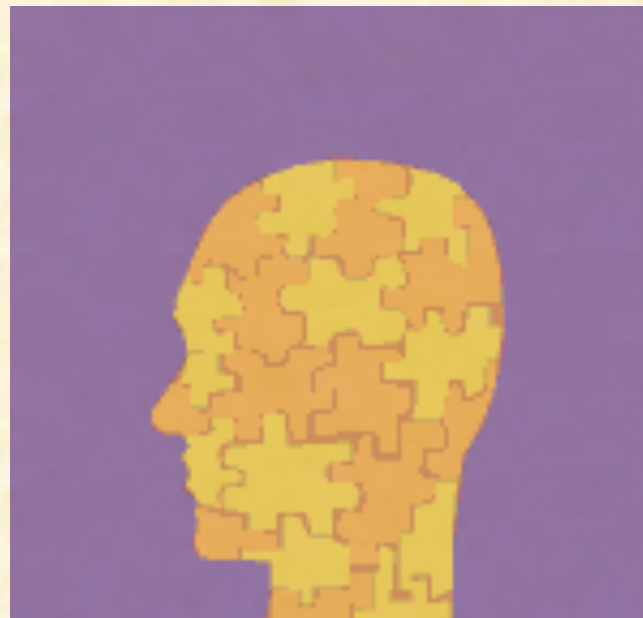


Hey! My Brain Doesn't Work That Way!

or

Using the Body to Lead the Mind

Anxiety in the Classroom



February 19, 2016

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www.marclandry.ca

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HEY! My Brain Doesn't Work That Way!



Brain/Brain Differences/Neuroplasticity

Anxiety and Stress - Neurology Affects Attention and Arousal, Neurotransmitters

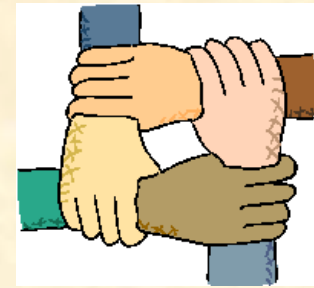
Self Regulation - Basics/Strategies/Heavy Work



Anxiety - Buffers, Strategies

Positive Steps & Resources

Using Strength Based Models



Positive Deviance - The "How She Did That" approach

Look at how people harness resources from their own lives and environments during different situations. Manage own routines and resources. The answers are all around us. We learn through **Experimentation** and **Observation**.

Professionals are *Advocates* and *Participant Observers*

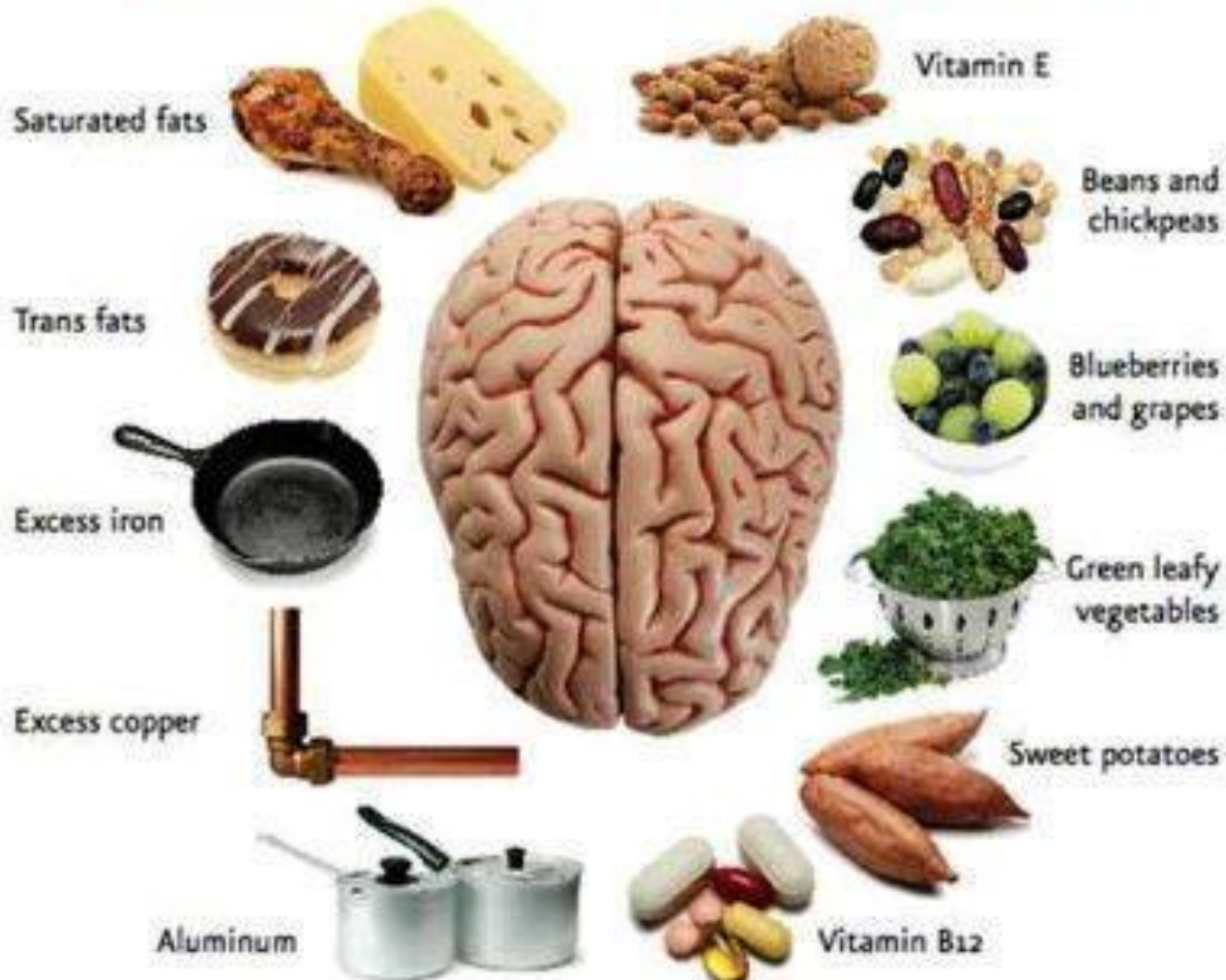
Positive Psychology - The "I Can" approach

Focus on optimism, strengths, resources. Create the "flow", the "just-right challenge". **Self Understanding** leads to better strategies and **Self Advocacy**, more resourcefulness in novel situations. Fosters sense of **Self Efficacy** and **Self Determination**.

Professionals are *Advocates* and *Participant Observers*

Brain Threats

Brain-Protectors

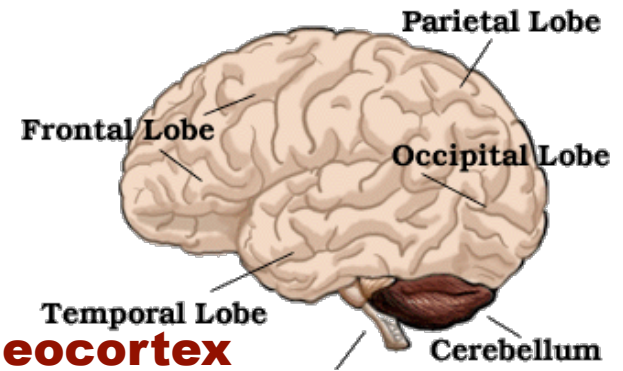


For Extra Power



Teens, especially those who experience stress or anxiety, have greater oral-sensory needs. Help them meet these needs without toxins, stimulants, alcohol or drugs.

The Brain is Important in Learning !!



Mamallian Brain / Mesocortex
satisfaction/contentment

Human Brain / Neocortex
connection/relationship

LIMBIC SYSTEM

Thalamus

Hypothalamus

Pituitary

Amygdala

Hippocampus

BRAIN STEM

Pons

Reticular formation

Medulla

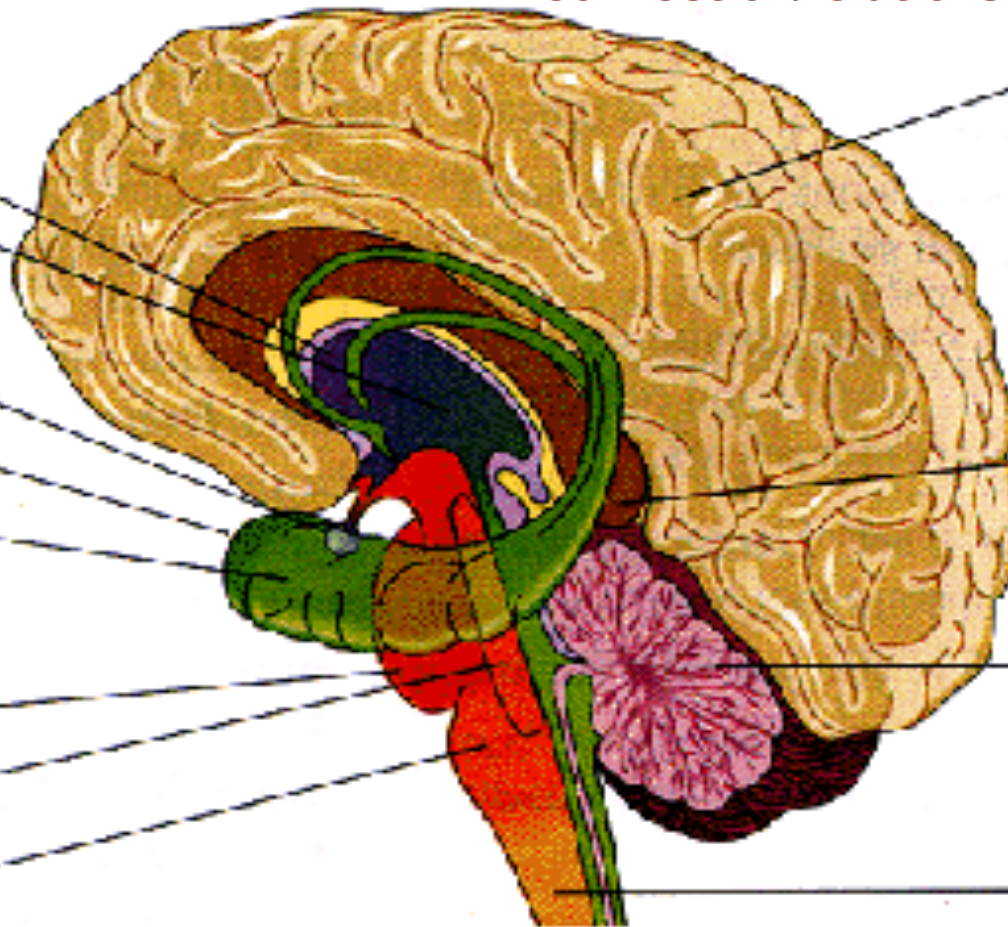
Cerebral cortex

Corpus callosum

Cerebellum

Spinal cord

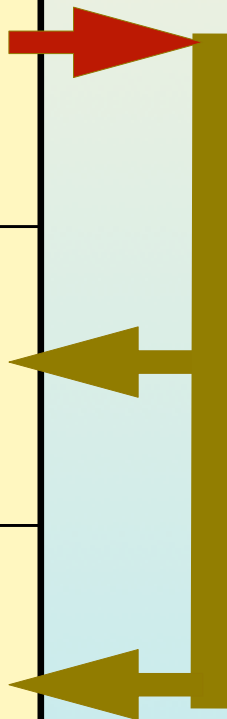
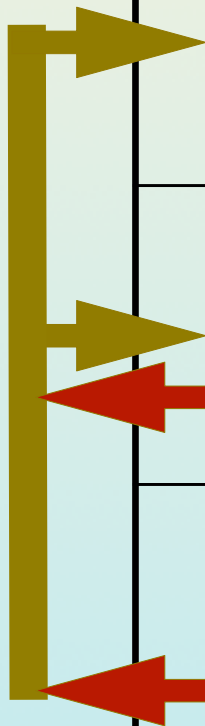
Reptilian Brain / Paleocortex
survival/safety



Brain Hierarchy

Lower level must achieve end goal to move on

Brain Area	End Goal-	How to Support-
Cortex Human Brain Neocortex	Connection Relationship Thinking	Collaboration Acceptance choices/ problems
Limbic System Mamallian Brain Mesocortex	Hormone Balance Satisfaction Contentment	Positive Regard Comfort Belonging
Brainstem Reptilian Brain Paleocortex	Survival Safety Sensory Station	Peace Calming Parasympathtic



Bottom-Up
 Brainstem influences higher centres

Top-Down
 Thinking affects influences lower centres



Boy & Girl Differences



- Boys ability to process words is more limited than the ability to process visual input. Boys are more dependent on vision than words. They are more easily distracted by non relevant visuals around them, and anxiety will increase with visual/sensory overload. Excess language can cause either stress or tuning out
- Boys have a harder time maintaining eye contact, especially when trying to use language or access emotions (both facilitated by movement). Forcing eye contact increases stress hormones. Movement helps. In discussing uncomfortable content, do not demand eye contact.
- While long discussions can be comfortable with girls, boys do better with systematic or analytical tasks, like measures and lists. Listing "pros & cons" will be easier than broad discussions.
- Boys require more time and movement to transition between sensory modalities and tasks. It is more stressful to put aside an incomplete task or subject
- Oxytocin vs. Vasopressin

Differences in boys & girls



We Need to Dissipate Nervous Energy Regularly. What works for this?

Boys

Aggression Nurturance
Intense Movement
Heavy Work
Oral Sensory Input -items
Stories involving Heroes
Laughing
Drawing about feelings
ritual/ceremony
music & movement

Girls

Eye Contact with familiar person
Sharing Stories/talking circles
Fine Motor Activities
 chopping/knitting/colouring
Oral Sensory Input -talking
Giggling
Writing about feelings
music & movement

What you can do to increase motivation in a child with a fragile nervous system

Check in with the child each day. Listen and guide.

Get them involved in an area of interest, working with others.

Put them in the front of the classroom.

Less verbal learning, more hands on, allow for reduced writing (Dragon)

Let them move around and change positions often.

Do running, gym, music early in the day as wake ups.

Promote smaller classrooms and single gender classes

Build male mentorships. Access middle generation.

Boys must relate to "emotional meaning, honour, purpose".

Help Boys identify "honourable traits", heroes, what kind of men they want to be and what they can do today to move toward that.

Systemize things, categorize and measure.

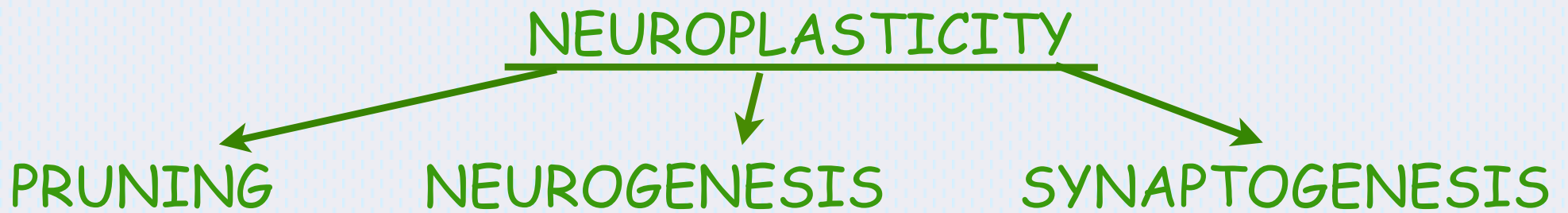
Make sure to start with small steps to ensure success.

Use more fidgets and movement.

Use physical activity daily. Run, move desks, use stairs.

BE WILLING TO LISTEN.





BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) increases neurogenesis and synaptogenesis

Pillars of Brain Health

- Exercise/Movement (increases energy to brain)
- Nutrition (Energy and glial support)
- Stress Management (Brainstem and Limbic Load)
- Socialization
- Mental Stimulation (May be work or, better yet, PLAY!)

www.nognz.com

 nognz brain fitness

The Senses are important to learning!

EXTEROCEPTORS v Interoceptors

vibration

light period/rhythm

burning freezing

pressure(cut)

irritation(chem) pain

proprioception

liquid antenna sensing systems

taste

tactile

oral input

itching

first "pain"

second "pain"

intuition

warmth

cold

nociception

chemoreception

VISUAL

smell

kinesthetic electric field

vestibular

magnetism

accessory olfactory system

Additional Senses - These are really systems rather than organs. They are hidden, automatic, we are not aware of them and have little control over them.

The Vestibular System - Balance/Gravity

Processes information about movement and the position of the head in relation to gravity. This enables us to maintain our balance while still or in motion. Information is processed via the tiny fluid filled semicircular canals in the inner ear, as well as utricle and saccule via the medulla. Vestibular nuclei communicate with reticular activating system, limbic system, as well as cerebellum, motor areas, visual cortex. Vestibular processing anomalies are common in persons with autism. vestibulocochlear nerve carries mvmt/sound.

The Proprioceptive System - Pressure/Force/Position

Processes information about body position through the muscles and joints. Application of regular proprioceptive feedback to the muscles through firm, deep pressure and heavy work, is recommended for many people, because it has been shown to have an organizing effect on the central nervous systems.

Kinesthesia - Movement

A sense built using information from vestibular and proprioceptive systems as well as stretch and touch receptors. Kinesthesia gives us a sense of what parts of our body are moving and how so. Function requires good proprioception, vestibular function, and felt sense (via arousal system).

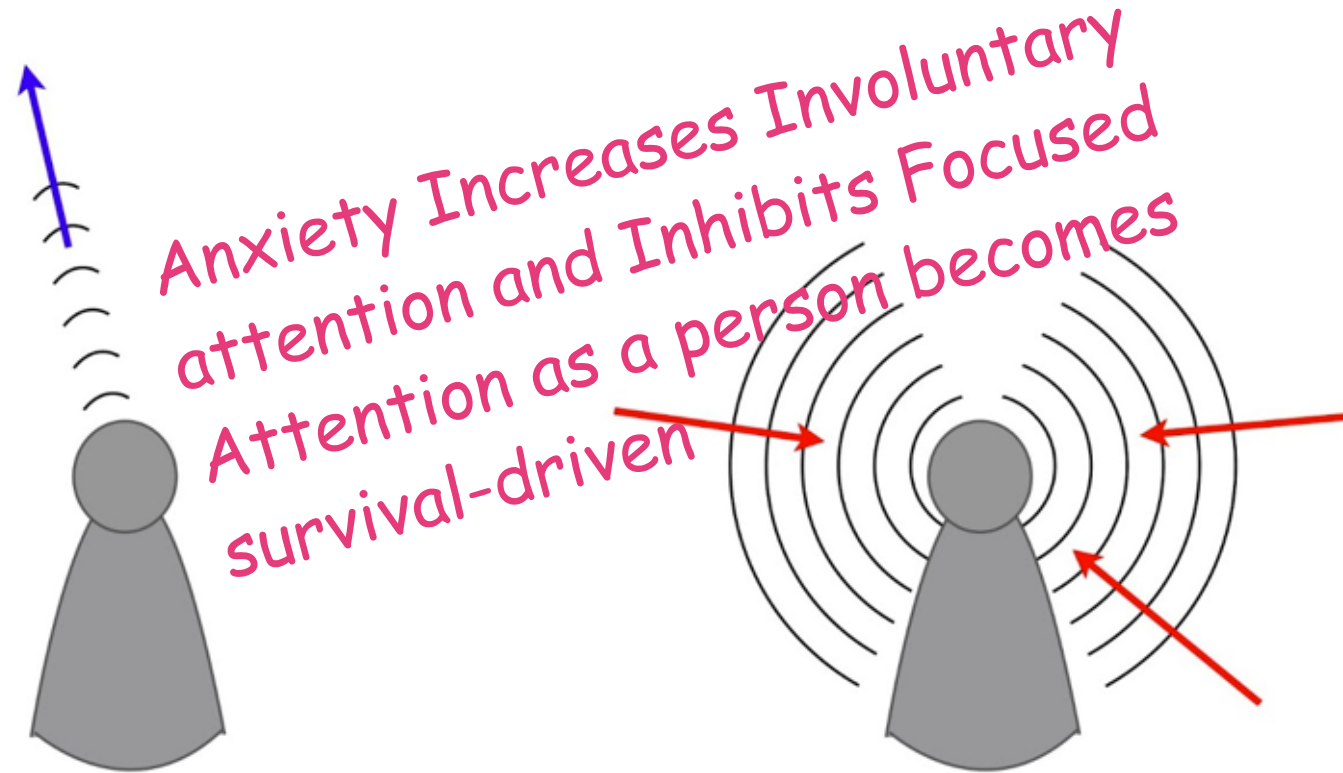
The Felt Sense - State/whole of emotion/consciousness

The Felt Sense is how we experience the fullness of sensation and knowledge about ourselves as an organism. This includes internal sensations and synthesis of different sensations. The felt sense unifies lots of scattered data and infers meaning. The felt sense (connected to my nervous system) is what is my overall experience of the world as well as emotions, thoughts, and feelings. **AM I SAFE?** The felt sense, always changing, it is the most basic experience of being alive as an entity. Feeling comfortable, safe, nervous, anxious, happy, are examples. In some contexts (i.e. Eugene Gendlin), the felt sense can be perceived in the body and changes and moves.

For more on the felt sense, see Waking The Tiger by Peter Levine, pgs. 8, 66, 67, 68, 69
and Focusing by Eugene Gendlin

Attention focuses Modulation

Modulation seeks to inhibit 'Involuntary Attention'



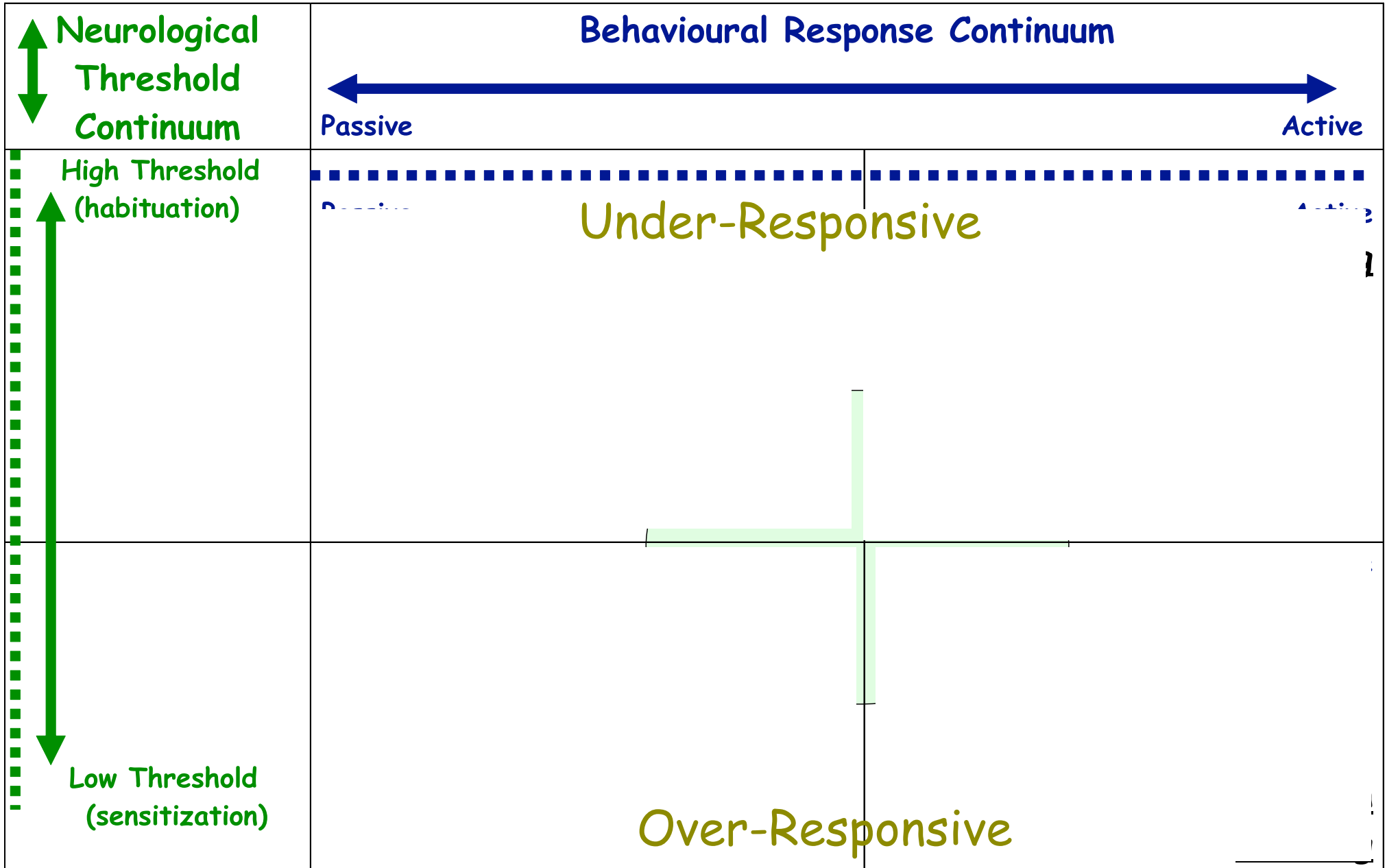
Goal-directed Attention
(curiosity, motivation, focus)

Focused Attention

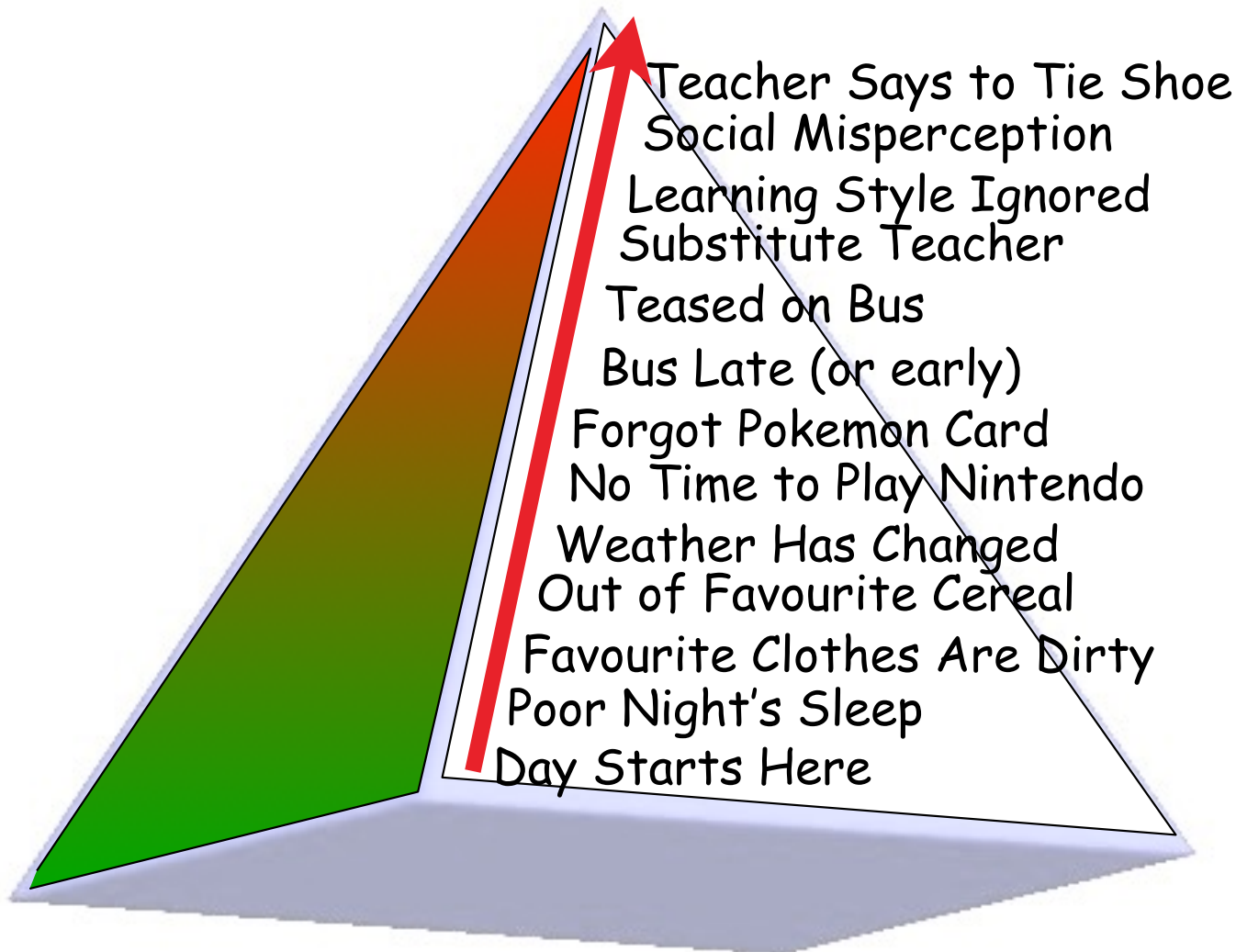
Stimulus-driven Attention
(reaction, fear, pop-up ads)

Involuntary Attention

Relationships between Neurological Thresholds & Behavioural Responses



A Day in the Life of a child with Sensory Sensitivities



aggression



frustration

A Day in the Life of a child with Low Registration



seeking more

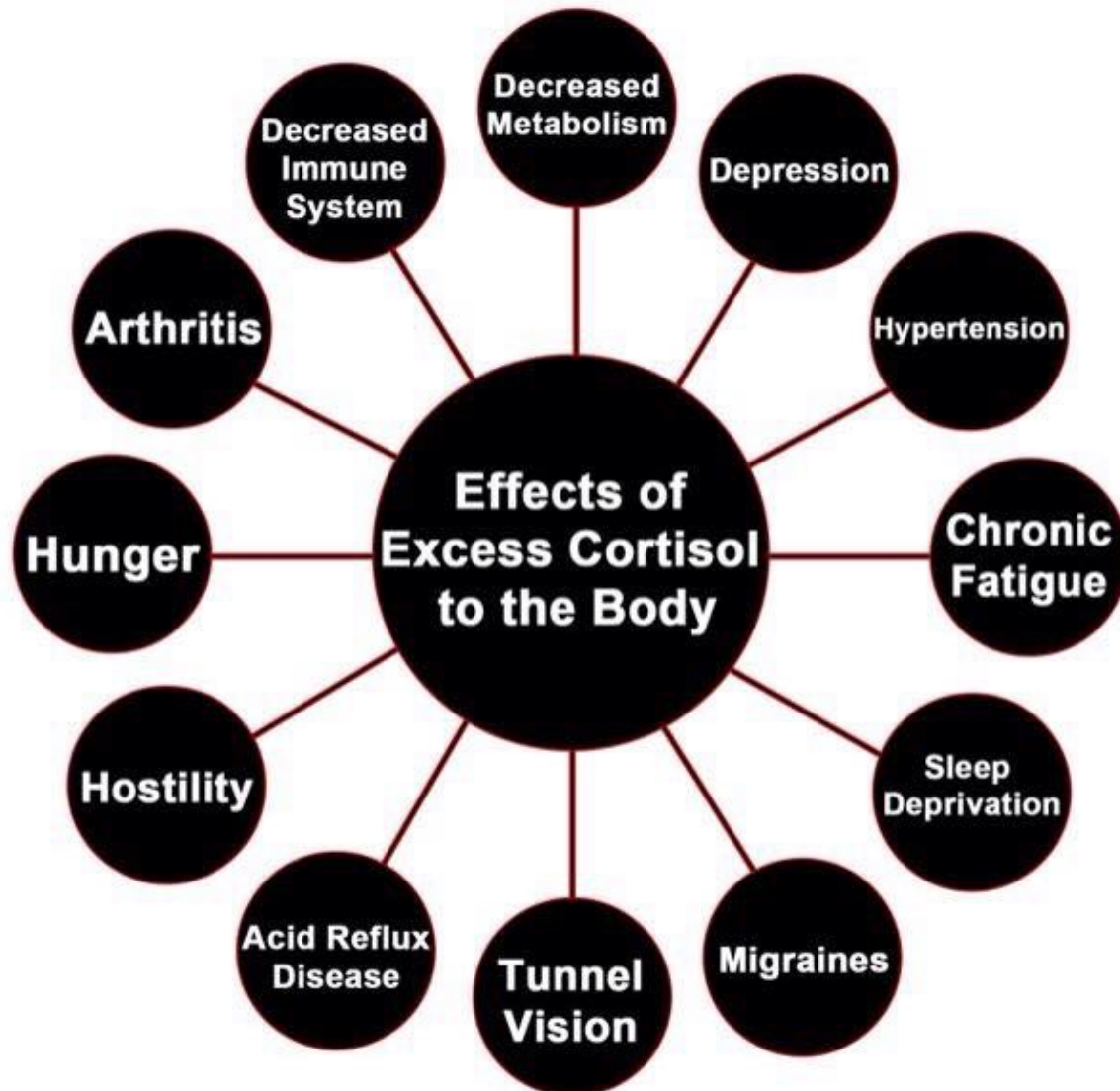
More awake after shower
or cold drink
Sleeps well, hard to
awaken

Builds energy, wants to move
Sensory opportunities discouraged
Scolded for jumping and moving
Scolded for fooling around on bus
Not enough time to play outside before school
Forgot homework -too busy
Carpet time too long & criss cross applesauce
Can't sit still, scolded, recess taken away
Scolded for not sitting still at desk
Tries to doodle or fidget with something
Sits still to end criticism
Stops listening and tunes out the world

tuning out



What stress hormones do



Cortisol - The Stress Hormone



Stress Response System

(primarily sympathetic activation)

Activation leads to: shutting off frontal areas, increased peripheral awareness, increased limbic activation, release of stress hormones.

Panic leads to hyper-arousal and loss of any cortical control or influence.

Dissociation is the most primitive response ("freeze") and occurs around the brainstem level, joins stress response and surrender.

Stress Hormones cause us to focus on body, environment, time with a very self-centred orientation. This is survival mode. Attention and impulse problems can be the result of change in organization of neural networks. Initially these would most often support survival, but not when repeatedly activated post-trauma.

"Developmental trauma" - A few minutes of stressful experience early in life can change a rat's stress response system forever. Everyone's stress response system is unique, influenced by individual experiences.

Dissociative and hyper-arousal pathways can become overactive and sensitized, affecting one long after initial trauma. When this happens, it looks just like hyperactivity, ADD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, coloured by a desperate need to be in control.

In humans, stress system can be triggered by thinking.

Stress response can be modulated by presence of familiar people, humour, and play. Oxytocin is an anti-stress chemical, if not mis-interpreted.

Chronic loss of control leads to paralyzing fear, a form of learned helplessness.

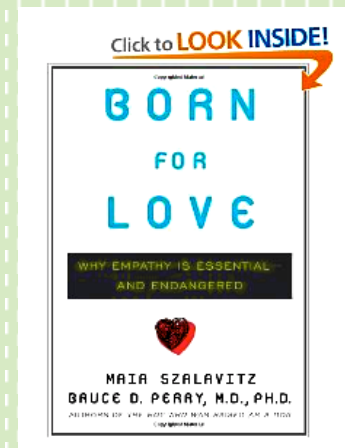


Human Reward System

(primarily parasympathetic activation)



- Neurotransmitters lead to positive feelings, which increase the likelihood of behaviour repeating itself.
- Dopamine helps us to feel happy, but also strong, motivated, confident, adventurous. Drugs and over eating may boost dopamine levels.
- Serotonin (5-HT) involved with mood, muscle contraction, memory and learning.
- Endogenous opioids, enkephalins and endorphins act to sooth, relax, reduce pain, make us feel satisfied and happy.
- Oxytocin increases bonding, interaction, language
- Can be activated by behaviours and environment, as well as by anticipation, memories, and association, as well as a feeling of being in control.
- Parasympathetic links with heart, face, brain, gut, genitals to ↑ love and social.
- "If you give psychostimulants to animals when they are young, their rewards systems change. They require much more stimulation to get the same level of pleasure. So on a very concrete level they need to eat more food to get the same sensation of satiation. They need to do more high-risk things to get that little buzz from doing something." Bruce Perry





Activity & Neurotransmitters

Serotonin Management or Mindfulness?

Most people never heard of serotonin management, or even considered it at all except for medications. Serotonin management amounts to paying attention to the little things that make you feel good and systematically including them in your daily routine. We know, instinctively, that pampering ourselves is a door to a sense of well being, but we may not take time to schedule pleasant surroundings, favorite music or food, or even quality time with loved ones into our daily agenda.

Just getting out of bed and into a warm shower elevates serotonin levels, making it easier to get into a positive, constructive frame of mind. And generally speaking, depression if it is mild enough can sometimes be managed without prescribed medications. Aerobic exercise, watching your carbohydrate & alcohol consumption, getting up early and moving, even if you don't feel like it, forcing structure on your life, using meditation and imagery (if you can concentrate, which depends on how depressed you are), and seeking a support group or therapy, have all proved helpful.



Seemingly little things that taste good, smell good, or delight the senses can be very significant when systematically included in your daily routine. Violets for the soul may be one of your best investments, especially if you consider the fact that people who feel good are significantly less likely to be tardy, absent, ill, or involved in accidents of all kinds.

Much serotonin (5-HT) is produced in the gut, and this production starts with the beginning

Emotional Regulation



- Emotional Regulation is a function of the neocortex (human brain) and the limbic system or mesocortex (mammalian brain). In the cortex, we build meaning for our emotions.
- We reason with ourselves and tell ourselves stories to help us feel calm. The frontal cortex can moderate and dampen the reactions of the amygdala and inhibit over-activation of emotional responses.
- Requires language areas and frontal/executive areas to work together.
- "Social Stories" (Carol Gray) can help children to achieve Emotional Regulation by reducing the load on the amygdala.
- In OT jargon, this is a form of self regulation that we call "top down" or "third order" Self Regulation.
- Emotional Regulation is not possible if the body is too agitated, or if fear or anger have cut off the neocortex or cognitive brain.

Oetter's Stages of Self Regulation

First order - self regulation is dependent on our senses, the autonomic nervous system, and our interconnections with the brainstem, the reticular formation, and the limbic system. The ANS functions to regulate temperature, tone, sleep/wake, monitor for survival, etc. When the brainstem is overly stimulated by sensory input, stress hormones are released, can lead to loss of cognitive control. Typically, no conscious control over this area. Automatic, except we can leave or alter the environment.

Second order - self regulation is reflected in sensorimotor strategies to achieve, maintain and change situation appropriate states. Sensorimotor input and feedback help organize states, ie. Foot tapping, rocking, fidgeting, doodling. **Using the body to lead the mind.**

Third order - emergence of higher level cognitive (cortical) skills. At this stage, problem solving abilities and the use of verbal and internal language for organization allow the individual to monitor, plan and evaluate regulatory strategies. "Just this much more and then I will treat myself to..." or "If I don't get it done, such and such will happen." **Using the mind to lead the body.** This can also be called **Emotional Regulation**, as it is referred to in psychological and educational jargon.

What are Your Subconscious Regulatory Strategies?

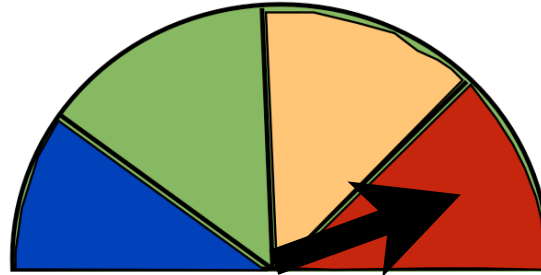
- Chew gum
- sip water
- hard candy
- crunchies
- bite nails
- smoke
- popcorn
- coffee
- mints
- sweets
- rub tongue inside mouth
- chew on pencil/straw
- Rock, spin on chair
- squirm/shift in chair
- roll head
- rock body
- run, jump
- tap objects or body parts
- stretch
- isometrics
- balance chair on 2 legs
- shake feet, etc.
- Twist hair
- fidget in pocket
- cool shower
- warm bath
- rub fingers or clothes on skin
- hands about mouth area
- play with ears, nails, necklace, sleeve, chin, pencil, pocket contents
- stare at movement (fire, fish, rain, clouds, sand and oil toys, spinning things, etc.)
- Avoid bright light
- listen to calm or lively music
- Sing or talk to self
- gravitate toward rhythm
- avoid loud noises
- more intense reactions than others to unexpected sensory input around you.

Not cognitively mediated





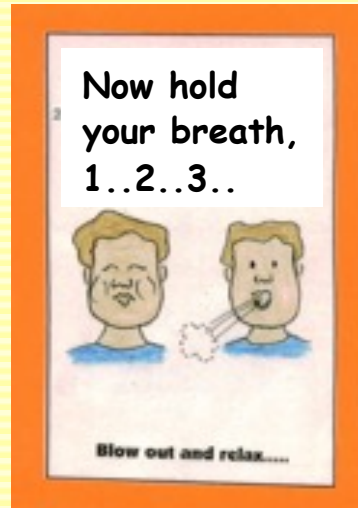
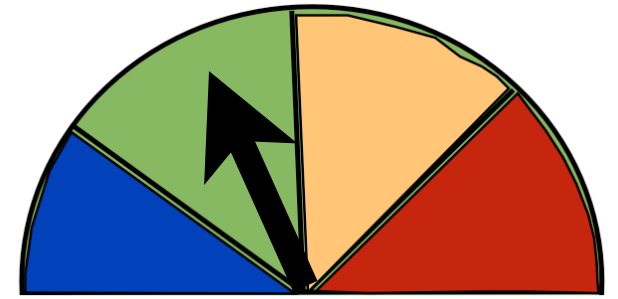
High Anxiety - How Does it Feel?



How does my head feel	How does my neck/shoulder feel?	How do my arms and hands feel?
How does my chest feel?	How does my stomach feel?	How do my legs feel?
How does my breathing feel?	What else do I feel?	What seems to be easiest to notice?

This is half of self regulation - noticing when I am leaving the green zone

Self Awareness & Progressive Relaxation



Must be practiced often, initially.

Spend time on the feeling of the relaxation in each area. Talk about this. Be insightful.

Use sensory-motor strategies that affect level of arousal (deep calming input, fidget items, movement, heavy work, etc.).

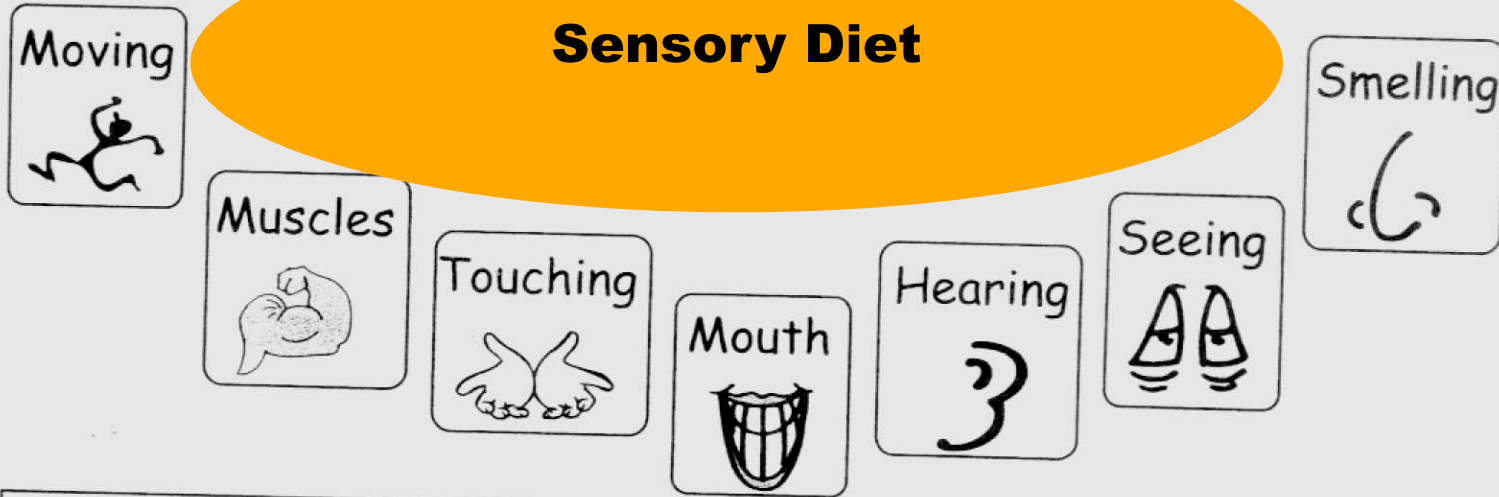
Mindfulness, breath control, Heart Math, Brain Gym, many areas may be worth exploring

http://www.marclandry.ca/Marcs_Sensory_Oasis/Workshop_Materials_files/relaxation%20book-2011.pdf

Deep Breathing is the fastest way to clear adrenaline and activate the body's calming system (parasympathetic system).

I love MindUP! It is a way to focus your mind, calm down and reflect on a situation when you need to make a choice.
- Tyler G., Seventh Grade Student

Sensory Diet



The term 'sensory diet' coined by Patricia Wilbarger, an occupational therapist, refers to "how certain sensory experiences can be used to enhance occupational performance in any individual." (Bundy, Lane & Murray, 2002)

Everyone has individual sensory preferences for calming, waking up, concentrating, etc. The key is to figure out which strategies work for YOU and how you can integrate them into your lifestyle. Here are some examples:

MOVING: taking a brisk walk after 20 minutes at the computer

MUSCLES: working out at the gym before homework time

TOUCHING: fidgeting with a small koosh-like ball during a long lecture

MOUTH: popping in a piece of sour candy just before a big exam

HEARING: listening to soft music while studying

SEEING: dimming the lights when wanting to take a nap

SMELLING: using lavender-scented sheets for sleeping.

DISCOVER WHAT WORKS FOR YOU!

From Diana Henry's "Tools for Teens" www.henryot.com

When I want to keep my engine running "Just right"

What Works?	What Bothers Me?
Mouth	Mouth
Move	Move
Touch	Touch
Look	Look
Listen	Listen
Smell	Smell
Pressure / Heavy Work	Pressure / Heavy Work

WHEN I WANT TO KEEP MY ENGINE RUNNING "JUST RIGHT"		
What Works to be more alert?	What Works to be more calm?	What Bothers Me?
In the mouth	In the mouth	In the mouth
Move	Move	Move
Touch	Touch	Touch
Look	Look	Look
Listen	Listen	Listen
Combinations	Combinations	Combinations

The other half of self regulation – what will help and what will not
 webpage - workshop materials - sensory supplement working forms



In Your Mouth !



Alerting Foods

cold, sour, tart, spicy, minty, crunchy

Calming Foods

warm, smooth, sweet

All Purpose Foods (deep pressure through jaw from chewing)

chewy and crunchy foods may belong in this category

Non Foods: water, gum, straws to suck, blow or chew, bubble toys

aquarium tubing is great for sucking, blowing, and chewing. You can also get plastic hose for water cooler or hospital use that is high quality.



See oral motor section at www.fdmnt.ca online store

"Our Chewable Jewels (right) are made from FDA approved food grade silicone and are Phthalate, BPA, PVC, Latex and Lead free products!"





MOVEMENT!!!



- Small movement, big movement, now and then movement, constant movement

- Up & down, back and forth, side to side, round and round (orbital and centrifugal)



- Movement of mouth/hands/feet can happen/help when whole body movement is not an option. (mouth items, fidgets, exercise band)

- Dynamic sitting provides movement input (chair ball, move'n'sit cushion, t-stool, kneeling).



- Increased gravity can decrease need for movement (weighted products, proprioception).





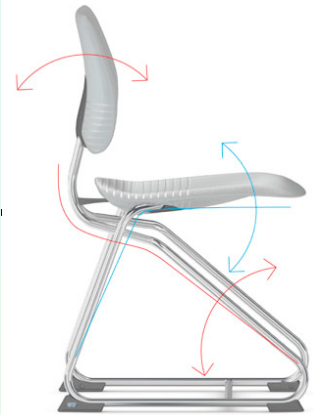
MOVEMENT!!!!



PantoMove
the best chair
in the world!



The B1



PantoSwing



Andrew Lowes
VS America, Inc.

Canadian Sales Manager
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F: 250-929-2230
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Bodies in Motion -
Brains in Motion

*Dynamic Seating...
Meet the new exercise ball!*



Hokki Stool



Zuma Cantilever



Standing Desk



Zuma Rocker

Conquer Portable Mini Exercise Bike

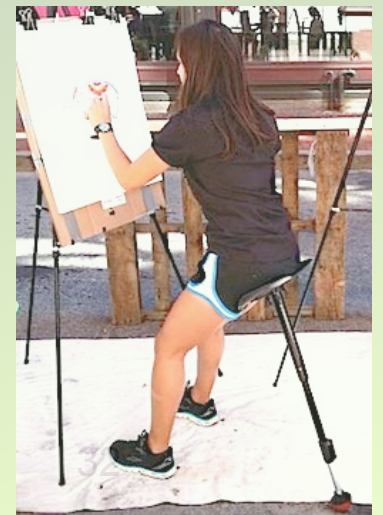
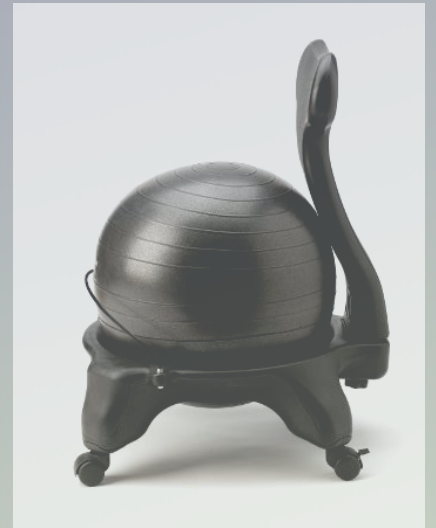


treadmill desk



Ask Eric McHaffie eric@jmclimited.ca

Move & Work



<https://www.theinsidetrainer.com/office-exercise-equipment/>

Some Sensory Diet and Self Regulation Equipment

Sensory TOOLS for grounding and regulating



Can improve listening, thinking, language functions, focus.

These only work when kept to the self.

They provide the body with movement and touch input.

Older students can create their own inventories.

Heavy



Involves Pressure/Force and provides a lot of calming sensory feedback from the body.

Also promotes core strength and stability, for increased strength and endurance.

We call these Heavy Jobs for kids who infer work as being negative.

Promote Heavy Work throughout the day, but direct a person to it:

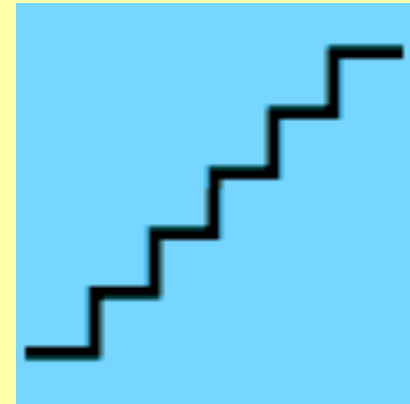
When reaching overload

when s/he can't focus or be still,

when something challenging is coming,

when s/he needs a break from something challenging,

when s/he needs to wind down a bit.



Before, during, and after using Collaborative & Proactive Solutions™ Ross Greene

Note what games and jobs work well for the person and when (in general).

DO the DETECTIVE WORK! Take cues from what the person's body is telling you.



Heavy Work



Heavy "Jobs"

Haul groceries into the house and put things away. (include climbing and hands and knees)

Sweeping, mopping, wiping boards, desks, raking, mowing, beating a rug

Dragging hose, leaf bags, wheelbarrow, cart of balls or playground supplies

Pull linens off of the bed and drag down stairs. Move the sofa or classroom furniture

Carry laundry basket, carry pots or buckets of water, sand, dirt

Move books, office supplies, boxes of paper, trash cans, recycling, lumber, firewood

Chopping, sawing, hammering

Heavy Play

Dragging out the box of books, toys

Magic Carpet - Kids pull each other on a piece of rug or blanket

Walk like different animals (include plenty of 4 leg creatures, i.e. bear, crab, etc

Jump on a mini trampoline or rebounder

2 people sit face to face and rock to "row your boat" with rope or inner tube around them

Fall into a bean bag chair

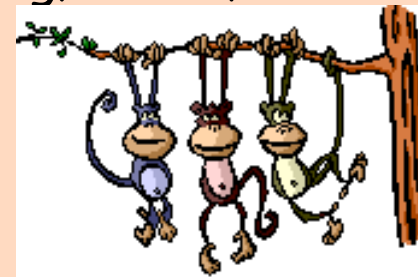
Encourage hands and knees play with cars, animals (one hand plays, one hand holds you up)

Sidewalk chalk, playing in a wet sandbox

Tug of war, Pushing games, medicine ball

Swinging from rings, bars, jungle gym, hockey

Broad jump, jumping off of platforms and playscapes



Doing the Detective Work

When Reaching Overload:

1. Sensory Reduction
2. Heavy Work
3. Independent is better

For Homework and Focused Learning:

1. Observe, Observe, Observe...
2. Explore alternatives...different positions, places
3. Provide more movement opportunities
4. Provide more dynamic sitting or desk opportunities.



IF a person has difficulty sitting still:

1. Provide more movement and stimulation before the focused time.
2. Incorporate and end with Heavy Work, Proprioception, Pressure/Force.
3. During sitting, put something heavy in lap, dress warm or heavy (puts some to sleep).
Do some pulling/pushing while seated and quiet.
4. Try dynamic or unstable sitting.



- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Health Anxiety Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Panic Disorder and Agoraphobia
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- School Refusal
- Selective Mutism
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Specific Phobia

Handling Anxiety

Implementing Change



Common reactions to anxiety are **ESCAPE** and **AVOIDANCE**. These interfere with task performance and need to be worked on. Baseline cortisol levels set in first 6 years of life.

Stress challenges us to adapt or cope, and these are better strategies than avoidance. Stress that makes us stronger is usually moderate, predictable, and patterned, unless it happens when the individual/system is overloaded. Stress (cortisol) damages the hippocampus, involved in new memory/learning. Neurological reactions to stress and anxiety can be neurotoxic if not modulated.

Perceptions of what is stressful can change, and are often controlled by autonomic function (sensory processing) and emotional and cognitive factors.

Rather than avoiding anxiety, we can seek to reduce the reaction we generate to the negative thinking.

Learning to expect and accept stress can help to take the power away from our stress reactions.

- What is stressful for a child can be very different from what you might expect, and is very different for different brain types, different environments, families
- Stress factors: anxiety, demands, energy levels, illness, toxins, sleep, diet, love, movement

Buffers to Anxiety

situational or personal characteristics which assist in increasing our ability to deal with anxiety and help us recover from stress responses.



sense of humour

sensory/motor and
sensory diet strategies

internal control

social supports (oxytocin)

hardiness (ability to accept
challenge, with commitment, confidence,
and self control.)

schedules

Adequate sleep

positive self talk

positive outlook

physical fitness

⇓⇓ Level of arousal

self esteem

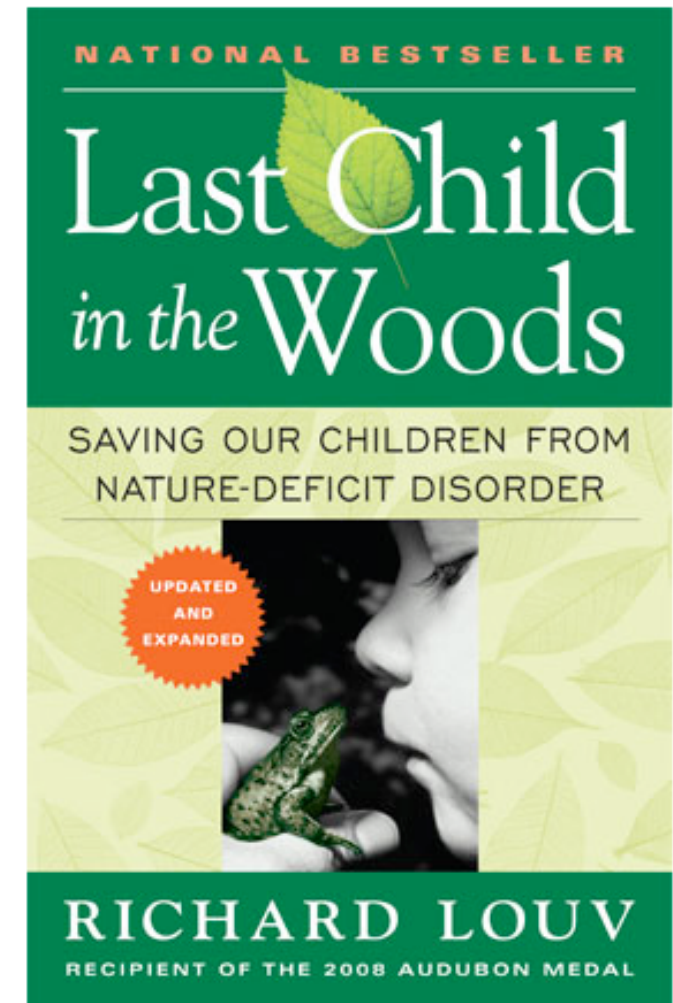
optimism

expectations

Nature - Healing and Grounding

- ≡ Invite native flora and fauna into your life. Maintain a birdbath. Replace part of your lawn with native plants. Build a bat house. For backyard suggestions, plus links to information about attracting wildlife to apartments and townhouses, see the National Audubon Society's [Invitation to a Healthy Yard](#).
- ≡ View nature as an antidote to stress. All the health benefits that come to a child come to the adult who takes that child into nature. Children and parents feel better after spending time in the natural world-even if it's in their own backyard.
- ≡ Spend time along the beach, sea wall, park, trail, pond, stream
- ≡ Help your child discover a hidden universe. Roll over an old log in the woods and look at what's living there. Watch for a while. Return to this universe once a month, lift the log and discover who's new.
- ≡ Revive old traditions. Collect bugs, watch them, release them. Make a leaf collection. Keep a terrarium or aquarium. Explore streams and ponds.
- ≡ Nature experiences can be Calming, Alerting, or Organizing, and can incorporate every sensory modality.

Eco-Psychology



Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS)

❖ Precede CPS with sensory reduction, calming strategies, mindfulness

❖ The Empathy Step

- ❖ Gather information to hear other's concern and perspective
- ❖ Neutral observation of what's going on ("So your concern is...")
- ❖ Add/explore sensory perspective
- ❖ Don't jump to conclusions - WANT to understand

❖ Define The Problem Step

- ❖ Introduce YOUR concern or perspective ("My concern is..." or "The thing is...")
- ❖ Discuss, don't force (both sides tend to rush past this step)

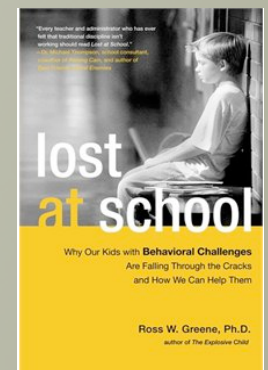
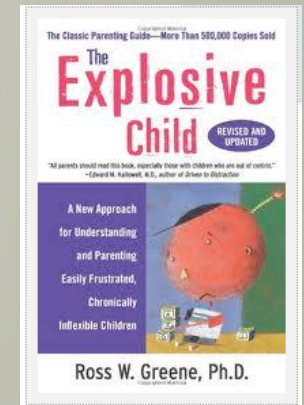
❖ Invitation Step

- ❖ Work TOGETHER - brainstorm with ("Do you have any ideas?")
- ❖ Can't do this step if you need to control the outcome
- ❖ Options need to be realistic and **mutually** satisfactory

❖ Hear, clarify, understand, validate, address

❖ Prove that you are as invested in making sure his/her concern is addressed as you are in making sure that your concern is addressed.

❖ When a child/person can do better, he/she WILL !!



Mental Rehearsal - The Social Story Enhanced

Neurons can be activated by mental rehearsal, just as by activity
Imagine as many details as possible, with desired performance and outcomes
Experience Thoughts and Feelings so the body perceives it as reality
Rehearse in advance to build skill and confidence.
Rehearse (after difficult situations) what you would have done differently, to
weaken negative pathways

Positive Self Talk

I am calm and relaxed I can do this! I can! I can!
I remember what it feels like to be calm I can handle it!
Build positive talk into your interactions
Do your own positive self talk so the child can hear
Talk about the feeling of accomplishment and how it feels to be done.
Positive self talk must be honest

Visual Imagery "The Safe Place"

Introduce after relaxation and after enjoyable activities
Find that special place (It does not have to be calming for YOU)
Describe and explore in a calm, positive voice. Give it a simple name
Make it multi-sensory (add smell, sound, touch, movement, visual)
Reinforce and Practice. This is key in activating parasympathetic system and
coming down from **RED ZONE**

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

GoZen.com

1. Stop Reassuring

Try the FEEL method:

- **Freeze** -- pause and take some deep breaths with the anxious person. Deep breathing can help reverse the nervous system response.
- **Empathize** -- anxiety is scary. An anxious person wants to know that you get it.
- **Evaluate** -- once the person is calm, it's time to figure out possible solutions.
- **Let Go** - Let go of your guilt; you are an amazing adult giving your charge the tools to manage their worry.

2. Highlight Why Worrying is Good

Remember, anxiety is tough enough without a person believing that Something is wrong with me. Many people even develop anxiety about having anxiety. Teach that worrying does, in fact, have a purpose. Worry is a protection mechanism. Worry rings an alarm in our system and helps us survive danger. Teach that worry is perfectly normal, it can help protect us, and everyone experiences it from time to time. Sometimes our system sets off false alarms, but this type of worry (anxiety) can be put in check with some simple techniques.

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

3. Bring Worry to Life

As you probably know, ignoring anxiety doesn't help. But bringing worry to life and talking about it like a real person can. Create a worry character. In GoZen they created Widdle the Worrier. Widdle personifies anxiety. Widdle lives in the old brain that is responsible for protecting us when we're in danger. Of course, sometimes Widdle gets a little out of control and when that happens, we have to talk some sense into Widdle. You can use this same idea with a stuffed animal, real animal personas, or even role-playing at home.

Personifying worry or creating a character has multiple benefits. It can help demystify this scary physical response children experience when they worry. It can reactivate the logical brain, and it's a tool your children can use on their own at any time.

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

4. Teach Your Child to Be a Thought Detective

Try a method called the 3Cs:

- **Catch your thoughts:** Imagine every thought you have floats above your head in a bubble (like what you see in comic strips). Now, catch one of the worried thoughts like "No one at school likes me."
- **Collect evidence:** Next, collect evidence to support or negate this thought. Teach a worrier not to make judgments about what to worry about based only on feelings. Feelings are not facts. (Supporting evidence: "I had a hard time finding someone to sit with at lunch yesterday." Negating evidence: "Sherry and I do homework together--she's a friend of mine.")
- **Challenge your thoughts:** The best (and most entertaining) way to do this is to teach people to have a debate within themselves.

5. Allow Them to Worry

As you know, telling people not to worry won't prevent them from doing so. If they could simply shove their feelings away, they would. But allowing them to worry openly, in limited doses, can be helpful. Create a daily ritual called "Worry Time" that lasts 10 to 15 minutes. During this ritual encourage people to release all their worries in writing. You can make the activity fun by decorating a worry box. During worry time there are no rules on what constitutes a valid worry -- anything goes. When the time is up, close the box and say good-bye to the worries for the day.

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

6. Help Them Go from What If to What Is

You may not know this, but humans are capable of time travel. In fact, mentally we spend a lot of time in the future. For someone experiencing anxiety, this type of mental time travel can exacerbate the worry. A typical time traveler asks what-if questions: "What if I can't open my locker and I miss class?" "What if Suzy doesn't talk to me today?"

Research shows that coming back to the present can help alleviate this tendency. One effective method of doing this is to practice mindfulness exercises. Mindfulness brings us from what if to what is. To do this, help to simply focus on the breath for a few minutes.

Self Awareness & Progressive Relaxation



Must be practiced often, initially.

Spend time on the feeling of the relaxation in each area. Talk about this. Be insightful.

Use sensory-motor strategies that affect level of arousal (deep calming input, fidget items, movement, heavy work, etc.).

Mindfulness, breath control, Heart Math, Brain Gym, many areas may be worth exploring



http://www.mindandbody.org/Mind_Sensory_Oasis/Workshop_Materials_files/relaxation%20book-2011.pdf

Deep Breathing is the fastest way to clear adrenaline and activate the body's calming system (parasympathetic system).

I love MindUP! It is a way to focus your mind, calm down and reflect on a situation when you need to make a choice.
- Tyler G., Seventh Grade Student

Tip to help with an anxiety attack

- Look around you.
- Find 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste.

This is called grounding. It can help when you feel like you have lost all control of your surroundings.

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

7. Avoid Avoiding Everything that Causes Anxiety

Do worriers want to avoid social events, dogs, school, planes or basically any situation that causes anxiety? Do you help them do so? This is natural. The flight part of the flight-fight-freeze response urges people to escape the threatening situation. Unfortunately, in the long run, avoidance makes anxiety worse.

So what's the alternative? People who are able to manage their worry break it down into manageable chunks. Gradual Desensitization uses gradual exposure or chunking concept to reach a goal.

Let's say a person is afraid of sitting on the swings in the park. Instead of avoiding this activity, create mini-goals to get closer to the bigger goal (e.g., go to the edge of the park, then walk into the park, go to the swings, and, finally, get on a swing). You can use each step until the exposure becomes too easy; that's when you know it's time to move to the next step.

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

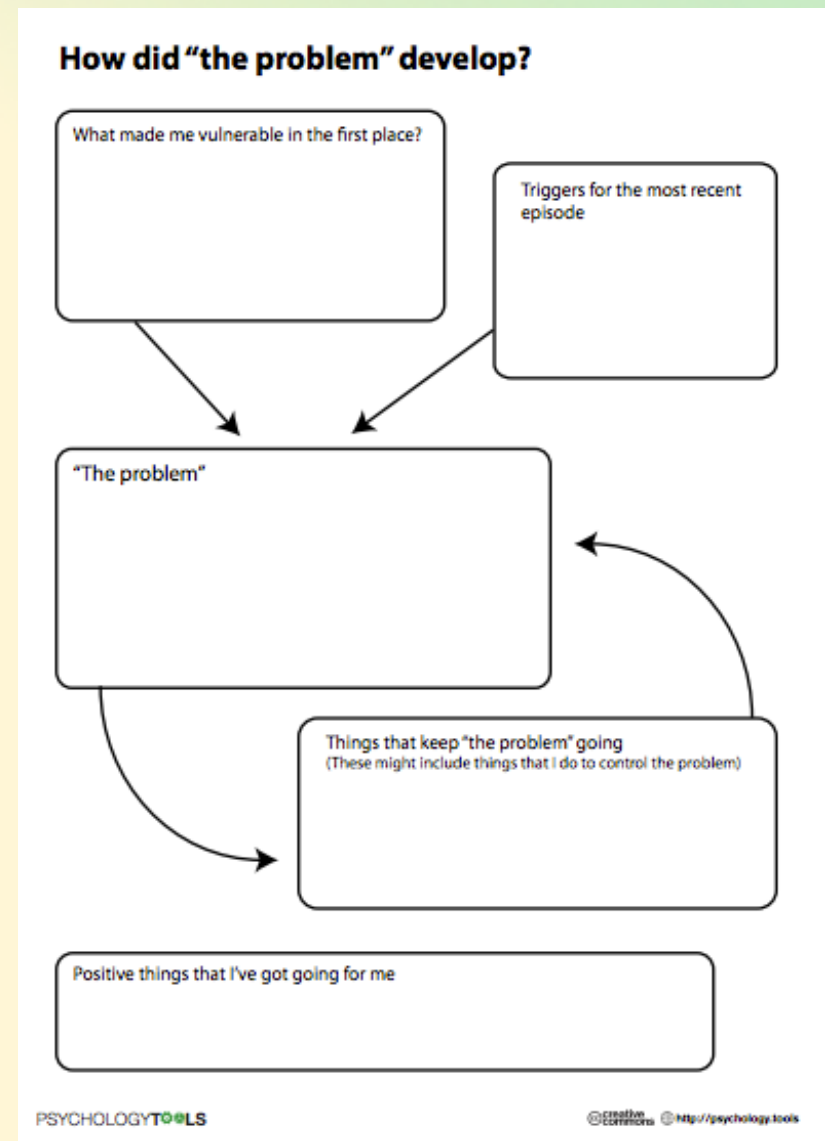
8. Help Them Work Through a Checklist

What do trained pilots do when they face an emergency? They don't wing it; they refer to their emergency checklists. Even with years of training, every pilot works through a checklist because, when in danger, sometimes it's hard to think clearly.

When kids face anxiety they feel the same way. Why not create a checklist so they have a step-by-step method to calm down? What do you want them to do when they first feel anxiety coming on? If breathing helps them, then the first step is to pause and breathe. Next, they can evaluate the situation. In the end, you can create a hard copy checklist for your child to refer to when they feel anxious.

- ✓breathe
- ✓ground your senses
- ✓move
- ✓drink
- ✓connect
- ✓communicate
- ✓brainstorm
- ✓make a list
- ✓try cognitive re-framing
- ✓follow a schedule

Mental Rehearsal
Training Optimism
Positive Affirmations
Positive Self Talk
Cognitive ReFraming
Cognitive ReStructuring



<http://faculty.education.ufl.edu/Myrick/CMethods/Reframe.html>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3222579/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201301/cognitive-restructuring>

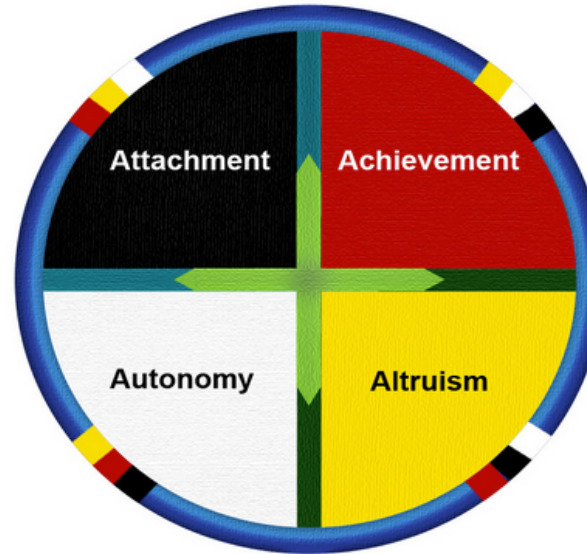
<http://psychology.tools/cognitive-restructuring.html>

Positive Steps in Dealing with Anxiety in Children

9. Practice Self-Compassion

Watching a person suffer from anxiety can be painful, frustrating, and confusing. Research shows that anxiety is often the result of multiple factors (i.e., genes, brain physiology, temperament, environmental factors, past traumatic events, etc.). Please keep in mind, you did not cause the anxiety issue, but you can help to overcome it.

Toward the goal of a healthier life for the whole community, practice self-compassion. Remember, you're not alone, and you're not to blame. It's time to let go of debilitating self-criticism and forgive yourself. Love yourself. You are the worrier's champion.



<https://www.starr.org/training/youth/> great books, resources, speakers

<http://www.behavioradvisor.com/CircleOfCourage.html> also scroll down for good videos

<http://www.anxietybc.com/anxiety-PDF-documents> great worksheets and curriculum resources

Covering Autism, Sensory Processing Differences, Self Regulation Skills, Brain Differences, Stress Management Skills. Self Empowerment comes from not giving up, learning from life, finding like minds, and conscious living.

www.marclandry.ca

Visit my website for the following:

"Workshop Materials"

Recommended Reading and Links

Relaxation Book & Social Stories

"What Works" "Red Zone" and "Safe Place" forms

Teaching Self Regulation Handout

The Scarfe Papers ("Play")

Advocacy Support

Resources

Information about my private practice ("About Me")

Self Regulation gauges

Fine Motor Planner

My Newsletters