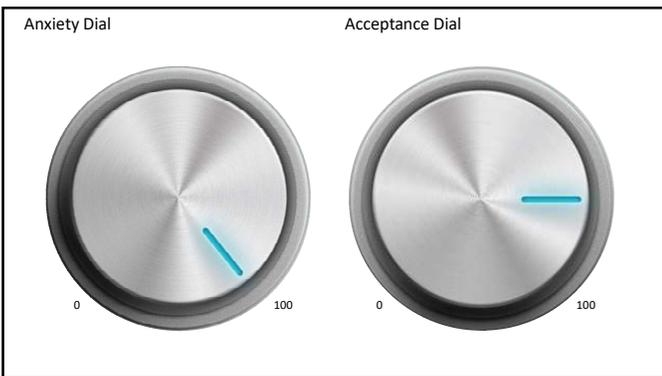
Starts with Awareness: Practice!

What am I feeling?	Situation?	How am I responding?	What I am going to do next:

130



131



132

50,000+ Thoughts a Day

We can't control our thoughts – only our response to them

133

Mindfulness

NOT ABOUT RELAXING

NOT ABOUT CHANGING THOUGHTS

134

134

Mindfulness

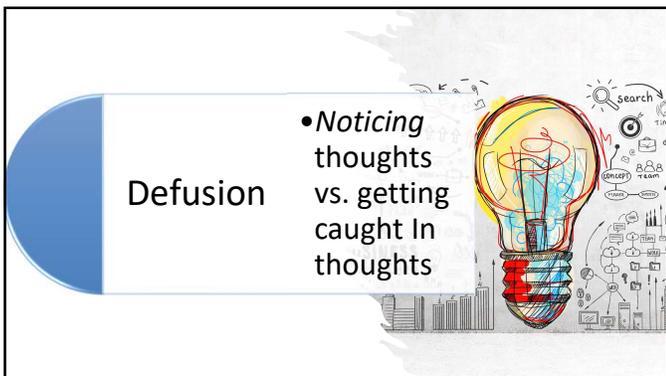
IT'S ABOUT *NOT* FIGHTING THEM

135

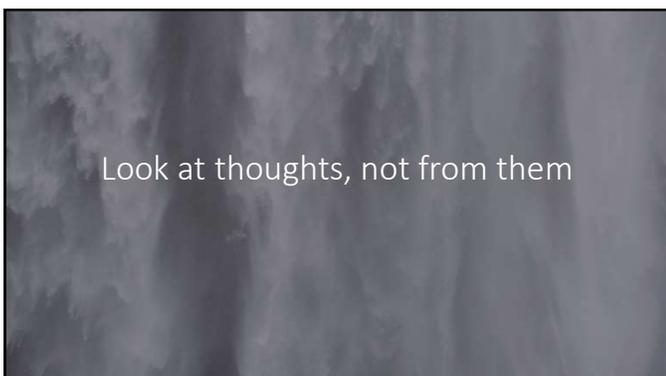
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138



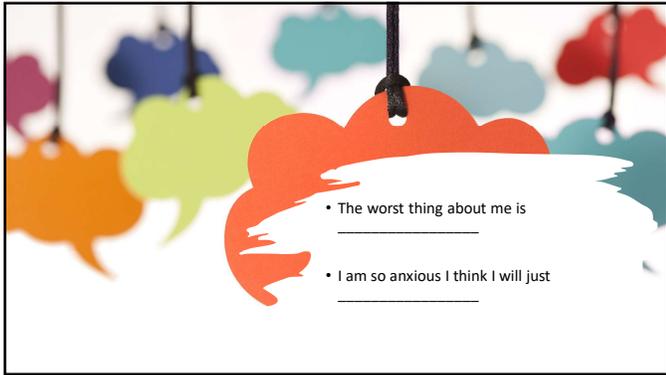
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140



141



142



143

Unwinding from thoughts

Repetition

Distancing

- "I notice I'm having the thought that..."

Train, balloons, clouds, or leaves on the river

Thank them



144



Make fun of worried thoughts

- ✓ Sing it
- ✓ Draw cartoons
- ✓ Mute it
- ✓ Say it really fast
- ✓ Say it in slow motion
- ✓ Mimic it

145

Dismiss Worried Thoughts

Dismiss Worried Thoughts		Demand more from worried thoughts	
Roll my eyes	You're so boring!	Is that all you got?	Is that the best you can come up with?
Big deal	So what?	Don't you have something scarier?	Can't you give me more?

146

Unwinding

- War of the Worlds
- Objectify
- Pop-ups
- Name that Story



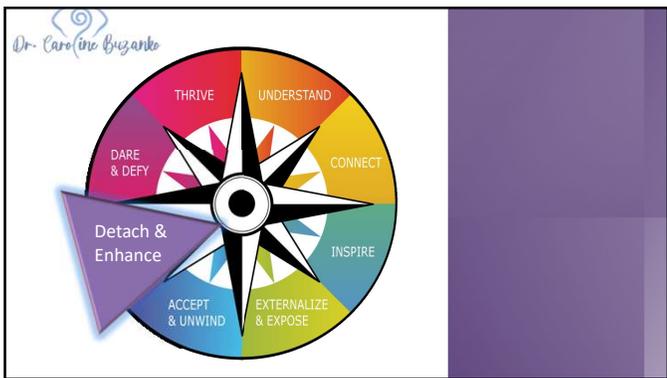
147



148



149



150

Detach from Worried Thinking & Enhance Problem Solving Thinking

- Thoughts (unrealistic, extreme)
 - Mom and Dad are late – they must have died in a car accident.
 - My work must be perfect otherwise people will think I am dumb.
 - I am going to throw up at school tomorrow.
 - I can't catch a ball very well so can't go to school tomorrow when we start basketball.
 - I can't read in front of the class because everyone will laugh at me.
 - Substitutes don't know how to help me so I can't go to school tomorrow.



151



152

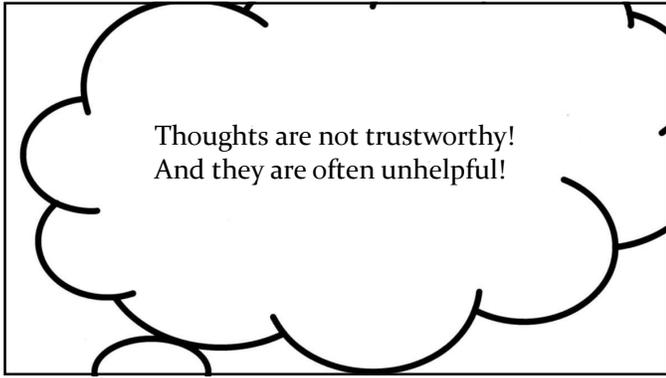


Stretch

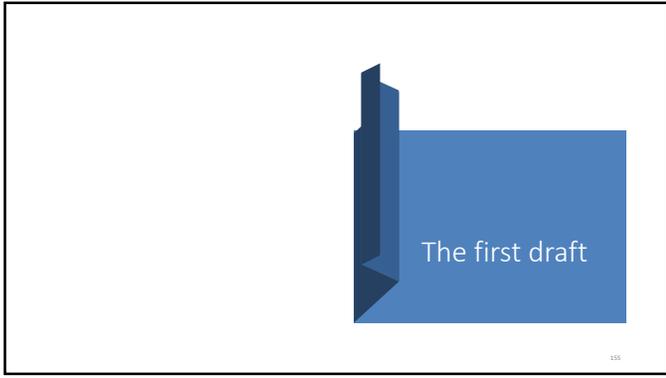
Make a list of things you or others have believed that you do not believe anymore

*Things change.
Even things that were truth.
Just because we still believe it doesn't mean it is still true.*

153



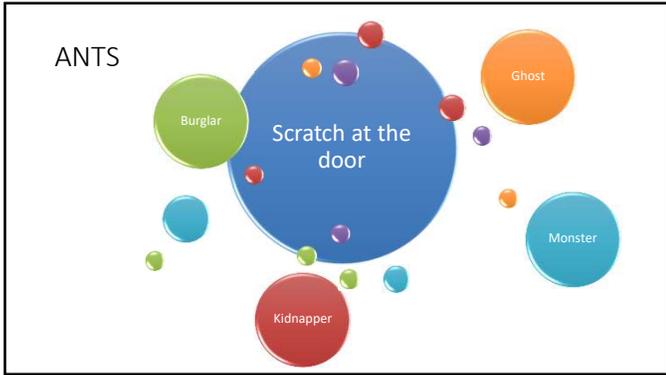
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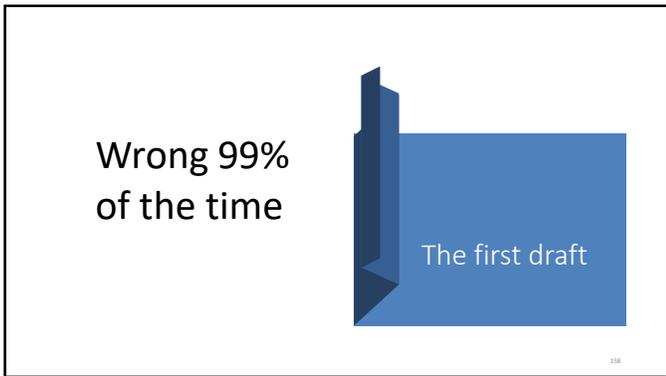
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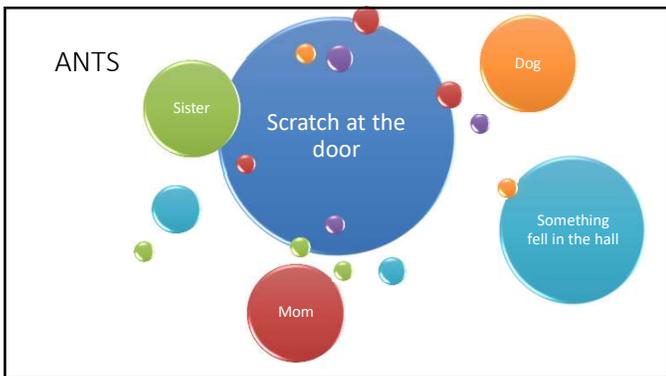
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157



158



159

These are only guesses!!!!
 (Based on *unhelpful* trickster ants assumptions)

- Overestimate**
• Believe something bad is for sure going to happen
- Fortune telling**
• Believe you know what is going to happen
- Overgeneralization**
• Believe one experience is always going to happen again
- Mind reading**
• Believe you know what others are thinking
- Negativity bias**
• Focus only on negative while missing positives
- Rigid**
• Must know, needs to be my way, your too
- All-or-nothing**
• Never, always, no matter what, nothing can change
- Avoidant**
• I can't unless... I don't want to, I am sick
- Permanence**
• I will always be like this
- Catastrophic**
• Worst case scenario

160

Raising Awareness

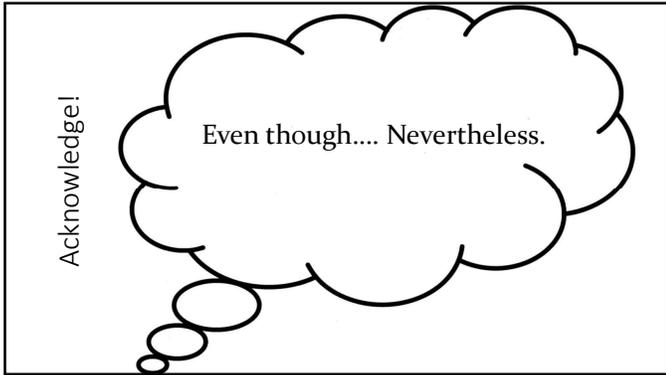
<p>Helpful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am going to have so much fun! I can't wait to see Danny! I have to remember to bring my swimsuit 	<p>Unhelpful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am going to throw up (even though I haven't thrown up in over five years) Mom is going to forget to pick me up (even though she has never forgotten before) No one is going to play with me (even though my friend is going to be there) All the bad things that will happen
---	---

161

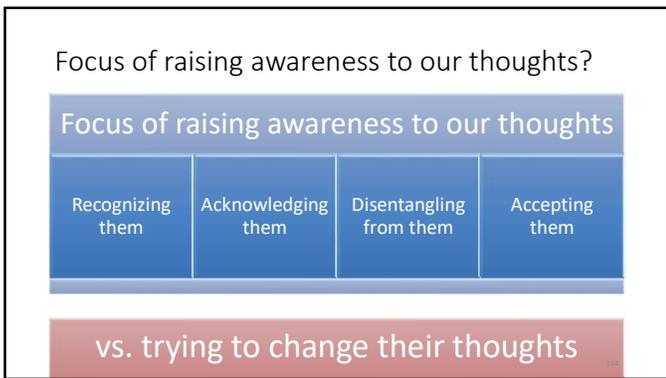
Acknowledge!

- Yep, that's your story you're trying to tell
- Nice first draft. Nice conspiracy.
- You're normal.
- This is not an emergency.
- You're annoying.
- I am learning.

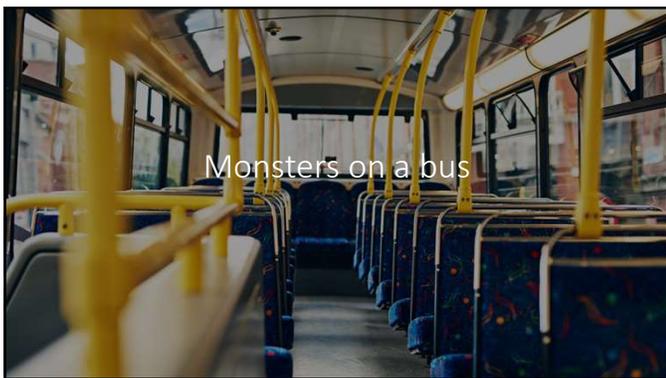
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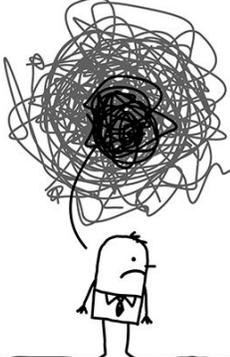
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164



165



Overestimate

- Believe something bad is for sure going to happen
- Confuse possibility and probability

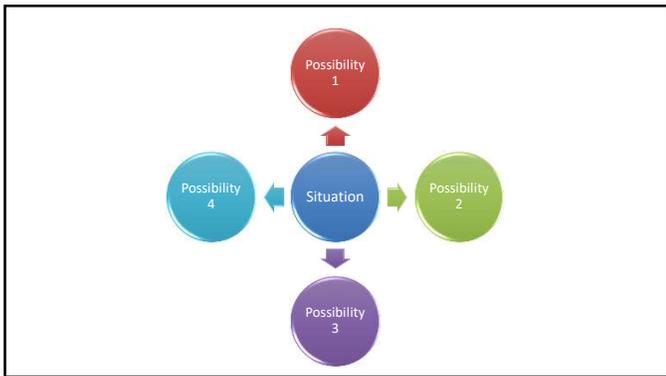
166

Overestimate

Rely on inner emotional compass
Use anxiety level to gauge risk



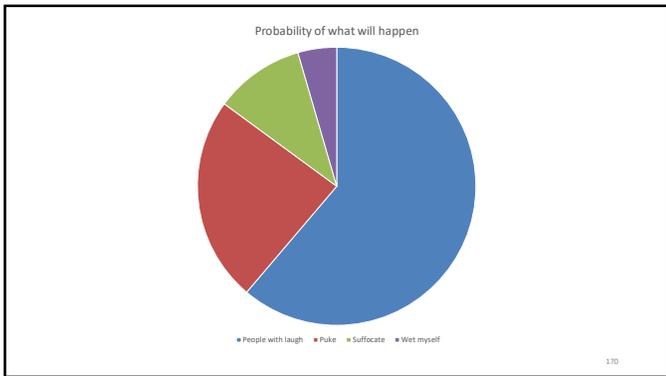
167



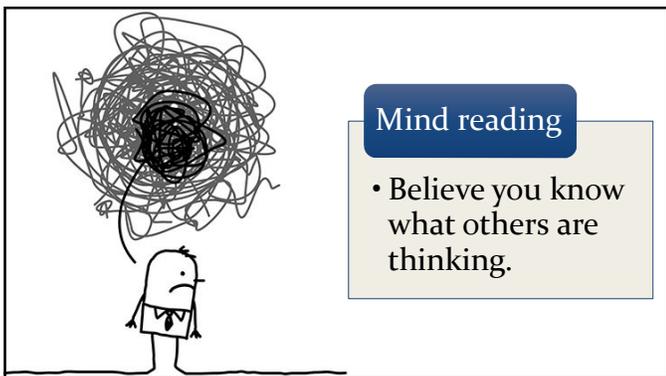
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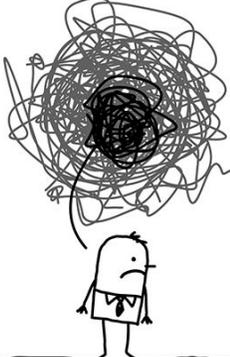
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170



171



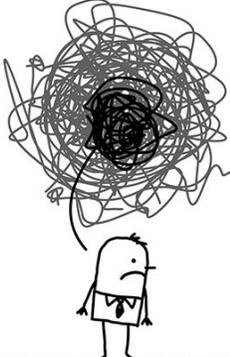
Positivity blind

- Focus only on negative while missing positives

Overgeneralize

- Believe one experience is always going to happen again
- Core beliefs about the world

172



Rigid

- Rules: shoulds and musts
- Must know, needs to be my way, yeah but

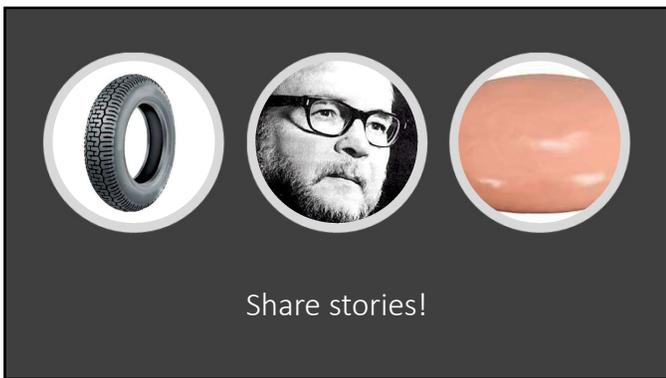
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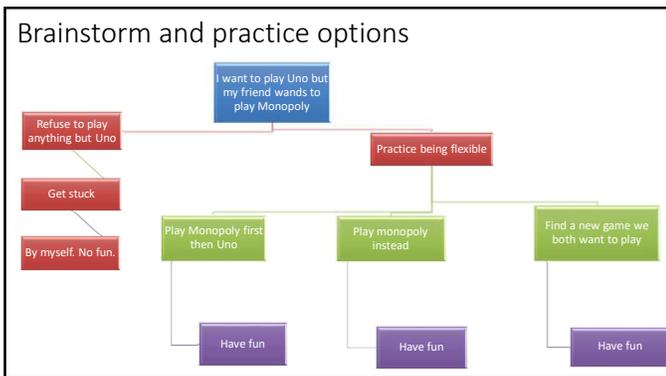
174



175



176



177

Write worries out & what you can do about it

Out of my control

- Acknowledge and focus on something else

In my control

- What can I do about it?
- What is the first step I can do today? Then tomorrow?

178

178

OVER THERE
NOWHERE
FAR AWAY
SOMEWHERE
NO IDEA
NOT SURE
UNCERTAIN

Unexpected event/mistake of the day & how you handled it

179

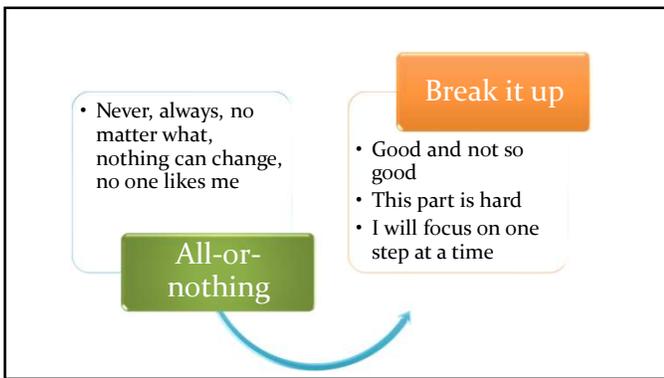
179

Chain of flexibility

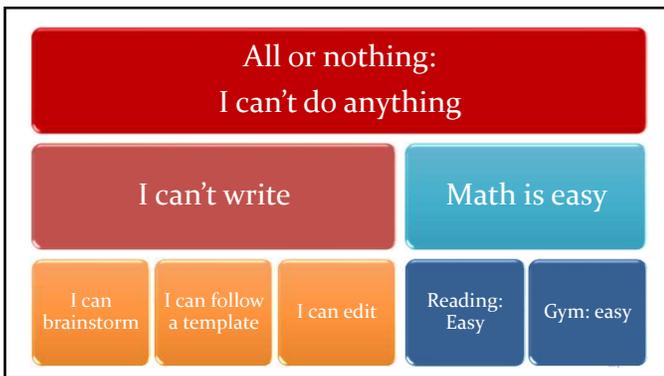
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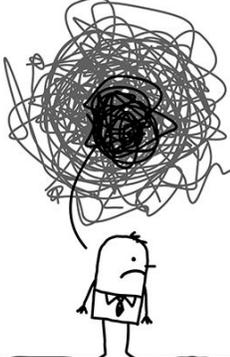
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182



183



Permanent

- I will always be like this.

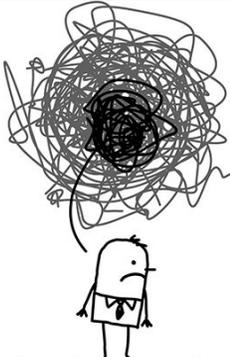
184



Temporary

- I can change my brain
- This will pass

185



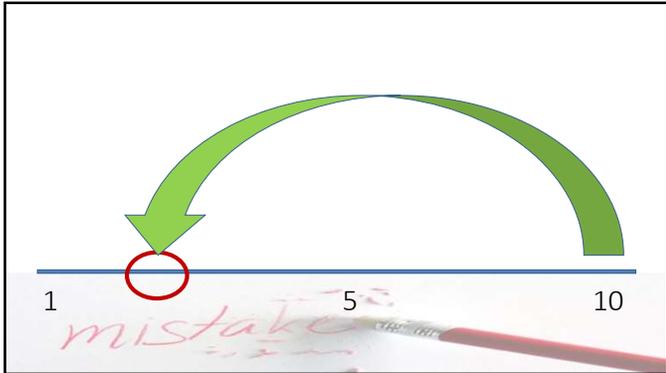
Catastrophic

- Worse case scenario
- Completely awful
- Completely unmanageable

186



187



188



189

Pros	Cons
Mom gets to comfort me a little longer.	I cannot go into class at the same time as my friends.
I miss roll call and won't get yelled at for not sitting at my desk.	I will be more noticeable if I come in late.
	I miss being chosen for fun jobs.
	I am always last to get a book and all the good ones are gone.

190



191



192

Power of Questions

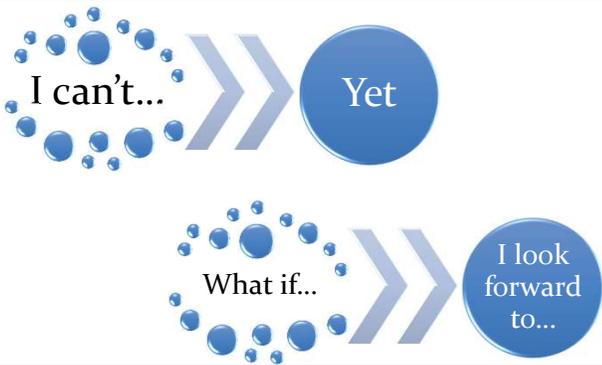


193

What we say affects our thoughts
AND changes the structure of our
brains

We can tell ourselves we can't or... ?

194



195



Write it out!

- I want to go to the sleepover and have fun so I am willing to not know if I will fall asleep or not
- I want to be part of the play so I am willing to go to the audition so I am willing to feel anxious
- I want to go on the trip so I am willing to go to get the needle and not know how much it will hurt

What story DO you want to buy into?!

196

FLIPSIDE

- Draw a picture of a difficult situation & draw on the flipside them mastering it
- Help internalize messages
 - What did you do to get there?
 - How did they master the situation



197

Develop personal mantras

Fall seven times, get up eight (Japanese Proverb)

Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly (Robert Kennedy)

Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently (Benjamin Disraeli)

You miss 100% of shots you don't take. (Wayne Gretzky)

198

This feeling isn't great. But I can handle it.

I can be anxious and still do what I need to do.

This is temporary. I will just let my body do its thing.

This isn't an emergency. I have felt this way before and will make it through again.

199



Bounce backs & Challenges

200



Coping Cards

- I got this.
- I am worried but can do it anyway.
- I am not going to let worry get in my way.
- The world is pretty safe.
- This worry is temporary and will pass.
- This is manageable.

201

Coping Cards

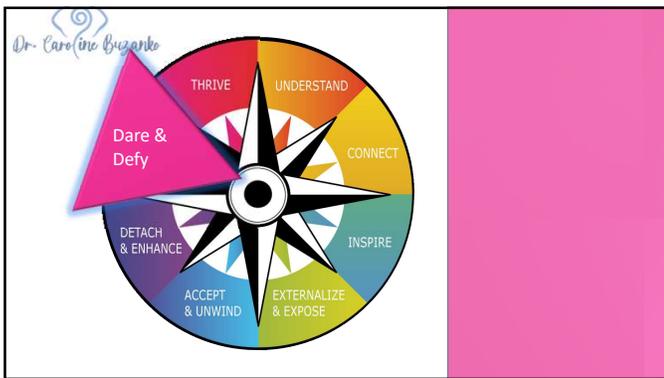
What worry says:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I am going to say back:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

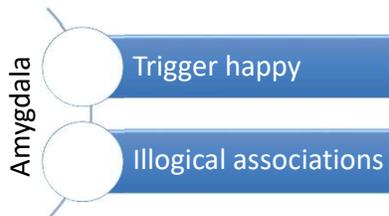
202



203

MUST DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY!

Becomes a disorder when we do what anxiety



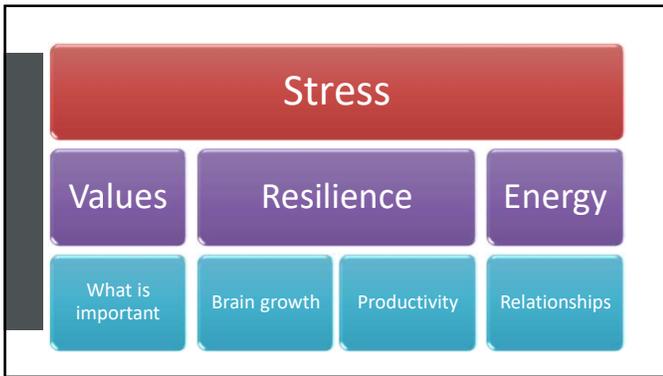
204

90% of what kids learn is from what they *experience*

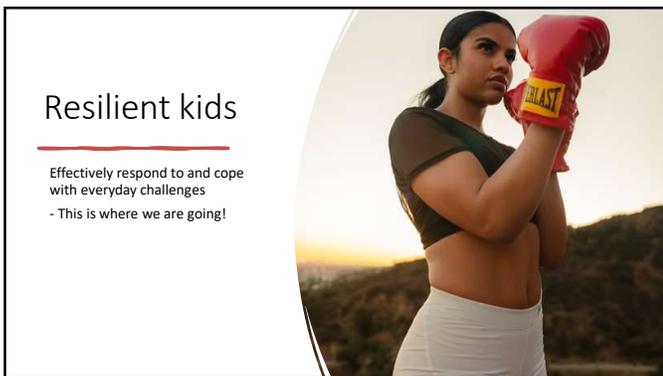
- Face fears... and the unknown
- Being brave builds immune system to develop coping skills
 - Otherwise, leads to avoidance

- Resilience
- Ability to adapt well to **adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress.**

205



206



207



Avoidance

- Habit forming
- Unhelpful
- Changes the brain in a debilitating way

When kids avoid things they don't feel comfortable with, they lose the chance to practice and grow

208



All the things anxiety makes you do when avoiding

- Cry
- Yell
- Feel gross
- Isolate
- Stay home
- Feel bored

All the things anxiety makes you avoid

- Seeing friends
- Sleepovers
- Birthday parties
- School
- Tryouts for sports (and therefore sport teams)
- Sleeping in own bed
- Making new friends

209



Speed of recovery directly relates to your willingness to **feel** anxiety

210

Focus on pairings to retrain the brain

Activate to generate

Develop new, competing brain circuits

211

Tangible

Cognitive

Physiological

212

Goals

PROCESS vs. OUTCOME

- Learning and confidence vs. anxiety reduction

Learning opportunities:

- Their feared outcomes are less likely or severe than they think
- Anxiety itself is safe, **tolerable**, and temporary
- Safety behaviours are not needed to tolerate anxiety or to stay safe
- They can still live life and do anything, even while feeling anxious!

213

Foundations of Effective Exposure

Contradicting information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No convincing!: Learn through experience
Maintaining variables eliminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully present without help
Generalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of practice to develop stronger (new) stories • Variable stimuli, content and contexts

214

Important!

- Must understand the thing they worry about AND the meaning they give that thing
- Don't assume we know the meaning!

215

Both Have Social Anxiety

But it sounds, feels, and looks very different from one child to the next.

216

Important!



What would be awful about that? • Kids will laugh at me

What would be awful about that? • I will be embarrassed

What would be awful about that? • Kids won't like me

217

Antecedents (Triggers to anxiety)	
Seeing a picture of a snake	
Thinking about a snake	
Someone talking about a snake	
Seeing a snake in its cage	
Seeing someone holding a snake	
Seeing a snake on TV	
Snake slithering on the ground in front of me	
Knowing someone was going to bring a snake for show & tell	

218

Get Thick



- What was happening right before?
- What did it feel like in your body?
- What conspiracy was it trying to spin?
- What did you do when it told you its story? Did you try to do something to feel safe?
 - Did it help?

219

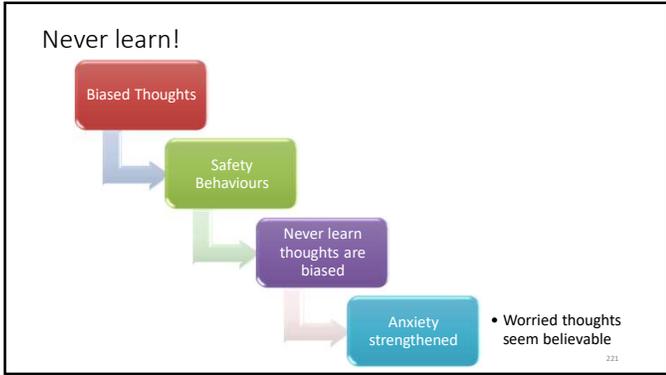
Safety behaviours



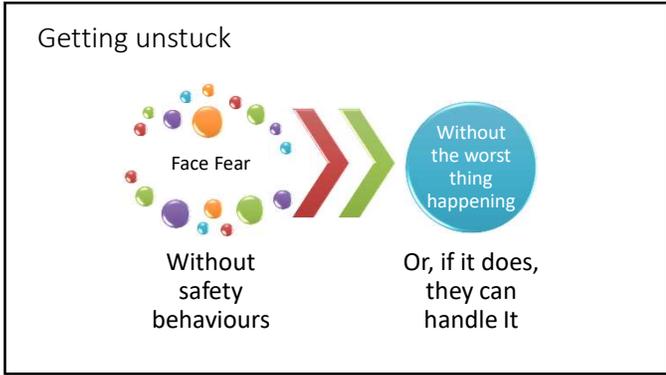
Habits that maintain anxiety

- Passive avoidance
- Excessive checking
 - Reassurance seeking
- Overt compulsions
- Covert compulsions
- Safety signals

220



221



222

Exposure corrects maladaptive beliefs

Lived experiences modifies worried thinking (not our sage advice)

223

223

Exposure

Talking not enough to change the brain

- Doing makes stronger memories
- Doing gives us experience
- Worry **MUST** show up for learning to happen
- Do new things – more engaging. And, stretching!
- Quicker progress



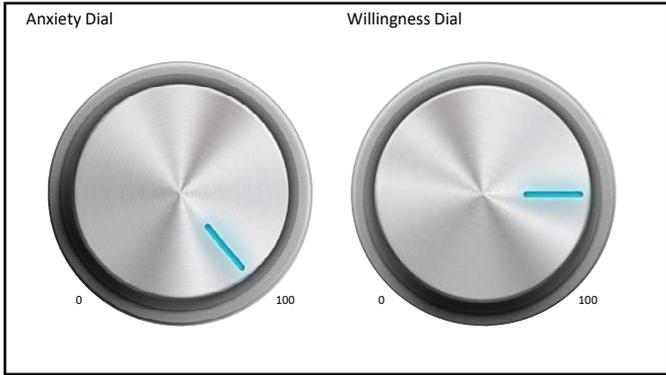
224

GOAL: Build Worry Tolerance

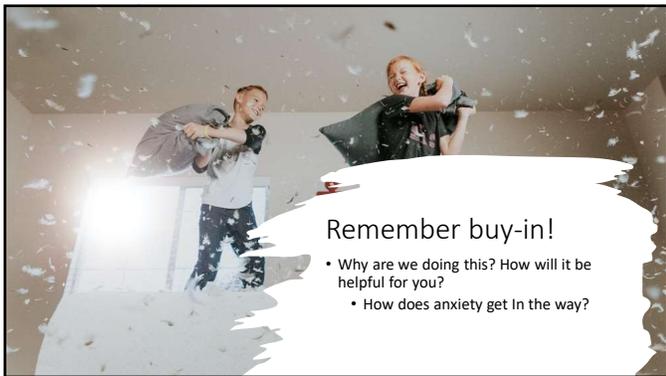
- NOT resist, control, or eliminate anxiety.
- Focus on *ending fear of anxiety*
 - Anxiety is still there but I am going to do the opposite anyway



225



226



227



228



229

Setting up Exposure

- Rationale and buy-in
- Honesty
 - Anxiety is uncomfortable but normal, safe, and temporary
- Remind them how anxiety works
 - Thoughts affect our body and behaviours and gets us stuck
 - No safety behaviours – response prevention!
 - Get unstuck and learn how to handle anxiety with exposure
- Collaborate: no specific order

230



231

Anxiety is physical.
We cannot avoid or get rid of these feelings.

BUT, we can think about and respond to them differently.

Head feels fuzzy
sweaty hands
heart beats faster
Breathe in
Breathe out
Need to go to the toilet more

CAUTION

Anxiety Maintaining Behaviour

232

Setting up Exposure

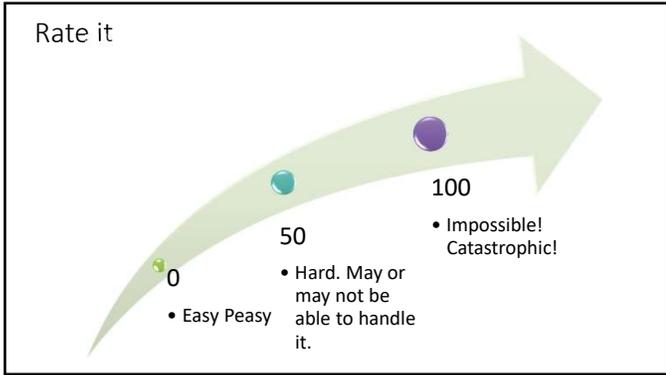
- Rationale and buy-in
- Honesty
 - Anxiety is uncomfortable but normal, safe, and temporary
- Remind them how anxiety works
 - Thoughts affect our body and behaviours and gets us stuck
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 - Get unstuck and learn how to handle anxiety with exposure
- Collaborate: no specific order

233

Anxiety Dial

Willingness Dial

234

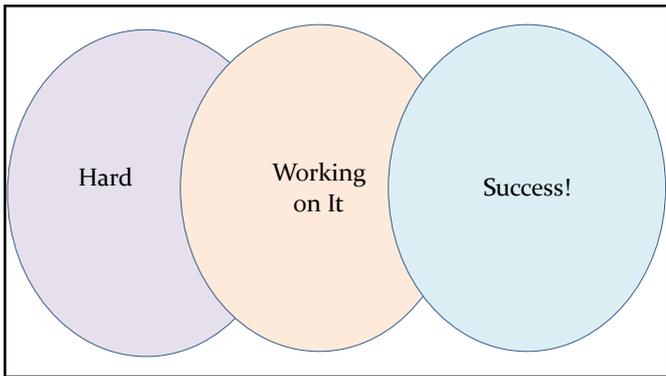


235

Rate it

Antecedents (Triggers to anxiety)	Predicted Awfulness	Actual Awfulness
Seeing a picture of a snake – staring at it for 5 min.	50	
Standing in front of the cage for 2 min.	70	
Seeing someone holding a snake for 2 min.	80	
Watching a snake on TV for 10 min.	60	
Snake slithering on the ground in front of me	100	
Watching it for all of show & tell	100	

236



237

Exposure

Collaborate – need to focus on things they WANT to and then figure out how

What should we start with?

Predict:

- What will worry say?
- How will your body feel?
- What will your parents do if you get sucked back In?
- What can you say if your parents get sucked in?
- What will happen If you move on when worry shows up?



238

Set a goal on something actionable

Without any safety behaviours or thoughts

From doing that, you are going to learn something new



239



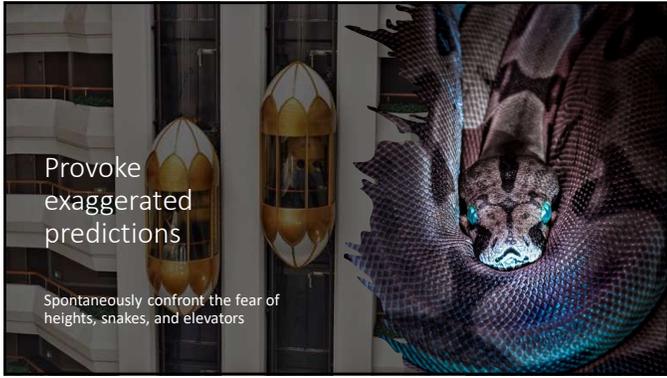
If I am uncomfortable

Then I know I am on the **right** track

240



241



242



243

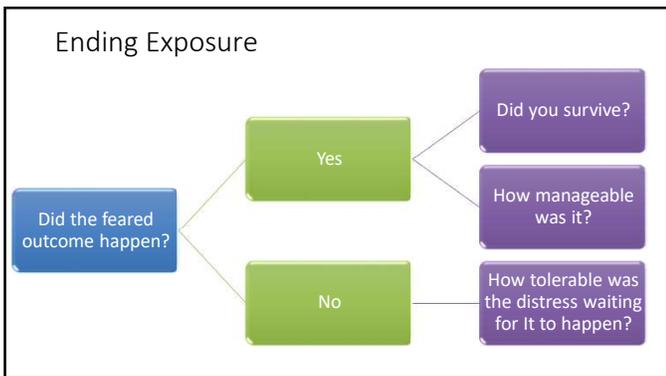
Interoceptive Exposure

- Learning: The uncomfortable physical sensations are tolerable, temporary, and not dangerous.
 - Evoke sensations as intensely as possible
 - Sustain sensations beyond feared outcome limits

244

	Hyperventilate/fast breathing		Breathe through a straw really fast
	Run on the spot or up and down stairs		Spin in place
	Shake head fast		Wear something tight around neck

245



246

Committed Action
Willingness
Action Plan


Goal:


Big why:


The steps I need to take are:

I will take the first step on [Date] at [time]


The discomfort I am willing to have to achieve this goal:

Thoughts
Feelings
Sensations
Urges
I can remind myself that:

247

Why this is Important:

Goals	Action	Barriers	Strategies

248



Self-guided exposure

249



250

Work on it everyday

- Focus on what skills your child needs to develop specifically
 - Problem solving
 - Making mistakes
 - Asking for help
 - Frustration tolerance
 - Persistence
- Change it up
 - Length of time
 - Distance
 - Time of day
 - Places
 - People



BE BRAVE.
EVERY DAY.
AND PUSH
YOURSELF
TO THE LIMIT.

251

251

Smash Patterns

- Do opposite
 - Of what normally would do
 - Of what worry expects
 - Break worry rules
- Create opportunities for greater Independence
- Go beyond comfort
 - Be silly!



Love who
you are

252

252



253



254



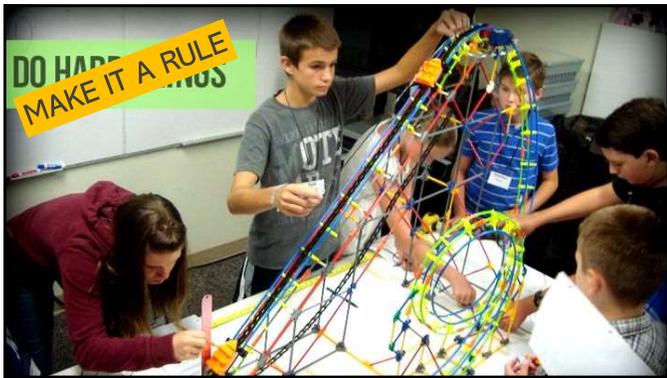
255



- Travel
 - Be with the people
 - Fly on their own
- Limits on screen time
- Learn the skills they need to survive early
 - Quad
- Help with Important events
 - Hanging lights
 - Using tools
 - Bake

Risk-takers advantage
 Exposing kids to opportunities for some risk is helpful

256



257

No idea how it will work out. But, I am going to use what I've got to get through.

- What strengths do I have?
- What resources are available?



22

258



259

Create Opportunities for Independence

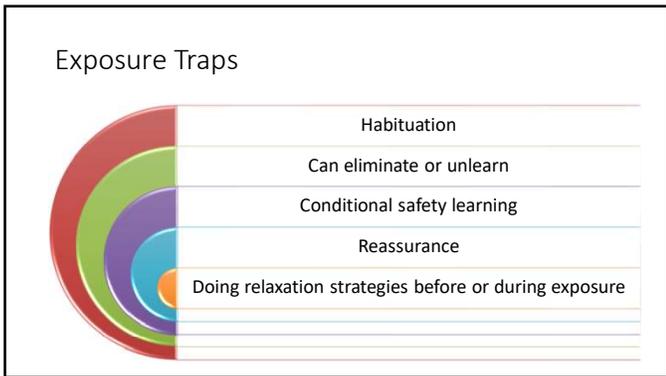
- Give kids the chance to do, think, be, and make mistakes on their own
 - Get ready to go home
 - Pack own bag
 - Check their homework
 - Solve conflicts
 - Make their own friends
- Encourage kids to try new things, even when scared
 - Create opportunities to be successful (especially with previous failures)
- Teach kids to be comfortable in the world

260

Opportunities :
Capitalize on current challenges!

- Challenges are part of life.
 - Dealing with them is part of learning.
- Optimize teachable moments
 - Let them try.
 - Let them fail (but don't set them up for failure)
 - Kids to take accountability
 - Understand other's perspectives
 - See the consequences of their behaviours
 - Work through next steps and how to fix things

261



262



263



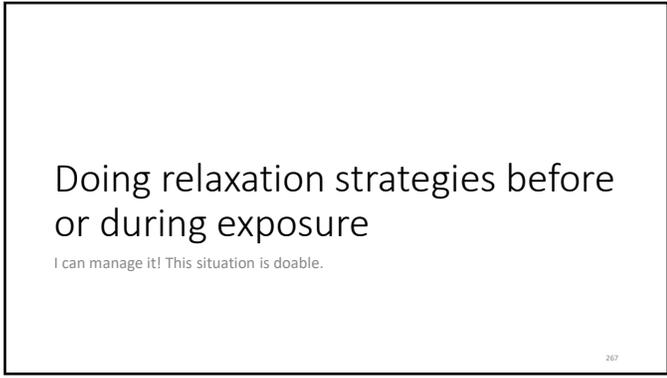
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266



267



Committed Action

- Fusion
- Excessive
- Avoidance
- Remote

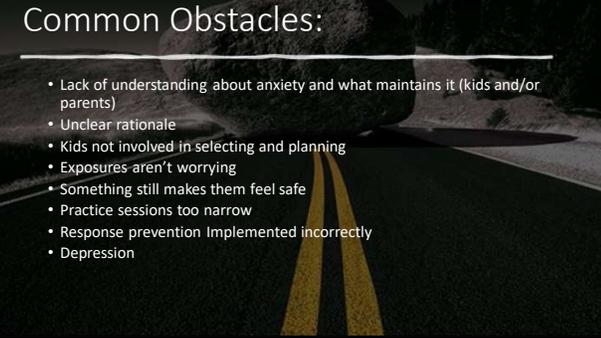
268



Committed Action

- F
- E
- A
- R

269



Common Obstacles:

- Lack of understanding about anxiety and what maintains it (kids and/or parents)
- Unclear rationale
- Kids not involved in selecting and planning
- Exposures aren't worrying
- Something still makes them feel safe
- Practice sessions too narrow
- Response prevention implemented incorrectly
- Depression

270



Helpful tips

- Model
- Don't rush!
- Good debrief
- Lots of mini sessions close together

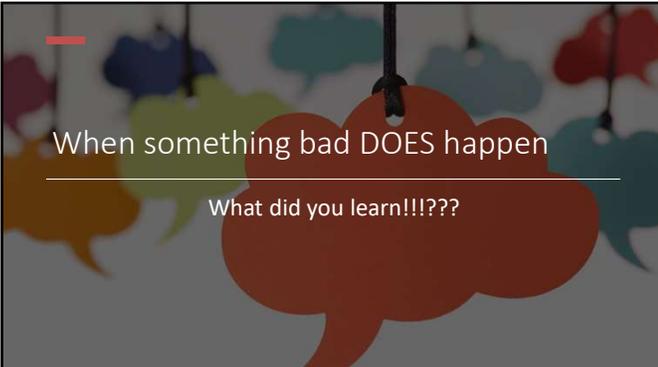
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When something bad DOES happen

- Yay!
- Importance of keeping going

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When something bad DOES happen

What did you learn!!!???

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When kids just don't wanna

- Behavioural strategies
 - Clear expectations
 - Contingent reinforcement
 - Extinguish anxious behaviours
 - Break It down
 - Frequent reinforcement
 - Make It fun!

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When Anxiety Overwhelms

<p>During a Meltdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm and neutral • Create safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye level • Soothing tone • Disengage but remain close for support 	<p>After a meltdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and praise • Validate and empathize • If calm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through it • Lessons learned • Function of emotion • Rewind and do over
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Not worried about worries

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Worry can be strong

- Negative, worrisome events create strong memories
 - Look through photos
 - Happy times
 - Learning
 - Successes

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Worry makes us forget

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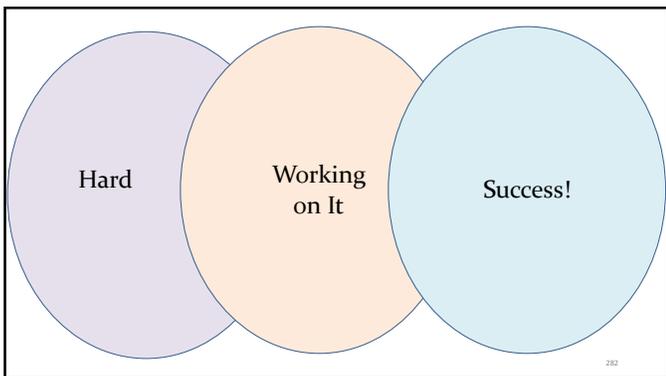


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Remind how worry works
Those gremlins are up to their usual tricks.
Making your forget how to manage this.
Making you think the worst is going to happen.
Making you want to run away and not have any fun.
Trying to get stronger by making you forget.

Sorry dudes, we are going to build a reminder bridge.
Past successes with managing worry

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Exercise

- Kids are not meant to sit all day
- Stretching and yawning can reduce stress
- Exercise boosts serotonin and melatonin
- Tires and relaxes muscles,
- Supports bodily processes for sleep



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Yoga

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Family Rituals: Dance party

- Friday shake
- Dance lets go of tension
 - Few minutes of music; let go of self-consciousness!!!!
 - Upbeat
 - Get jitters out
 - Shake your whole body

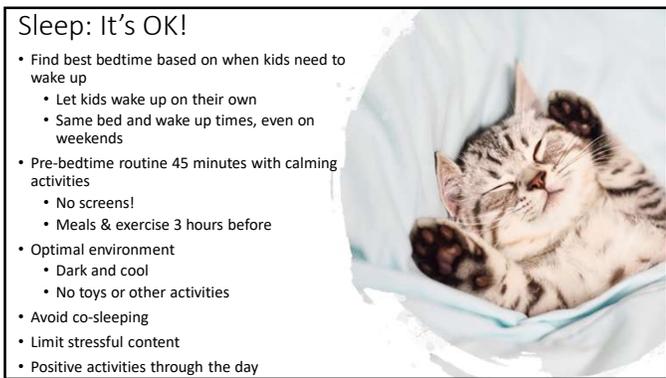
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Diet

- Sugar and processed foods creates stress in the body (because it maintains a high alert state)
- Low blood sugar triggers the same feelings as a panic attack

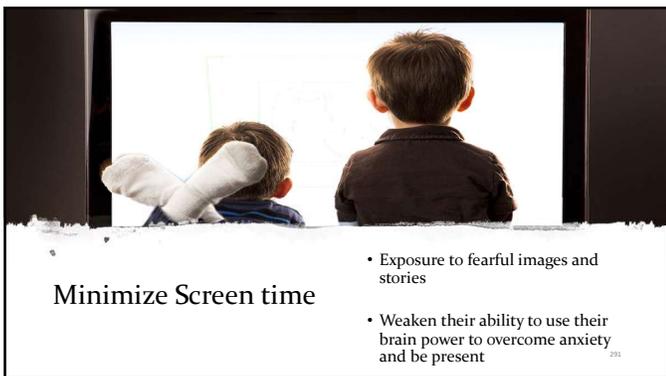
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Sleep: It's OK!

- Find best bedtime based on when kids need to wake up
 - Let kids wake up on their own
 - Same bed and wake up times, even on weekends
- Pre-bedtime routine 45 minutes with calming activities
 - No screens!
 - Meals & exercise 3 hours before
- Optimal environment
 - Dark and cool
 - No toys or other activities
- Avoid co-sleeping
- Limit stressful content
- Positive activities through the day

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Minimize Screen time

- Exposure to fearful images and stories
- Weaken their ability to use their brain power to overcome anxiety and be present

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Mindfulness

- Create!
 - Any repetitive action
 - Chewing gum
 - Rolling coins, sorting rainbow loom
- Experiment!
 - Physical activities
 - Music
 - Outdoors
 - Things that are peaceful



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Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Sit/lie comfortably
- Tense/relax cycles (5-10 sec., 10-15 sec.)
- Controlled belly breathing (5 sec., 10 sec.)
- Relaxed state (30 sec.)

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Practice!



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Breathing is important to **reset (but is not treatment on Its own)**

- Deep breathing – increases oxygen flow to the brain and organs, decreases muscle tension, increased focus, etc.
- Chronic anxiety and stress conditions the breath so much that even when we sleep our breath does not return to optimal breathing
 - Must ensure we get deep breaths In

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Breathe Proactively

- Breathe into belly then chest
- Slowly exhale saying cue word (e.g., calm, relax, let go) under breath
- Let muscles go limp and warm. Loosen face and jaw muscles.
- Remain in resting position 10-15 seconds
- If time, consciously count 10 breathes



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