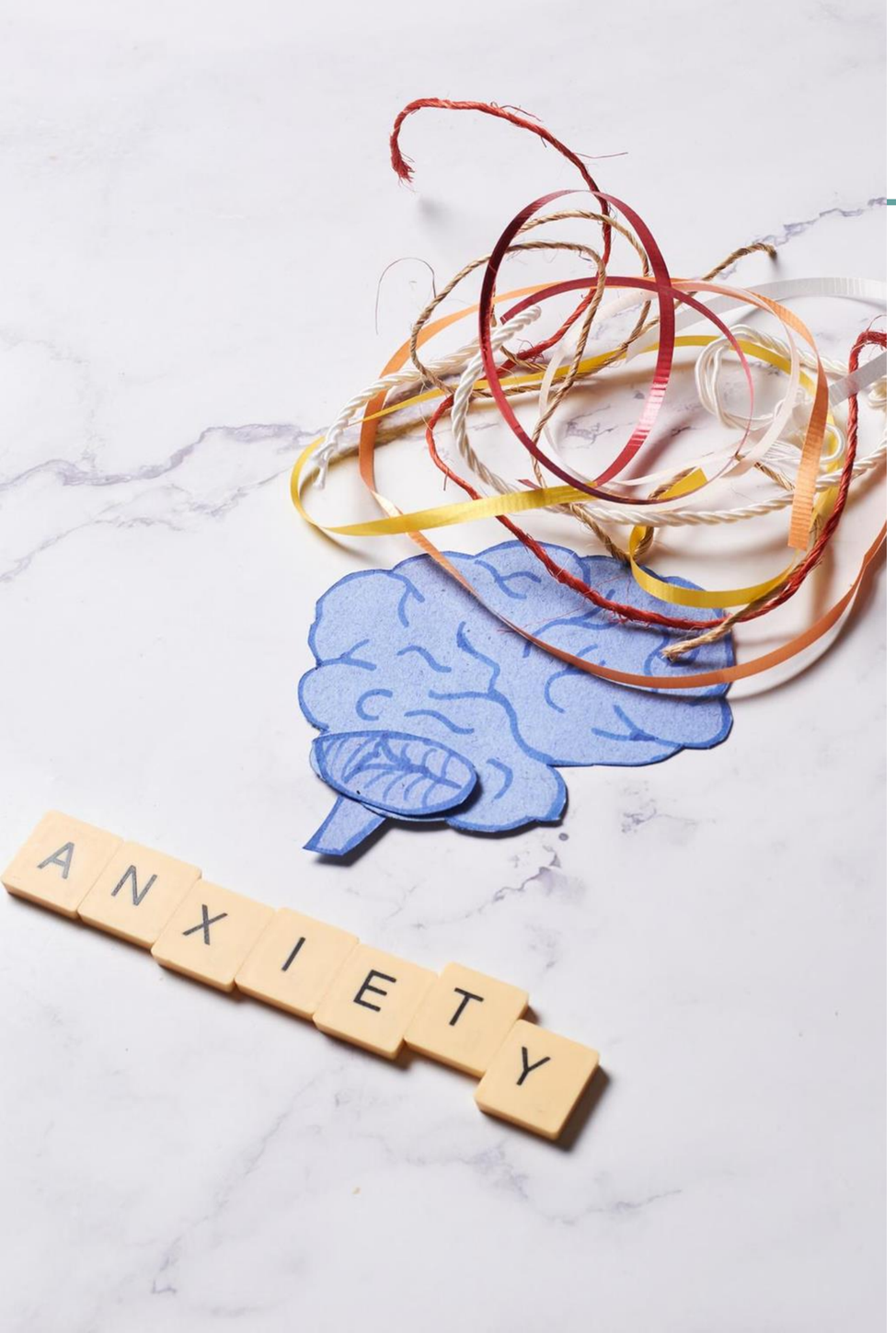
COFFEE WITH MRS. ORTIZ

Today's Topic: Understanding Anxiety and How to Support Your Child





Agenda:

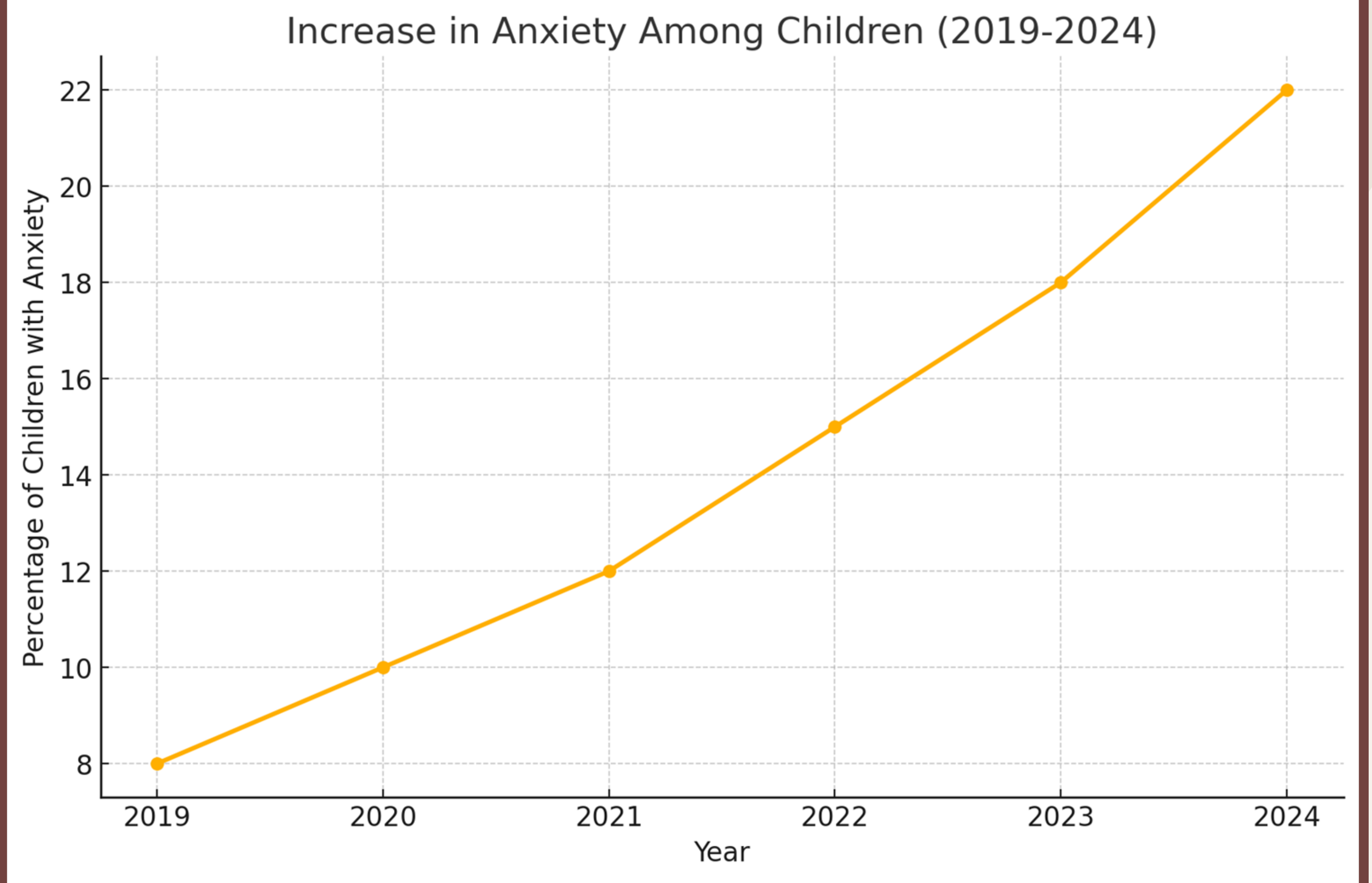
1. Understanding and Recognizing Anxiety
2. Impact of Anxiety on Children
3. How Parents Can Support an Anxious Child
4. Strategies for Managing Anxiety at Home

Opening Exercise

https://www.gonoodle.com/videos/72GyKY/bee-breath



Today's Topic: Understanding Anxiety and How to Support Your Child


Increase in Anxiety Among Children (2019-2024)
Percentage of Children with Anxiety
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
Year

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY



Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. When anxiety does not go away, increases over time, and interferes with daily activities, this is when anxiety can be a concern.

Normal Anxiety

OCCASIONAL WORRIES

It’s normal for children to experience occasional worries or fears about everyday events, such as a test, a new school, or making friends

TEMPORARY

Typical anxiety tends to be temporary, a response to a specific situation, and it usually resolves on its own or with minimal support

DOES NOT INTERFERE SIGNIFICANTLY

Normal anxiety does not significantly interfere with a child's daily functioning, academic performance, or relationships

Problematic Anxiety

INTENSITY AND FREQUENCY

Problematic anxiety has intense and frequent worries that are disproportionate to the situation. The child may feel anxious most of the time, even in the absence of an obvious stressor

DURATION AND IMPAIRED FUNCTIONING

Persists over an extended period, often for several months and does not resolve on its own. Significantly impairs various areas: academics, social relationships, and overall well-being

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS AND AVOIDANCE

May experience headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, or changes in sleep patterns. To cope with anxiety, a child might avoid school, social situations, or activities they used to enjoy

COMMON SIGNS OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN:

AVOIDANCE

- Avoiding places, people, or activities that trigger anxiety

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Complaints of headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, or other physical discomforts without an apparent medical cause

PERFECTIONISM

- Setting unrealistically high standards for themselves
- Becoming overly upset or frustrated when they make a mistake

CHANGES IN SLEEP

- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep

EXCESSIVE WORRYING

- Expressing worries about a wide range of topics including: school, family, health, or the future

SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

- Isolating themselves from peers or avoiding social situations

ATTENTION & CONCENTRATION ISSUES

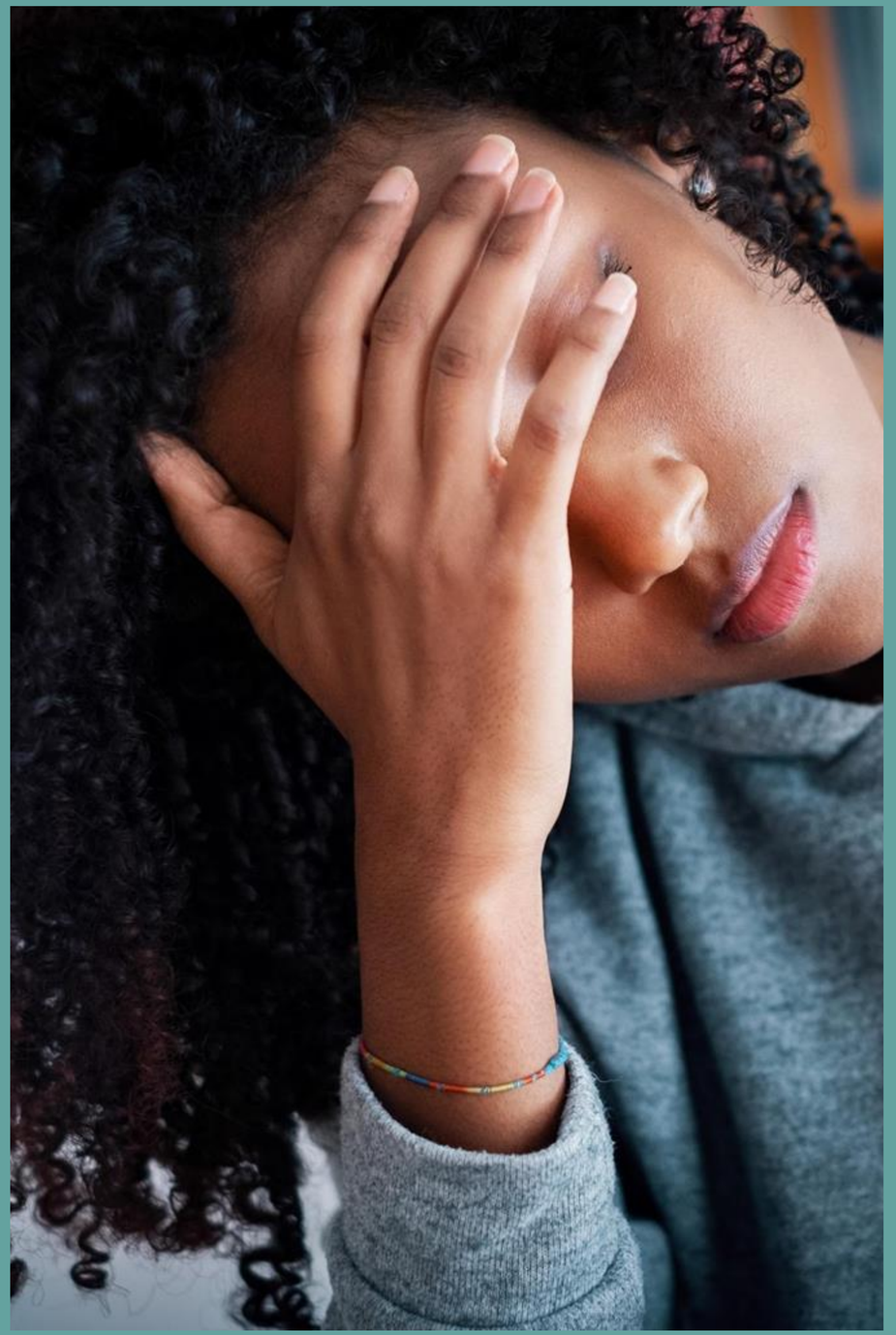
- Difficulty focusing or completing assignments
- Restlessness or becoming easily distracted

IRRITABILITY

- Increased irritability or mood swings.
- Outbursts of anger or frustration

IMPACT OF ANXIETY

- Academic Performance
- Social Relationships
- Physical Health



IMPACT OF ANXIETY:

Academic Performance



CONCENTRATION AND FOCUS

- Children with anxiety may struggle to concentrate on tasks or schoolwork.
- Persistent worry or preoccupation with anxious thoughts can interfere with the ability to focus.

ATTENDANCE

- Chronic anxiety may contribute to school avoidance or reluctance to attend classes.
- Physical symptoms of anxiety (stomachaches or headaches) may lead to frequent visits to the school nurse.

TEST PERFORMANCE

- Anxiety can negatively impact performance on exams and standardized tests.
- Test anxiety may lead to blanking out, difficulty recalling information, or making careless mistakes.

MEMORY/LEARNING

- Can impair memory and hinder the ability to retain new information.
- Learning may be compromised as anxious thoughts interfere with cognitive processes.

IMPACT OF ANXIETY:

Social Relationships



SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

- Anxious children may be more prone to withdrawing from social interactions, preferring to avoid situations that trigger their anxiety.

DIFFICULTY MAKING FRIENDS

- Anxiety can contribute to challenges in initiating and maintaining friendships.
- The fear of judgment or rejection may lead to hesitancy in reaching out to others or joining group activities.

FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION

- Children with social anxiety may have an intense fear of being negatively evaluated by their peers.
- This fear can lead to avoidance of social situations, limiting the chance to form connections.

OVERDEPENDENCE ON FAMILIAR PEOPLE

- Anxious children may gravitate toward familiar individuals (such as family members or close friends) and find it challenging to branch out and form new connections.

IMPACT OF ANXIETY:

Physical Health



STOMACHACHES & DIGESTIVE ISSUES

- Anxiety can contribute to stomachaches, nausea, and other digestive problems
- “Butterflies in the stomach" feeling is a common physical symptom of anxiety

HEADACHES

- Tension and stress associated with anxiety can lead to headaches
- Chronic or recurrent headaches may be linked to underlying anxiety issues

CHANGES IN SLEEP

- Excess worry and fear can make it difficult to fall or stay asleep

FATIGUE

- Anxious thoughts and worries can be mentally exhausting, leading to physical fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping due to anxiety may contribute to tiredness during the day

MUSCLE TENSION & PAIN

- Persistent anxiety can result in muscle tension and pain
- Clenching or grinding teeth is another result of anxiety

CHANGES IN APPETITE

- Anxiety may lead to changes in appetite, with some children eating more and others losing interest in food

INCREASED HEART RATE

- Increased heart rate due to anxiety feels like a racing or pounding heart
- Shallow breathing or hyperventilation can occur during heightened anxiety

SKIN ISSUES

- Stress and anxiety may aggravate skin conditions such as eczema
- Nervous habits like skin picking may also arise as a way of coping with anxiety

HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT AN ANXIOUS CHILD:



HELP THEM FACE THEIR FEARS

- Don’t try to remove stressors that trigger anxiety
- Help them learn to tolerate what is making them anxious. The anxiety will decrease over time.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

- Respect and validate their feelings, but don’t empower them
- Listen and be empathetic – and then encourage them to feel that they can face their fears.

DON’T ASK LEADING QUESTIONS

- Don’t ask, “Are you anxious about your test tomorrow?”. Instead ask open ended questions, “How are you feeling about your test tomorrow?”

TROUBLESHOOT WITH YOUR CHILD

- Talk through what your child is anxious about
- Help create a plan on how to handle what is making them feel anxious
- Having a plan can help reduce anxiety

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING ANXIETY AT HOME:



EXPRESS CONFIDENCE

- Let your child know they are going to be ok, even when they are scared
- Express confidence that they can face their fears and feel less afraid over time.

TEACH RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

- Practice deep breathing or mindfulness
- Practice these techniques together during calm moments to make them more familiar

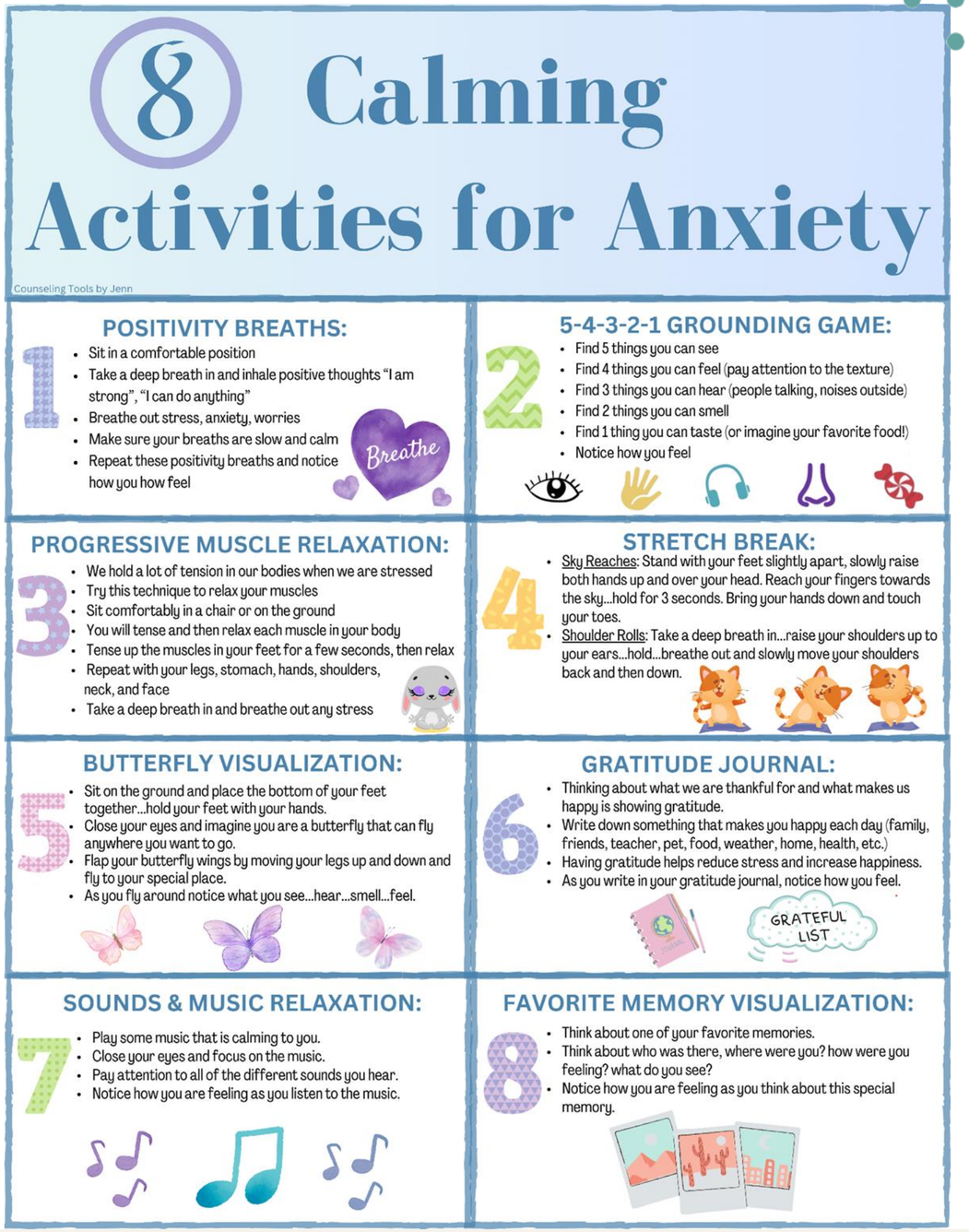
MODEL HEALTHY COPING

- Demonstrate healthy coping skills by managing your own stress in positive ways
- Model healthy problem solving in the face of challenges

OUTSIDE SUPPORT

- Communicate with teachers and school counselor about your child's anxiety
- Talk with your child's pediatrician about concerns

ADDITIONAL CALMING ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE AT HOME WITH YOUR CHILD



Thank you!

Any Questions or Comments?