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# A Parent's Masterclass in Anxiety

Alexandra McCannel MA, LMFT

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- Mental Health Treatment- Day treatment services
- Private Practice
- School Consultant
- EIDBI Provider and QSP- Qualified Supervising Professional

# Systems Approach

- Improved outcomes came when I worked the family.
- Provided Education to parents
- Taught parents how to identify and respond
- Empowered the parents to model and teach their child

# A Parents Masterclass in Anxiety

Resume Course

## Welcome!

In this course, Alexandra McCannel, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, will empower you with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to improve your child's life and your whole family system. You will go from feeling overwhelmed and helpless to feeling empowered and equipped. This course includes four modules that provide psychoeducation on understanding how anxiety presents, responding to high anxiety moments, and using tools and strategies to maintain your child's mental health.


**16 of 17 Lessons Completed**

# Three step process to reducing anxiety

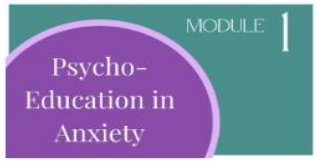
1. Education
2. Identification
3. Regulation

# Modules

6

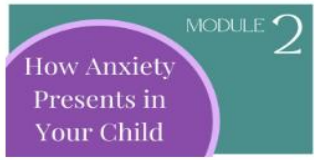

### Introduction

Welcome to the 'Masterclass in Anxiety. In this course, we will explore the topic of anxiety and its impact on your child.




### Module 1: Psycho-Education in Anxiety

In this first module, we are going to take a deep dive into what anxiety is, what happens in our brain, and how our functioning is impacted.




### Module 2: How Anxiety Presents in Your Child

Module 2 explains how anxiety presents. It's important to learn how your child's anxiety presents and teach them self-awareness skills so they can identify when they are feeling anxious.


### Module 3: How to Respond in the Moment

Module 3 focuses on how to respond to your child when they are in the trenches of high anxiety or a panic attack.


### Module 4: Strategies and Tools

Module 4 is all about the tools and strategies to use and how to maintain your child's overall mental health.

### Closing

# Module 1: Education

- Dive into the fundamentals of anxiety—what it is, what happens in the brain during anxious moments, and how the anxiety cycle can impact your child’s functioning. By grasping the science behind anxiety, you’ll be better equipped to recognize its effects on your child’s behavior and emotions.

- Go from feeling overwhelmed and helpless to feeling empowered and helpful

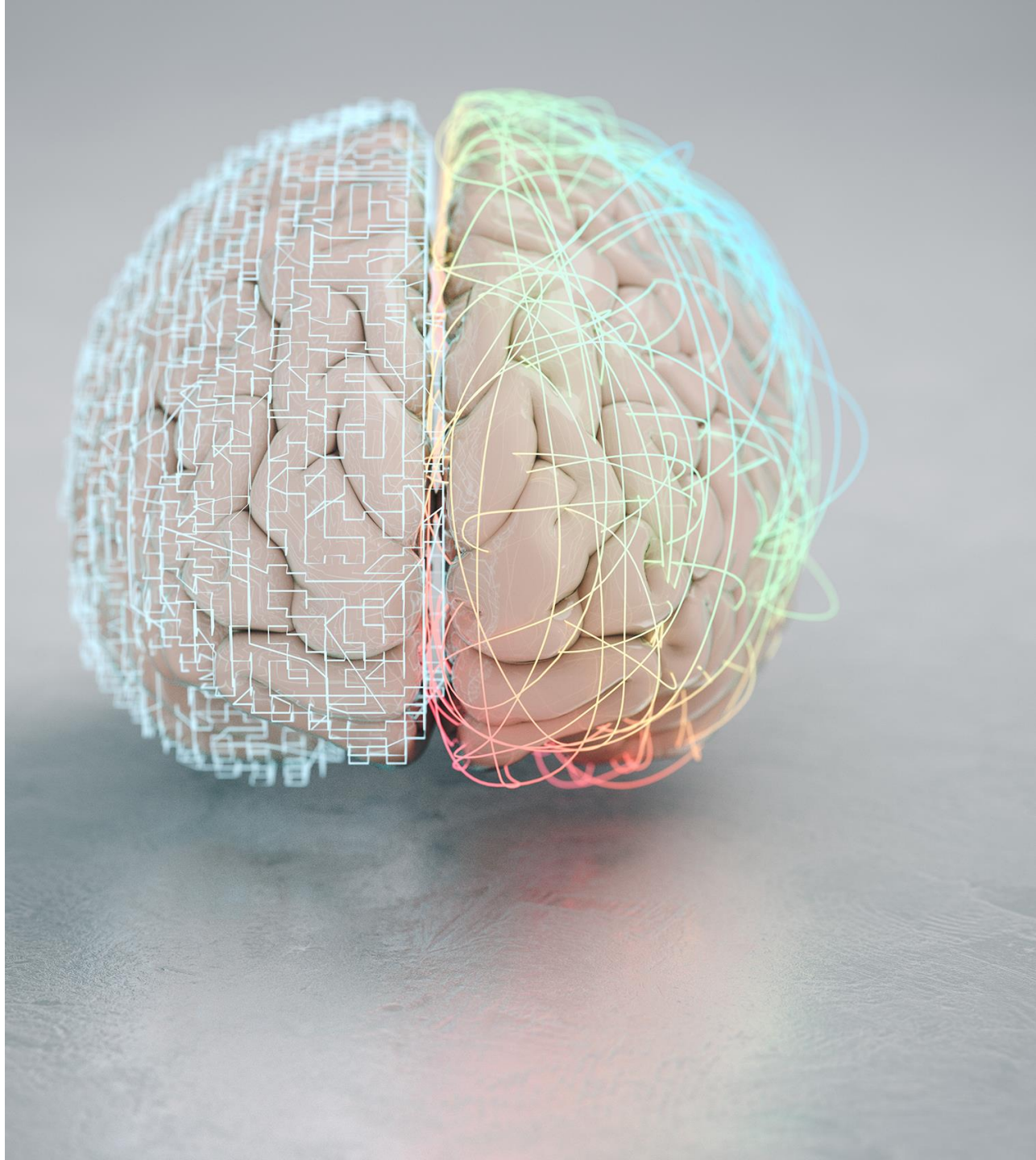
# Step 1: Education

Anxiety can feel lonely and scary. In order to decrease it we have to understand what it is.

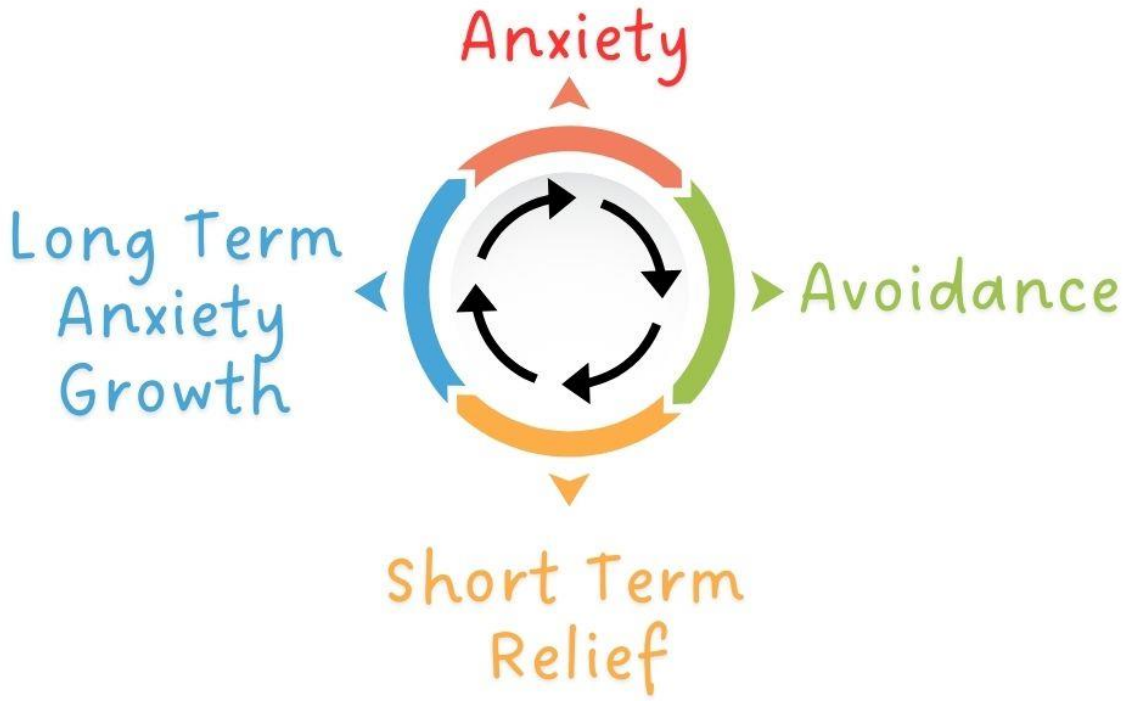
The power to change comes from  gained knowledge and understanding.

# Lesson 2:
# In This Lesson You Will Learn

- What happens in the Brain when we feel anxious
- What Skills we lose when our Frontal Lobe goes off-line
- Difference between Upstairs and Downstairs Thinking
- Autonomic Nervous System



# Anxiety Cycle



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# Step 2: Identification

- Parents learn how to identify how anxiety presents in their child.
- How to teach your child to The  develop self-awareness

# Module 2: Identifying Anxiety in Your Child

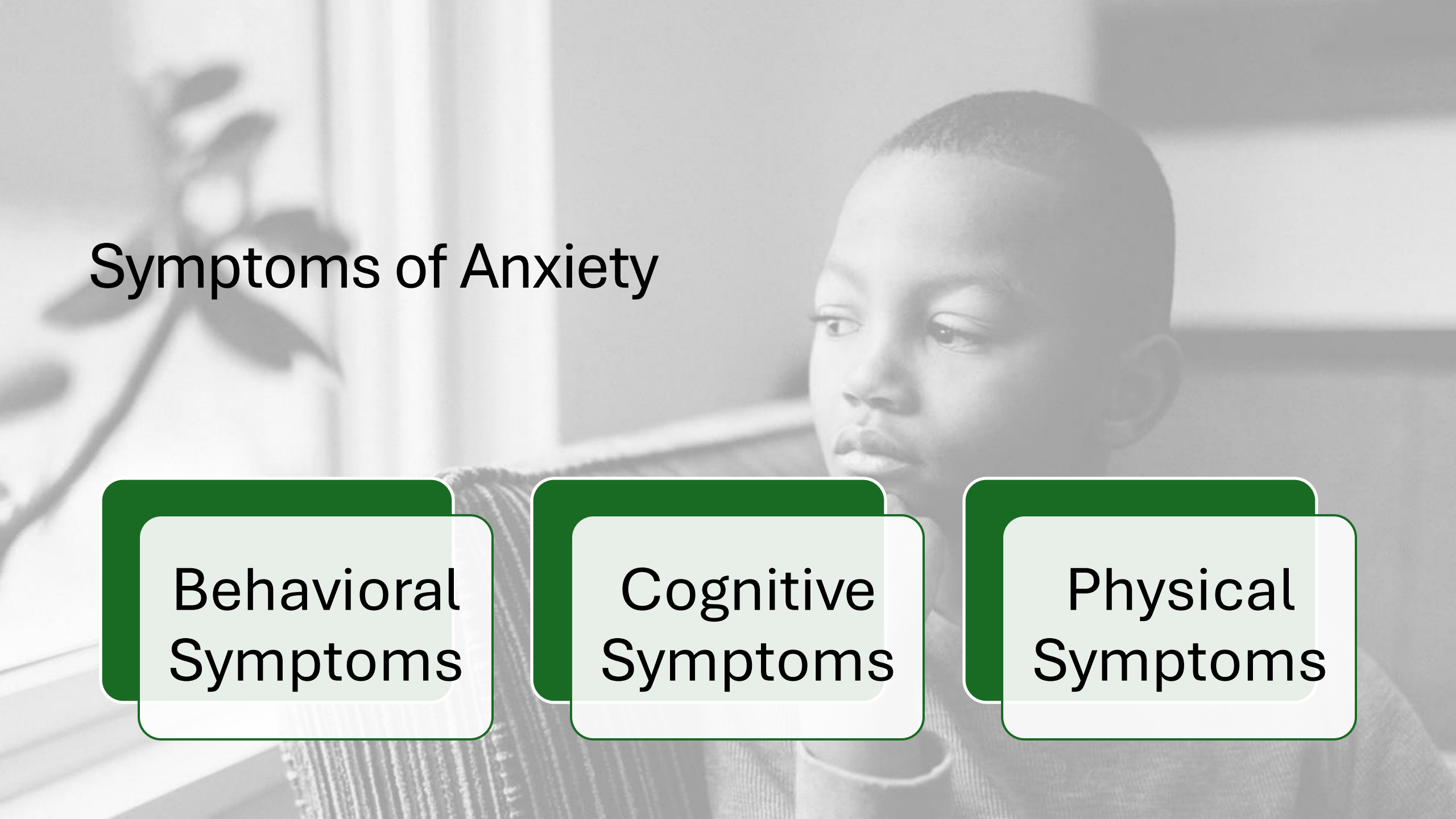
- Explore how anxiety manifests in children, focusing on downstairs brain thinking and the role of primary and secondary emotions. This module will help you understand how anxiety can hinder your child's ability to function, equipping you to identify the signs and address them appropriately.

# Anxiety's many looks

- Anger
- Frustration
- Sadness
- Isolation
- Obsessive Compulsive Behaviors
- Risky Behavior
- Self-medication

# Anger and Frustration

When asked "why don't you want to go to school" Child responds by slamming their door and yelling back

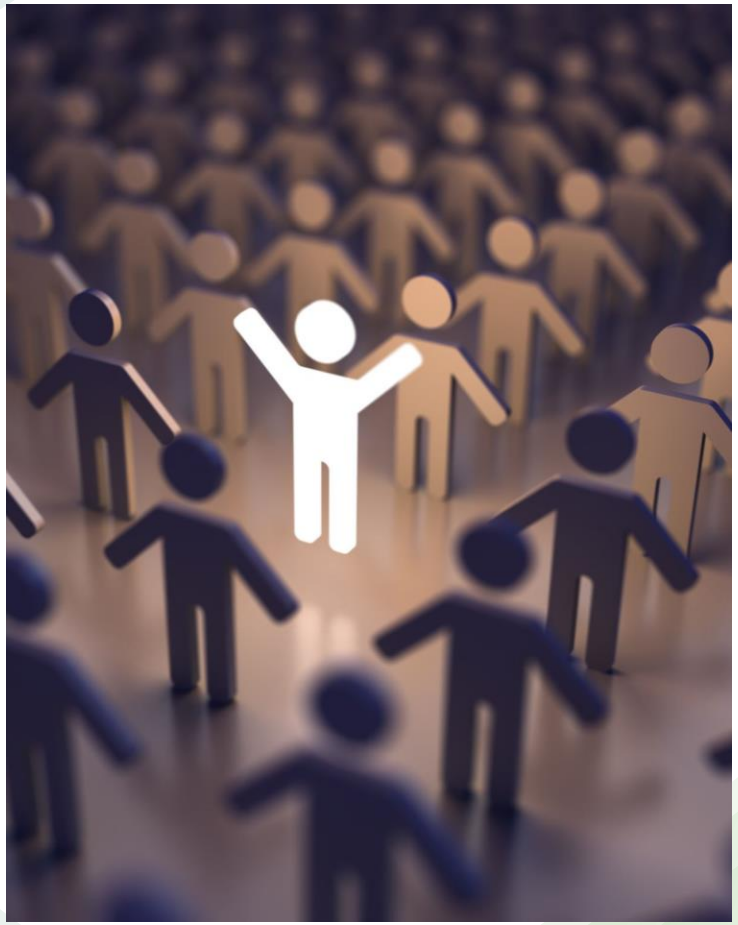


# Symptoms of Anxiety

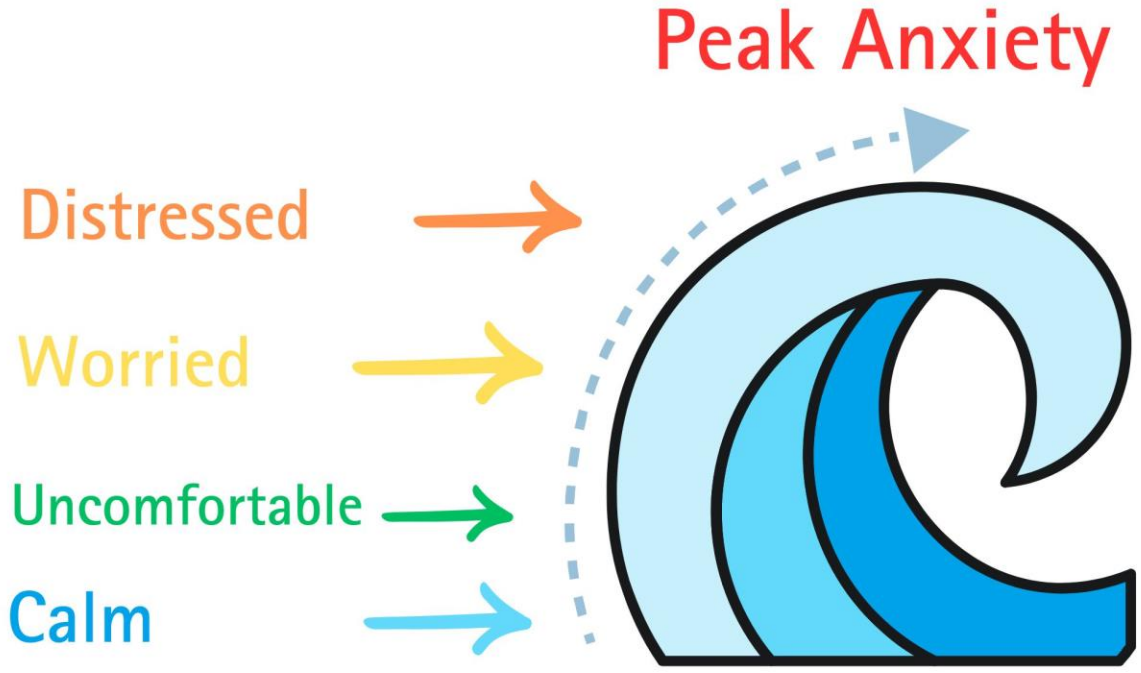
- Behavioral Symptoms
- Cognitive Symptoms
- Physical Symptoms

# 4 Steps to Build Self-Awareness

1. Body Scan
2. Label Emotions
3. Model
4. Reflection



# Anxiety Emotion Wave



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# Step 3: Regulation

- Co-Regulation
- Self-Regulation

# Module 3: Effective Responses to Anxiety

- Learn how to respond to your child’s anxiety with compassion and strategies that work. This module covers exposure techniques, co-regulation practices, calming strategies, and the importance of boundary setting. You’ll leave with practical tools to support your child in real-time.

# Co-Regulation

Co-regulation is the interactive process by which caring adults

(1) provide warm supportive relationships,

(2) promote self-regulation through coaching, modeling, and feedback

(3) structure supportive environments

(Co-Regulation From Birth Through Young Adulthood: A Practice Brief; Murray et al., 2019).

# The Three R's




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# Co-Regulation

Be the calm and in control person you want them to be.

Model what you want them to do

Acknowledge and validate their experience and feelings

Empathetic language

You don't have to talk

Don't put demands on them

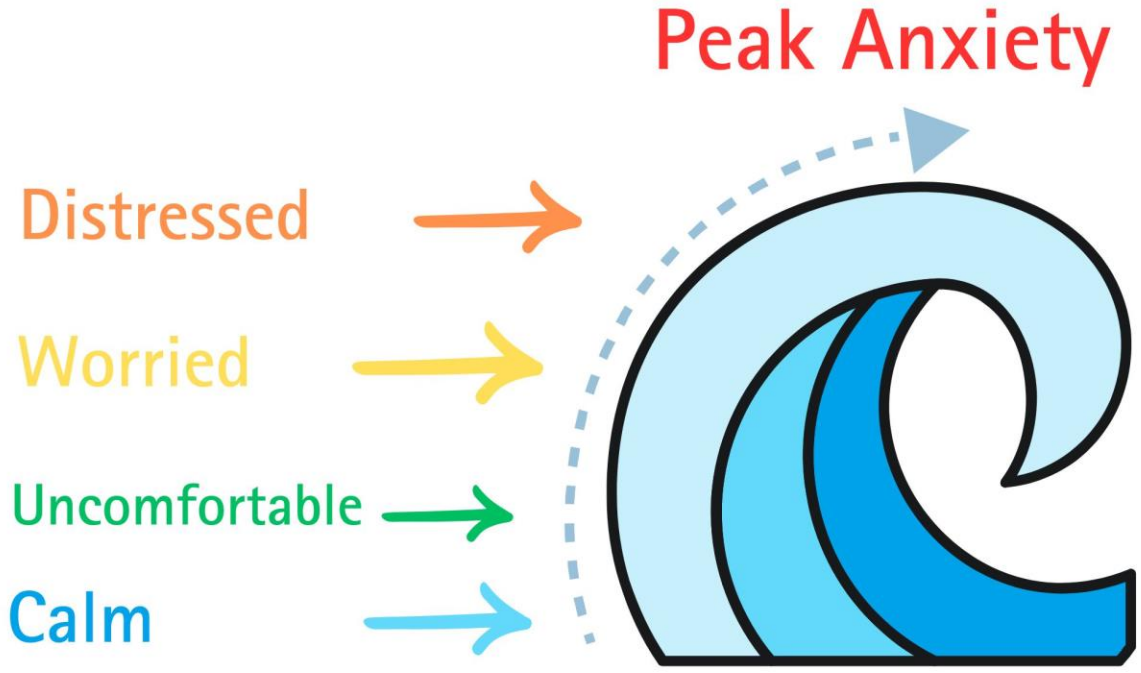
Goal is to be the calming presence so that they can calm

Employing coping skills WITH them

# Module 4: Preventative Techniques and Building Resilience

- Discover preventative strategies that can help your child manage anxiety before it escalates. This module focuses on empowering your child and fostering resilience, providing you with techniques to instill confidence and a sense of control in their lives.

# Anxiety Emotion Wave



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# Teach them to ride the wave

- Provide them with the language – pair their physical symptoms to the emotional
- Do not avoid the anxious feeling
- Teach them about anxiety
- If they continue to avoid the feeling it will only grow

# Why Resilience is  Important

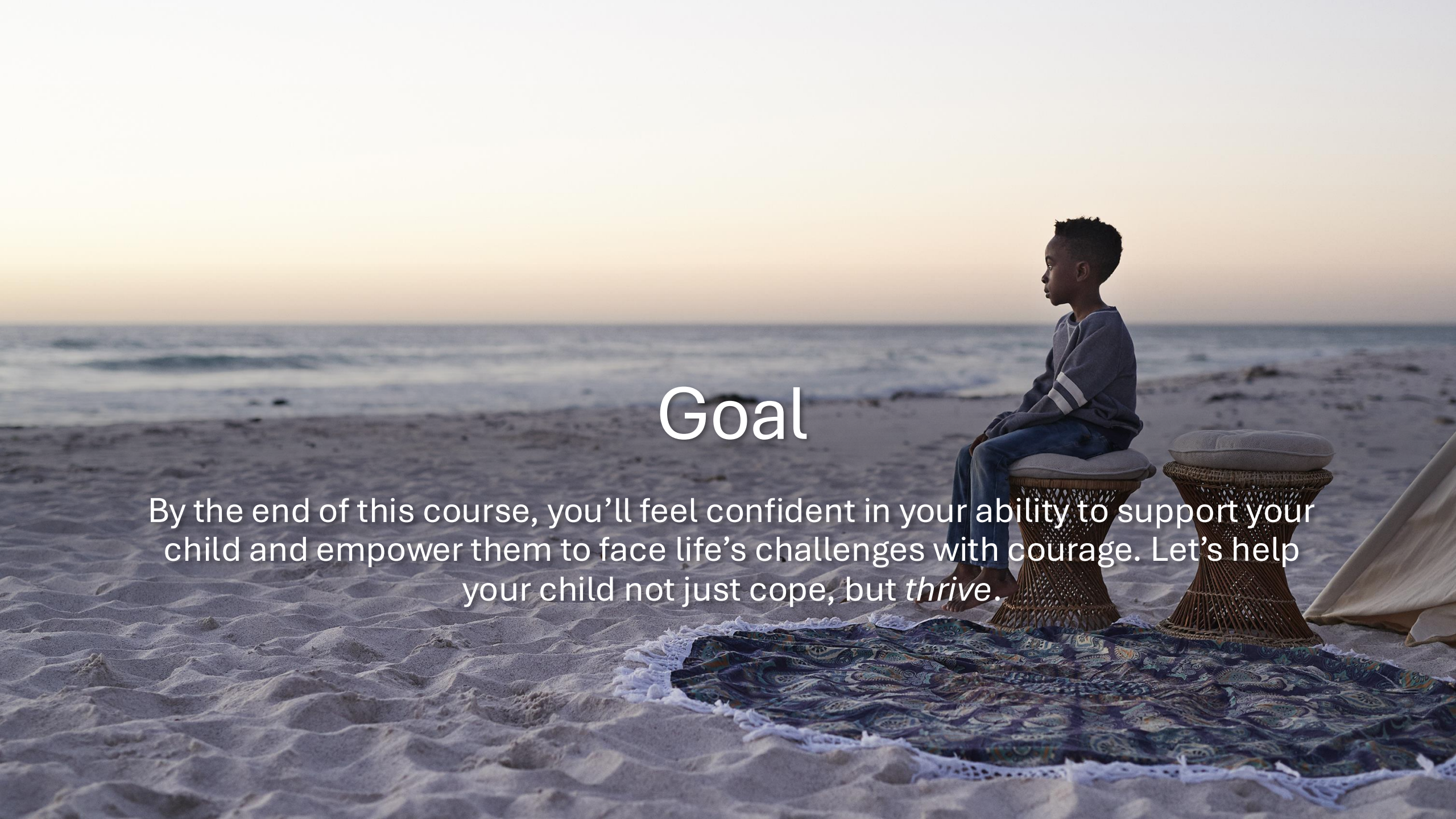
- It sets children up for success throughout their life.
- Without the skill of resiliency, life will be more difficult, overwhelming, and isolating
- Increases their problem solving skills
- Increases self-worth
- Increases the ability to take healthy risks

# How to Externalize

- Model separation language
- Name it to tame it!
- Draw a picture
- Talk back to the anxiety

# Mindfulness Strategies

- Spiderman Meditation: What you hear outside, what you hear inside, what's going on in your body…
- Grounding: 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.
- Pick a color: find all the things in the room that are that color
- Draw a picture of favorite place- what do you hear, what do you see, who is there
- I Spy



# Goal

By the end of this course, you'll feel confident in your ability to support your child and empower them to face life's challenges with courage. Let's help your child not just cope, but *thrive*.

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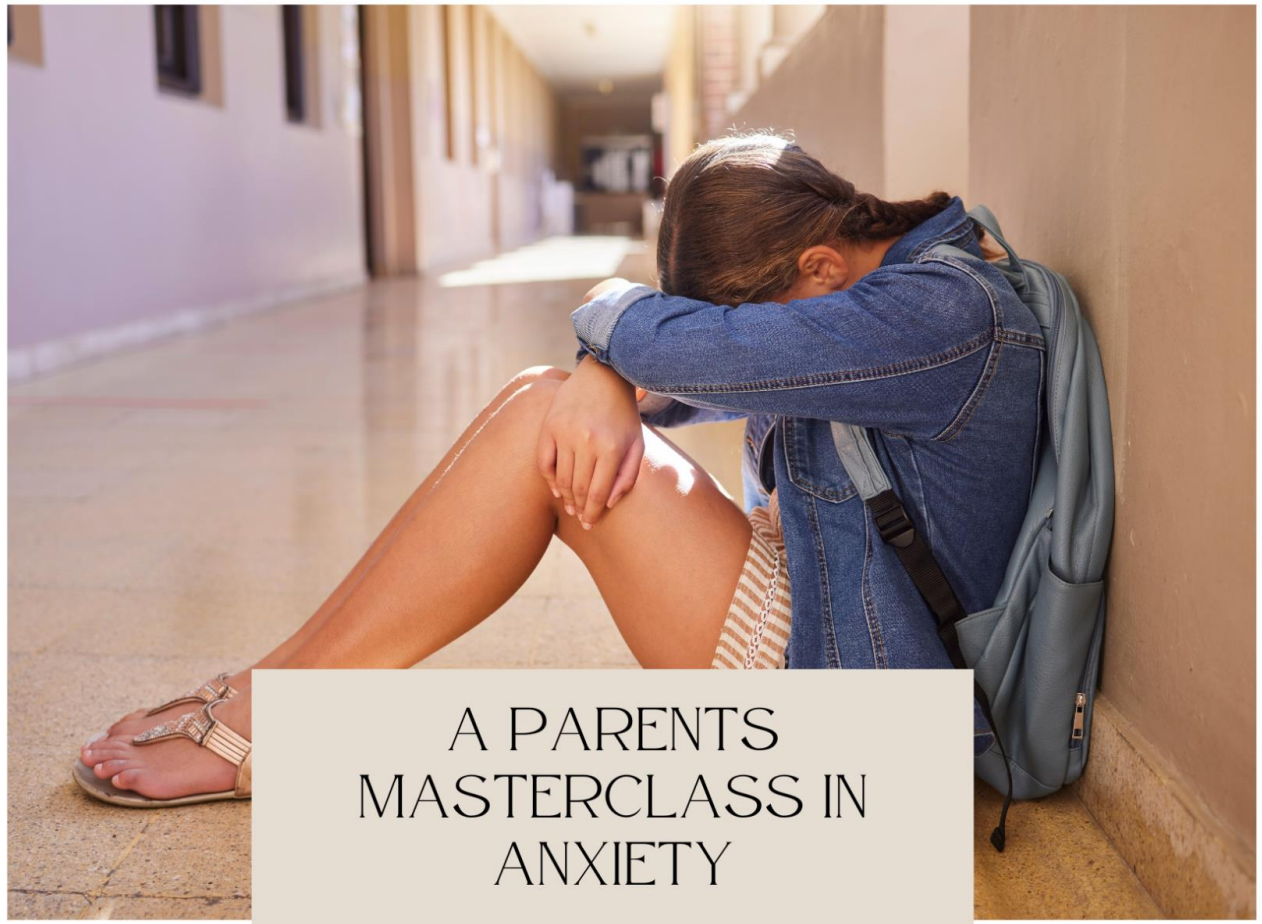

# A PARENTS MASTERCLASS IN ANXIETY

## A Parent's Guide to Navigating Childhood Anxiety

ALEXANDRA MCCANNEL MA, LMFT

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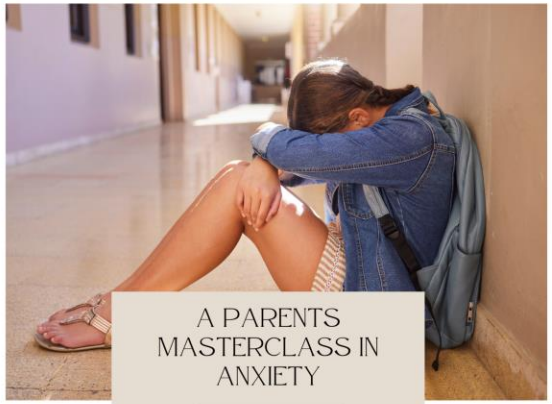


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