

13 Practical Strategies for Helping Students Challenged by Anxiety

Mike Paget

mcpaget@gmail.com

ReThinking Behavior

Free online magazine for anyone interested in student emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges

- **Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders**
- Go to MSLBD.org
- Click on “What we do”
- Scroll down to ***ReThinking Behavior***
- Subscribe if you’re interested
- Interested in writing an article? Email me for info.



I think this student has anxiety



What does it look or sound like?

- Too quiet, head down
- Resistant to participation
- Asks too many questions
- Very easily frustrated
- “I don’t feel well”
- “I have a stomachache”
- “Don’t call on me”
- “Don’t make me, I don’t want to!”

How does it impact the student?

- Can’t pay attention, wants to be left alone
- Doesn’t talk or interact with classmates
- Doesn’t turn in homework or assignments
- Feels the need to be perfect
- Avoids being actively engaged
- Avoids school

Is it stress? Or is it anxiety?

- **Stress:** a response to challenges & threats, often including mental & physical symptoms, such as irritability, anger, fatigue, muscle pain, digestive troubles, & difficulty sleeping.
- **Anxiety:** persistent, excessive worries that don't go away even in the absence of a stressor.





Anxiety Disorders

The #1 mental health disorder:

7.1% of children aged 3-17 (CDC)

33% ages 13 – 18 (NIH)

females 2X males

- **NORMAL:** A survival instinct that helps mobilize in response to danger or threat.
- **ANXIETY DISORDERS:** a health condition that involves hyperarousal of the central nervous system & creates intense feelings of fear, worry, apprehension.
 - *Always present, not in response to a real danger or threat.*
- **SCHOOL IMPACT:** difficulty engaging academically & socially due to mental & physical distress from fear & worry
- **DSM 5 lists 7 subtypes**
- **Comorbidity:** 60% with anxiety have symptoms of depression. 25% with ADHD have an anxiety disorder.

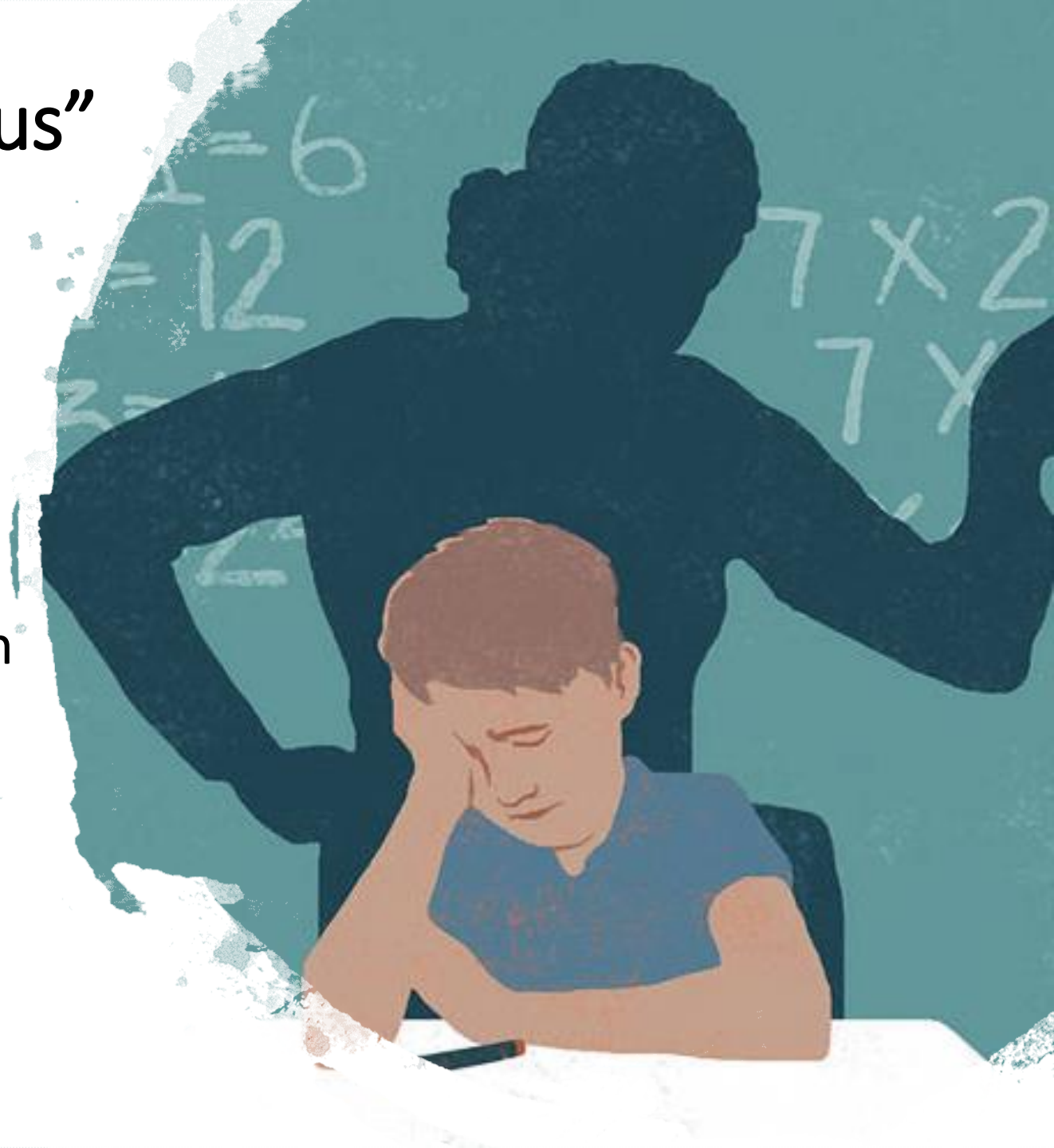
Where do anxiety conditions come from?



- There is survival value in **CAUTION, APPREHENSION, GUARDEDNESS, RELUCTANCE, HESITATION...**
- Some are **naturally** more cautious, apprehensive, guarded, ...
- Genetic causality: approximately 26% (*Insider Health, 4/21/2020*)
- **Created or Amplified by** scary events, trauma

Anxiety can be “contagious”

- Parents or teachers can "teach" a child to be anxious.
 - Constant supervision, demanding to know what the child is doing
 - Not allowing the child to make decisions
 - Constantly pointing out possible risks
- An adult working hard to remove anxiety triggers may appear to help in the short term.
- But it reinforces the student's sense that there is something to be anxious about.
- It may increase the anxious behaviors “asking” for trigger removal.



Separation anxiety



- Being very afraid when away from parents or other caregivers
- Intense worry that something bad will happen to your parents when you're not there.
- *The most common anxiety condition in students under age 12*

In the classroom

- Crying, clinging, tantrums
- Distraction from instruction
- Somatic complaints
- Frequent requests to visit the nurse or office
- Frequent requests to go to or call home

Selective mutism



What is it?

- Reluctance or refusal to speak in selected settings.
- No physical difficulties with language or talking.
- May use friends to speak for him or her
- May whisper or speak abnormally low

In the classroom

- Doesn't participate fully in instructional activities
- Minimally responsive to adults
- Doesn't interact comfortably with peers



“OK, Mrs. Dunn. We’ll slide you in there, scan your brain, and see if we can find out why you’ve been having these spells of claustrophobia.”

SPECIFIC PHOBIAS

A persistent, excessive, & unreasonable fear about a specific thing or situation:

- **Animals:** insects, snakes, dogs;
- **Natural environments:** storms, darkness, heights;
- **Situational:** enclosed spaces, elevators, flying;
- **Blood-injection-injuries:** seeing blood, receiving injections

In the classroom:

- Difficulty sitting near an area that feels confining
- Difficulty enjoying events, e.g., a field trip to a cave, or a zoo
- Extreme distraction during weather events
- Intense worry when a classmate has a small injury

Panic Disorder

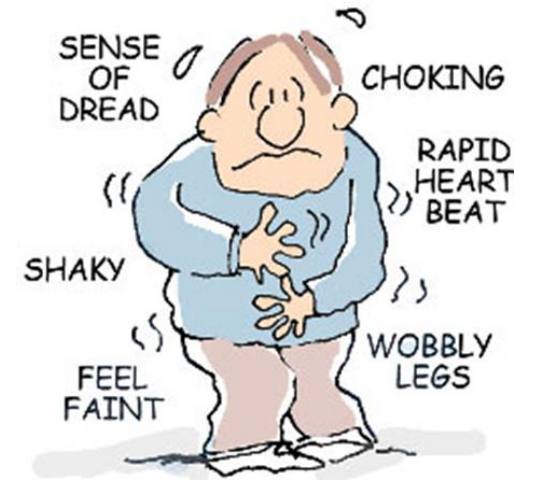
unexpected strong feelings of high anxiety & discomfort, usually lasting 15 – 30 minutes, sometimes brought on by other types of anxiety

Common characteristics

- Heart pounding, shortness of breath; dizzy, shaky, sweaty; numbness or tingling
- Fear of losing control
- Feelings of choking or dying
- Nausea, chills, or sweating
- Worry about when it will happen again

Important details

- In the classroom:
 - Urgent sense of needing to leave
 - Excessively anxious in the hall or other crowded places
 - School refusal
- Needs early treatment, or the risk of secondary issues increases: agoraphobia, becoming homebound
- Not common in younger children - .4%; higher in adolescents – 2-3%



Agoraphobia

What is it?

- The “anxiety of anxiety”
- Knowing you’re not in control of your anxiety, and doing what you can to avoid any triggers
- A persistent fear of being trapped in situations or places without a way to escape easily and without help
- Home becomes the only ‘safe’ place away from the panic & resulting embarrassment & humiliation of having a panic attack in public

How does it look in school?

- Difficulty riding a school bus
- Anxious in open spaces; anxious in enclosed spaces
- Anxious standing in line or being in a crowded hallway
- Claustrophobia + panic attack



Social Anxiety Disorder

12% - the most common anxiety condition



- Constantly feeling that other kids are staring, gawking, snickering...
- Being very afraid of places where there are people
- An intense fear of negative responses from others
- Social reluctance, withdrawal, avoidance, poor eye contact
- Fears of saying the wrong thing or being laughed at by others
- Difficulty answering questions, responding
- Much more intense than extreme shyness

Shyness vs Social Anxiety Disorder

Intensity of fear



shyness

Level of avoidance

Social Anxiety Disorder

Degree of impairment

Generalized Anxiety

A broad and constant worry about

everything



- **Intense & out-of-proportion worrying** about homework, tests, making mistakes, recess, lunchtime, birthday parties, playtime with friends, riding the bus, war, weather, loved ones, safety, illness...
- Attempting to calm anxiety by being **perfect**
- **Worrying about the future** or bad things happening
- **Trouble relaxing**, frequent irritability; difficulty sleeping

#1 A Calm & Predictable Classroom

How might this help students with anxiety?



8 Elements of Successful Classroom Management

Classroom Level

Positive Behavior Supports

Developed by Susan Barrett/Maryland PBIS Project/References: Wong & Wong; Coleman & Lazar
Revised by Mike Paget

TEACHING BEHAVIOR is the basis for the *8 Elements of Successful Classroom Management*

- **Teaching**
 - **Re-teaching**
 - **Cuing**
 - **Pre-correcting**
- Thinking of a student as ***behaving badly*** causes you to think of punishment.
 - Thinking of a student as ***not knowing how to behave appropriately*** encourages you to **calmly and directly** **teach** behavior.

Element #1

Teach classroom rules and expectations

Teach	Teach directly and actively
-------	-----------------------------

Practice	Practice what you teach
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Practice	Practice the rules where they apply
----------	-------------------------------------

Do not assume	Do not assume that hearing it once is enough!
------------------	--

Give	Give lots of positive feedback
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Element #2

Teach transition behavior

*up to 45% of
the day is in
transition*

- **Teach** “signals” that all students will understand:
 - To get attention/say “stop”/say “start”
- **Teach** the routine: what do you do when?
- Pre-correction for students who are challenged with stopping/starting/changing
- Monitor continuously – scan, move about
- Positively reinforce what is done correctly
- Practice transition behaviors in the natural contexts (class, playground, cafeteria, etc.)

Element #3

Teach classroom routines directly

Practice where you use the behavior, pre-correct/prompt those who need it, positively reinforce correct behaviors, model

- Turning in homework the right way
- Lining up
- How to get teacher attention
- When to sharpen pencils, use the bathroom, put trash away
- What to do when finished early
- When is it ok to talk
- How do you wait for the bus
- Taking things home to sign and return



Element #4

Teach an attention-getting cue/rule for the entire school

- Teach it on the first day of school
- EVERY teacher uses it!
- Pick a cue that can be used in all settings:
 - Example: hand up/fingers straight/slowly close the fingers into a fist
- You may need both visual & auditory combinations
- Remind all staff to use the same agreed upon cue consistently
- Positively reinforce when students respond

Element #5

Pre-correct for CHRONIC problem behaviors

Cue/remind

Pre-correct: Cue/remind/redirect before the undesired behavior occurs

Give

Give lots of “mini lessons” to remind/re-teach the desired behavior

Watch

Watch for demonstration and reward

Experience

All students must experience success!

Element #6

More Positive
to Negative
teacher to
student
interactions

- Smiles
- Positive adult-student interactions: “What did you do last night?”
- Very difficult: At least a 5:1 ratio of positive remarks/interactions to every negative remark/interaction
- The “**Matching Law**” says that reinforcement determines behavior.
 - If negative behavior gets a response every 3 times, vs. positive behavior which gets a response every 15 times, then negative behavior will probably happen 5 times more often than positive (Snyder, J. & Stoolmiller, M. (2002). Reinforcement and coercive mechanisms in the development of antisocial behavior. The family. In J. Reid, G. Patterson, & J. Snyder (Eds.), *Antisocial behavior in children and adolescents: A developmental analysis and model for intervention* (pp. 65–100). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.)



Element #7

Actively
Supervise at all
times!

- **Proxemic support: move around the room continuously**
- **Use lots of eye contact**
- **Touch shoulders as you pass by**
- **Use lots of the opportunities to make positive comments/reinforce**

Element #8

Manage minor (low intensity or frequency) behaviors positively & quickly

- **Do not hammer** a student for minor behavior violations in hopes that it will prevent more intense behaviors (research shows otherwise!)
- **PRIVATELY** follow through on rules violations
- **TEACH** the behavior:
- Demonstrate the behavior
- Continue the lesson but move in closer (caution: moving in too close when a student is anxious may escalate things)
- Look at the student and tell her/him “remember”
- Point out the mistake
- Have the student state and demonstrate the correct response
- Disengage quickly, early, and decisively



Elements 1-8 Implementation: **LOW**

HIGH

Teach classroom rules & expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Teach transition behaviors	1	2	3	4	5
Teach classroom routines directly	1	2	3	4	5
Establish an attention getting cue for the school	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-correct chronic problem behaviors	1	2	3	4	5
More positive to negative teacher to student interactions	1	2	3	4	5
Actively supervise at all times	1	2	3	4	5
Manage minor behaviors positively and quickly	1	2	3	4	5



2 RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTION

“Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her.”

Urie Bronfenbrenner



Relationship building basics

- **Call your students by name**
- **Pay attention. Non-verbally and verbally.**
- **Focus when they talk about their interests, hobbies, & aspirations**
- **Tune in to the student, remove distractions (including your cell phone)**
- **Always ensure dignity; discipline privately, calmly, quietly**
- **Get to class early & stay late to chat with your students**

The “2 X 10” approach to building connections

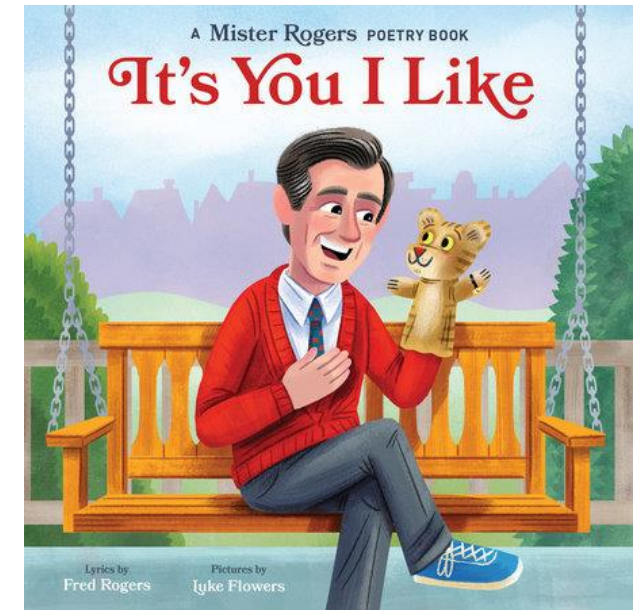
Ginsberg, M. & Wlodkowski, R. (2004) Creating Highly Motivating Classrooms

- Have a **2-minute conversation** with the student about anything EXCEPT SCHOOL – sports, TV, jokes, video games – whatever they might talk about
- Do this **10 days in a row**
- ***Bonus! Call the student’s family and tell them what a pleasure it is to work with their child!***



Communicate: “I see you. You matter.”

- **One-on-one** compassionate conversations can be profound.
- **Acknowledge** the student’s invisible efforts. *Feeling seen & understood can be transformative.*
- **Ask:**
 - what they **enjoy**
 - what they’re **good at**
 - what helps them **feel relaxed** and **focused**
- **“...the quiet magic of radical empathy...”**



Katie Walsh from Tribune News Service, reviewing “It’s a Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood”

Support the student in **experimenting** with insights to lower anxiety and worry, and to improve focus, attention, confidence, mood

1. Preferential seating
2. Noise-cancelling headphones; a quiet corner
3. Posted daily schedule, visual schedules, class agenda, planners
4. Extended time on assessments
5. Break large assignments into smaller chunks
6. Offer instructions in multiple formats: oral, written, digital
7. Small, achievable goals for long-term projects
8. Chew gum
9. Fidgets
10. Tutoring
11. Peer help
12. Opportunities to help someone
13. Opportunities for leading

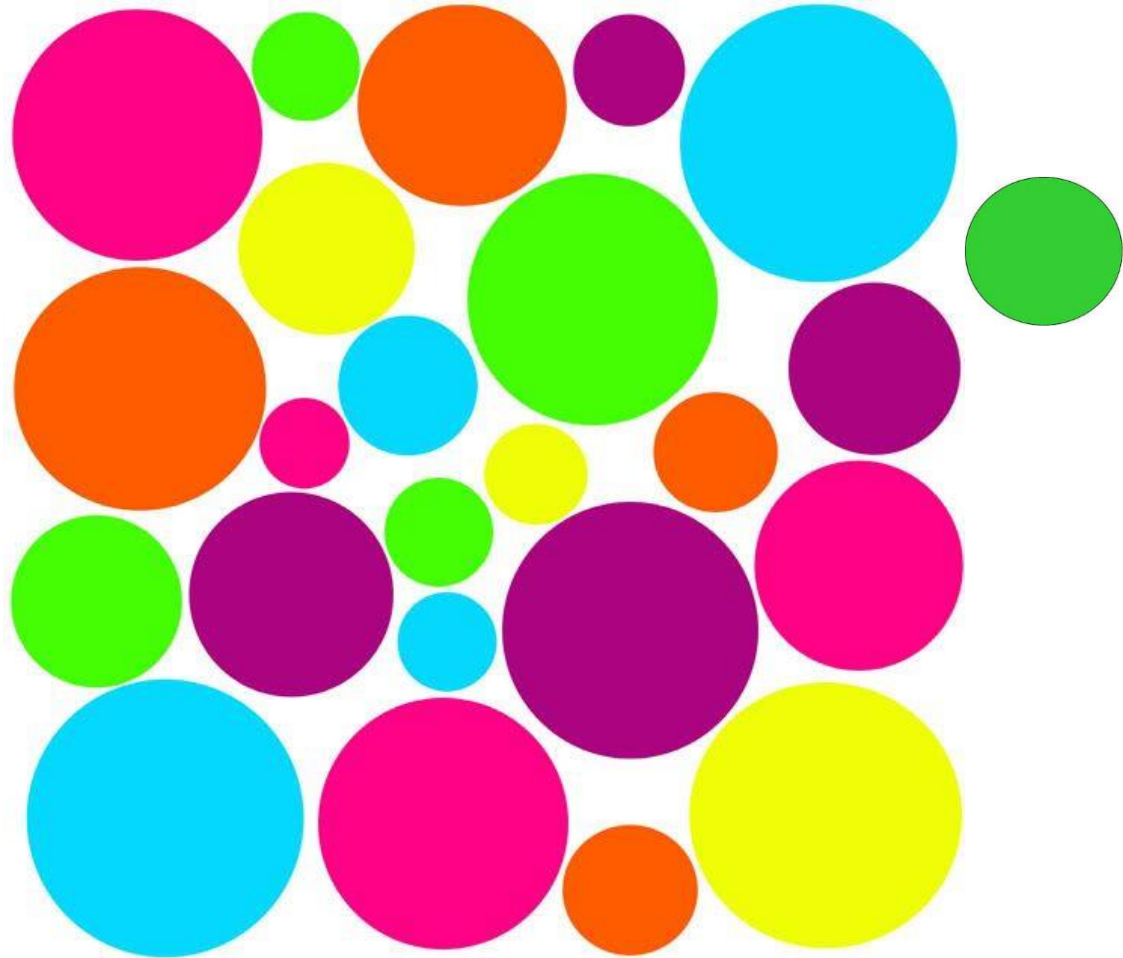


Practice smiling

- Every morning spend a few minutes looking at yourself in a mirror.
- Practice saying: “Good morning students, I’m so glad to see you!” Then smile.
- Do this in your class at your school.
- Do this ten days in a row and see how things change.



School climate and relationships where all students belong



Periodically look over your rosters and identify students that aren't liked by anyone. Put together an intentional plan to get someone to like the student.

A daily guaranteed connection

Check in

- “Good morning, great to see you! What did you do last night?”
- “Let’s make sure you’re ready for today...anything I can do to help?”
- “Have a great day, see you this afternoon.”

Check out

- “How was your day?”
- “Do you have stuff you need to take home?”
- “Have a good evening, see you tomorrow!”



Mentoring relationships with students

- **CHECK & CONNECT**
- *“Check in/Check out +”*
- Expectation of “sticking with you” for at least a couple of years
- Regular “checks” using school data
- Timely & individualized problem-solving as needed
- Trusting connection with families



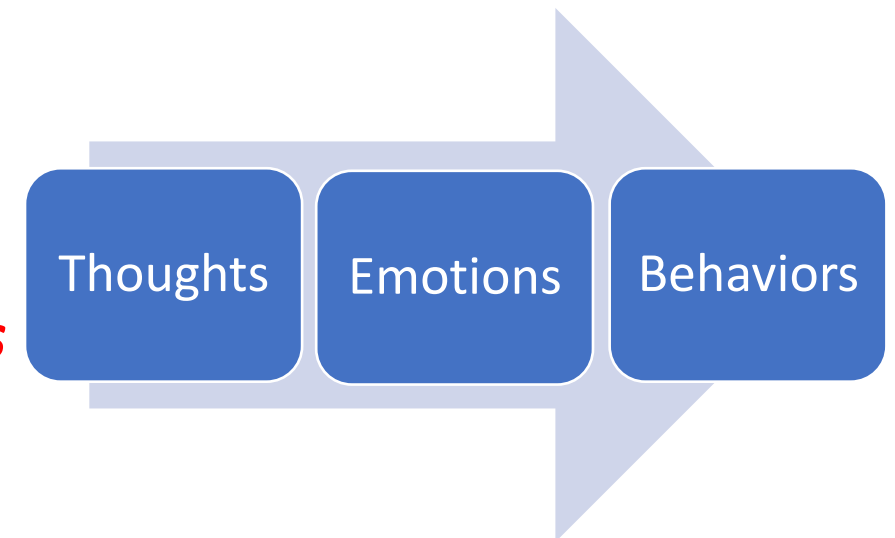


Students who are very shy, reluctant to participate, or afraid of being embarrassed

- Watch for **comfortable peer relationships**, pair the students. Add a 3rd compatible student occasionally.
- Encourage the student to **be an observer**: watch others to “see” how to participate.

#3 The inner voice of students dealing with anxiety often is negative and irrational: **Cognitive Distortions**

- “I’m not going to answer; it’ll sound stupid”
- “I wonder if anything bad is happening at home?”
- “Why did I say that??? That was so dumb!”
- “Nobody likes me, I don’t have any friends”
- “Everyone always laughs at me!”
- “I know you were talking about me!”
- “I’ll never get this right!”
- ***These negative & irrational habitual errors in thinking can dominate, discourage, & depress!***



3 *Coaching students to think, behave, & react more positively & rationally*

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

30-minute sessions for 12 to 20 weeks

“Stop! Change that thought!”



#3 From Negative to Positive!

- NEGATIVE:
 - “There’s no way I can do this...it’s too hard!”
- POSITIVE & CONSTRUCTIVE:
 - “I know it’ll be tough, but I’ve studied, and I’ll make a go at it!”
- NEGATIVE:
 - “Listen to that thunder, look at the lightning! It’s so close, we’re going to die!”
- POSITIVE & CONSTRUCTIVE:
 - “ Let’s move to a safe spot in the house.”



#3

Classroom friendly CBT

Rational Emotive Behavior
Therapy

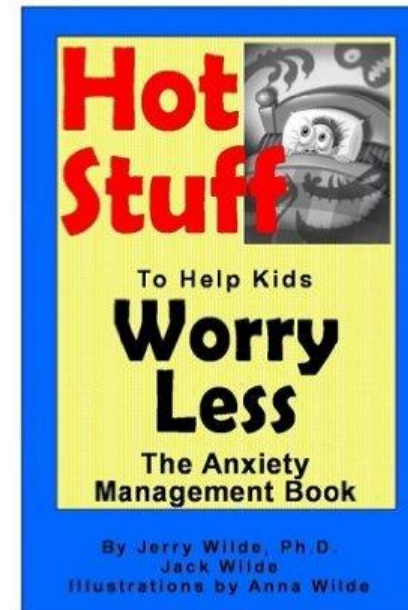
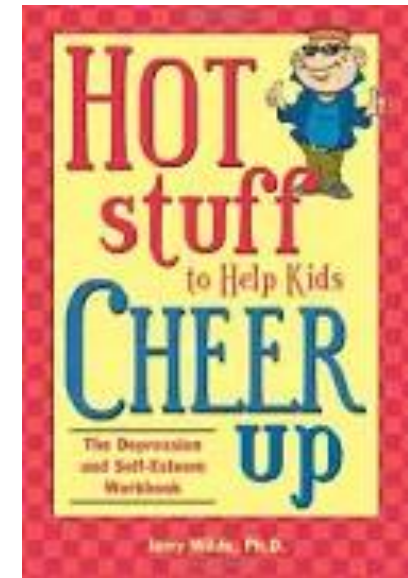
Dr. Jerry Wilde's "Hot Stuff
to Help Kids"

Worry Less: The Anxiety Management Book

Chill Out: The Anger Management Book

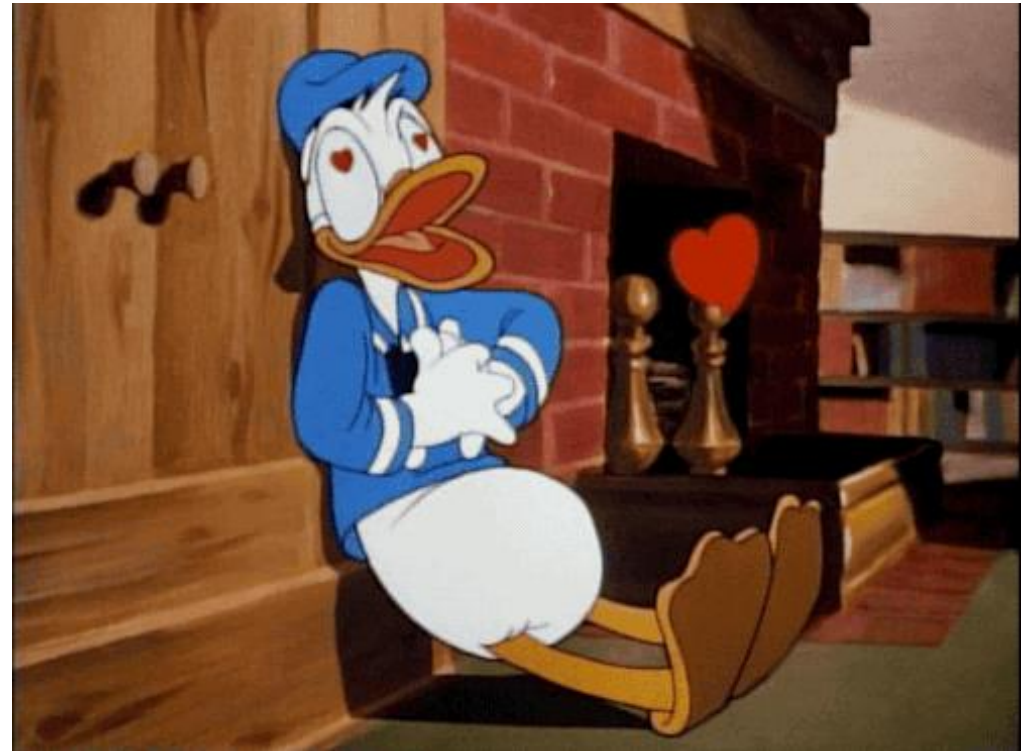
Chill Out: The Anger and Stress Management
Book

Cheer Up: The Depression and Self-Esteem
Workbook "



Can you live with anxiety?

- Always thinking, “Am I anxious?” intensifies anxiety.
- Helping the student **TOLERATE** anxiety is the goal.
- Experiencing “tolerating” vs “eliminating” anxiety will reduce it over time.





#3 ACT: **A**cceptance & **C**ommitment **T**herapy

another version of counseling to change your thoughts

- Putting the anxieties in a box and moving forward in spite of them
- Shift your thinking from “I can’t do anything until I fix my anxiety” to “I can take action on things while focusing less on feeling anxious”

#3 “SPACE”

Supporting **P**arents for **A**nxious **C**hildhood **E**motions

Developed by Dr. Eli Lebowitz, Yale Child Study Center

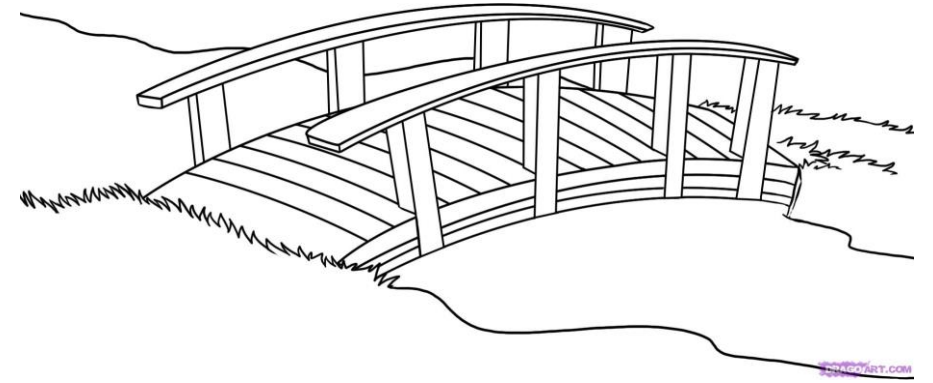
Shouldn't we help our children avoid failure and pain?

When parents protect their children from things that make them anxious, it may unintentionally reinforce the child's anxiety.

Expressing confidence in the child to handle it helps the child build resilience

A new treatment approach that deals only with the parents, helping them gradually reduce rescuing, while increasing statements of confidence.

- A variety of “lanes” crossing the bridge
- Written notes
- Gestures
- Non-verbals
- Low verbals through a friend
- Low verbals to others
- Moderate verbals
- *Accept & nurture all lanes crossing the bridge!*



4 The Communication Bridge

For students who are selectively mute, or very guarded about talking

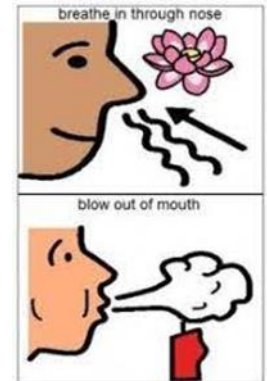
5 Learn & Use relaxation skills

When your emotions are intense you often go into **Fight, Flight, Freeze, Appear**

- Stress: fight/flight
- Adrenaline & cortisol flow
- Logic & focus: diminished
- Reacting, not responding
- Chronic stress: high blood pressure, increased heart rate, muscle tension

Relaxation response: **Health protecting; Improved ability to plan & respond; More focused thinking**

- Breathing: 6/6/3



- Bio feedback calming card



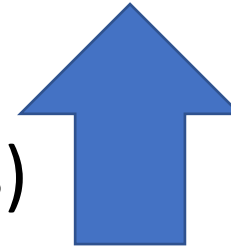
- Engage your logic: write, draw, or doodle



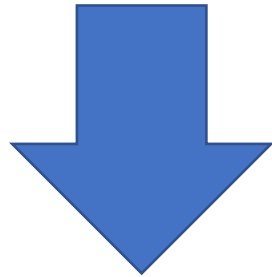
#5 Relaxation: Mood support dogs

Positive effects on brain chemistry

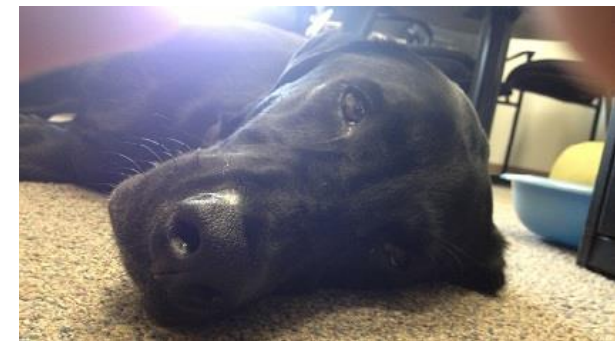
- **oxytocin** (bonding) & **dopamine** (happiness)



- **Cortisol** (stress hormones)



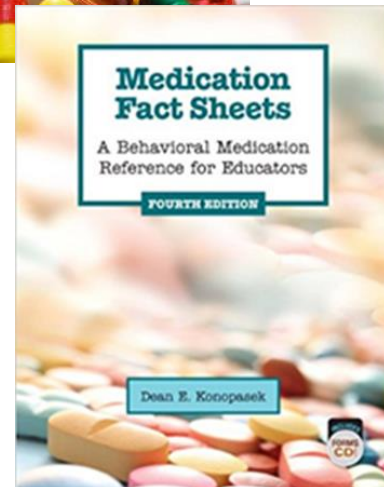
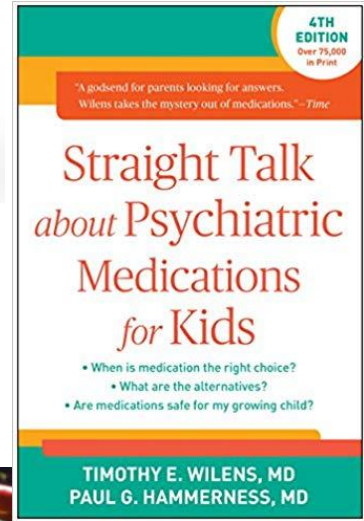
- **Mood support dogs** assist with Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, PTSD, Autism, Schizophrenia & more
- ***Charlotte's Litter*** – educators' guide
- www.charlotteslitter.org



#5 Relaxation

Medications to calm anxiety

- Antidepressants (serotonin reuptake inhibitors) have the strongest efficacy
- CAUTION: Anxiety is sometimes mistaken for ADHD. If stimulants are given, anxiety may get worse; stimulants can make going to sleep difficult, often already a challenge with anxiety.
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy + medications = best outcomes
 - Child Mind Institute/2021/John T. Walkup, MD
- Compliance and acceptance are issues
- Watch for side effects: *cognitive dulling*
- Increase your knowledge to better talk with parents & students
 - “Straight Talk about Psychiatric Medications for Kids”; Wilens, 2016 (4th edition)
- Family + **student** + **doctor** + school = team
- *A positive attitude to taking the medication is essential*



#6 Some students *need movement* to be calmer & think

Foot bands, stress balls, thinking putty

Stim & Fidget Jewelry

5 companies:



Stimtastic

Calming Kits

Spacerobot Studio

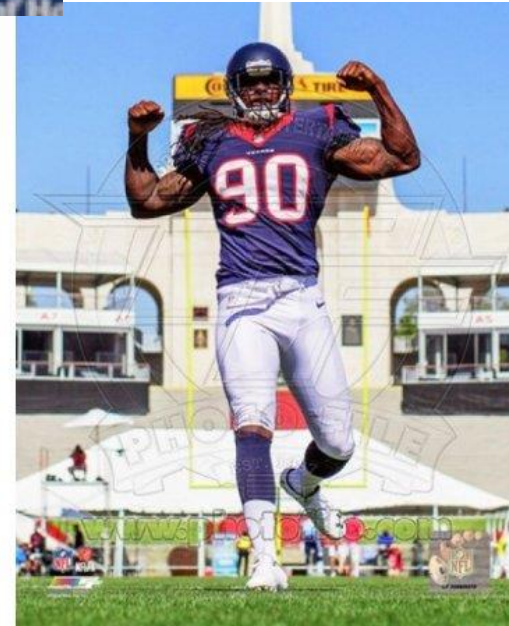
Renascent Studios

LoveDawne



6 The 2-minute power pose drill

Dr. Amy Cuddy



~~#~~7 *Teach Social Skills*

social, behavioral, friendship, & problem-solving skills

5 steps:

- Name it
- Show it
- Practice it
- Use it in real life
- Give feedback



#7 Social Skills

Appropriate for Students with Anxiety

- Talking with others
- Trying new tasks
- Asking for help
- Expressing feelings appropriately
- Making positive statements
- Optimism
- Using relaxation strategies

“Teaching Social Skills to Youth with Mental Health Disorders”

Targeted Social skills for 109 disorders

“Teaching Social Skills to Youth”

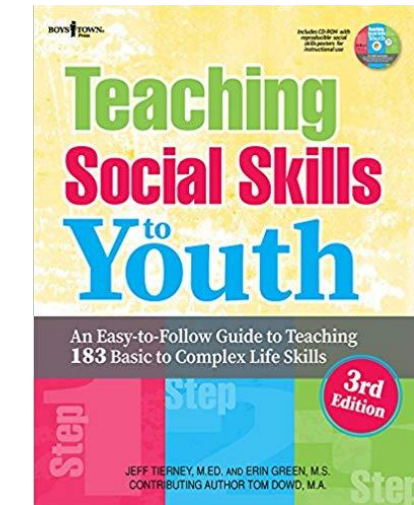
lesson plans for 183 social skills

(both books are from Boy’s Town Press)

JENNIFER RESEAR VOLZ, PH.D. TARA SUTTER, PSY.D. MICHAEL STERBA, M.H.D.

**TEACHING
Social Skills
to Youth with
Mental Health
DISORDERS**

Incorporating Social Skills into
Treatment Planning for **109** Disorders



#7 Social & Emotional Teaching

- **TEACH** social skills – Why do some students need help “filling in the gaps?”
- Desire to learn SEL increases when the skills are seen as useful to the student
 - clubs & activities
- Individual/small group/school/class wide SEL
- Collaborative for **A**cademic, **S**ocial, & **E**mootional **L**earning

www.casel.org

#7 Social & Emotional Modeling

How you manage stress is instructive



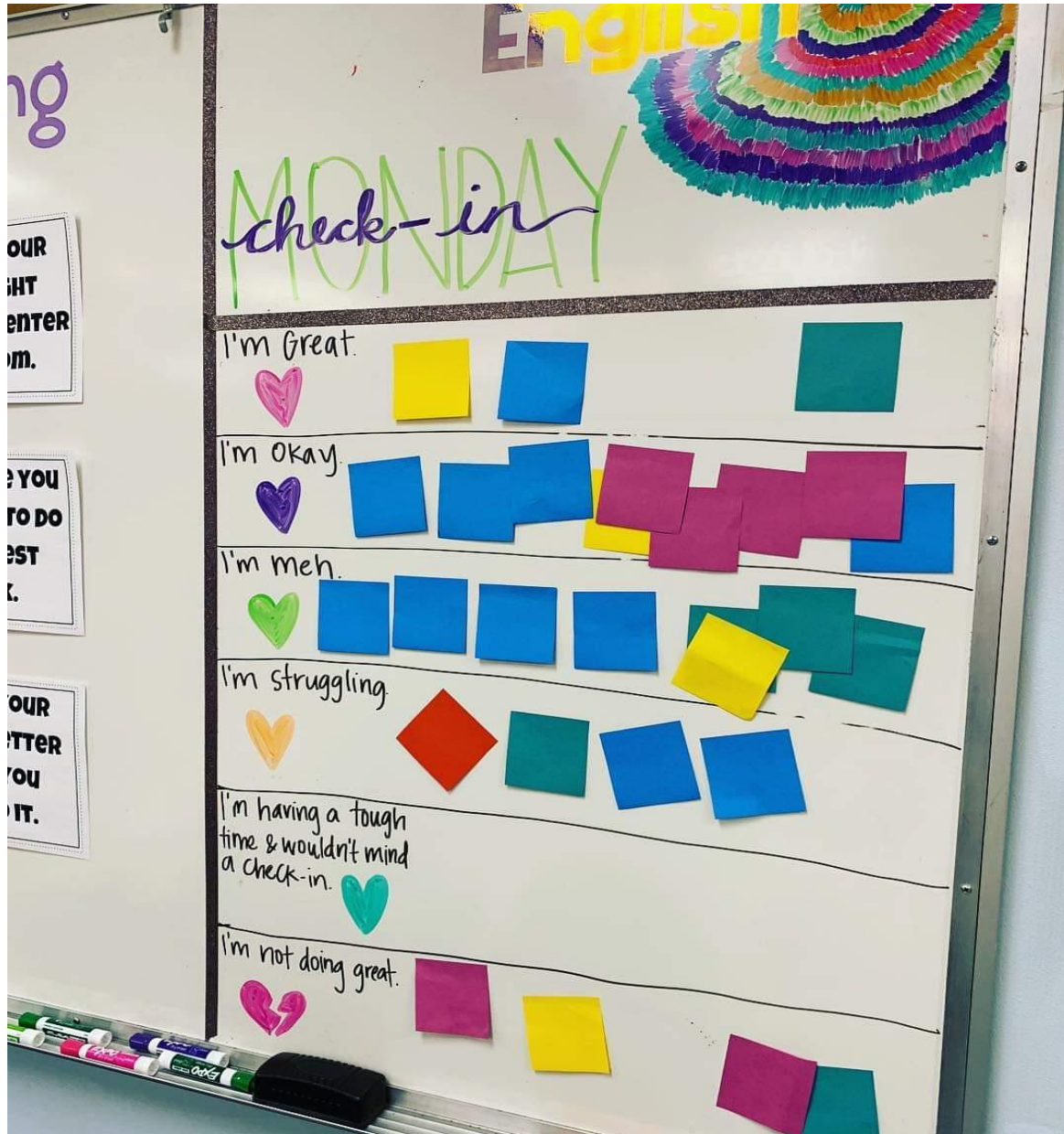
Lowering the Anxiety Temperature

- Integrated Experiences (CPI)
 - The actions, emotions, & attitudes of staff directly impact the actions, emotions, & attitudes of students, and vice-versa
- Proactive interactions
- Don't take things personally
- Structure & routine work for all
- Rely on your team
- Model self-calming
 - Time & space
 - Breathing

Debriefing

- A daily review of how things went
- Rely on each other – honesty, support, trust
- What went well and what contributed?
- What could have gone better? How might tomorrow be different?
- EVERY DAY

#7 SEL integrated into classroom routine



- Thanks to TX teacher Jessie Cayton for this idea!
- HOW AM I DOING? CHECK-IN
- Class wide & quick
- Students write their name on a sticky note and place it on the row that best describes how they're feeling right now
- "I'm great"; "I'm OK"; "I'm meh"; "I'm having a tough time & wouldn't mind a check-in"; "I'm not doing great"
- Students learn emotional awareness & expression
- Teacher gets a heads-up

#7 SEL through literature

*reduce stigma, raise understanding,
increase empathy*

The Children's Story Project

ADHD, anger, anxiety, trauma, Aspergers, bipolar, bullying, grief & loss, learning disabilities, obsessive compulsive disorder

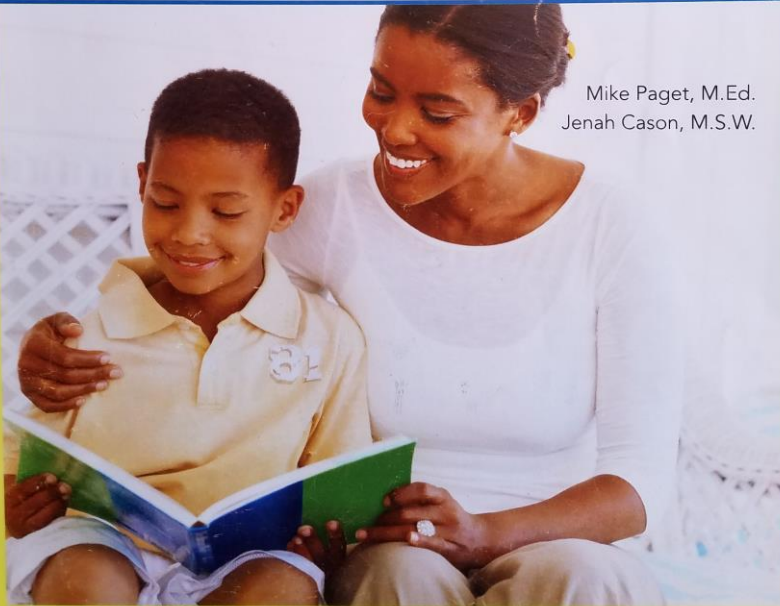
A free *bibliotherapy* guide to help students understand themselves and others through stories

mcpaget@gmail.com

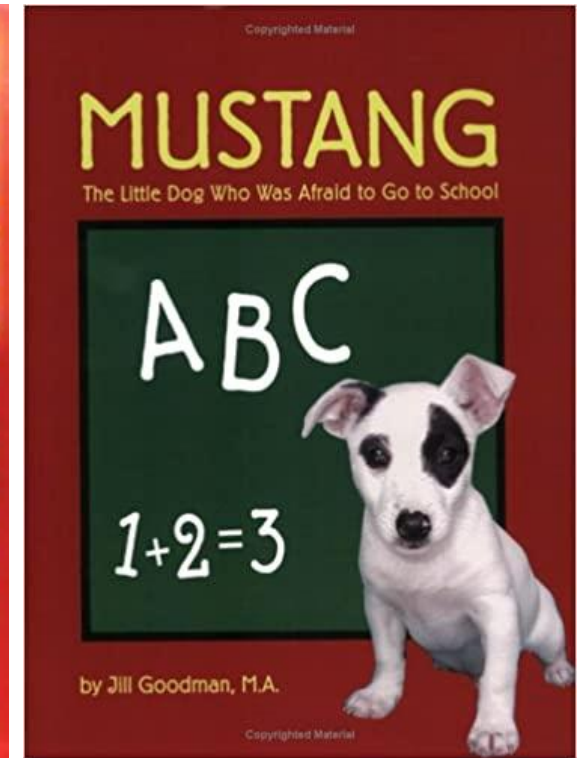
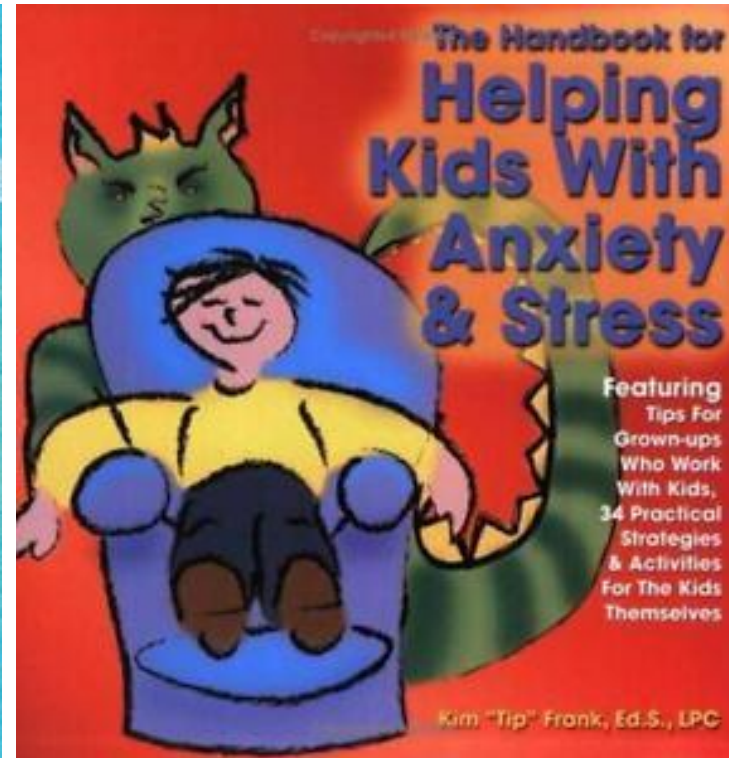
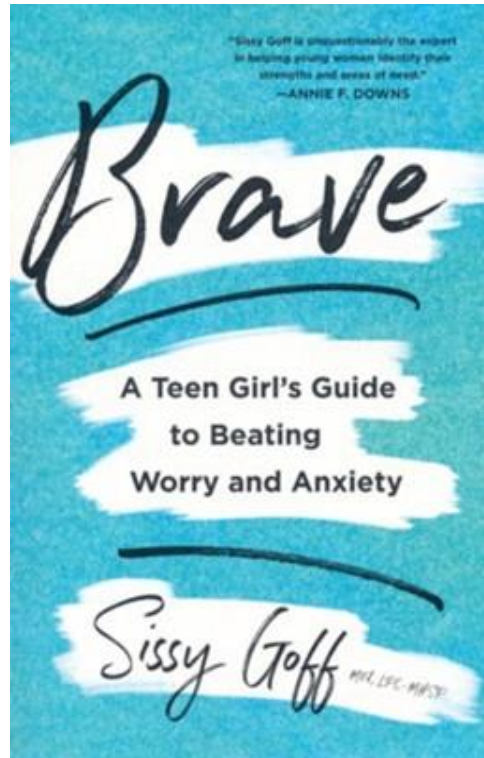
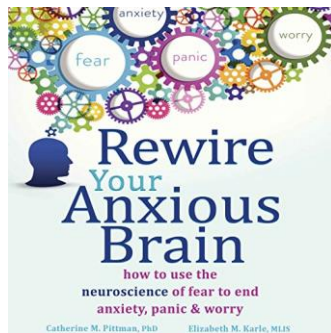
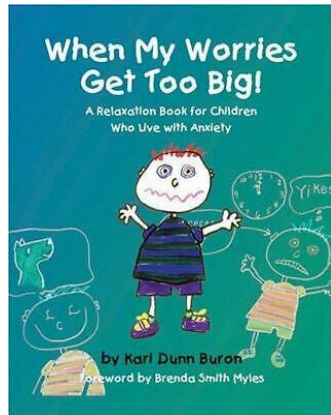
Federation of Families of South Carolina
Project Focused Agenda

The Children's Story Project 2011

Mike Paget, M.Ed.
Jenah Cason, M.S.W.



#7 SEL through literature: Examples of books about Anxiety



Reassurance & logic don't always help

When a student says:

“I don't feel well”...“I have a stomachache”...“Don't call on me”...“Don't make me, I don't want to!”

NOT HELPFUL:

- “It's going to be OK. Just relax.”
- “There's nothing to be scared of.”
- “Stop being such a worrier!”

8 Acknowledge feelings

Hear, acknowledge, Inform, model

- Validate: “I can see that you're scared.”
- Say, “Feelings are always real, but they're not always facts.”
- When the student is relaxed, explain the evolutionary basis for worry.
- Let students see you calmly deal with a worry.



9 Helping students who are “stuck”



- Proxemic support: move around the classroom constantly
- 1:1 hurdle encouragement; the “zig zag” walk
- Stop and encourage, redirect, specific praise

#9 Still Stuck: common classroom manifestations of anxiety

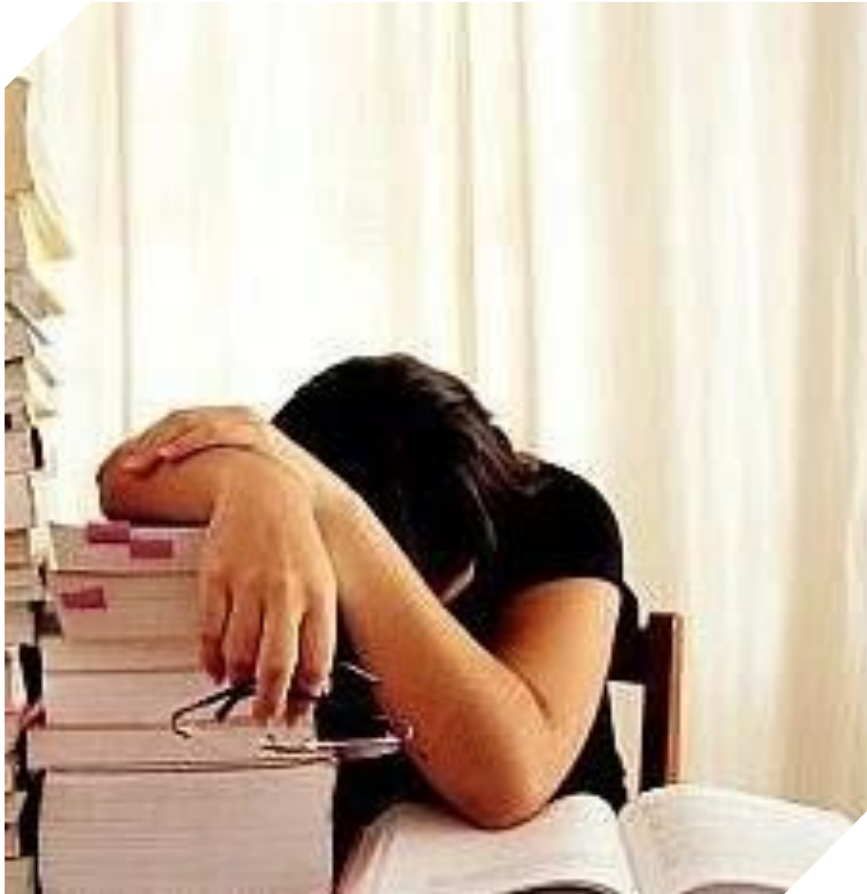


What you might see

- Frequent erasing, starting over
- Refusing to get started
- Worry about a test
- Resisting participating in discussions or interactions

How to respond

- Small grades, extra credit options
- Mastery Learning
- Incorporate interests/expertise
- Avoid “random calling on”



- **Model that perfection isn't the goal**
- **Don't use "perfect papers" as models**
- **Reduce worry over writing quality by using a laptop/computer keyboard**
- **Cue the student well before transitions; allow completion of an activity without undue pressure for the next**
- **Be careful not to reinforce "perfect" work**

10 Perfection challenges

#11 Exercise benefits anxiety, mood disorders, trauma, stress

- **Aerobic exercise changes neurochemistry**

- Endorphins regulate mood, pleasure, pain
- Dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin affect focus, attention & alertness

“Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain;” Dr. John Ratey, 2008

- **Aerobic exercise counters depression & lowers stress**, reducing adrenaline & cortisol

Harvard Medical School blog

- How much exercise for MH benefits?
- **30 minutes moderate intensity exercise such as walking for 4 days a week**
- **30-45 minutes five days a week of getting your heart rate up** gives *significant* benefits



#11 SLEEP 8–10 hours

- Consistent bedtime routine
- Turn off electronics at least 30 minutes before sleep
 - *Circadian rhythms: Electronics emit **blue light** that triggers the brain to stop making melatonin, the sleep-inducing hormone.*
- Last exercise 5 + hours before sleep
- Last meal/snack 3 + hours before sleep
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol



#11 Media Management

- Electronic screens shift the nervous system into high arousal, hyper focus, & fight-or-flight mode *Reset Your Child's Brain*, by Dr. Victoria Dunckley, MD
 - emotional dysregulation, mood swings, concentration problems
- Social Media Perfection worries: “FOMO”
- News & Notifications Overdosing
 - Check news/media less often
 - Take media/news breaks for a day or a week
 - Stop notifications; avoid “Breaking (you) News”
 - Avoid negative news stories several hours before bedtime



#11

2 hours a week in NATURE

June 13, 2019 *Scientific Reports* volume 9, Article number: 7730 (2019)

- GETTING TO NATURE:
 - neighborhood park, hiking in the woods, walking by a lake or river
- THE BENEFITS:
 - lower stress levels
 - decreased blood pressure
- Doctors are prescribing **10 – 30 minutes daily** in nature to improve health





#11 Nutrition

impacts mental wellness

Harvard Medical School: *"Nutritional Psychiatry: Your Brain on Food"*



Less of these

- Refined sugars
- Processed & refined foods
- Dairy products
- Processed grains



More of these

- Less processed/refined foods
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Unprocessed grains
- Tree nuts
- Fish & seafood
- Probiotics
- Fermented foods: kimchi, miso, sauerkraut, pickles, kombucha





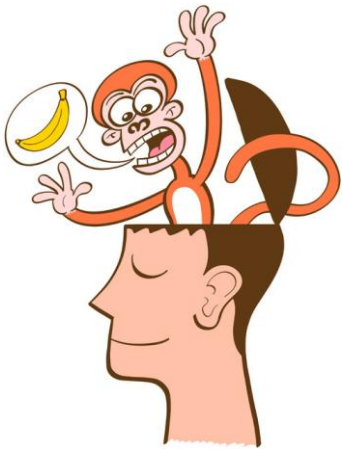
#11

Lifestyle Issues
are Family Driven

*How might you inform &
encourage students &
families on lifestyle
issues?*

PTO

Meeting



#12 Mindfulness

Paying full attention to the current moment, not dwelling on the past or future; training yourself to focus in a relaxed, easy way.

anxiety & depression



attention & emotional regulation



- *To teach mindfulness you must practice it.*
- *Practice breathing exercises until they feel useful & accessible.*
- *While walking think about things you are grateful for.*
- *“Shake off” the restlessness; maybe start with a foot, move up.*
- *Pick something external to pay attention to, e.g., identify the most distant sound you can hear.*





#12 Putting Your Mind in the Moment

using our senses to focus on the present

5 things
you can
see

3 things you
can hear



4 things you
can touch

2 things you
can smell

1 thing you can taste

Anxiety Escalators

Helplessness



Worthlessness

13 Helpless or Powerful?

- In our efforts to support, we may inadvertently give a student the message that they are powerless.
- Examples of how we might do that:
 - Working hard to prevent situations that might cause anxiety.
 - Trying to fix every problem.
 - Giving the message that the student needs us to handle things.
 - In an effort to help, give the subtle message that the student's efforts need extra support.



13 Powerful!

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF

- **Psychoeducation:** Learning about your temperament, your personality, your unique cognitive & emotional needs; understanding how anxiety works within yourself
- **Monitoring:** Recognizing your early warning signs: “feelings”
- **Relaxation training:** Calming skills to manage arousal
- **Cognitive retraining:** Replacing negative thought patterns with more positive and constructive thoughts
- **Assertiveness training:** Teaching skills designed to get needs met, including skills for handling teasing or bullying
- **Behavior training:** Problem solving/conflict solving, social, relationship, communication, and behavior skills



13 Powerful!

Finding their strengths

- Challenge the students to create an “A to Z” list of their strengths
- Include strengths of every student in the class – use different colors so the students’ strengths show up clearly
- Use stories, sports & news items, amazing things you learn about others as source material

Achiever	Action-Oriented	Adventurous	Analytical
Artistic	Athletic	Authentic	Caring
Charming	Clever	Compassionate	Communicative
Confident	Connectedness	Courageous	Creative
Curious	Determined	Disciplined	Educated
Empathetic	Emotional Intelligent	Energetic	Entertaining
Fast	Flexible	Focused	Helping
Ideation	Individualization	Inspiring	Intelligent
Leadership	Learning	Motivated	Optimistic
Open-Minded	Organized	Outgoing	Patient
Positivity	Precise	Responsible	Self-Controlled
Speaking	Spontaneous	Social / People Skills	Strategic Thinking
Team-Oriented	Thoughtful	Visionary	Warm
Willpower	Wisdom		

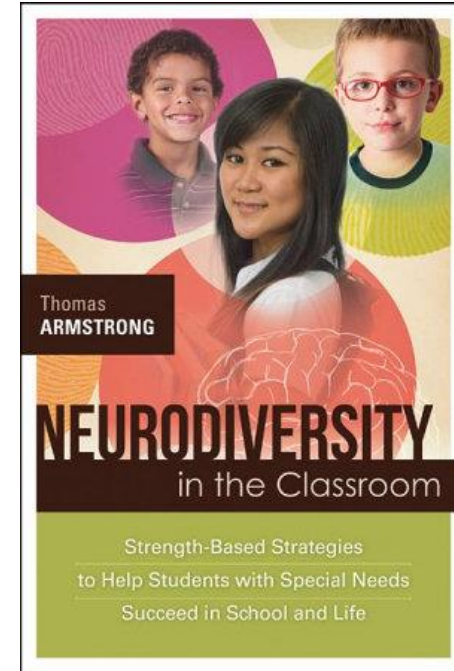
Peers see
strengths we
miss: *Power
Capes*

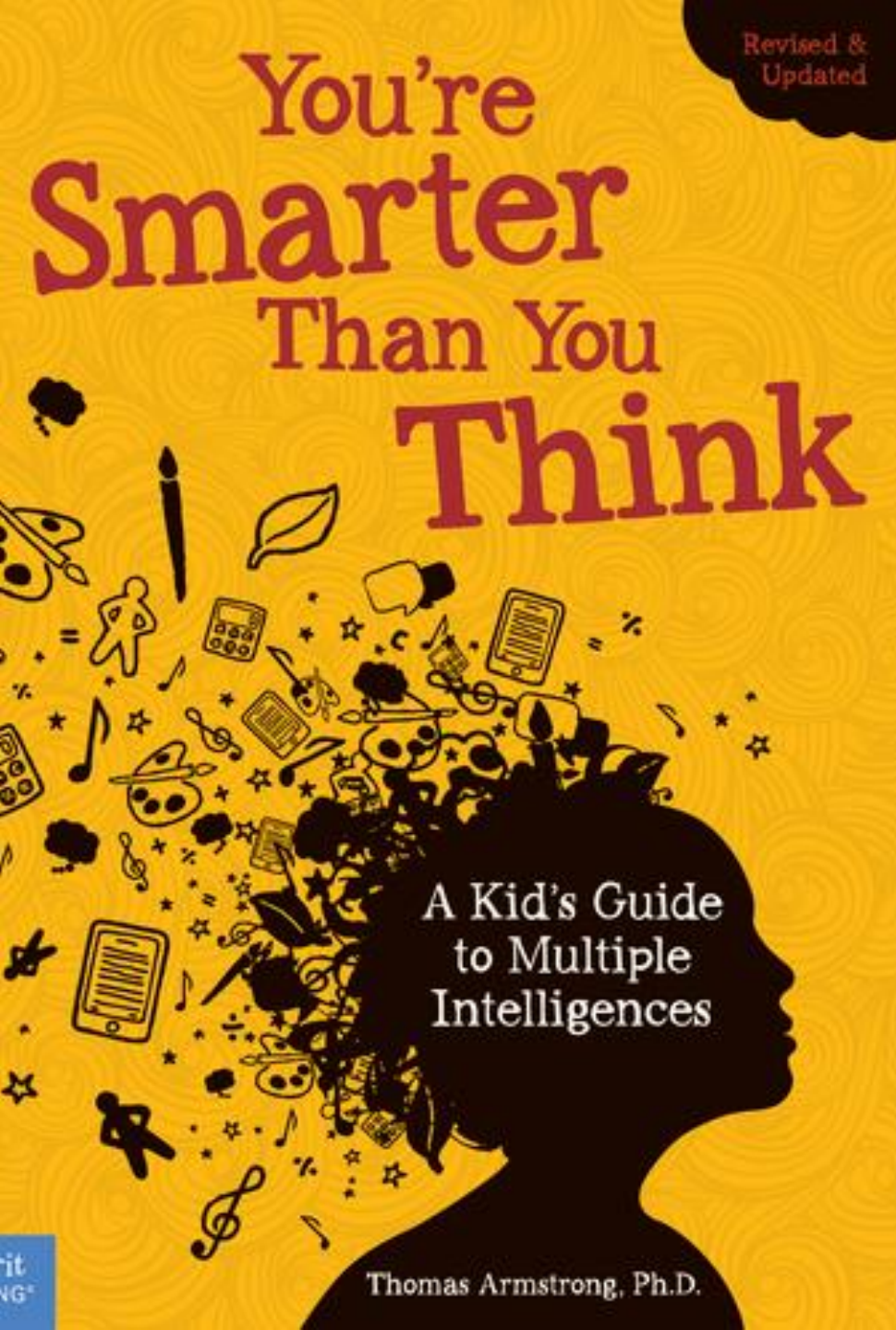


Strengths: Appreciate Neurodiversity

Dr. Thomas Armstrong

- Atypical neurological development is imbedded in the human condition, presenting possible assets for humanity
- Learning disabilities – artistic talents
- ADHD – energy, excitement, vitality
- Autism – “systemizing” skills – computers, machines, math, languages...
- Intellectual disabilities – sense of humor, warmth, joy
- Emotional disabilities – insights, humor, playfulness, vitality
- ***Checklist of 165 skills of individuals who are Neurodiverse***





You're Smarter Than You Think You Are Dr. Thomas Armstrong

- *A kid's guide to multiple intelligences*
- Word smart
- Music smart
- Logic smart
- Picture smart
- Body smart
- People smart
- Self smart
- Nature smart
- Life smart
- ***LIKELY CAREER PATHS FOR EACH IQ***

Call out the strengths students who have anxiety

- Compassionate, empathetic, sensitive
- Ability to forgive unconditionally
- Amazing emergency instincts
- Highly observant
- Strong work ethic
- Loyalty
- You “get” others with anxiety and/or mood issues
- Cautious and thoughtful



Reframing: *shifting from negative traits to seeing assets*



Anxiety descriptors

- ***CAUTION***
- ***APPREHENSION***
- ***GUARDEDNESS***
- ***RELUCTANCE***
- ***HESITATION***

Seeing the Assets

- “I admire how you always look before you leap!”
- “Sometimes you see things that I miss!”
- “Standing back and observing makes sense!”
- “You have the courage to make decisions!”
- “It’s interesting how you pause to get more information before taking action.”

Helping others, feeling your unique & positive contributions, being needed

It is transforming when a student experiences helping others. We have a deep need to be needed.



13 Practical Strategies for Helping Students Challenged by Anxiety Conditions

1. A calm & predictable classroom: **8 practices or insights**
2. Relationships & Connection: **11 practices or insights**
3. Coaching students to think, behave, & react more positively & rationally: **4 practices or insights**
4. The Communication Bridge: **1 practice/insight**
5. Relaxation: **5 practices or insights**
6. Movement to calm & think: **2 practices or insights**
7. Teach Social Skills to help students improve social, behavioral, friendship, & problem solving: **7 practices or insights**
8. Adult responses to make things better, not worse: **4 practices or insights**
9. Helping Students who are “Stuck”: **7 practices or insights**
10. Perfection challenges: **5 practices or insights**
11. Lifestyle supports: **6 practices or insights**
12. Mindfulness: **2 practices or insights**
13. Building self-responsibility and strengths: **8 practices or insights**



71 Practices & insights