

Anxiety in Youth: What You Need to Know and How You can Help

PRESENTATION WILL
BEGIN SOON



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Anxiety in Youth: What You Need to Know and How You can Help

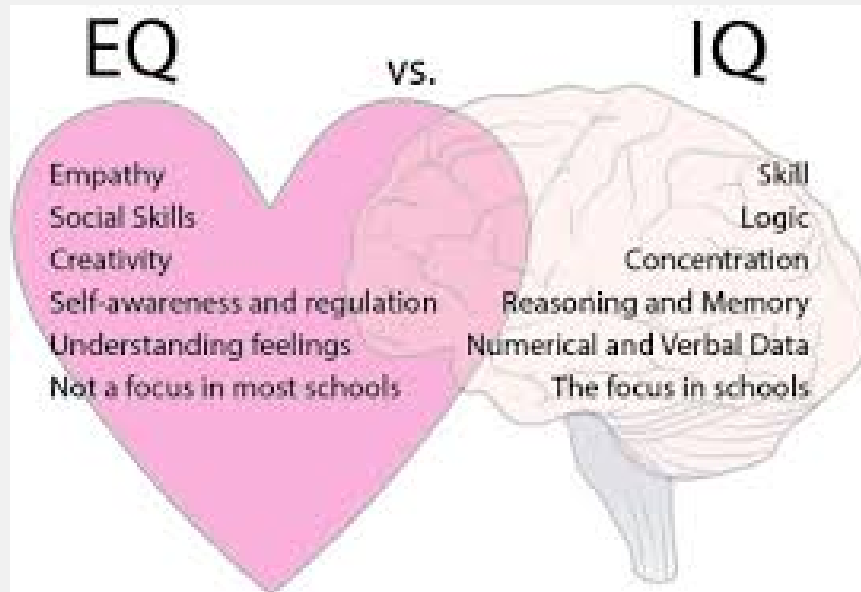
Dr. Paula Yanes-Lukin

OLENTANGY PARENT PROGRAMS TEAM
(PPT)



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WHY TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS?



ANXIETY IN YOUTH

- Prevalence: 31.9% of youth have an anxiety disorder (National Comorbidity Study, 2017)
- Highly comorbid: 55.3% have more than one (Kendall et al., 2010)



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Feelings of*:

- Nervousness
- Fear
- Unease

* Generally, in anticipation of a future event



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Unpleasant thoughts:

- Worries, fears, obsessions
 - “What if _____?”
- Catastrophes
 - “If _____, then _____, then ✨!”
- Images



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Physiological experiences

- Stomachaches/headaches
- Nausea
- Rapid/difficult breathing
- Lightheadedness/dizziness
- Heart pounding
- Sweating
- Muscle tension



WHAT DOES ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

- Fight
- Flight (*AVOIDANCE*)
- Freeze

Children With Anxiety May...



The infographic features eight circular illustrations arranged in a 2x4 grid. Each illustration depicts a child or adult in a specific state of anxiety, with a corresponding text label below it. The illustrations include: a man and child at a desk, a man kneeling and holding a wooden post, a woman with her arms crossed, a man eating at a table with a clock, a woman reading a book, a man shouting with clenched fists, a woman with her hand to her face, and a man looking at a book with a frustrated expression.

- Appear more clingy than normal
- Be restless and fidgety
- Complain of stomachaches
- Display changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Express negative thoughts or worries
- Get upset or angry more quickly
- Have bouts of unexplained crying
- Struggle to concentrate

verywell

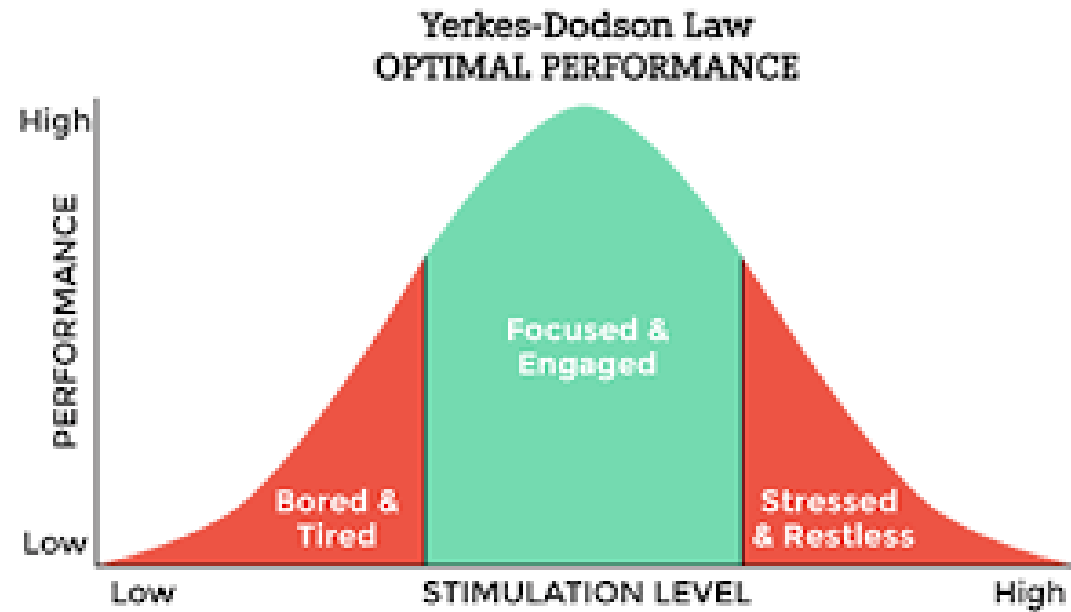


WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE ANXIETY?

Anxiety is **necessary** and often **adaptive**

- Alerts to threat
- Prepares for action
- Pushes one to act

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY AND PERFORMANCE



WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE ANXIETY?

Etiology of Anxiety Disorders

Biological causes

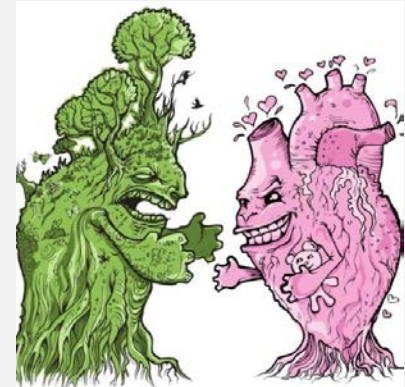
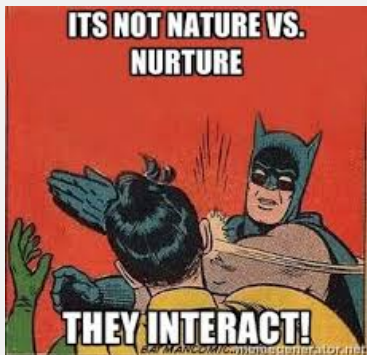
- Heredity
- Neurotransmitter imbalance
- Illness
- Medications
- Nutritional factors

Psychological causes

- Personality traits
- Low self-esteem
- Cognitive dissonance
- Negative emotions
- Inter and/or intra-personal conflicts
- Developmental crises
- Perception of situational factors

Social causes

- Adverse Life Experiences
- Lack of social support
- Work stress
- Lack of social skills
- Changing values
- Conflict of societal norms
- Terrorism
- Natural calamities





**PARENTS:
ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION
REGARDING DANGER**



WHEN SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

Anxiety → significant **avoidance**

- Not going to school or doing schoolwork
 - Missing presentations/performances/etc.
- Not talking to friends
 - Skipping social activities
- Not going places with family

WHEN SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

Anxiety → impaired **functioning**

- Home: Frequently texting/calling parents, checking/asking for reassurance
- School: Trouble concentrating, taking longer to complete tasks, distracted by worries
- Social: Dismissing invitations, extreme shyness, existing friendships compromised, pre-rejection due to anxiety



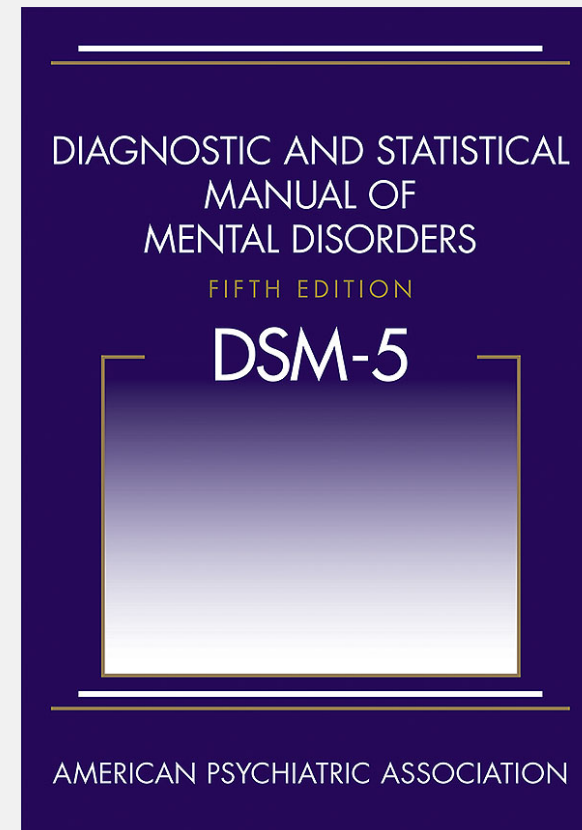
WHEN SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

- Anxiety → significant **distress**
 - Consistently
 - Extended period of time



ANXIETY DISORDERS

- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Specific Phobia
- Panic Disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder



HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

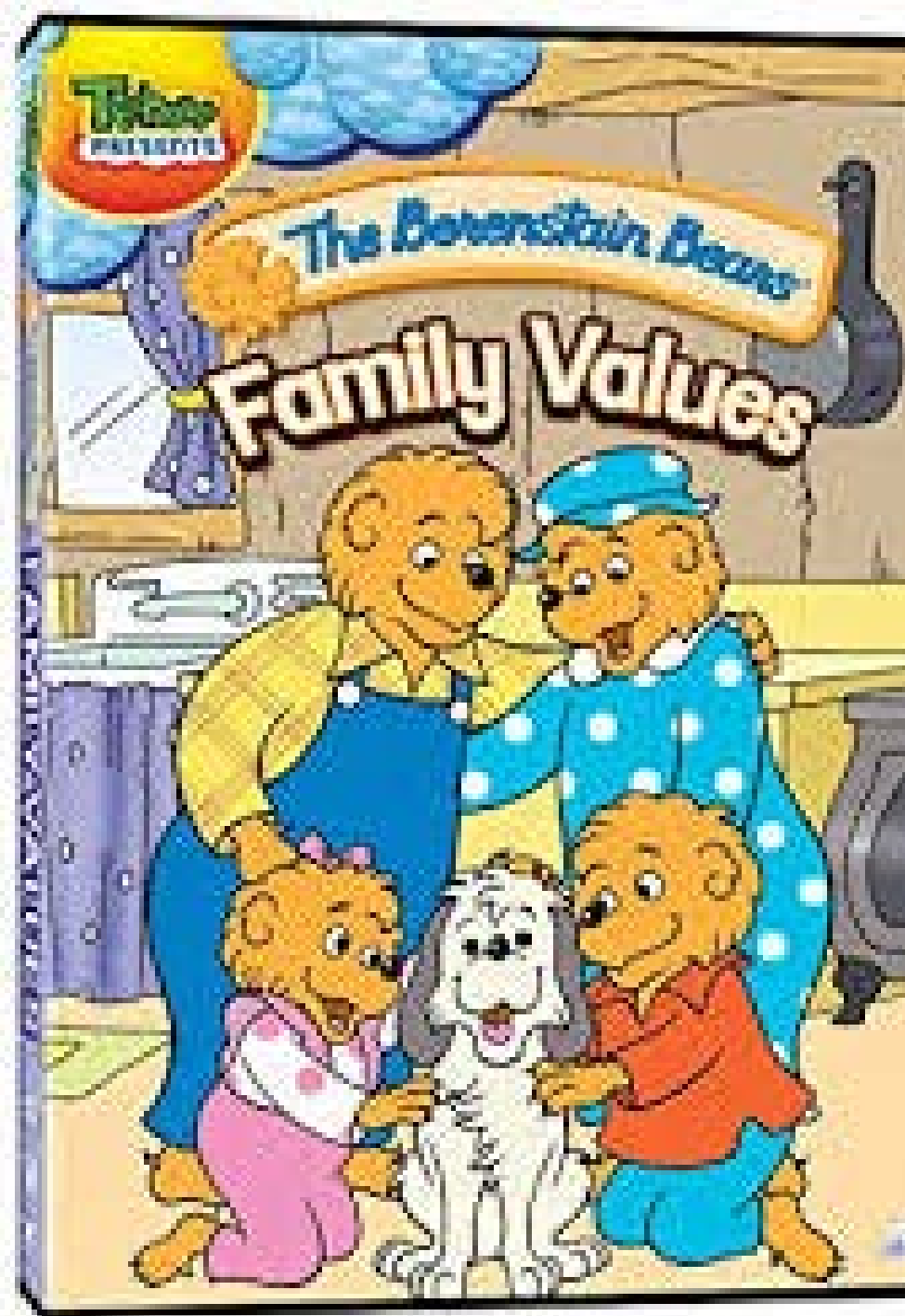


PARENTING VALUES EXERCISE: VALUES FOR CHILD

- Responsible
- Hard Working
- Helping Others
- Well-Mannered
- Independent
- Integrous
- Creative
- Empathic
- Persistent
- Tolerant
- Obedient
- Curious
- Religious
- Sense of Humor

PARENTING VALUES EXERCISE: VALUES AS PARENT

- Encouraging
- Teaching
- Leading
- Accepting
- Good Listening
- Disciplining
- Connecting with Child
- Providing Opportunities
- Providing Structure
- Providing Safety



PARENTING BY VALUES

Consider:

- How might you respond differently to your child?
- What might you highlight in their behavior?
- Might you do different activities with your kids?

HOW TO HELP: PARENTS' EXPERIENCE

Parent out of **Love** vs. **Fear**

- Parenting is rife with uncertainties and anxieties
 - Paralleling children's experiences: LOTS OF FIRSTS!!
 - Encourage your child to do the tough thing



TIPS:

1. Be mindful of your own values/goals for parenting
2. Check in to see if your actions are purposeful/intentional and aligned with those values/goals
3. Be mindful of what you are modeling

HOW TO HELP: CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Do you have a relationship built on **respect**?

Consider these elements:

1. Children need to feel **seen** and **accepted**
2. Children need to **trust** and feel trusted



HOW TO HELP: CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

First Step:

Create a space where children feel seen and accepted

- Children are unlikely to seek parent support if they don't feel tolerated or seen for their own experience
- Example: *Parent-Child Interaction Therapy*
 - Child-Directed Interaction FIRST, then Parent-Directed Interaction



TIPS:

1. Listening/reflecting (should dominate over speaking)
2. Get to know your child
 - Talk about their interests, show genuine engagement, compliment

HOW TO HELP: CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Second Step:
Build trust by being honest
As much as possible!!

As parents we lie and pretend all the time

- E.g., “You’re not going to fail the test,” “Stop worrying, you won’t get hurt,” “You’re going to do great,” “They’re not going to judge you.”

But... YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW!!

TIPS:

1. Avoid reassurance
2. Be honest about possibility of failure/bad thing



HOW TO HELP: THE “MAGIC” FORMULA

Validation + Encouragement = Parental Support



HOW TO HELP: VALIDATION

When they *do* come to you for support...

Use **VALIDATION!!**

(LOTS AND LOTS AND LOTS OF VALIDATION)

- Sincere understanding (not agreement) with emotional experience



Examples:

- “Wow”
- “That must have been hard, I’m so sorry”
- “That **DOES** sound embarrassing”
- “Sounds like you’re feeling hurt, is that right?”
- “I hear you, I would be angry too”

Avoid:

- “Calm down”
- “Don’t worry”
- “It’s not that bad”
- “You’re being lazy”
- Jumping to problem solving

HOW TO HELP: ENCOURAGEMENT

- Encourage approach/tolerance
 - Set (appropriate) expectations to face hard tasks or emotions
 - Or at least try!
- Give space to allow child to problem-solve
- Confirm belief that child can manage distress or failure



HOW TO HELP: THE “AND” STATEMENT

Validation COMBINED with encouragement:

- “I know this makes you very nervous and any person in your situation would feel scared, **and** I’ve seen you take on some pretty big challenges and I know you can handle whatever happens.”
- “I can imagine you might feel ashamed and sad, I hear you, that’s really hard. I want you to know that I see how hard it is and that I believe in you and know you will get through this.”



HOW TO HELP: RECAP

- Bottom line: Anxiety is important to feel!
 - Stress is normal and important to tolerate
 - Anxiety turns into problems when youth do not learn how to face and sit with negative feelings
 - Parent out of love and values
 - A strong relationship with your child, which gives space for their distress, will help them learn how to effectively manage negative feelings like anxiety
 - Validate and encourage problem-solving and resilience (keep trying!)



WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF HELPING?

- Difficulty managing child's distress
 - Seeing your child upset is hard!
 - They need to learn how to swim before being thrown in the ocean
- Going to extremes
 - Pushing too much vs. overprotecting
- Too high expectations
 - Perfect is the enemy of good



TYPICAL BEHAVIOR VS. ANXIETY PROBLEM

- Most common parent concerns:
 - Worry if punishing anxiety
 - How much leeway to give since child is in distress and trying to cope the best they can?
- Doesn't really matter → similar formula:
 - Validate (*may require more validation than usual*) and set appropriate limits



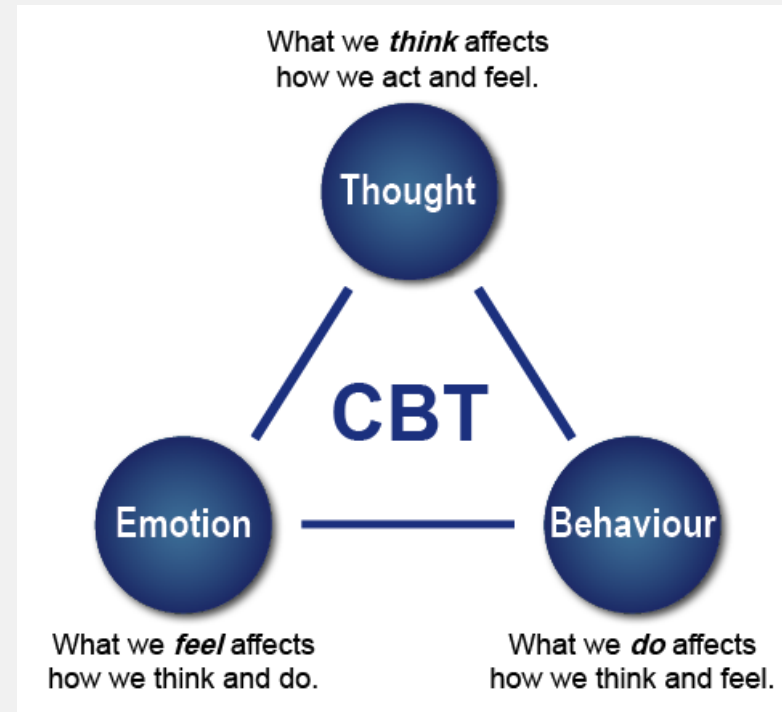
WHEN NEED TO SEE A PROFESSIONAL

- You feel like nothing is working/too difficult to manage
- Symptoms are really getting in the way/not functioning in a certain area
- Significant distress on a consistent basis



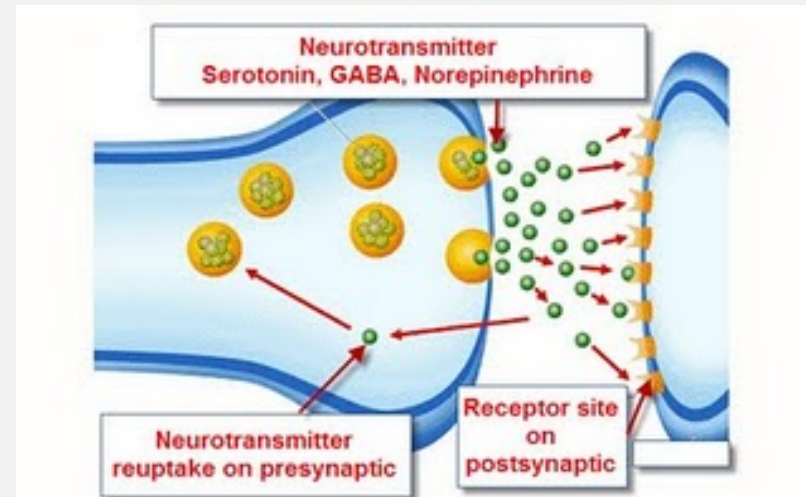
TREATMENT FOR ANXIETY DISORDERS IN YOUTH

- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
 - Target avoidance by engaging child in gradual exposures
 - Target cognitions (in older kids)
- Role of parents in CBT
 - Support child
 - Increase understanding of anxiety
 - Strength of relationship with child



TREATMENT FOR ANXIETY DISORDERS IN YOUTH

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRI) medications
 - Prescribed by:
 - Psychiatrist
 - Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
 - Occasionally Pediatricians
- Usually taken for a minimum of 6 months
 - Take a long time to work, need time to build up to and stay on an effective dose (~12-16 weeks)



OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Other types of therapy
 - Dialectical Behavior Therapy
 - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
 - Interpersonal Psychotherapy
- Other types of medication
 - Benzodiazepines (clonazepam, lorazepam)
 - Tricyclic antidepressants (clomipramine)
 - SNRIs (Effexor)



THANK YOU!!

Contact Information:

Paula Yanes-Lukin , PhD

Paula.Yanes-Lukin@nyspi.columbia.edu

646-774-5855

Please complete our PPT survey by opening the link through the QR code below:



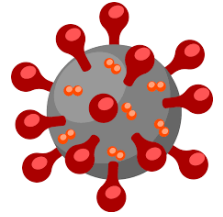


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THANK YOU



EFFECTS OF COVID



Overall, greater anxiety and depression in youth during COVID-19

- Vulnerable populations are at greater risk (e.g., previous diagnoses/worst symptoms prior to pandemic, greater difficulties with online learning, greater family conflict, female, minorities; Asmundson et al., 2020; Magson et al., 2021; Veldhuis et al., 2021)

Greater avoidance=atrophied bravery muscles

- Social anxiety in particular may be impacted