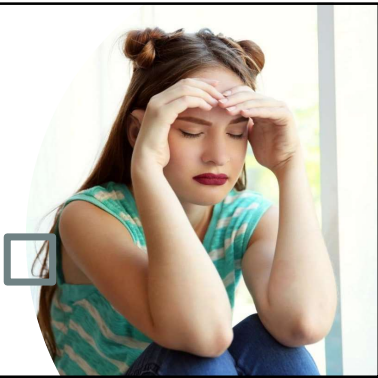
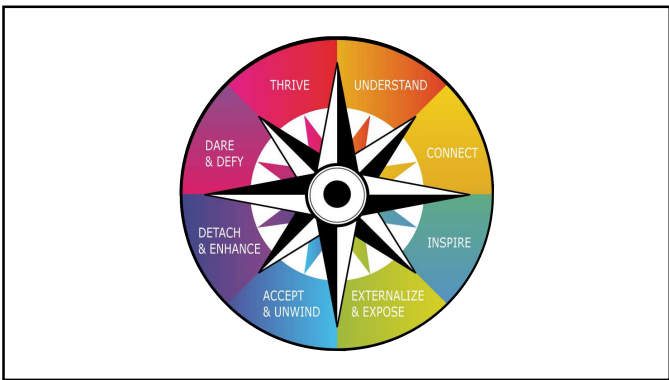






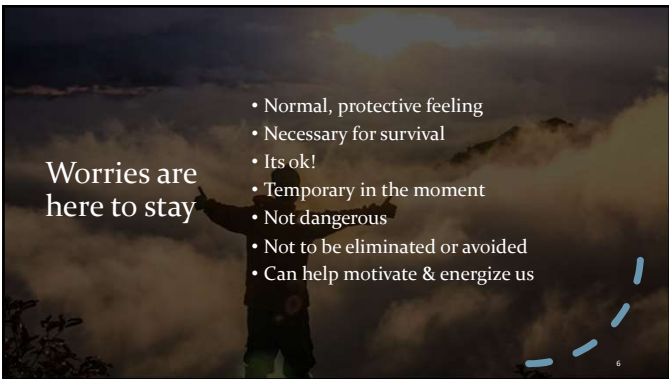
Untreated anxiety is the leading predictor of depression in teens & young adults





Worries are here to stay

- Normal, protective feeling
- Necessary for survival
- Its ok!
- Temporary in the moment
- Not dangerous
- Not to be eliminated or avoided
- Can help motivate & energize us



Worries to be expected

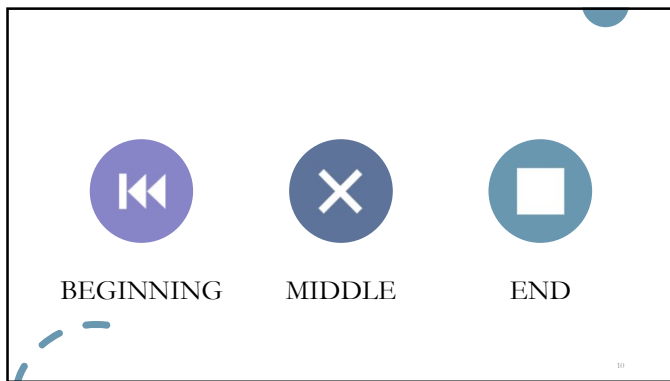
- Developmentally appropriate fears
 - Survival: separation, danger
- Life transitions
 - New school, graduation, change in family composition, teenage years
- Stressful experiences
 - New or unfamiliar situations

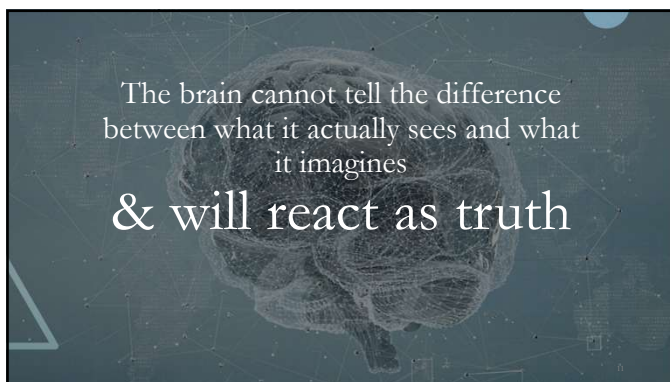
Worries to be expected

Infant/Toddlers	Preschool	Early Childhood	Elementary	Pre-Adolescence	Adolescence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation Novelty Loud noises Shyness, fear of strangers Santa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals, dark, thunder, fire Nightmares Monsters & shadows Novelty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of death or ghosts Separation Dark Getting lost Thunder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes Performance Getting sick or hurt Animals, monsters, ghosts Natural disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home alone Family or pets Rejection Mortality, health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social What others think Family getting sick School performance World events After high school!!!!

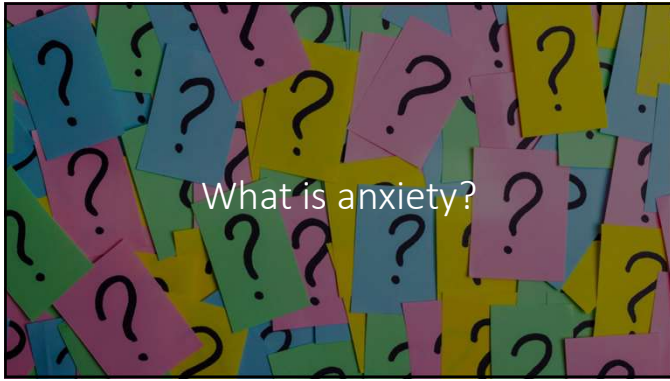
Worries to be expected

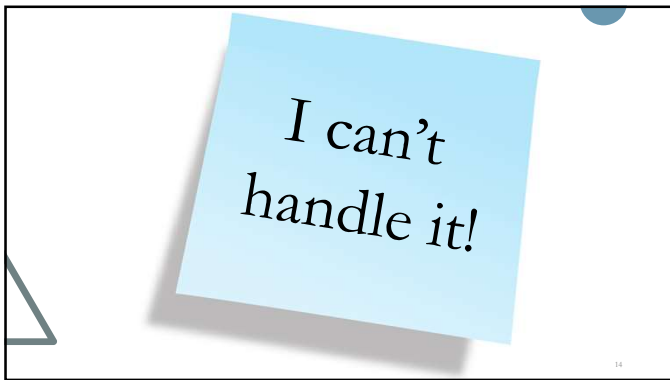
- Temporary
- Do not interfere with functioning
- Students still successful in achieving goals

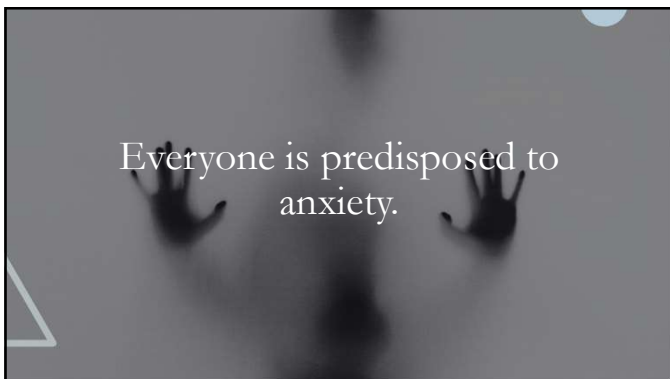






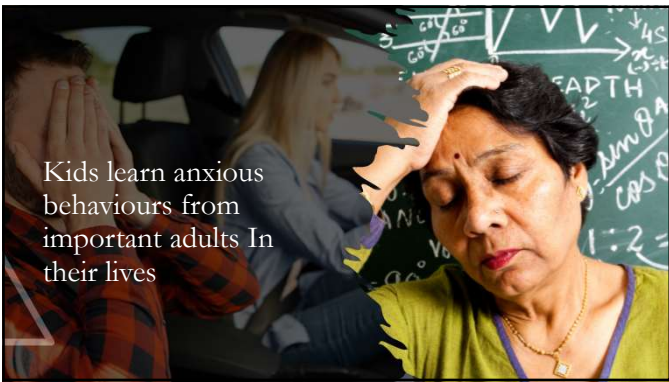




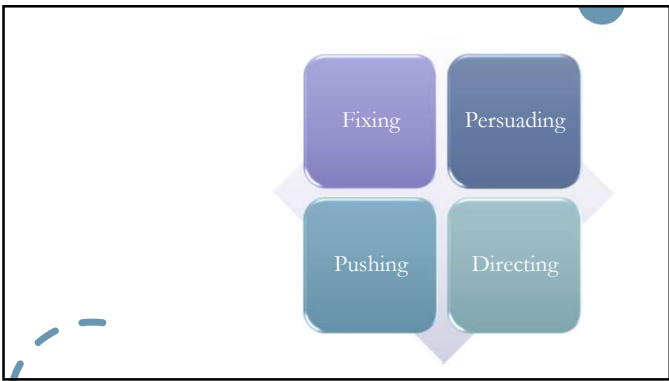


Kids are More Stressed, More Anxious, & Less Resilient than ever before





Kids learn anxious behaviours from important adults in their lives





Unsolicited Support

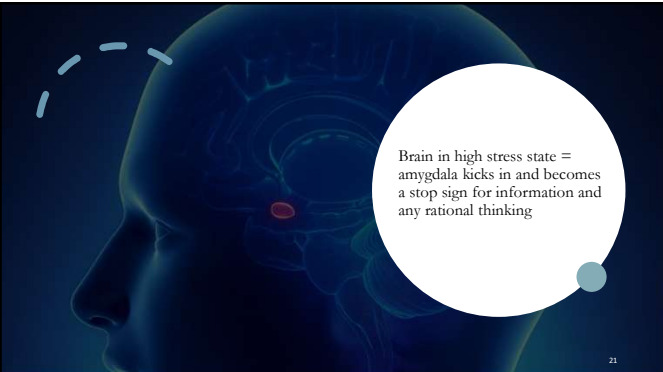
- Swooping in can:
 - Undermine the equity in the relationship
 - Create a sense of obligation
 - Independence and self-esteem threatened
 - Feel invalidating
 - Seem unsympathetic
 - Shut down communication

Saying
“Don’t
worry”
doesn’t work


Minimizing

Get stuck in constant
need for reassurance

No skills developed



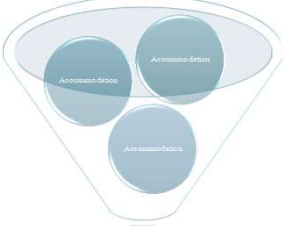
Brain in high stress state =
amygdala kicks in and becomes
a stop sign for information and
any rational thinking



Anxiety...


- Wants certainty
- Wants predictability
- Wants comfort

Accommodations worsens emotional dysregulation long-term



More impairing and severe with poorer treatment outcomes

Accommodation Behaviours



- Participation**
 - Assist in checking behaviours
 - Assist in avoidance
 - Reassure
- Modification**
 - Prevent distressing situations

Speaking for the student	Allowing students to be excused	Ensuring predictability	Avoiding outings	Sitting out of anxiety provoking situations (e.g., gym)
Only having one substitute	Participating in rituals	Not throwing away unnecessary items	Not opening windows	Rigid routines
Seeing school nurse unnecessarily	Leaving lights on	Checking homework	Accompanying the child to certain parts of the school	Distraction
Adjusting routines	Alternate place for lunch	Fixed schedules	Pre-warnings and Transition warnings	Stress balls

Consider IPP's/IEP's

☐ Does it accommodate anxiety? Or prevent it from showing up?

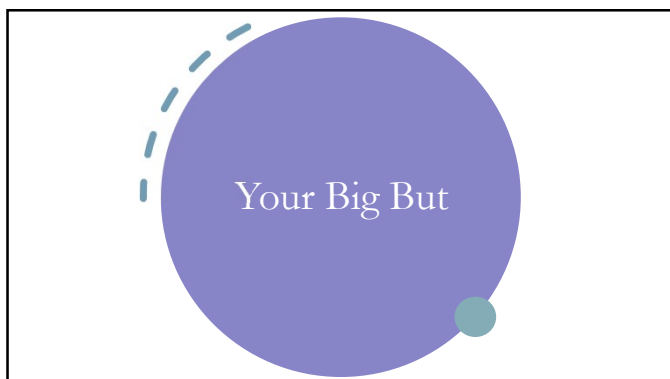
☐ Are skills being taught?

☐ • How do breaks/office visits help?

☐ Is there a transition plan?

☐ Does the plan address physical symptoms?

☐ Does it document how to maintain contact between home and school?



Deprived Kids



Critical for developing:

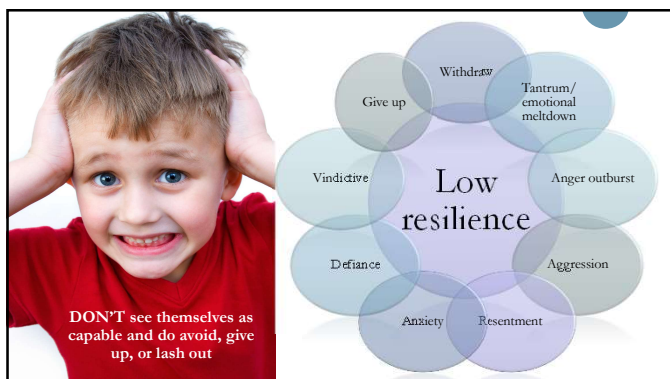
- Resilience
- Competence
- Confidence
- Maturity
- Mental health


Stunted Resilience

Kids develop patterns of behaviour/ways to respond to stress and other emotions depending on whether they believe they can manage.

And when they don't think they can manage....








What are you doing for your kids they can do themselves?

Harming kids when we do

- Changes brain development & ingrains emotional challenges
- Makes kids vulnerable: Confidence and resilience stunted
 - No opportunities to experience manageable amounts of stress
 - No opportunities to learn that they can handle it



Get Out of the Traps

This alone can make all the difference in the world



What are you doing for kids that they can do for themselves?

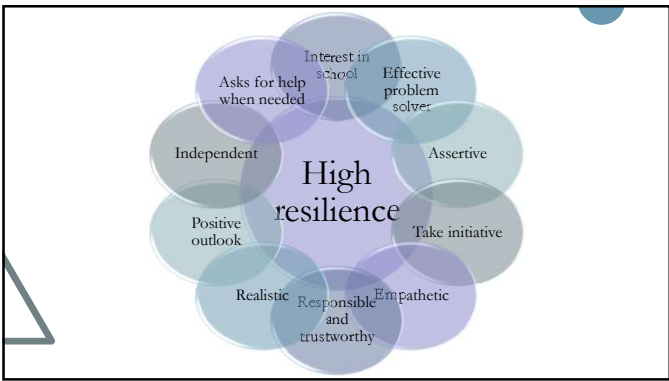
Solution:
Break the
cycle that
cripples
resilience

- Independent play
- Errands
- Responsibilities

Resilient kids

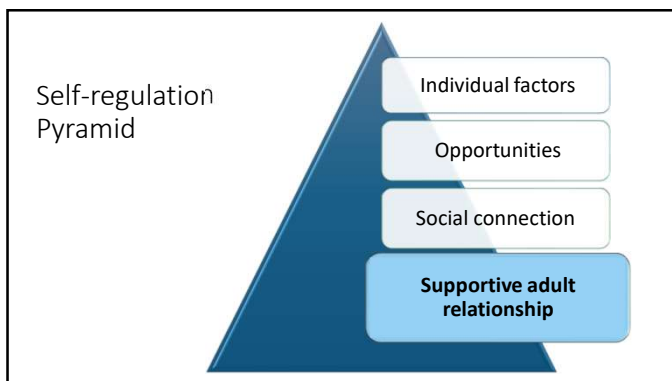
- Effectively respond to and cope with everyday challenges+















TO DO THE WORK
THEY MUST FEEL
SAFE WITH YOU!!!!


Modelling Resilience




Show kids how to handle mistakes and challenges.



Make comments like, *"I am worried about this but this is what I am going to do..."*



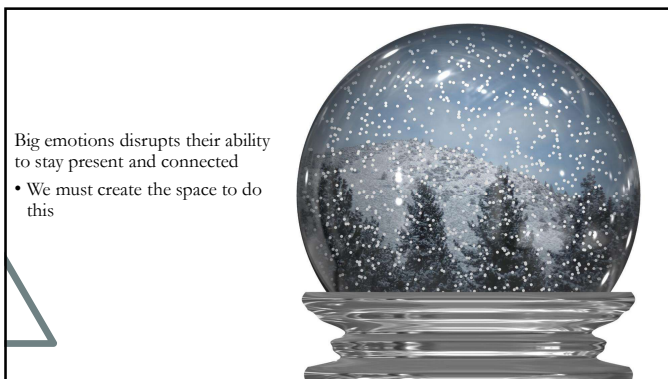
Use reflective problem-solving aloud: "This didn't go as planned—let's figure it out."

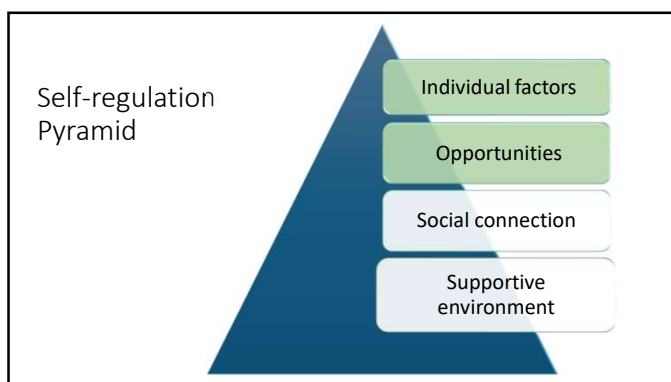


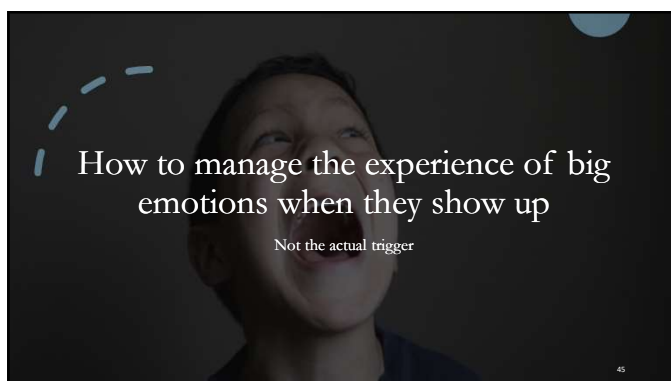
Show emotions BUT model how you manage them



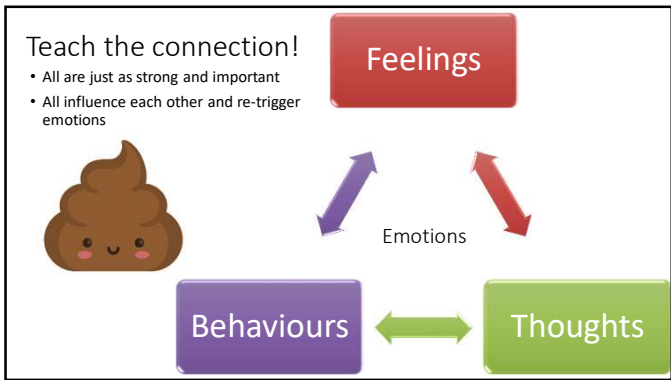
Effective Communication

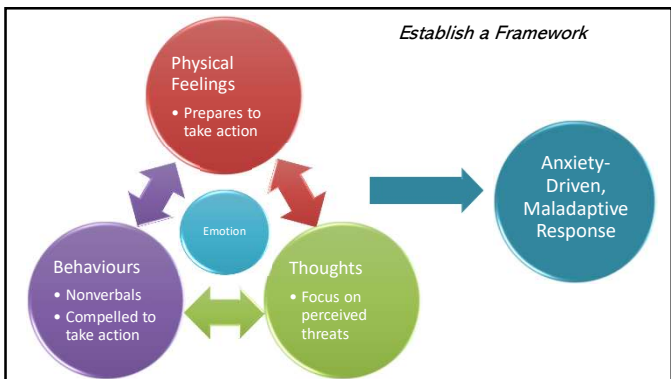


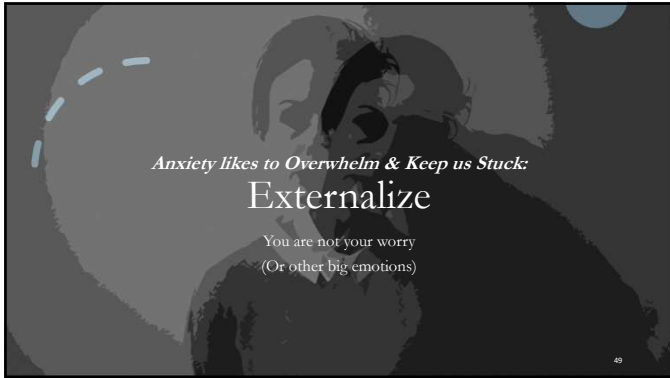


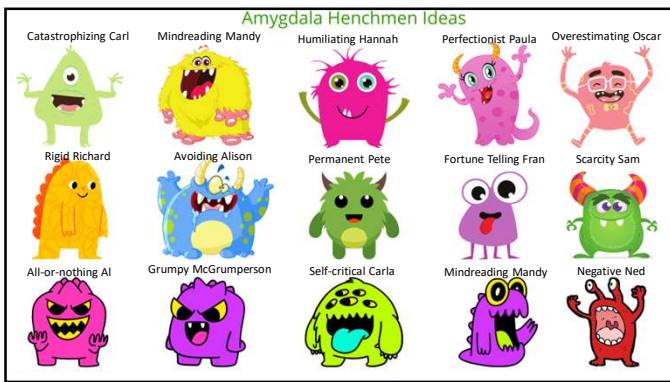


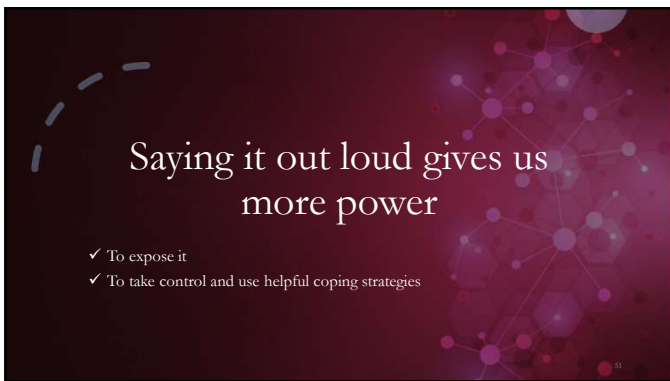










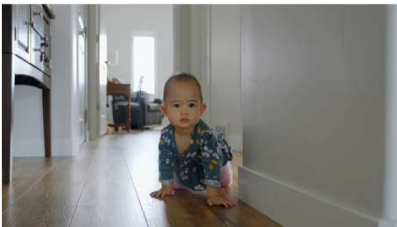


Curiosity is a key response to emotional experiences




Curious kids feel safe & have nervous systems that self-regulates

Anxiety leaves no room for curiosity.



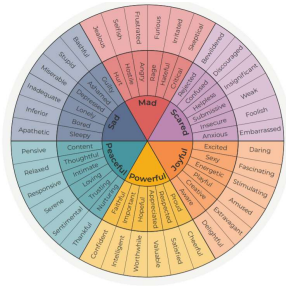
Labelling Emotions
& All that comes with it

- With no words comes behaviours
- Name it to tame it
 - Calms nervous system
 - Builds confidence




[illegible]

- Keeps PFC online
- Helps with foresight


[illegible]

How do emotions show up?




Sounds like:

List the worried thoughts and images that come up:



Feels like:

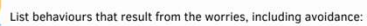
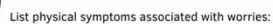
List physical symptoms associated with worries:

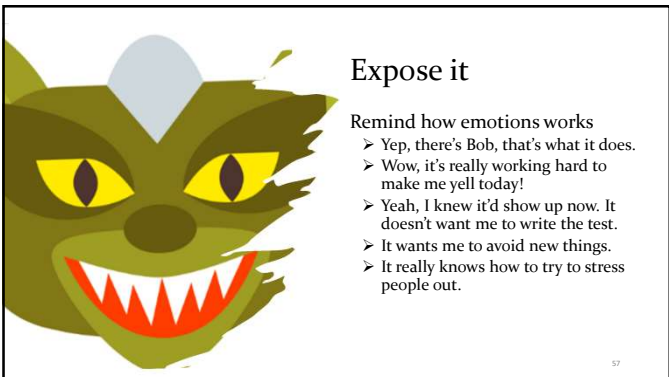


Looks like:

List behaviours that result from the worries, including avoidance:

List the worried thoughts and images that come up:





Remind how emotions works

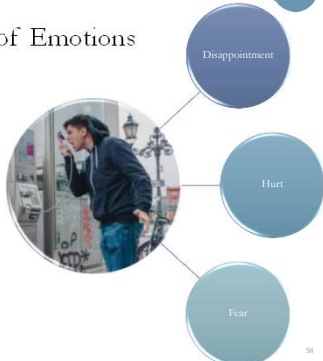
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Understand Functions of Emotions

and all that comes with it

MUST have physical reactions to alert us to what is happening


- Cannot change reactions without this understanding

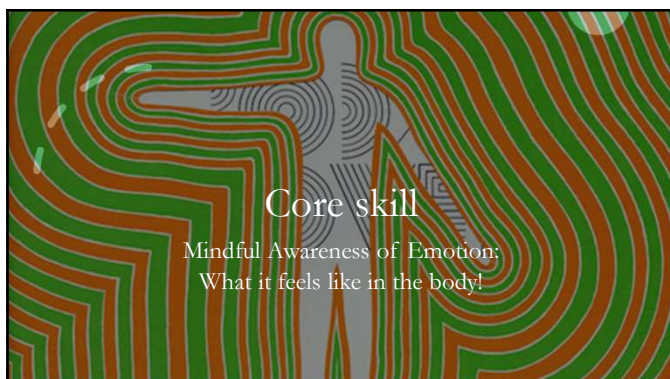


Physical Symptoms are a Problem

They start to worry about the physical feelings, which are distressing, which they will do anything to stop

Become reactive
Misinterpret and leads to more sensations...





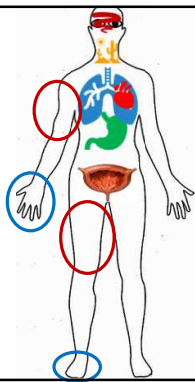
Core skill

Mindful Awareness of Emotion:
What it feels like in the body!

And we can respond in helpful ways!

That makes sense!
No wonder - your
adrenal glands have
sent out all that yucky
stuff.

Emotions
show up in
the body



They need to know that
we **MUST** have physical
reactions to alert us to
what is happening

- Cannot change reactions
without this
understanding


When uncomfortable,
EVERYONE's amygdala takes over
to try to make us quit.

Discomfort is temporary
quitting is forever

Understand how stress shows up = Adaptive thinking

The mystery is gone

BONUS: Expecting physical sensations helps reduce signals to amygdala



Mindfulness



Not about relaxing or getting rid of physical symptoms



Not about changing thoughts

65

Mindfulness

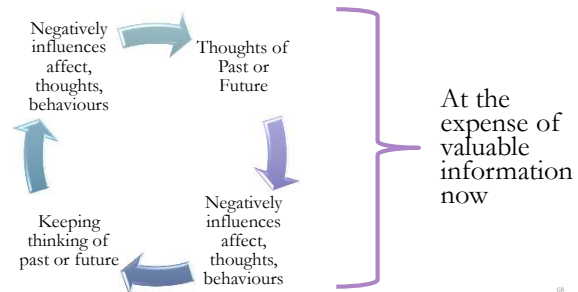


IT'S ABOUT NOT FIGHTING THEM

Mindfulness

- Active process
- Paying attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental way
 - Being detectives

Emotions Likes to Keep us Stuck!



Mindfulness

- Need to stay here and attend to the current context
 - To keep prefrontal cortex online
 - To attend to corrective information
 - To learn!

Versus getting sucked into worries, which intensifies the emotional experience and keeps us stuck

Understand Functions of Emotions

and all that comes with it

MUST have physical reactions to alert us to what is happening

- Cannot change reactions without this understanding

Disappointment

Hurt

Fear

Dizzy

Racing

Tension

Achy

Sore

Hot

Cold

Tingly

Numb

Sharp

Breathless

Shivering

Sweating

Trouble swallowing

Tired

Identify&
describe where
anxiety
shows up.
Stronger on left
or right?

Shivers

Increased heart rate

Weak legs

Ringing ears

Blurred vision

Muscle tension

Shaking

Trembling

Chest pain

Headaches

Burning skin/sweating

Blushing

Changes in breathing

Stomach-ache/ Nausea

Relaxed

Name it

Where is it in the body?

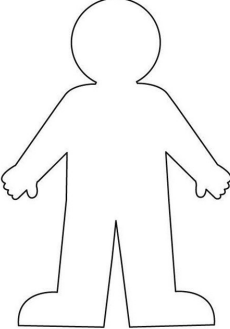
How does it feel?

Left or right?

What's next?

When we label the different parts of emotions and our experiences, we:

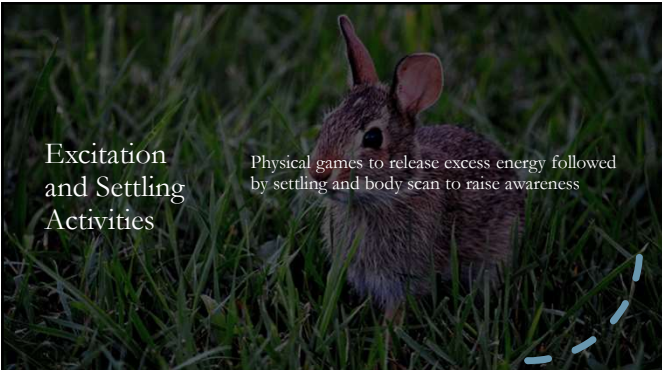
- Change our interpretation of them
- Change how our body responds
- Dampen amygdala's false alarm
- Turn on prefrontal cortex
- Make adaptive decisions
- Learn that we have control over our responses
 - I know what you are & I know how to handle you
- Avoid getting sucked in – it's just a piece of information



Can't just talk about it.
Practicing Emotional Awareness Key!

Excitation
and Settling
Activities

Physical games to release excess energy followed
by settling and body scan to raise awareness



Nonjudgmental Awareness of the NOW is Foundational

- Without mindful awareness and acceptance of emotions, can't move on with any of the other work to strengthen more adaptive responses
 - Therefore, need **LOTS** of practice and experiences with **UNCOMFORTABLE** feelings



Change Relationship with Emotions

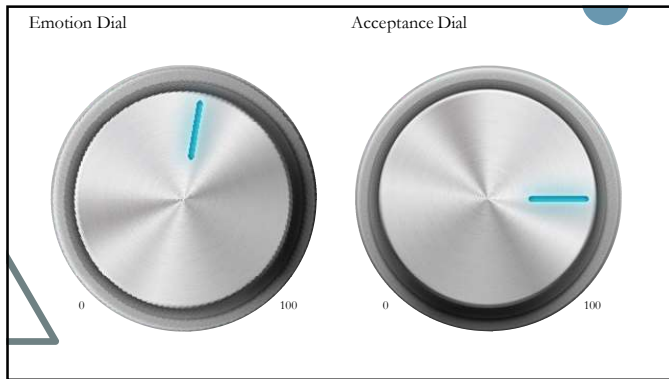
From judgmental and critical stance in which they try to avoid, minimize, or eliminate



GOAL Acceptance & Tolerance

- Normal part of being human
- Temporary, not fact
- Sit with them until they subside







Different hormones released to prepare for what's to come.

How does our body know?

- Depends largely on our evaluation of the situation, which COMES FROM EXPERIENCE!

Threat vs. Challenge Response
Not good or bad, different purposes

Threat response: Goal is survival in situations we aren't equipped to handle

- More cortisol to defend and protect

Challenge response: Opportunity for growth where we tackle hard but manageable situations

- More testosterone and adrenaline to help us achieve our goal

Build Acceptance & Tolerance

- NOT resist, control, or eliminate emotions
- Focus on **ending fear of discomfort**
 - I am uncomfortable but I am going to do this anyway



Core skills

Identifying and modifying unhelpful emotion-driven behaviours

Resilient kids

Effectively respond to and cope with everyday challenges
- This is where we are going!



Resilience


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




Resilience Needs stress




Antifragility: Growing Stronger from Challenges



We grow stronger under pressure.

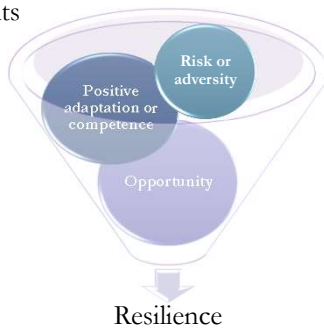


In strength training, muscles grow when they're exposed to challenges – more than what they're used to



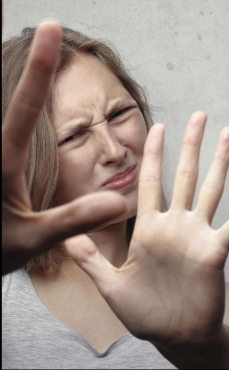
If students aren't challenged, their resilience "muscle" doesn't grow.

Key Ingredients




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

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




With avoidance, they never learn!




Biased Thoughts

Never learn thoughts are biased and bad things might not happen or be as bad as thought.



Safety behaviours

Never learn they can cope on their own
Hinders their ability to face challenges







Anxiety strengthened

Worried thoughts seem believable

Emotional (Avoidant) Behaviours

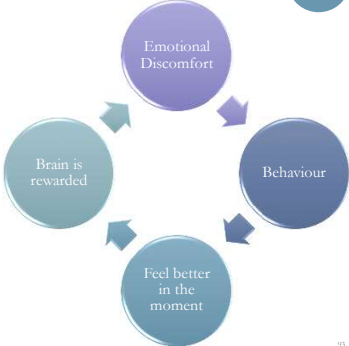
*Function:
To reduce the intensity of the emotion*

	Overt Avoidance	Avoid situations, people, things
	Subtle Avoidance	Avoid full experience of emotions
	Cognitive Avoidance	Avoid distressing thoughts
	Safety Behaviours/signals	Used to feel as safe as possible

Important!

MUST understand how their behaviours are maintaining, or even worsening, their emotional discomfort

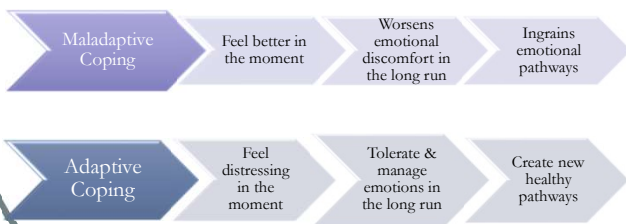
- The behaviour is reinforced in the moment, increasing the likelihood of using this strategy again in the future

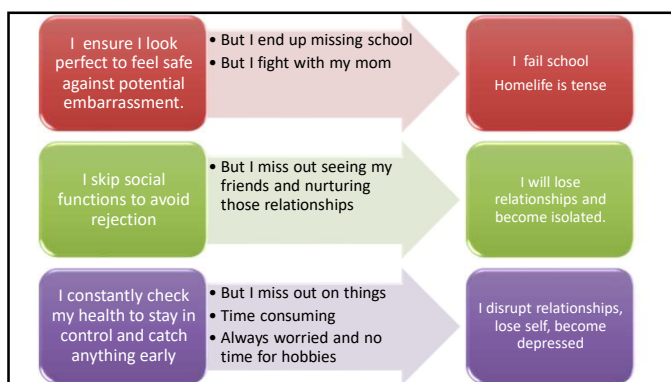


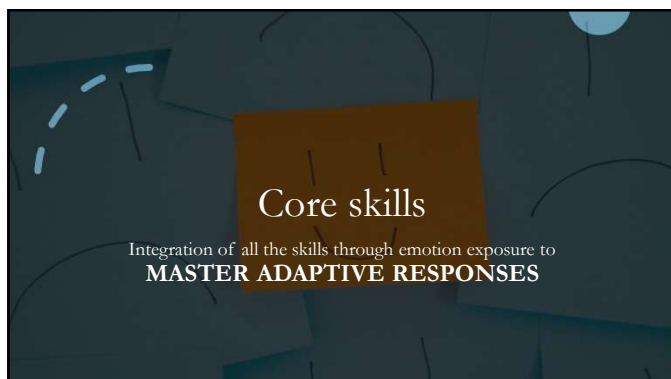
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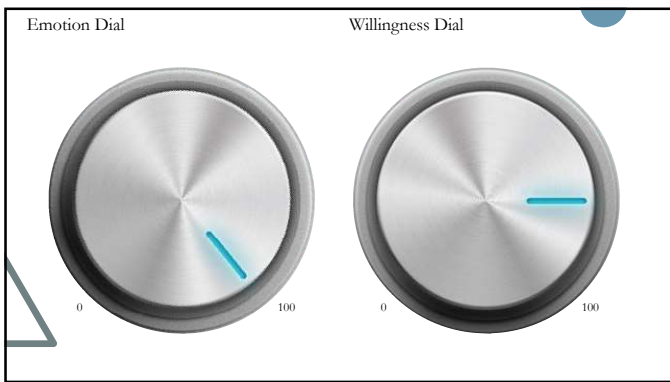
Remember! Short- and long-term outcomes of maladaptive vs. adaptive coping strategies

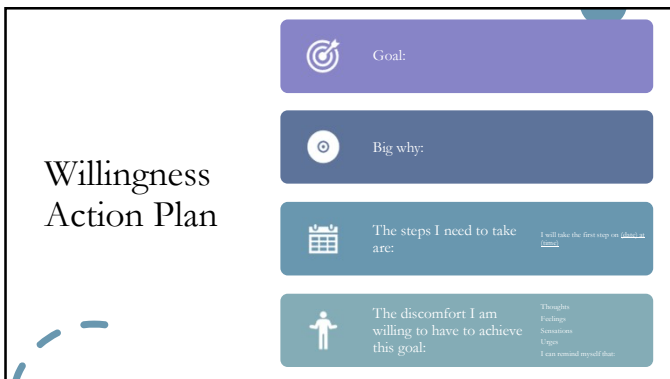




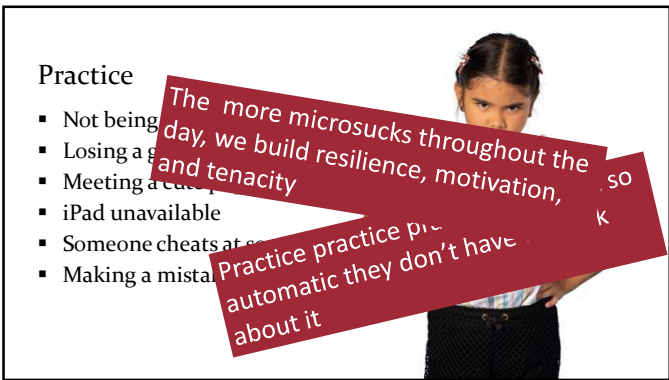






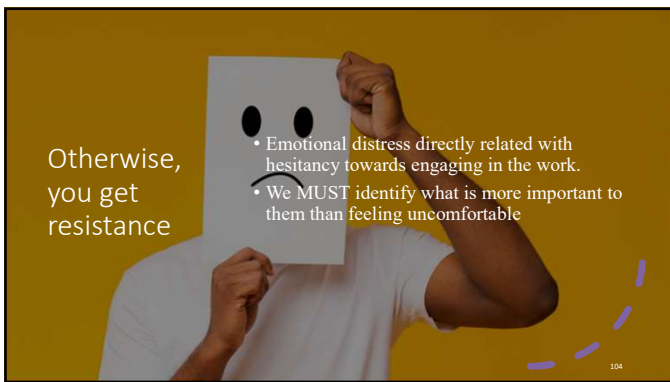


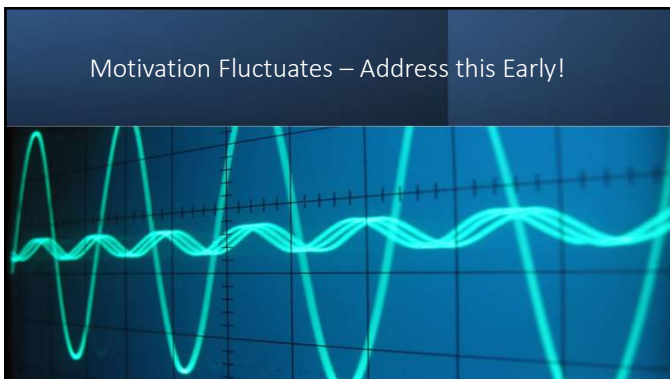






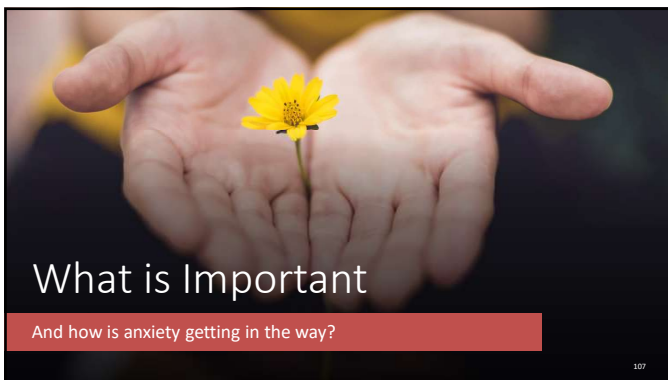






Example Teen Cost Benefit Analysis

Benefit of anxiety	Cost of anxiety
Protection – alert to potential dangers	Too upset and reactive
Makes me feel safer and more prepared	Social isolation
Better liked	Personal relationships affected
Prevent judgment	Academics affected
Responsible & taking good care of my health	No time for hobbies and self-care
Easier & more comfortable	Time consuming!
	Not sustainable
	Chronic physical symptoms
	Loss of self
	Effortful to feel overwhelm
	No joy in life



All the things anxiety makes you do when avoiding

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

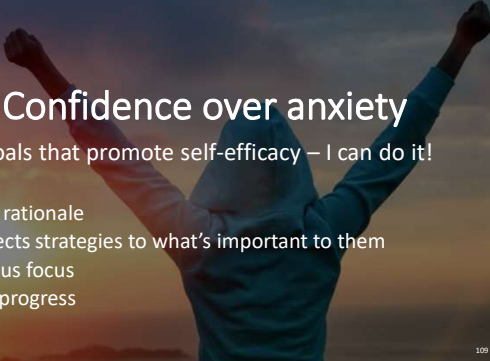
← All the things anxiety makes you avoid

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

Confidence over anxiety

Goals that promote self-efficacy – I can do it!


- Boost rationale
- Connects strategies to what’s important to them
- Gives us focus
- Track progress



Become so good at managing ANY emotion that comes up.

Learn to *respond differently* through LOTS OF EXPERIENCES

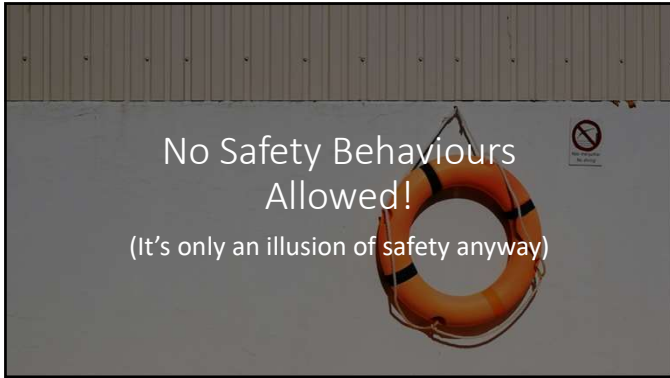
- Anxiety
- Shame
- Guilt
- Rejection
- Disappointment
- Frustration
- Self-doubt



Avoiding Rejection Ingrained in the Brain

Why?





The Problem with Safety Behaviours

Habits that maintain & worsens anxiety

- No learning happens: believe the behaviour prevented catastrophe
- Still trying to control anxiety (so never confront fears)
- Effortful and exhausting (which causes more anxiety and dysregulation)

Safety Behaviours

Any strategy to control, avoid, or reduce anxiety

Sitting strategically (e.g., near exits)	Having someone with you	Carrying a safety object	Never letting heart rate get too high	Having phone charged and on at all times
Medications	Reassurance seeking	Checking google all the time	Having water available at all times	Not eating before leaving the house
Not going to work or school	Asking forgiveness	Praying		

138

When the gremlin shows up, it is going to:

Tell me

Make me feel



Want me to

I am going to:

Say

Notice

Do

For Adults:  Reassure  Support Confidence

Collaborate!


- Brainstorm ideas, rate them, and let them choose
 - The harder it is, the faster the gains!

Easy Hard

|-----|

Predictions are important for learning!


Set up as experiments to ensure learning



Hypothesis Testing

Lots of experiments and experiences needed!


- What do you think will happen?
- How sure? (1-10)?
- Was the hypothesis right?
- What did you learn?



Exposure to LEARN:

Emotions are safe,
tolerable, & temporary


When I don't do anything to try
to make myself feel better, the
amygdala learns: This is not
dangerous! (**And stops
sending the false alarm.**)



Exposure to LEARN

Despite feeling anxious, I
still did it

And... I can still live life and
do anything, even while
feeling anxious!




Exposure TO LEARN

No matter what happens, I can handle it!

On my own

- Without others
- Without safety behaviours



Our job is not to convince:

Learning happens through experience

They need to:

- Test the accuracy of their predictions
- Make their own conclusions
- Create new expectations



Predict to Maximize Learning!

Antecedents (Triggers to anxiety)	Predicted Awfulness	Actual Awfulness	Later
Walking by M's desk and saying Hi	90		

I predict this will happen

What really happened?

I will turn bright red

I will stare like a deer in headlights

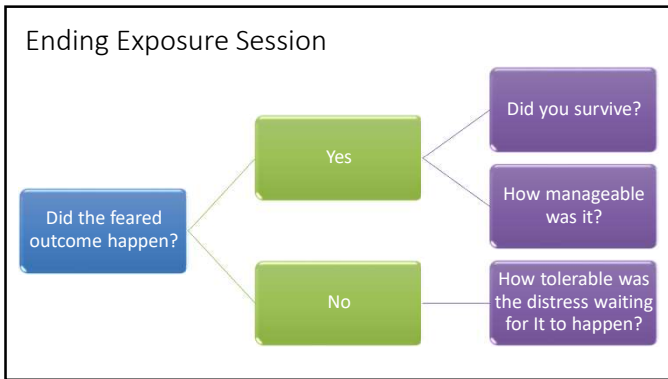
I will say something nonsensical or stupid

M will look at me in disgust

Everyone will hate me

I will die from embarrassment

Need to disconfirm their fear story to the fullest extent possible



When exposure is done

- Lots of opportunities
- Can do it on their own without safety behaviours
- NOT about their subjective distress!!!!

Willingness to face anxiety provoking experiences!!!

A photograph of a person jumping off a rocky cliff, symbolizing the end of exposure and facing anxiety.


Recovery is when:
You're not worried about worries

END

A background image showing a city map with a circular pattern of lines, suggesting a journey or recovery process.

Lifestyle Focus

Opportunists: Choosing to be anxious now for more success later




You don't grow with easy

CHALLENGE BOARD

- Choose tasks
- Track progress – the harder the task, the further they go!

Experience to cope with challenges
– realize they CAN manage and have the capacity to succeed



Missions for Self-Exposure

You're only limited by your own creativity!

Create themes for the week

- Imperfection
 - Make a guess when don't know
 - Focus on quantity vs. quality in a timed task
 - Fast decision making
- Independence
 - Book own appointments
 - Buy things on their own
 - Order the family's pizza
- Talking to people
 - Ask stranger for time or directions
 - Ask someone to play
 - Compliment someone



Opportunities to Be Comfortable in the World

Promote independence!

- Give kids the chance to do, think, be, and make their own decisions and mistakes
- Encourage kids to try new things, even when scared
 - They need to know you support and trust them!



Opportunities for Independence

- Give more responsibility
- Give kids the chance to do, think, and make on their own
 - Get ready to go home
 - Check their homework
 - Solve conflicts
 - Make their own friends
 - Fix mistakes
 - Solve problems
 - Students to come to you with concerns
 - Assert their needs (set up opportunities)
 - IPP goals
- Teach kids to be comfortable in the world



Opportunities: Use Real Challenges!

Challenges are part of life. Dealing with them is part of learning.

- Use teachable moments
 - Solve their own problems
 - Figure things out on their own
 - Take accountability
 - See the consequences of their behaviours
 - Work through next steps and how to fix things
 - Let them fail (don't set them up though)



Create challenges!

» Challenge of the day, week, or month

Work through things on their own

Might get frustrated in the moment but the intrinsic reward once solved is far greater than if helped




Create Challenges For Experimentation

Objective: Encourage students to take risks, think creatively, and learn from mistakes. Reinforce the value of trial and error.

- Ensure tasks include **iteration, problem-solving, and self-correction**





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

- Limits on screen time
- Learn the skills they need to survive early
- Help with important events and occasions
- Let them bake and decorate the cake (without you fixing it)
- Eskimo club
- Using tools

Doing something brave and difficult is more important than the outcome

Risk-takers advantage



LET THEM PLAY!!!



LET THEM HELP!!!

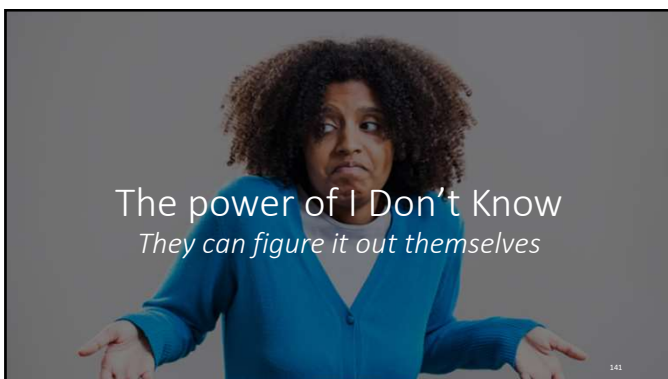
With IMPORTANT things
Sooner vs. later



NEED TO KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE UNEXPECTED

Skills: tolerate uncertainty and think
about different options themselves





(We can't know, so avoid reassurance.)


Let's figure that out.

What could you do?



Coaches use mirror neurons

Brain can't tell the difference



Show confidence = FEEL confidence

Kids need to figure out their own challenges: Put it back to them!

Confidence

Validation

Effective Response

What I know	What I don't know
• We are going to the zoo	• If I have to go to the bathroom
• We are going by bus	• Where the bathrooms are
• We are leaving at 9:10	• Who will be in my group
• We will get back at 2:55	• I will get lost
	• Where to go if I get lost
	• What parent will be in our group
	• If we will see the gorillas
	• If I will fall down and get hurt
	• If I have an allergic reaction

Adult Role: Master the Art of Stepping Back & Letting Children Learn from Mistakes

- To maximize student learning, independence, problem-solving, confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, and overall growth, we must allow them to **experience and navigate mistakes**
 - If a child is struggling:
 - Pause and ask if this is a growth opportunity
 - Validate their struggle and show confidence in their ability to figure it out
 - Encourage reflection with open-ended questions (e.g., what could you try next?)
 - Acknowledge persistence and small improvements (vs. the end result)

Trust the process. If they stumble, they will rise stronger.

Avoiding mistakes limits opportunities for creativity, innovation, and learning.

DO NOT try to eliminate stress or avoid mistakes – capitalize on them for growth and learning.

Help students view frustration as a sign of learning, not defeat, and emphasize the importance of sustained effort.

Reframe Mistakes as Opportunities


First though, **MUST** feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them.

The Importance of Mistakes and Failure

- Talk about your own mistakes and failures as adults
- Talk about others' experiences
- Talk about their own – what have they learned?

Create a culture where mistakes are openly discussed, valued, and expected.

Normalize & Celebrate Mistakes



Celebrate Mistakes

- Have a “Mistake of the day” to share a mistake or challenge they faced, how they fixed/handled it, and what they learned
- (Most top performers know they haven’t tried hard enough if they haven’t met a certain # mistakes in a day)



Embrace mistakes

What was this experience like?

What did you learn today?

What mistake did you make?

What did you try hard at today?

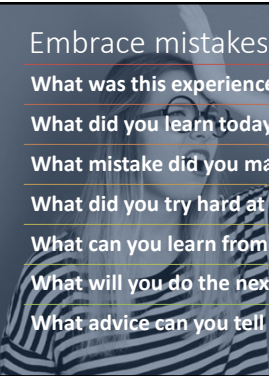
What can you learn from this?

What will you do the next time you are in this situation?

What advice can you tell others based on this?

Best response to a mistake =

Yay! You get to try again!





Build Procedural Thinking!

- Strive for excellence, but address unrealistic standards
 - Emotions related to expectations
- Focus on what's next (vs. circumstances, rumination, should's)

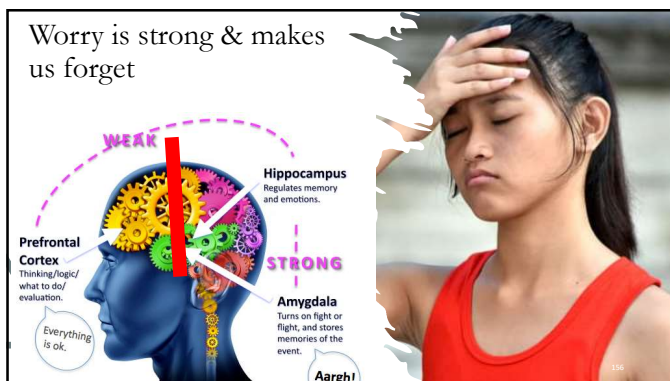
What's next?

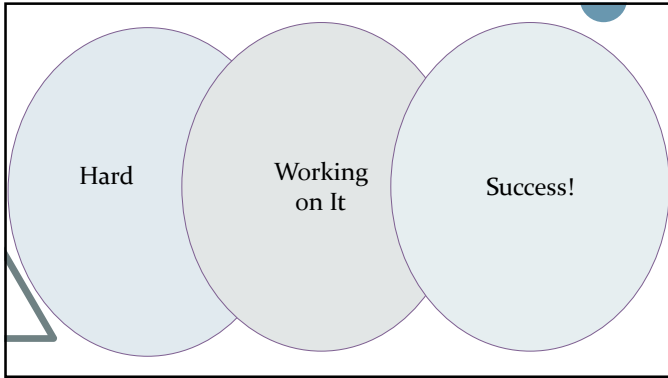
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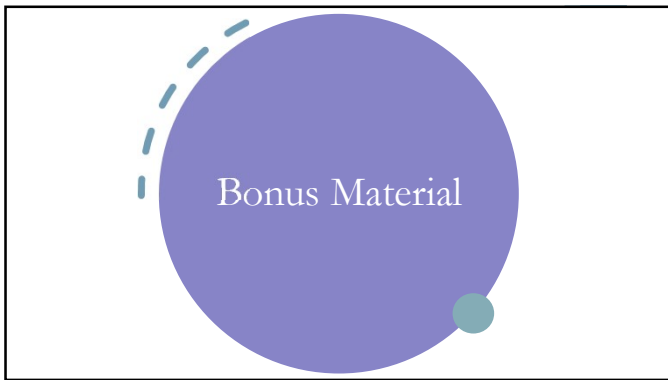
What's next?

➔

What's next?





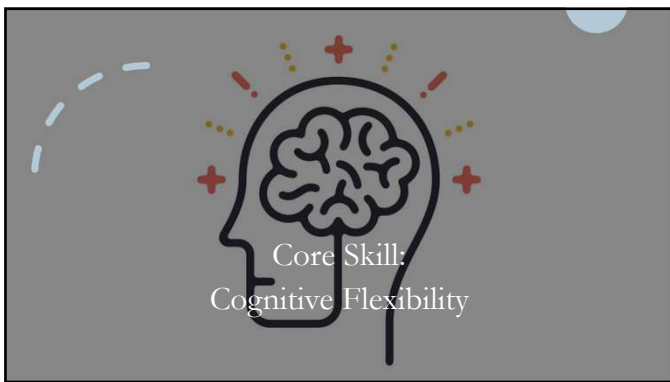


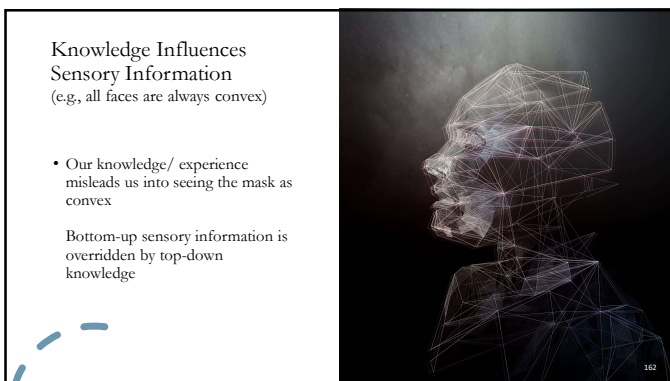
Mindful Awareness
& Acceptance of
Thoughts

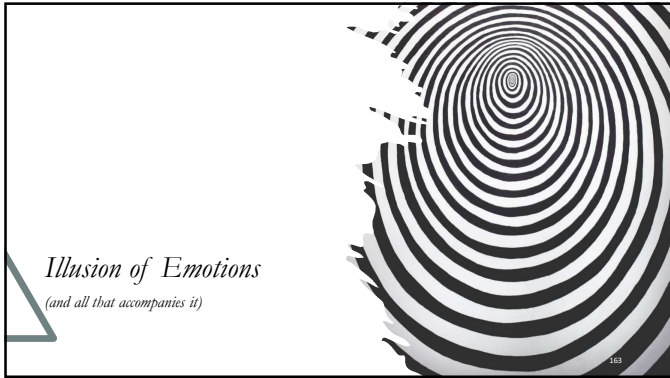
- Infinite amount of thoughts
 - (4.617×10^{61}) potential thoughts= four hundred sixty-one duodecillion and seven hundred decillion)

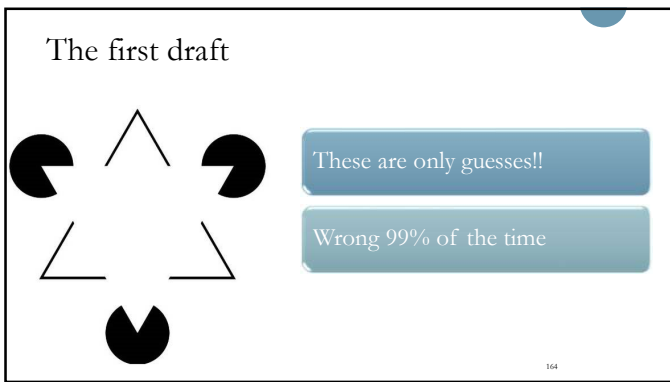
A photograph of a person sitting on a rooftop ledge, looking down at a city skyline. The person is wearing a blue shirt and dark pants. The city has many tall buildings and a dense urban layout.













Get Unstuck: Detach

Distancing

- “___ is noticing ___ is having the thought that...”
- Use third person language

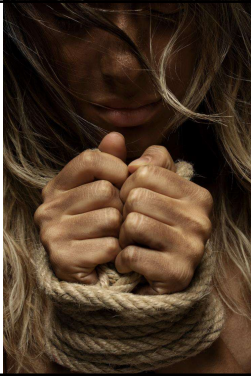
Train, balloons, bubbles clouds, or leaves on the river

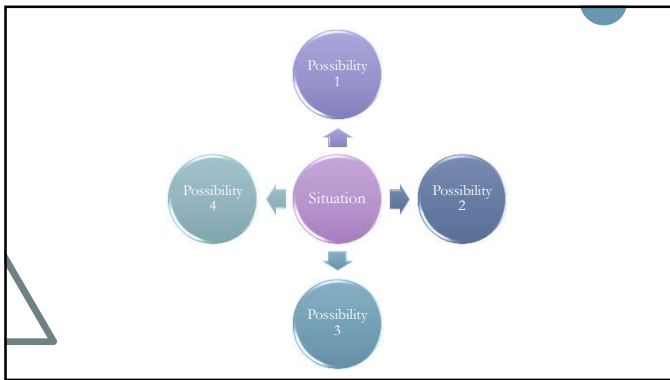
Thank them

Objectify

- What colour? How big? What shape? What texture? How would it move if it could?

Name that Story

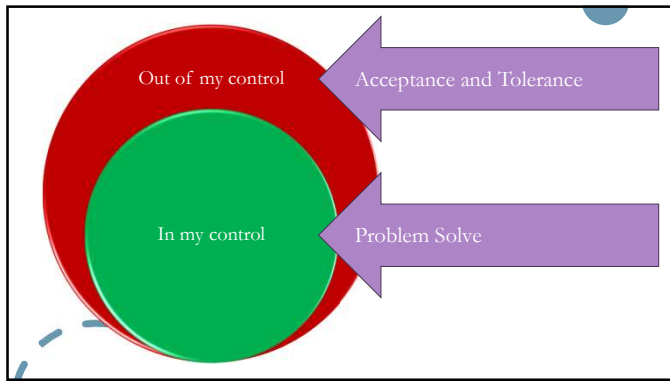




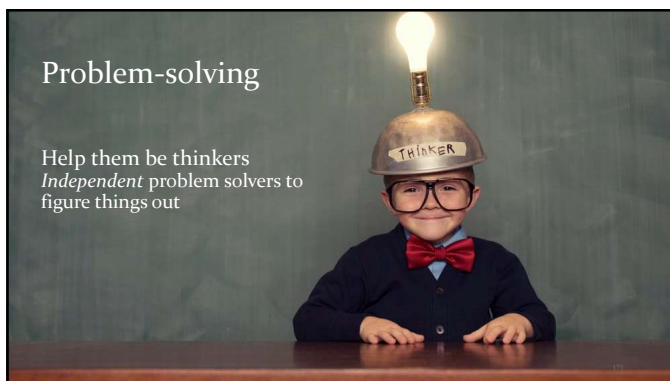


Build Awareness! Externalize & Get Meta

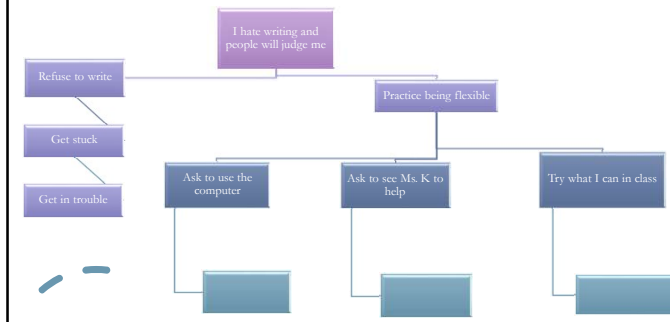
- When does Stuck Stan show up?
 - What is easy to get stuck on? What is easy about it?
 - What is easy to avoid getting stuck? What is easy about it?
 - What helps you get unstuck? What worked before? What do you say to yourself to get unstuck?
- Identify obstacles to getting unstuck
- Collaboratively develop strategies to overcome them







Brainstorm, Practice, & Evaluate Options



Model!

- I feel frustrated. I need to take a minute to think what to do next.
 - Can you help me brainstorm ideas?
- That's a tight timeline. I am going to plan this out.
- I am a little nervous; I have no idea what will happen. Let's figure this out.



Practice!

- Problem-solving
 - Start with emotion free problems
 - Move toward emotionally charged situations





