



MEMORIAL FAMILY CONNECTIONS
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2 DEMANDS OF ANXIETY:

- 1. CERTAINTY (I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT.... AND I WANT TO CONTROL IT)**
- 2. COMFORT (I WANT TO FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE... OR I AM OUT OF HERE)**

THE BAD NEWS:

- **ANXIETY IS THE #1 MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM IN THE USA**
- **UNTREATED ANXIETY: LEADING PREDICTOR OF DEPRESSION IN TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS**
- **UNPRECEDENTED MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN COLLEGE AGED KIDS**
- **UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF ANXIETY IN PARENTS**
- **MOST ALL TEENS VIEW THE FUTURE AS A SCARY PLACE (DRIVING, LAUNCHING, COLLEGE)**
- **FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, TEENS ARE REPORTING HIGHER LEVELS OF STRESS/ANXIETY THAN THEIR PARENTS**

THE GOOD NEWS:

- **ANXIETY IS VERY TREATABLE**
- **THE STEPS TO TREAT ANXIETY AND THE STEPS TO PREVENT IT ARE THE SAME: PSYCHOEDUCATION IS CRUCIAL!**
- **AS PARENTS, WE CAN DO OUR OWN WORK TO MANAGE OUR ANXIETY AND OUR KIDS WILL DIRECTLY BENEFIT**
- **NEUROPLASTICITY**

GOOD, COMMONSENSE PARENTING INTERVENTIONS THAT BACKFIRE:

- 1. REASSURING, RESCUING, OVERPROTECTING**
- 2. PROVIDING CERTAINTY**
- 3. OVERPLAYING THE GENETIC CARD "IT JUST RUNS IN THE FAMILY"**
- 4. REQUIRING FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS, & SCHOOLS TO ACCOMMODATE THE ANXIETY (IN THE ABSENCE OF SKILL BUILDING)**

WHAT ARE THE LIES ANXIETY TELLS US?

- **WE ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO HANDLE HARD THINGS.**
- **IF SOMETHING HARD HAPPENS, WE CAN'T HANDLE IT.**
- **WE ARE AS FRAGILE AS WE FEEL.**
- **IF SOMETHING BAD HAPPENS, WE WILL NOT BE OK.**

DO NOT ALLOW AVOIDANCE. DO NOT ALLOW AVOIDANCE. DO NOT ALLOW AVOIDANCE.

WE DO NOT WANT TO REARRANGE THE ENVIRONMENT TO CATER TO ANXIETY. IT MAKES THE ANXIETY WORSE.

WE DON'T WANT TO ELIMINATE ANXIETY AND STRESS, WE WANT TO LEARN TO TOLERATE IT. WE NEED TO GO ON THE OFFENSE NOT THE DEFENSE.

WHEN HARD THINGS HAPPEN

- **WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR CHILDREN TO MODEL FOR THEM RESILIENCE AND GRIT DURING LIFE'S GREATEST CHALLENGES. OUR CHILDREN LEARN BY WATCHING US.**
- **HARDSHIP AND SUFFERING IN OUR CHILDREN IS A NOT A PARENTING FAILURE. IT IS LIFE.**
- **AS PARENTS WE NEED TO RAISE STRONG, EMPOWERED, RESILIENT ADULTS. OUR CHILDREN DO NOT DEVELOP THESE QUALITIES BY LEARNING THEM INTELLECTUALLY. THEY DEVELOP THEM BY FACING ADVERSITY AND COMING OUT THE OTHER SIDE.**

IMPORTANT SKILLS TO PRACTICE AS A FAMILY

1. **LOOK AT WHERE WE WANT OUR KIDS TO BE WHEN THEY LAUNCH AND WORK BACKWARDS**
2. **TOLERATE AND NORMALIZE DISCOMFORT**
3. **LEARN BY DOING, FAILING, & SUCCEEDING**
4. **INCREASED TOLERANCE FOR THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE – WORK ON FLEXIBILITY!**
5. **DO NOT REINFORCE AVOIDANCE OF HARD & UNCOMFORTABLE THINGS- IT CREATES MORE ANXIETY!**
6. **PROBLEM SOLVING VS RUMINATION**
7. **ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS TO HIT DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES (DRIVING, DATING, ETC)- JUST BECAUSE IT FEELS SCARY FOR OUR KIDS (AND US!) DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULDN'T DO IT.**
8. **DON'T GET SUCKED INTO THE CONTENT OF ANXIETY, STAY FOCUSED ON THE PROCESS.**
9. **DO NOT LOSE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR**
10. **BUILD EMOTIONAL IQ**
11. **LEARN HEALTHY WAYS TO MANAGE YOUR OWN ANXIETY – OUR KIDS ARE WATCHING US!**
12. **LIMIT SAFETY CHATTER**
13. **PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

DON'T GET SO BUSY TRYING TO RAISE A GOOD CHILD THAT YOU FORGET THAT YOU ALREADY HAVE ONE!