

Information Evening- Strategies to support your child's wellbeing

Part I: understanding anxiety

Part II: helping your children

Part III: questions?

Myths about anxiety-True or false?



Anxious children are just worriers and there's nothing you can do to change that.

It is good to be scared at times.

Anxiety is a natural response to feared situation.

Children can pass out from panic.

Effective treatment of anxiety must focus on early experiences .

It is important to avoid situations that cause children to feel 'stressed'.

Children should just distract themselves if they are anxious.

Myths about anxiety-True or false?



It is good to be scared at times. TRUE

Anxious children are just worriers and there's nothing you can do to change that. FALSE

Anxiety is a natural response to feared situation. TRUE

It is important to avoid situations that cause children to feel 'stressed'. FALSE

Children should just distract themselves if they are anxious. FALSE

Effective treatment of anxiety must focus on early experiences. FALSE

Children can pass out from panic. FALSE

Part I: understanding anxiety

Symptoms of Anxiety

When the Fight or Flight response kicks in and our heart rate and blood pressure increases, we might notice some of the following symptoms.

dizziness

shaking

panicky

angry

noticeably
fast heart
beat

headache

shortness of
breath

frustrated

worried

stomach
ache

upset

feeling sick

scared

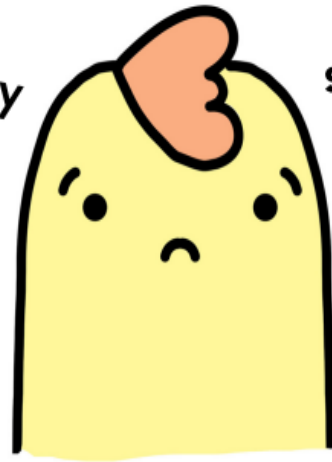
pins and
needles

tense
muscles

nervous

dry mouth

sweating



What is anxiety...?

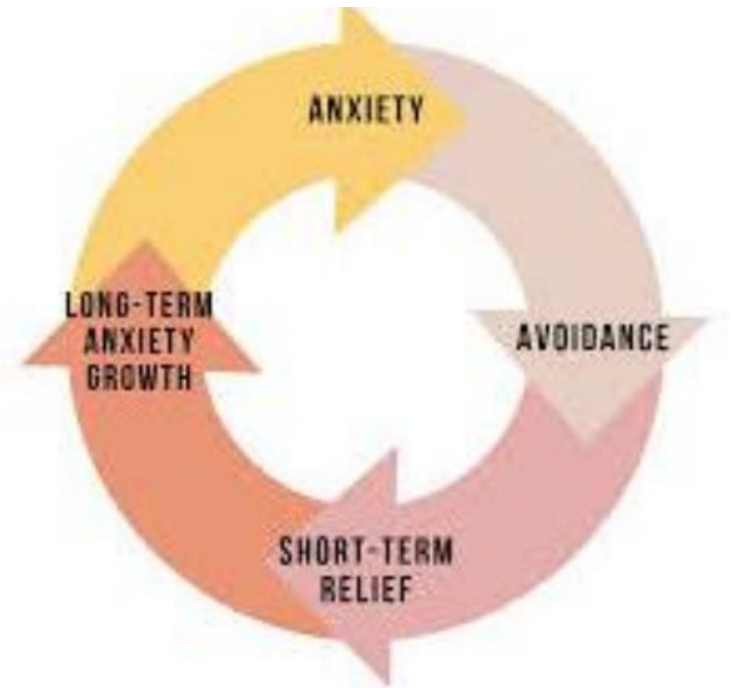
- Some anxiety is normal
- Anxiety helps us adapting to our environment
- Anxiety is crucial to our survival
- Anxiety is a normal part of growing up
- Anxiety is not an illness
- But... it is unpleasant to experience and can be distressing to see in our children anxious
- And... it becomes a concern when it gets in the way of children doing things they like or need to do.

What is anxiety..

- Anxiety is a response to perceived THREAT
 - Real or imagined / exaggerated
 - Physical or social
- Fight/Flight/Freeze
- Anxiety as a communication
- Anxiety can be telling us something needs to be done
- Anxiety can prompt us to prepare for something
- Bears, fire alarms, nerves and worries

What keeps the problem going ?

1. Avoidance- avoid feared factors.
2. Too much reassurance - when help your child avoiding feared factor.
3. Never discovering they can do it or cope with the discomfort!

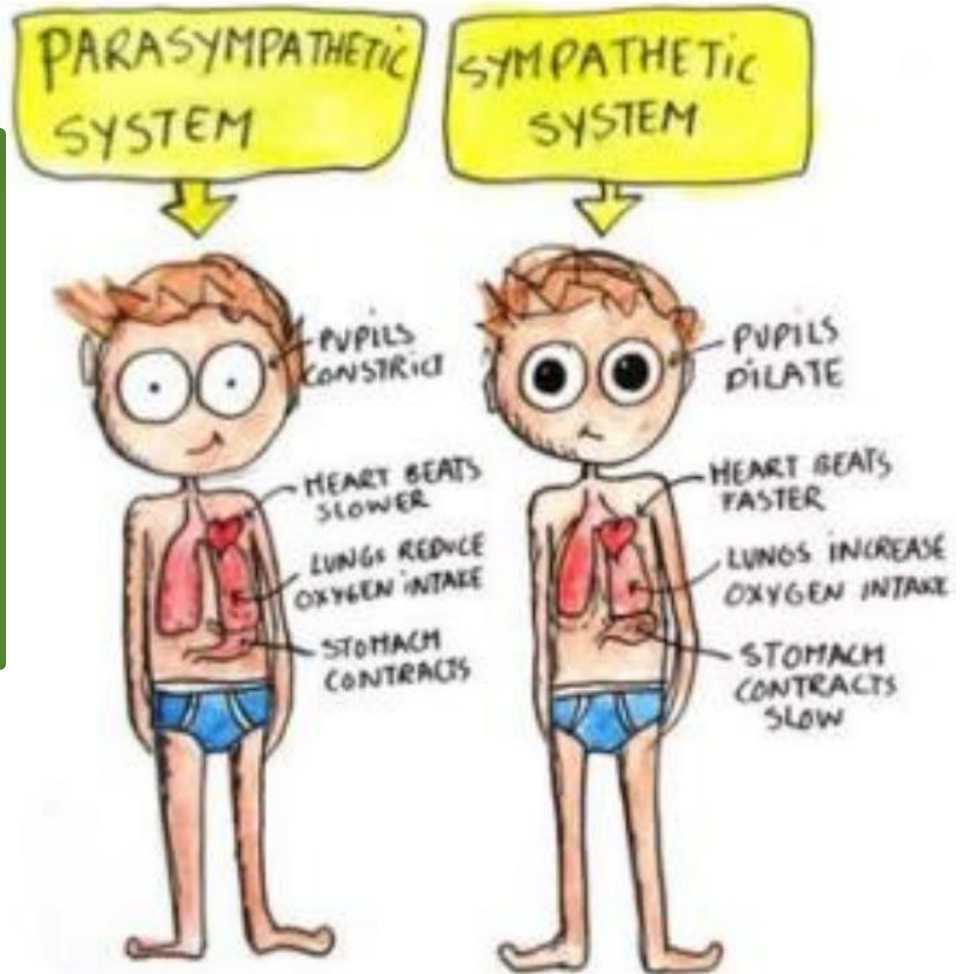


What do you already know..?

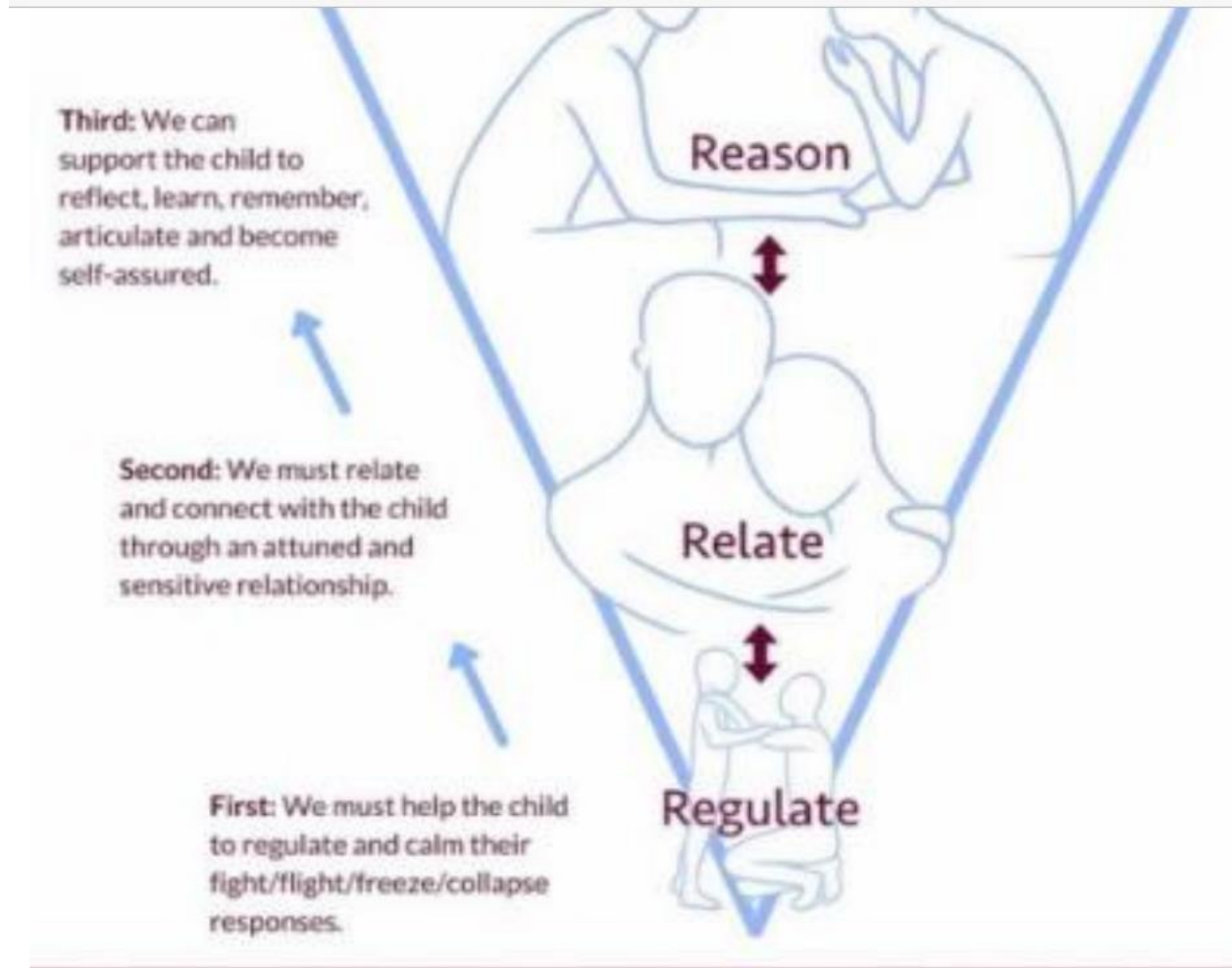
- What do you already do to help when your child is anxious?
- What have you tried?
- What doesn't work?
- What would you like to try differently?

Part II: helping your child

The brain and the body together
1. 'Sympathetic' - prepare for danger
2. 'Parasympathetic' - calm down,
rest and digest



Tip one- Regulate, Relate and Reason.



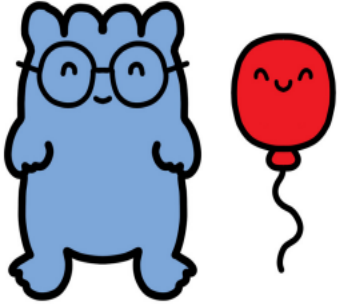
Heading straight for the 'reasoning' part of the brain with an expectation of learning, will not work so well if the child is dysregulated and disconnected from others.

(A helpful tip from Dr Bruce Perry)

Best not to use Reason straight away- meet your child where he is.

Tip two- Breathing.

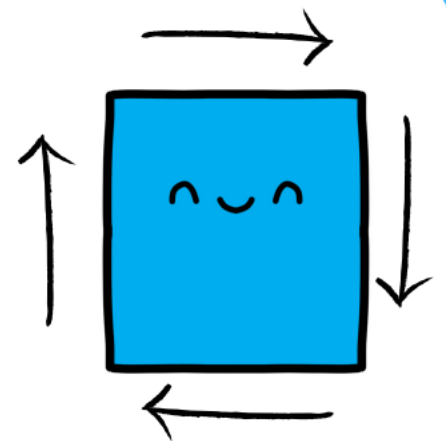
Belly Breathing



- Take a deep breath in and fill your belly like you're inflating a balloon.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath in and fill the balloon in your belly.
- Pause and then let all of the air out of your belly like you're letting a balloon deflate.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath out and let the balloon go down from your belly.

Square Breathing

- Imagine you're drawing a square with your finger in the air.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the top line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line down the side and then pause.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the bottom line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line up the side to make the square.



Tip three- Acknowledge.

You seem worried. I am wondering what you might be worried about.

It's understandable that you feel frightened. It can be really frightening when things like that happen.

It looks like you are feeling really scared right now.

I wonder if.....

Acknowledge
Acknowledge
Acknowledge

You feel really anxious when you do this.

Going to class is really tough for you at the moment.

You're really nervous about the test today.

It sounds like you are worried about something that is happening at school.

It seems like something is worrying you.

Tip four- classify your worries.

hypothetical worries

Hypothetical worries are worries that we don't currently have control over and can't do anything about. These can be overwhelming and tiring.

What if I get lost?

What if it rains?

What if the bus is late?

What if I feel tired in the morning?

What if I get worried?

What if the teacher asks me a question?

practical worries

Practical worries are usually worries about a current situation that we can do something about. It can be easy to put these worries off or try to ignore them all together. However, if we don't do something about practical worries, they can pile up and make us feel overwhelmed.

I don't have enough time to do my homework

I have lots of exams coming up

I have to do a presentation

I haven't seen my friends in age

I've been eating lots of unhealthy food

Tip five-start problem solving.

Step 1 Write down your problem in 1 or 2 sentences.

Step 2 Write down all the ideas you can think of to solve the problem (no matter what they are!).

Step 3 Make a table and write down ALL of the good things and ALL of the not so good things you can think of for each of your ideas.

	Good things	Not so good things
Idea 1		
Idea 2		

What do we offer here at Notre Dame?

- As part of the pastoral support, we offer a **6 weeks CBT intervention**.
- What do we cover?
- We look at **negative thoughts, unhelpful thoughts** that maintains our **negative cycles**.
- We talk about **emotions** and how are they connected with our thoughts.
- We look at what we do, our **behaviour**, helpful or unhelpful.
- We find **tools** that we can use to help use, cope in better ways.

Relevant readings:

- **Helping your child with fears and worries:** A self help guide for parents by Cathy Creswell, Lucy Willetts, et al.
- **The Whole-Brain Child:** 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind by Dan Siegel & Tina Payne Bryson
- **Brainstorm:** The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain by Dan Siegel
- [managing worry 3 session guide all sessions .pdf \(wsimg.com\)](#)- We Heart CBT.
- [supporting with low mood 3 session guide all s.pdf \(wsimg.com\)](#)