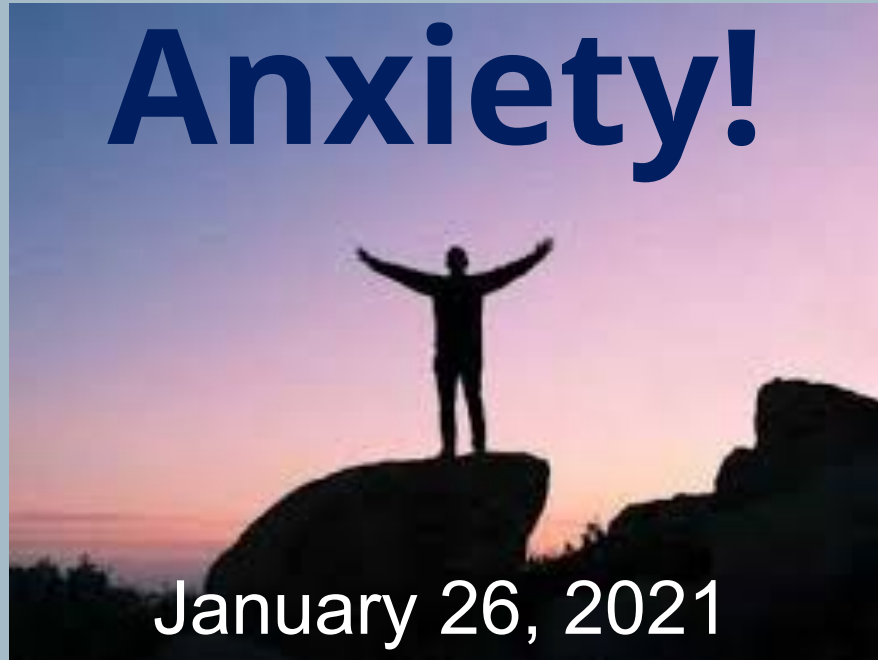


Landmark Learns:

Standing Up to Anxiety!



January 26, 2021



Who Am I?



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Plan for Tonight

1. What exactly is anxiety?
2. Why is this important now?
3. What anxiety looks/feels like
4. What we do at LMK
5. What you can do at home
6. Questions



Anxiety is...

- The body's normal response to stress
- A feeling described as fear, apprehension, worry
 - **Everyone has worry!**
- 25% present with notable symptoms/behaviors -
 - many people have anxious behaviors, not anxiety that is diagnosable
 - 7%+ of kids have diagnosed anxiety (CDC)
- Anxiety/anxious behaviors are higher for kids with LDs, ADHD, etc.
- Over time anxiety can lead to depression



Talking about Anxiety is Timely

Stress/Anxiety has 4 major triggers:

1. Novelty
2. Threat
3. Unpredictability
4. Lack of Control

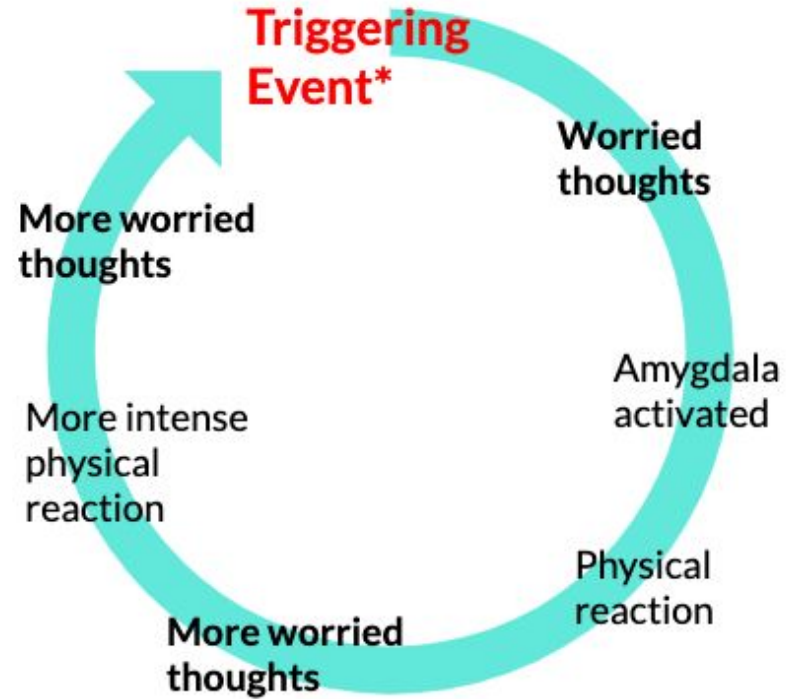
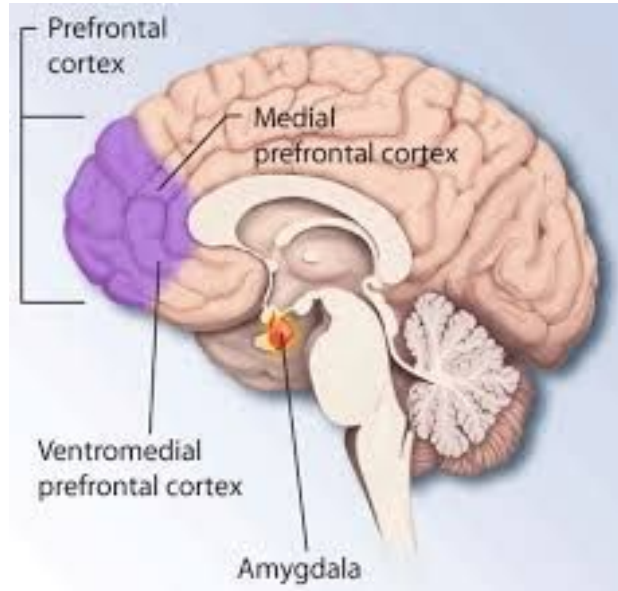
COVID triggers all of these!



<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/03/chan-school-session-breaks-down-ways-to-ease-stress/>



Anxiety and the Brain



Characteristics of Anxious Thinkers

- Think globally - can't break thoughts/tasks/ideas down (hard for LD students especially)
- Can't tolerate uncertainty
- Have difficulty being autonomous
- May show poor problem solving skills
- Can't envision their world without worry
 - Anxious people worry about being worried
 - Don't say "don't worry"



What you might see

In class, on the field, at home

- Poor motivation
- Learned helplessness
- Shutdown, refusal to work
- Task avoidance (hiding, class clowning)
- Immaturity
- School phobia
- Poor emotional self-regulation
 - meltdowns, temper tantrums
 - oppositional or argumentative behavior
- Lack of stamina



LMK Teaching Principles

1. Provide opportunities for our students to experience success.
2. Use multisensory approaches to teach.
3. Use micro-units and structured tasks for every student.
4. Ensure automatization through practice and review.
5. Provide models for our students to use as a guide.
6. Include our students in the learning process.



With anxious kids we usually...

1. Focus on what they are worried about specifically
2. Try to convince them all is ok
3. Say we will do "it" with or for them...
4. Let them get out of the task/activity
5. Make them comfortable



These actions do not help our students gain practice *managing* their worry



Help Kids Manage Worry

Teach kids to:

- Tolerate discomfort
- React differently to thoughts
- Learn by doing, failing, succeeding*
- Handle life uncertainty
- Be more flexible
- Problem solve



We can still:

- Validate
- Be present
- Support



1. Model Self Care

Children are sponges for others' anxiety

- Exercise
- Meditate
- "Veg out"
- Read
- Listen to music
- Cuddle with your pet



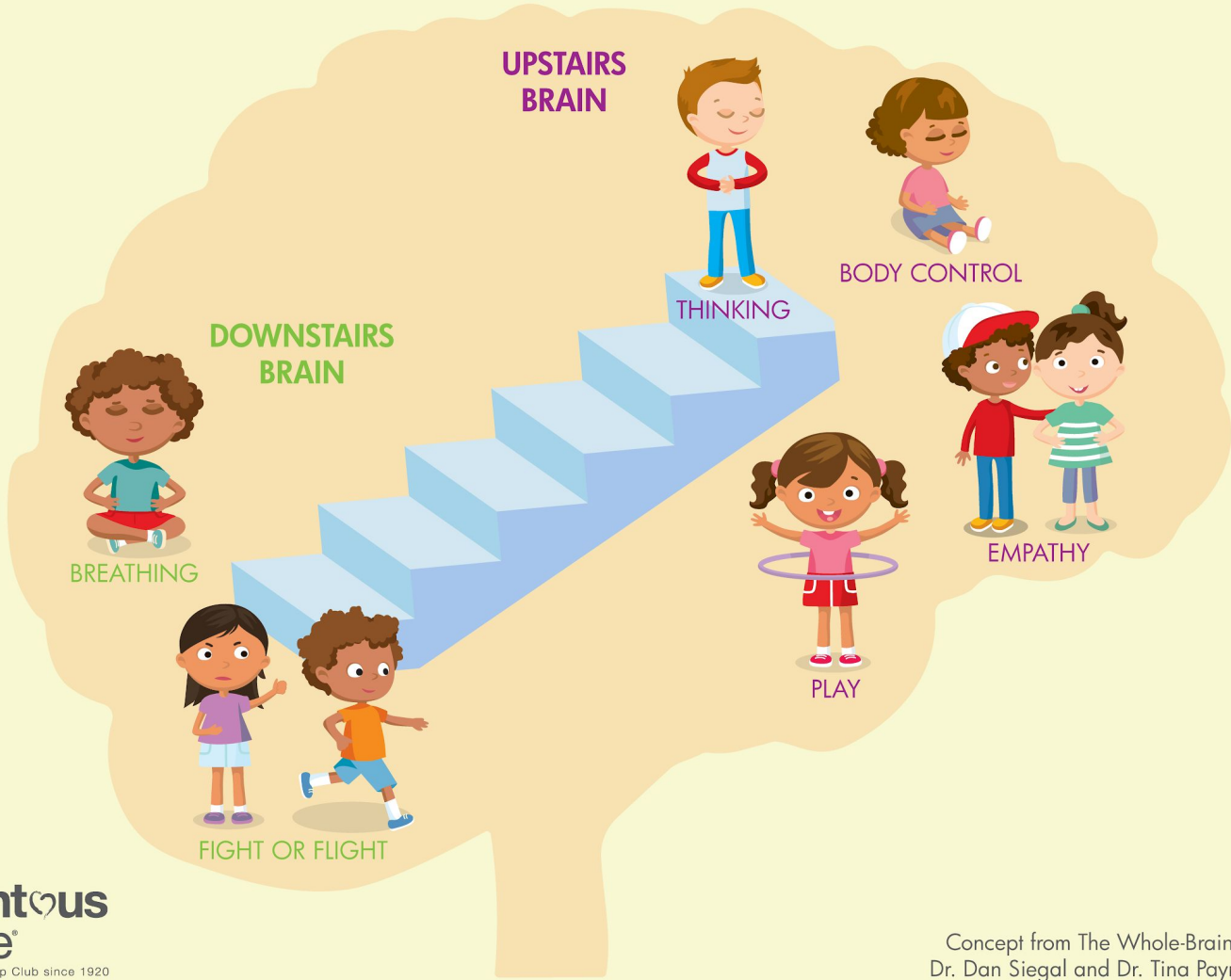
- Talk about feelings
- Articulate worry
- Normalize feeling nervous
- Verbalize overcoming obstacles



2. Teach Kids About Worry

1. Expect to worry
2. Talk to your worry (name it!!)
3. Be unsure and uncomfortable on purpose - trigger the worry, hang out, be on the offense
4. Breathe (reset your body) so you can do the work of managing what you are feeling
5. Know what you want
6. Circle back to your successes
7. Take action on your plan





UPSTAIRS
BRAIN

THINKING

BODY CONTROL

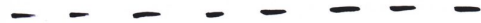
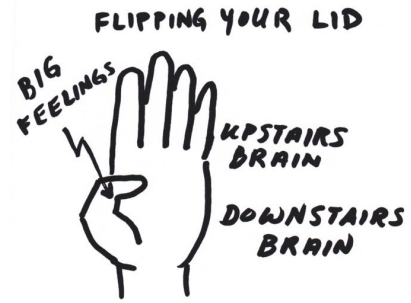
DOWNSTAIRS
BRAIN

BREATHING

EMPATHY

PLAY

FIGHT OR FLIGHT



USING YOUR UPSTAIRS
BRAIN TO GENTLY
HUG BIG FEELINGS

2. Teach Kids (revisited)

1. Name worry
2. Talk back to it
3. Predict what it will say
4. Tell it to "hit the road"
5. Celebrate success over worry

It's ok to:

- Be silly!
- Be direct
- Name your own worry, as a model



Bill Hader - What I would tell my younger self



3. Provide Structure

- Worried kids benefit from boundaries, structure, and routine
 - (all kids do too!)
- Prep for changes in schedules
- Model your reaction to changes
- Don't make promises about routines
- Expect your students' worry
- Reward flexibility



4. Other strategies

- Break tasks down
- Mindfulness
 - breathing
- Get their body moving
- Adjust the path - but not forever!
- Use rewards wisely
- Planned exposure



Check out Lynn Lyons!

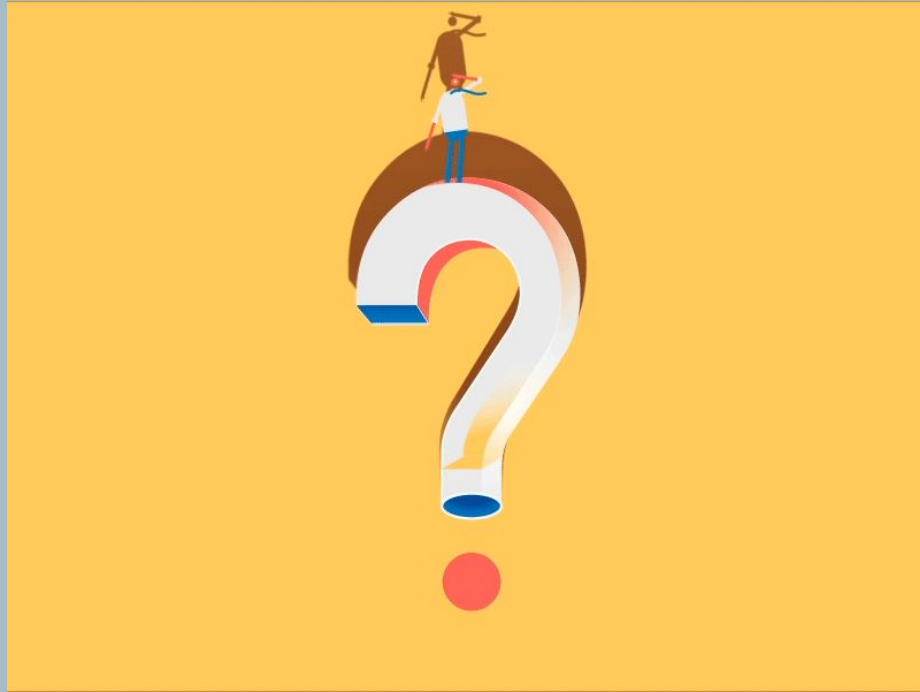


Final Reminders

- Worry is normal!
 - We don't want it to disappear - we want to manage it!
- Try not accommodate worry
 - It is a bully!
- When kids build skills, they can use them for worry of any kind (or any big feeling!)
- Help is available - reach out!



Questions/Comments



Resources

- Bourne, E. J. (2010) The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook, 5th Edition. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, California
- Cooper, B. Widdows, N.(2008) The Social Success Workbook for Teens. Instant Help Books A Division of New Harbinger Publications, Inc. Oakland, California
- Biegel, GM (2009) The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens. Instant Help Books, a Division of New Harbinger Publications, Inc. Oakland, CA
- Huebner, D. (2006) What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety. Magination Press, American Psychological Association. Washington, D.C.
- <https://www.lynnlyonsnh.com/>
- Relaxation resources: <http://www.stopbreathethink.org/> or <https://www.headspace.com/> or <https://insighttimer.com/>



References

CDC anxiety data:

[https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/anxiety-depression-children.html#:~:text=Anxiety%20and%20depression%20affect%20many,1.9%20million\)%20have%20diagnosed%20depression.](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/anxiety-depression-children.html#:~:text=Anxiety%20and%20depression%20affect%20many,1.9%20million)%20have%20diagnosed%20depression.)

Stress triggers:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/03/chan-school-session-breaks-down-ways-to-ease-stress/>

Bill Hader video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6hsP7co3ZA> (teaching kids to “lean in” to their worry)

