

PARENTING THE ANXIOUS CHILD



**Connecting for Kids
Speaker Series**

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OUTLINE



- What anxiety is
- Sources/Cause
- How to identify
- Treatment
- Parenting strategies
- Coping resources

WHAT IS ANXIETY



- Prevalence rates
 - Most common mental health issue in America
 - 1 in 10 young people
- Stress vs. anxiety
 - Fight or Flight response
 - When does it become distress?

FIGHT



Stand your ground, defend your position, attack, dig in, persevere!

or

Flight



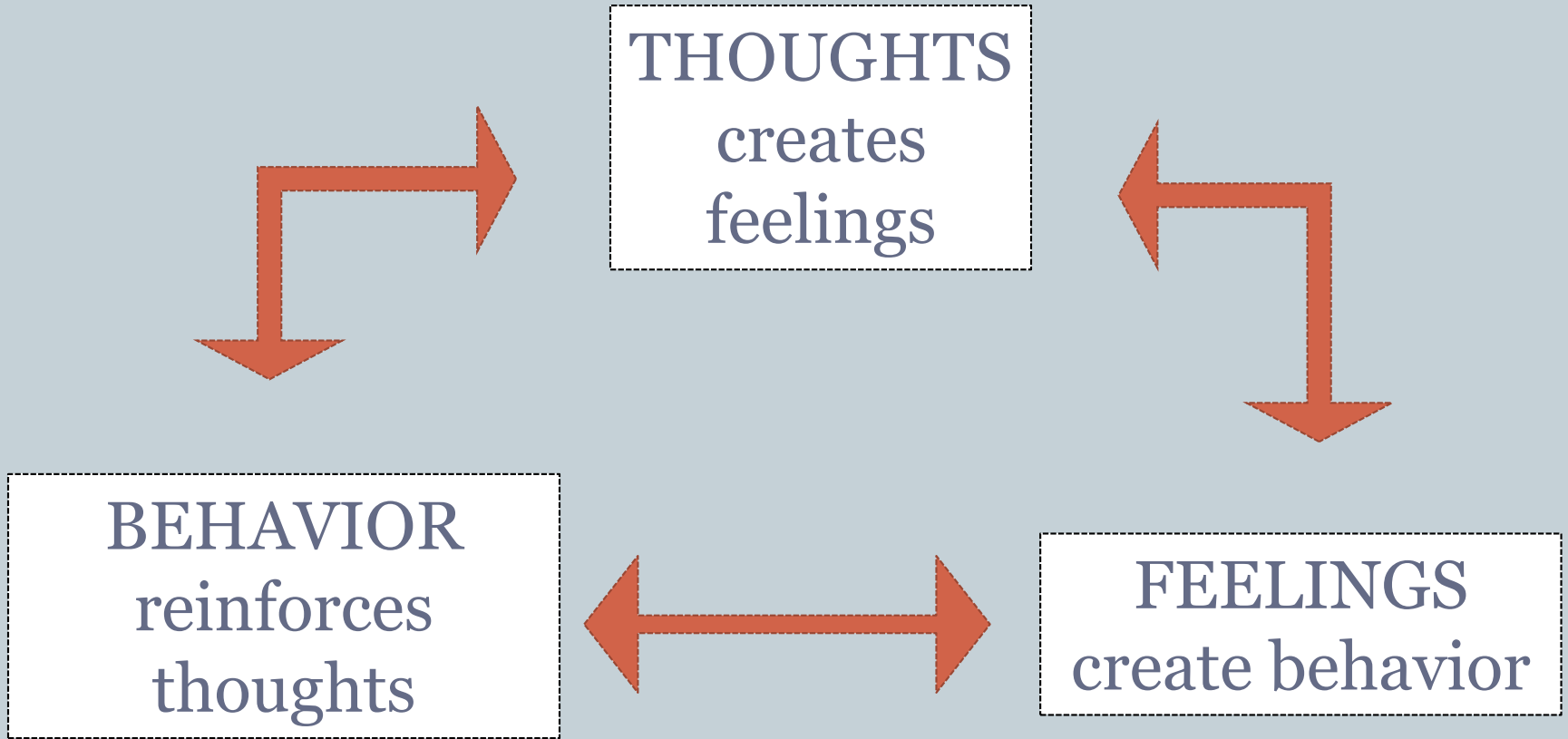
Give way, retreat, discard, remove yourself, give up, move on.

WORRY VS. ANXIETY



- Normal reaction to stress
 - Can be beneficial in some situations
- When it is excessive/extreme, no longer benefit
- Length of time, severity of impact
- Dependence
- Functioning

CYCLE OF ANXIETY



CAUSES



- Genetic
- Learning/Modeling
- Environmental

SOURCES OF STRESS IN KIDS



- Social media
- Peer relationships
- Family/sibling relationships
- Changes in family
- School
- Stressors within the family
- Separation anxiety
- New tasks

HOW TO SPOT IT



- Emotional
 - low self-confidence
 - Hypersensitivity
 - Mood lability
 - Easily distressed or agitated

- Cognitive
 - Need to be perfect
 - Worry
 - Critical self thinking
 - Worrying about what other people think

HOW TO SPOT IT



- Behavioral

- Difficulty concentrating
- Comparing self to others
- Crying
- Frustration
- Anger
- Avoiding things

- Physical

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Excessive sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid heartbeat
- Light-headedness

TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS



- Panic Disorder,
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD),
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD),
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Specific Phobias
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

HELPING CHILDREN COPE

(www.anxietybc.com & the American Psychological Association)



- **Listen**
 - Be available
 - Listen actively

- **Normalize**
 - Respond Thoughtfully

- **Educate**
- **Model it**
 - Consider

- **Tolerate**
- **Seek additional help**

PARENTING

(From ADAA & worrywisekids.org)



- Help them identify thoughts and feelings
 - Red light vs. green light thoughts
 - Help with child's own feelings
- Stay calm
 - Passing on fear
- Plan for transitions
- Expectations of your child
- Build on personal strength
 - Let child do things on their own
- Work together

PARENTING

(www.anxietybc.com)



- Reward bravery
- Parent tips (www.anxietybc.com)
 - Be clear
 - Be consistent
 - Be immediate
 - Be positive
 - Be flexible

PARENTING – TAKE CARE OF YOU

(www.anxietybc.com)



- Reduce stress
- Take breaks
- Seek support
- Eat well
- Get good sleep
- Do something fun

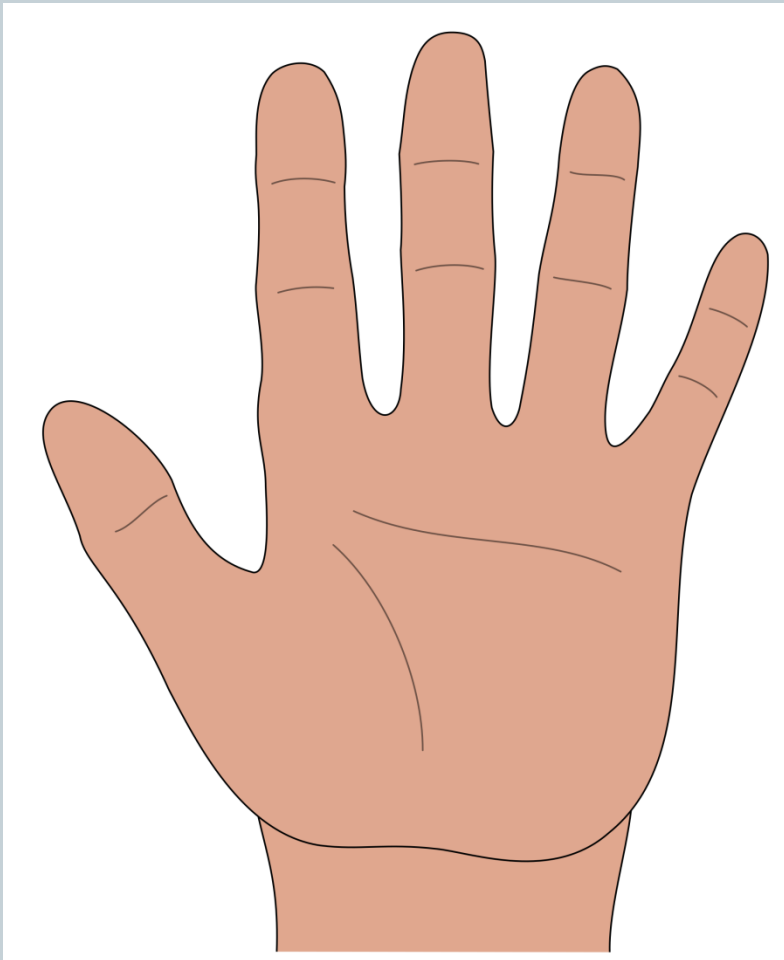
COPING STRATEGIES



- Bubble breaths
- Rainbow breaths
- Take a break
- 5 Finger exercise
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Make a list
- Distract yourself

5 FINGER EXERCISE

(The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Davis, Eshelman, and McKay)



- Relaxed muscles
- Felt loved
- Compliment
- Beautiful place

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



www.anxietybc.com

AT SCHOOL

(From www.worrywisekids.org)



- Common accommodations if needed
 - Classroom environment
 - Seating within the classroom
 - Following directions
 - Class participation
 - Class presentations
 - Answering in front of class
 - Testing conditions
 - Lunchroom/recess/unstructured activities
 - Safe person
 - Large group activities
 - Field trips
 - Change in routine/ fire drills

TREATMENT



- When to get professional help
- Therapy
- Medication

RESOURCES



- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
 - <http://www.nami.org/>
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
 - www.nimh.nih.gov
- www.worrywisekids.org
- American Psychological Association
 - www.apa.org
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America
 - <http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children>

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