


A Z Z i E t y





FROM A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE


Presenter: Deidra A. Sorrell, Ed.D, LPC, ACS, Certified School Psychologist






OBJECTIVES

- 
- **Debunk common myths about anxiety.**
 - **Learn recent statistics about anxiety.**
 - **Learn the definition of anxiety.**
 - **Discuss the causes of anxiety.**
 - **Learn how parents, schools, and the community can help.**
- 



ABOUT ME



- **CCPS School Psychologist**
 - **Licensed Professional Counselor (MD)**
 - **Approved Clinical Supervisor**
 - **Charles County, Maryland Resident**
 - **Charles County Schools (Maryland) Parent**
- 



MYTH #1

KIDS DON'T GET ANXIETY





THE FACTS

According to the CDC

7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have diagnosed anxiety.

Anxiety and depression have increased from 5-8% over time (2003-2012).

**Why is this?
What about now?**





WHAT IS CHILDHOOD ANXIETY

Apprehensive uneasiness or nervousness usually over an impending or anticipated ill : a state of being significantly anxious, worried or afraid.

- **Separation Anxiety:** Being very afraid when away from parents.
- **Phobias:** Having extreme fear about a specific thing or situation, such as dogs, insects, or going to the doctor.
- **Social Anxiety:** Being very afraid of school and other places where there are people.
- **General Anxiety:** Being very worried about the future and about bad things happening.
- **Panic Disorder:** Having repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected, intense fear that come with symptoms like heart pounding, having trouble breathing, or feeling dizzy, shaky, or sweaty.
- **Somatization:** Physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches, or stomachaches.

Anxiety may present as fear or worry, but can also make children irritable and angry. Anxiety symptoms can also include trouble sleeping, as well as physical symptoms. Some anxious children keep their worries to themselves and, thus, the symptoms can be missed. (www.cdc.gov)



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STRESS & ANXIETY

- Stress can be good sometimes. Anxiety is not good.
- Stress is a response to outward stimuli. Anxiety is an inward continuous response no matter what the outside stimuli is.
- Anxiety persists even after the stressor has been removed. The stress response does not turn off.
- Anxiety is the result of persistent stress.
- Anxiety is a disorder.
- Anxiety is ongoing (if not treated). Stress can be temporary in normal circumstances.



FACT:

THE #1 CAUSE OF ANXIETY IS STRESS



WHAT IS **STRESSING** OUR KIDS OUT?





WHAT IS **STRESSING** OUR KIDS OUT?



- Crises in the community!
- Financial issues (the recession)
- The impact of the ongoing crises on school
- Bullying
- Relationship/Friendship loss
- Puberty
- Academic Stress
- Family Stress (divorce, abuse, family dysfunction)
- Too much screen time
- Discovering their identity

What Else?





THE IMPACT OF THE **PANDEMIC**



The Pandemic Package: The Gift that Keeps Giving that No one Wants!

- Fear
- Virtual School: The Impact on learning, behavior and maturity
- The Impact of Masks
- Grief and Loss
- Loss of Structure
- Loss of Safety/Security
- Loss of Freedom
- A New Culture of Cancellation

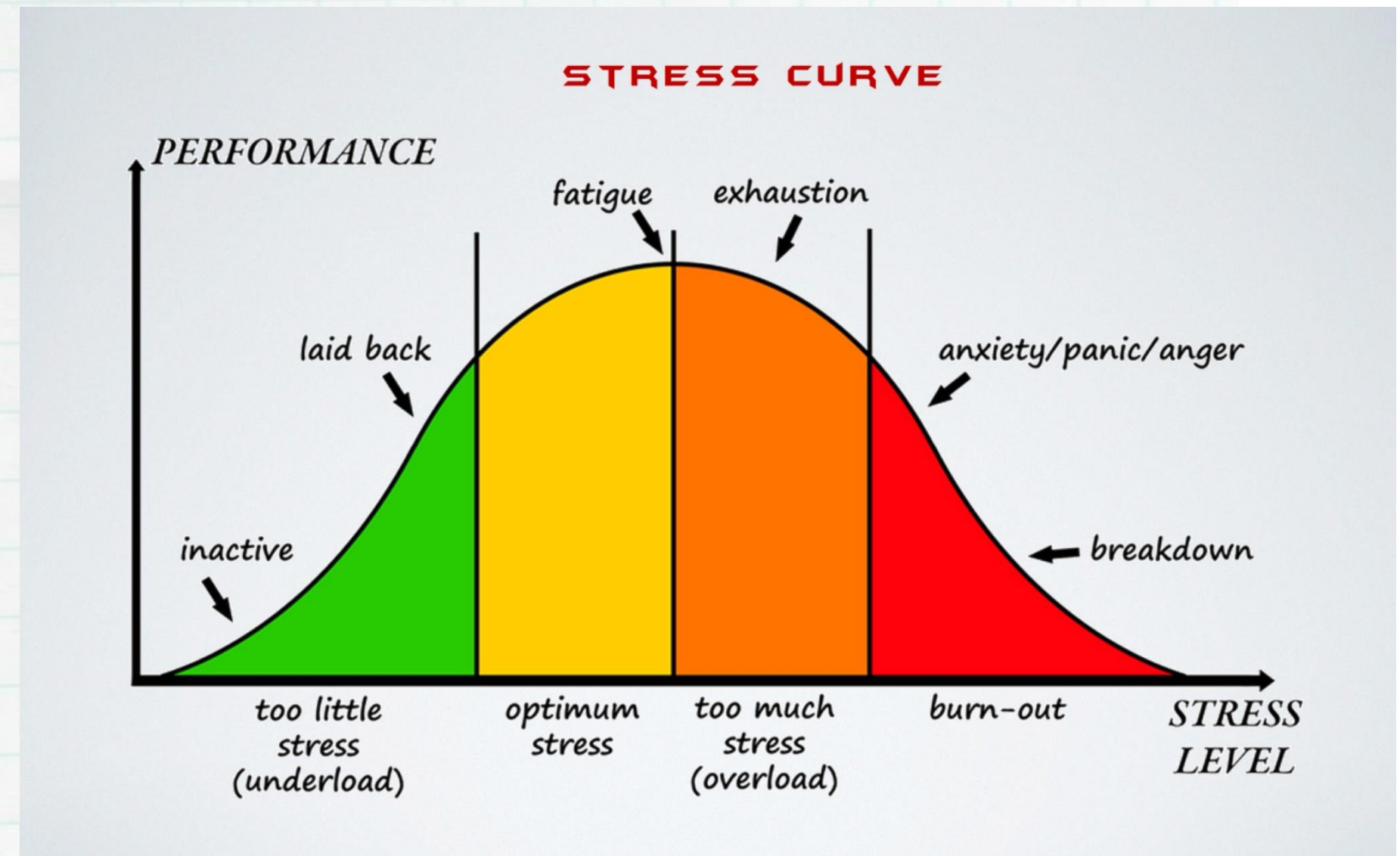
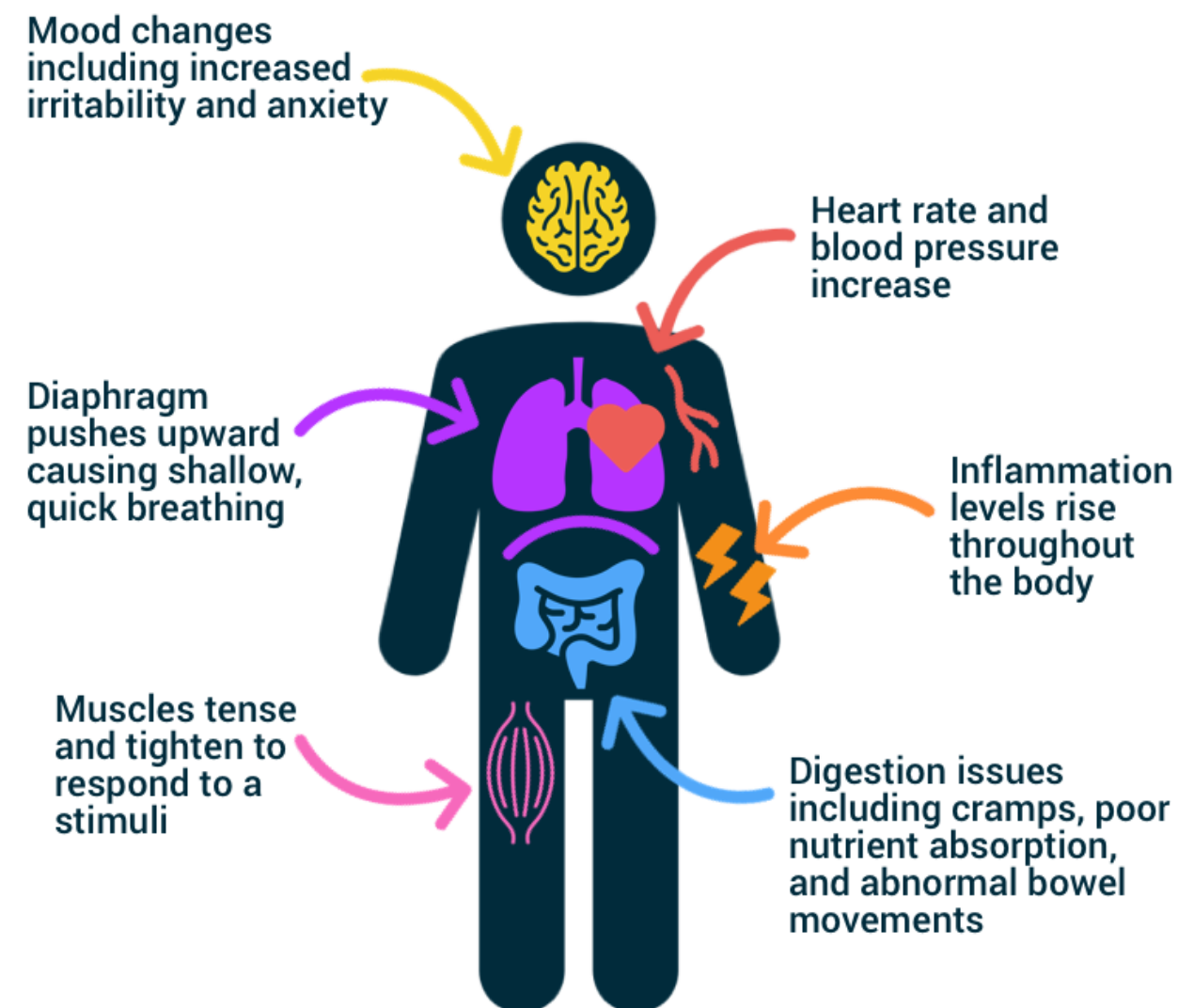
Teen mental health decreased, and suicides increased during the height of the pandemic. (CDC, 2022)

What Else?



THE IMPACT OF **STRESS** ON THE BODY.

Stress response in the body



What is the goal?



MYTH #2

KIDS WITH **ANXIETY** ALWAYS ACT NERVOUS





SYMPTOMS OF CHILDHOOD **ANXIETY**

- Agitation
- Restlessness
- Inattention, poor focus
- Somatic symptoms like headaches or stomachaches
- Avoidance
- Tantrums
- Crying
- Refusing to go to school
- Meltdowns before school about clothing, hair, shoes, socks
- Meltdowns after school about homework
- Difficulties with transitions within school, and between school and an activity/sport
- Difficulty settling down for bed
- Having high expectations for school work, homework and sports performance
- Selective Mutism (www.Anxiety.org)

What other disorder does this sound like?





MYTH #3

ANXIETY WILL JUST GO AWAY





WE CANNOT **IGNORE** THE TRUTH

Untreated Anxiety can Lead to...

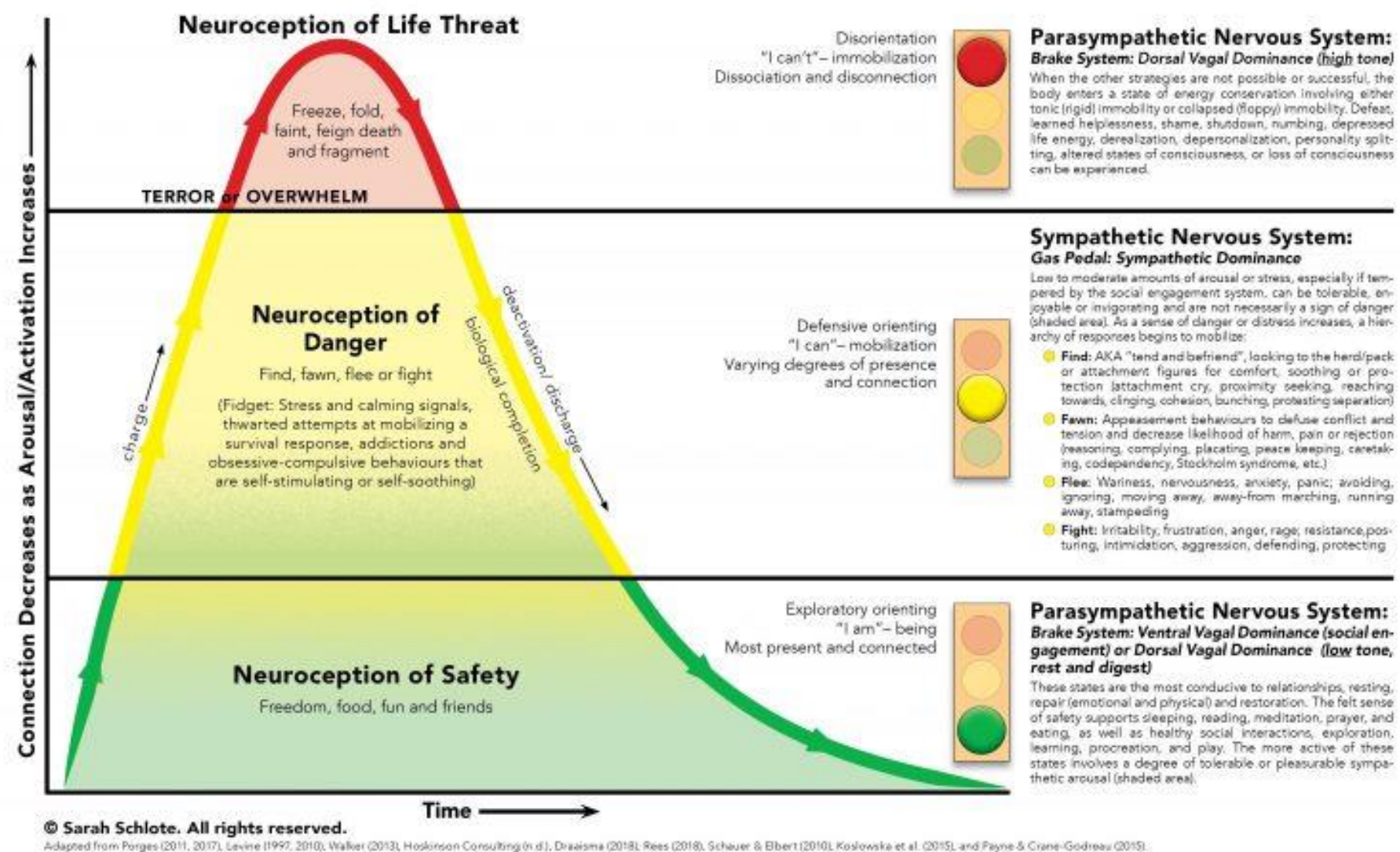
- **The anxiety depression connection**
- **Poor school achievement**
- **Poor social interactions**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Suicidal thoughts**
- **Health problems**



Nip anxiety in the Bud!!



WE CANNOT IGNORE THE TRUTH



Stress response in the body

Mood changes including increased irritability and anxiety

Heart rate and blood pressure increase

Diaphragm pushes upward causing shallow, quick breathing

Inflammation levels rise throughout the body

Muscles tense and tighten to respond to a stimuli

Digestion issues including cramps, poor nutrient absorption, and abnormal bowel movements

The Body Keeps the Score!!



MYTH #4

ANXIETY IS THE PARENT'S FAULT





A PARENT'S ROLE IN **ANXIETY**

Out of Your Control

- Your genetic history.
- External factors in our world (i.e. the pandemic, terrorism).
- Certain traumas.

What else?

Within Your Control

- Understanding your genetic history.
- Meeting the child's needs at home.
- Providing loving structure at home.
- Providing a peaceful environment at home.
- Providing positive reinforcement.
- Providing help for anxiety.
- Opening the lines of communication with your child.
- Providing empathy and non-judgmental feedback to your child.
- Providing limits on the news and social media.
- Providing a sense of calm instead of panic.
- Reminding your child that things will be JUST FINE.



MYTH #5

IT'S ALWAYS THE **SCHOOLS** FAULT





THE SCHOOLS ROLE IN ANXIETY

- **Awareness**

Acknowledgement of ACE's Adverse Childhood Experiences and it's role in anxiety. Constant training of all professionals.

- **Structure**

Providing rules/guidelines to keep everyone safe.

- **Safety**

Keeping students safe from physical and mental harm.

- **Improvement of School Climate/Culture**

Taking measures to reduce bullying and other forms of negative behavior in school.

- **Teaching Coping/Problem Solving Skills**

Providing a social skills curriculum to help students cope with distress.

- **Access to School Mental Health** (Hanie & Stanard, 2009)

Providing mental health services or mental health referrals to ALL students who need it. Crisis response services.





WHAT ELSE CAN THE SCHOOLS DO?





WHAT CAN YOU DO?





TRAUMA INFORMED PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Trauma: “Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as **physically or emotionally harmful** or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, **emotional**, or spiritual well-being”

- Identify the stressor
- Is it trauma?
- Trauma can be a Big T or little t
- Identify the feelings associated with the event
- Identify your child's goals
- Discuss different ways to solve the problem.
- Create a plan in line with your child's goals

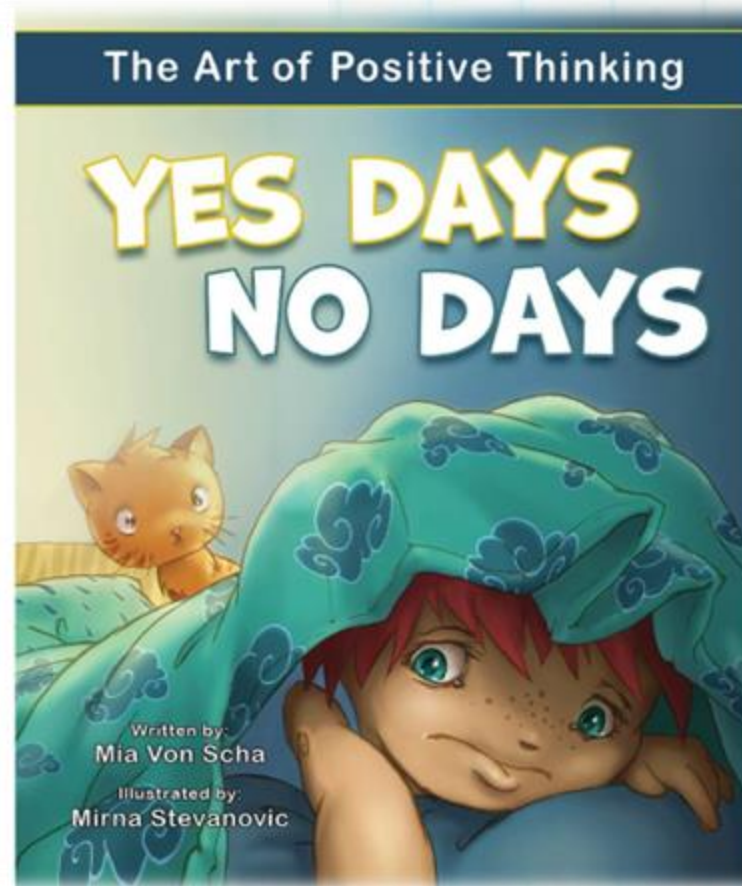
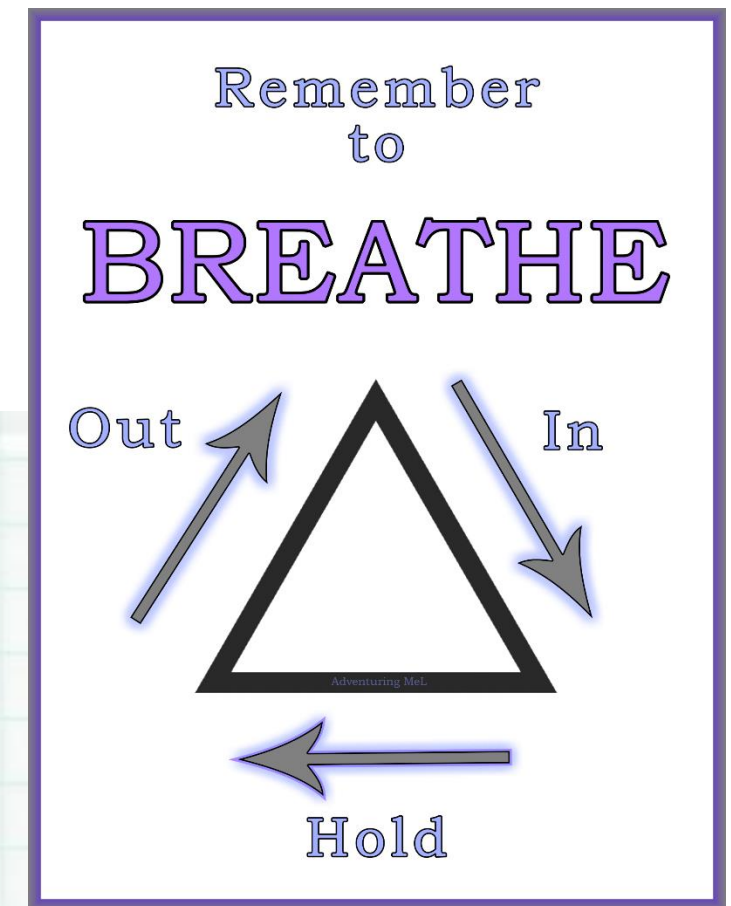




COPING SKILLS

What Zone Are You In?			
Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
Sick	Happy	Frustrated	Mad/Angry
Sad	Calm	Worried	Mean
Tired	Feeling Okay	Silly/Wiggly	Yelling/
Bored	Focused	Excited	Hitting
Moving Slowly	Ready to Learn	Loss of Some Control	Disgusted
			Out of Control

- Deep Breathing
- Positive Thinking
- Stop...Think...Make a Good Choice
- Zones of Regulation
- Biblio-therapy
- Body Scanning
- Stress Ball/Fidget
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Exercise



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

www.adailydoseoffit.com

Relieve stress and relax the body in three simple steps:

- 1) Lie flat on the floor in a quiet spot.
Take three deep breaths.
- 2) Tense up each major muscle group, starting with the feet and moving your way up the body.
- 3) Once finished, scan the body for any remaining tension.

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LET'S REGULATE

ZONES OF REGULATION



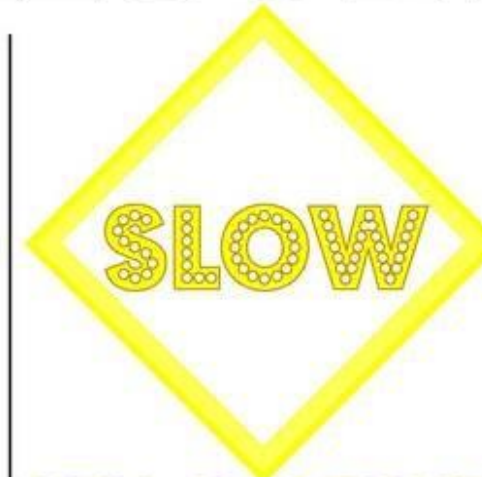
BLUE ZONE
Low State of Alertness

Bored
Tired
Sad
Disappointed
Sick
Depressed
Shy



GREEN ZONE
Ideal State of Alertness

Happy
Positive
Thankful
Proud
Calm
Content
Ready to Learn



YELLOW ZONE
Heightened State of Alertness

Excited
Silly
Annoyed
Worried
Embarrassed
Confused
Nervous



RED ZONE
Extremely Heightened
State of Alertness

Upset
Angry
Aggressive
Mad
Elated
Terrified
Out of Control



BREATHE OUT NEGATIVITY...

BREATHE IN POSITIVITY

THE 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Feeling overwhelmed or pacing? This countdown method can help you calm your mind.



Find **5** things you can **SEE** around you



Find **4** things you can **TOUCH** around you



Find **3** things you can **HEAR** around you



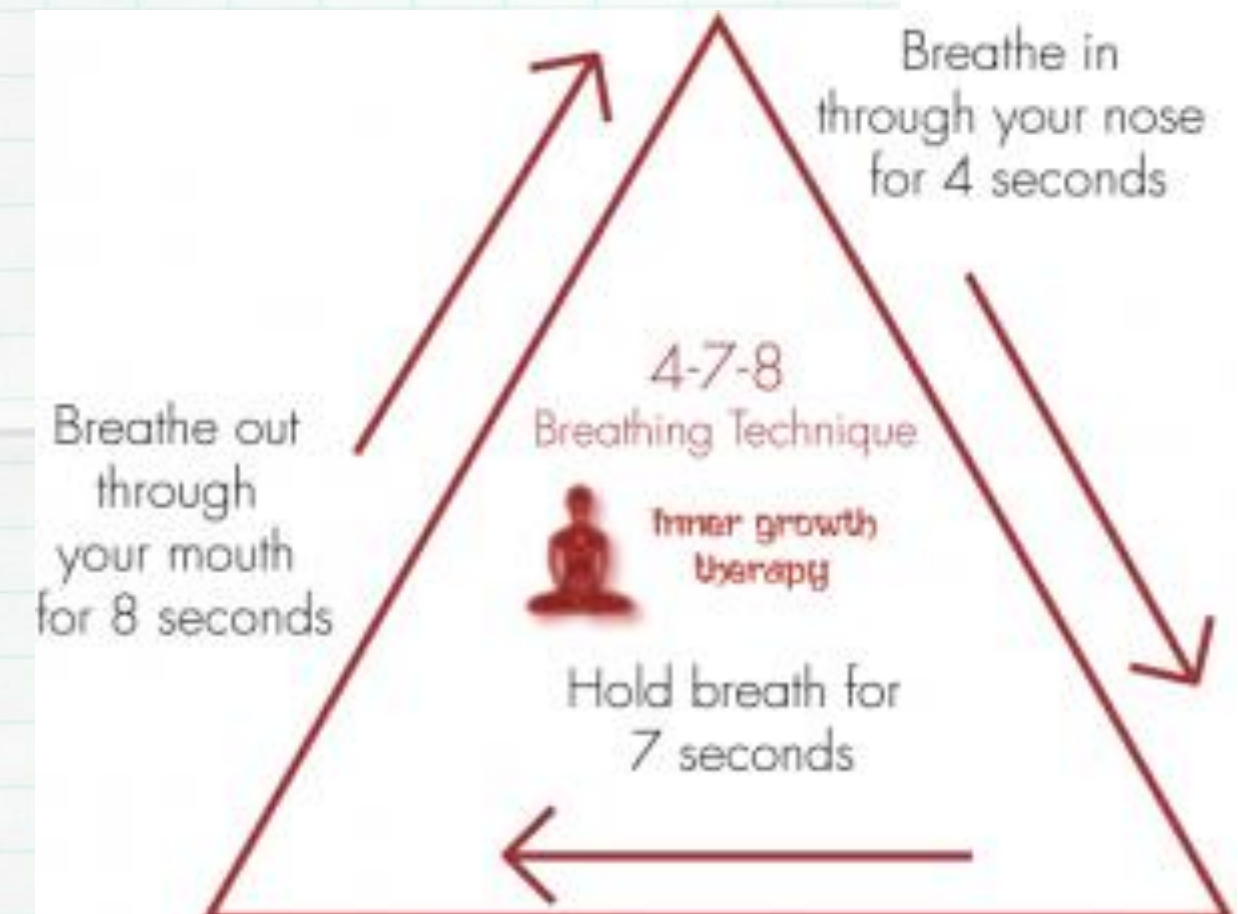
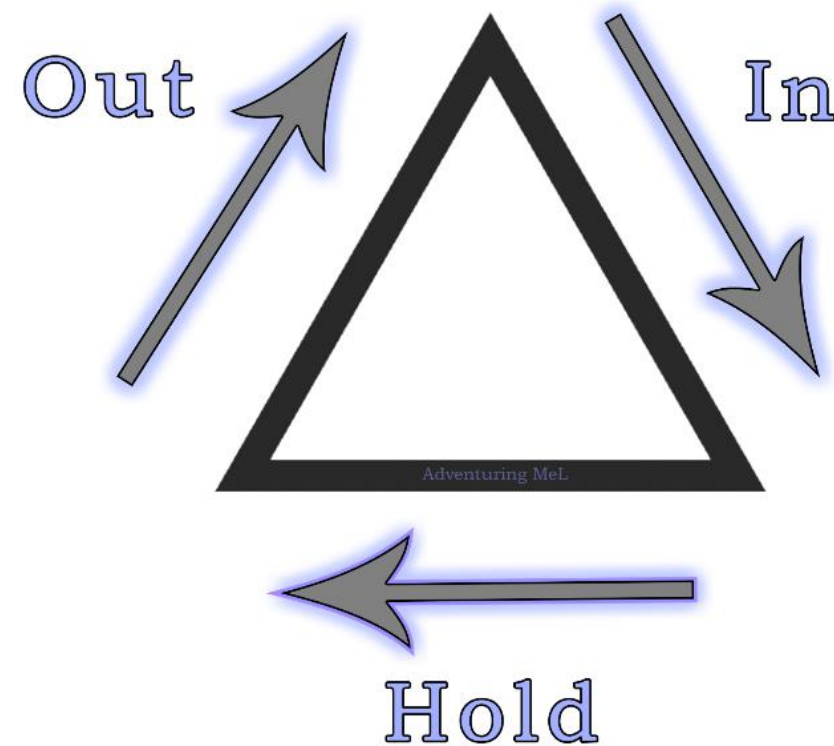
Find **2** things you can **SMELL** around you



Find **1** thing you can **TASTE**. (Swallow)

Remember
to

BREATHE





JUST RELAX!

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

www.adailydoseoffit.com

Relieve stress and relax the body in three simple steps:

- 1) Lie flat on the floor in a quiet spot.
Take three deep breaths.
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with the feet and moving your way up the body.
- 3) Once finished, scan the body for any remaining tension.



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KEEP A HEALTHY RHYTHM



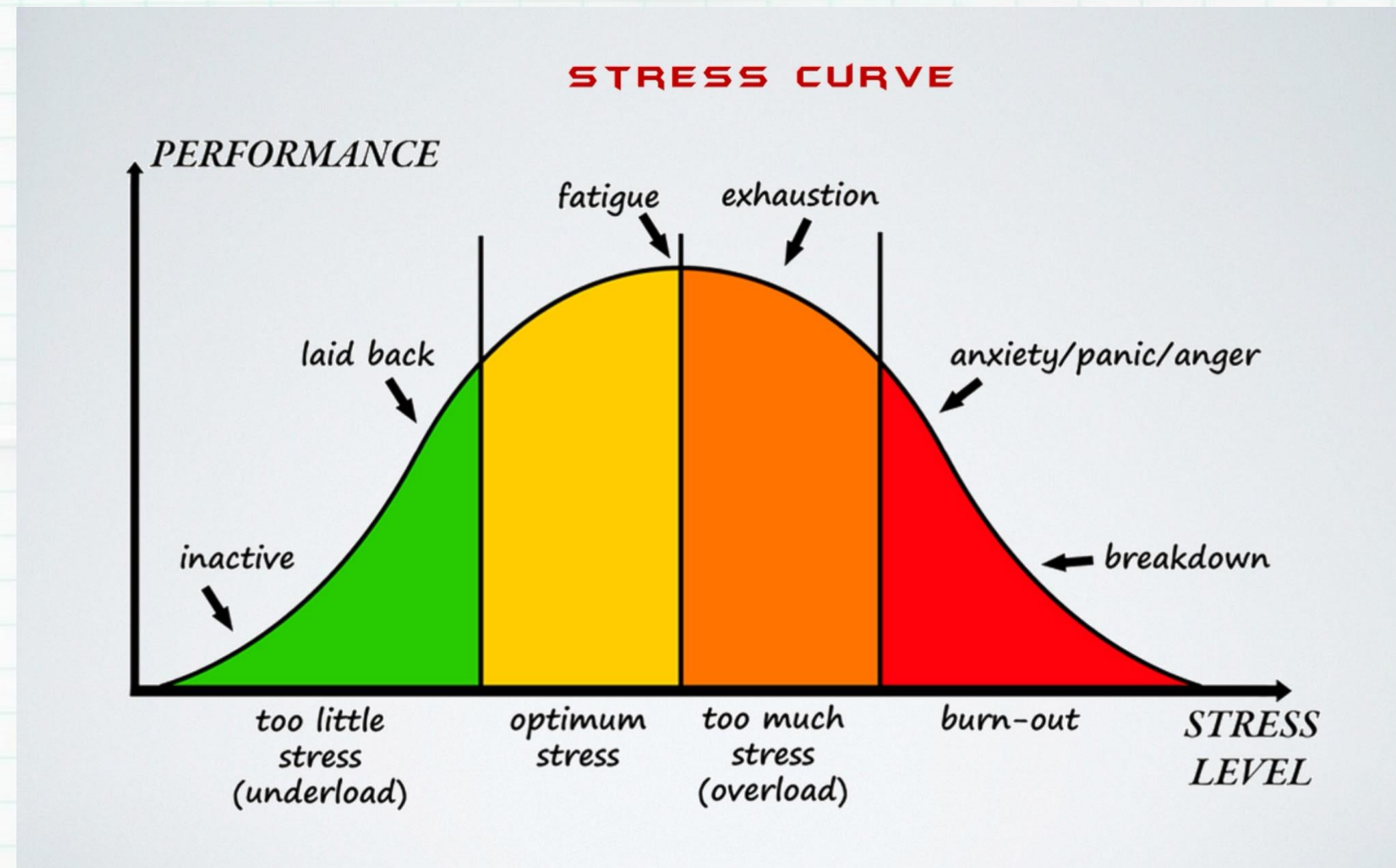
GUARD YOUR HEART!


- Limit watching the news.
- Limit social media.
- Watch/listen to comedic or inspirational entertainment.
- Practice faith or meditation.
- Do not let society dictate your feelings.
- Do not let society steal your joy!





REMEMBER THE GOAL





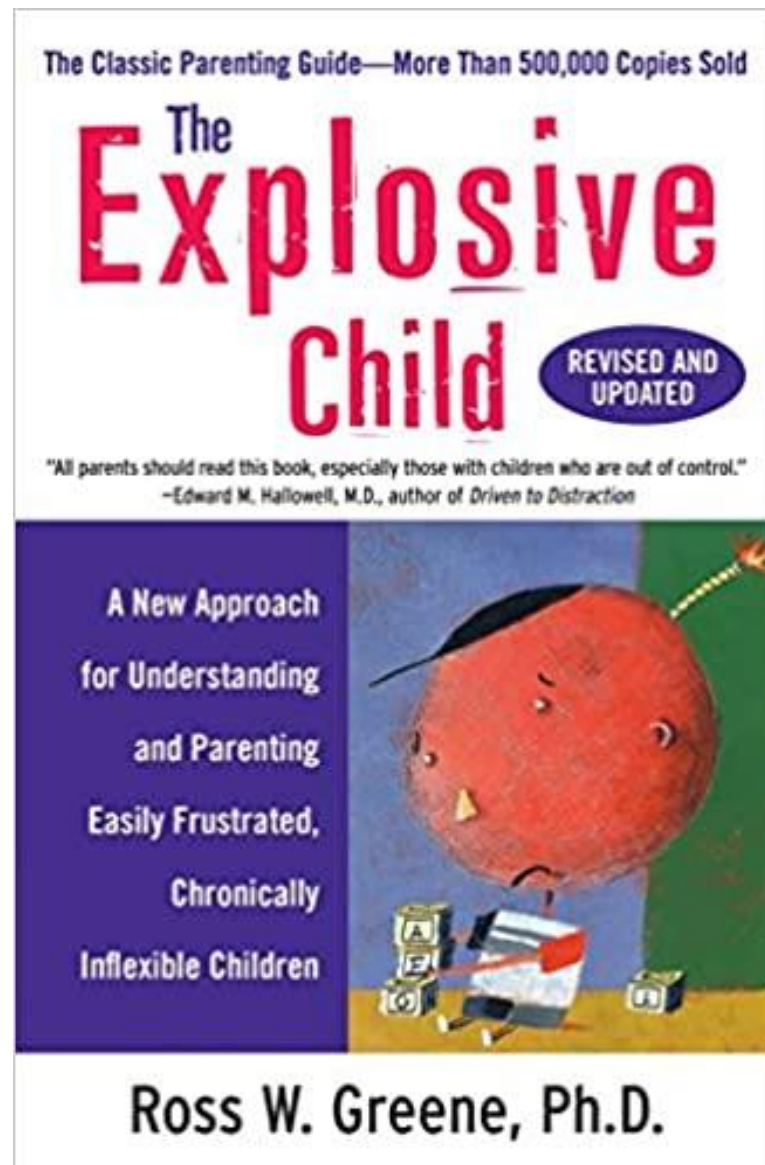
WAYS TO SEEK HELP

Therapy Works!



- www.psychologytoday.com
- www.therapyforblackgirls.com
- www.center-for-children.org/
- www.qcihealth.com/

RESOURCE PAGE



CDC. Childhood Anxiety

Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/anxiety-depression-children.html>

CDC. Positive Parenting Tips

Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/middle.html>

Hanie & Stanard, (2009). Students with Anxiety: The Role of the Professional School Counselor.

Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ871914.pdf>

Books on Anxiety: https://shop.puppydogsandicecream.com/pages/top-10-yesno-bogo-2-1-02-25-21?discount=bogo21&https://shop.puppydogsandicecream.com/&msclkid=d4b3bbe5cbd818e468dada7e7d78cdf6&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=search%20listicles&utm_term=anxiety%20coping%20skills%20for%20kids&utm_content=top%2010%20psychologist%20recommended%20books

&msclkid=d4b3bbe5cbd818e468dada7e7d78cdf6&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=search%20listicles&utm_term=anxiety%20coping%20skills%20for%20kids&utm_content=top%2010%20psychologist%20recommended%20books

Solving Life's Problems: A 5-Step Guide to Enhanced Well-Being by A.M. Nezu, C.M. Nezu, and T.J. D'Zurilla. Springer Publishing.




THANK YOU!!!

For Your Attention and Participation!

Any Questions???





NEED MORE INFO?

**Dr. Deidra A. Sorrell, School Psychologist
Mattawoman Middle School
Dsorrell@ccboe.com**