

Supporting Child & Adolescent Mental Health



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Pair Share

- © What did you know about mental health growing up?
- © How did you know it?
- © What do you want your children to know?

Most children experience positive mental health

- Affectionate with parents/caregivers
- Bounce back quickly when things don't go their way
- Show interest or curiosity in learning new things
- Smile and laugh
- Show interest and curiosity in learning new things
- Stay calm and in control when facing challenges
- Work to finish tasks they start

Retrieved March 6, 2025 from: <https://www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/data-research/index.html>

Some experience challenge

- Almost 20% of children and young people ages 3-17 in the U. S. have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder.

Anxiety problems, behavior disorders, and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children. Based on US data from 2021–2022: [\[1\]](#)

- 10% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed anxiety (9% of males and 11% of females).
- 7% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed behavior disorders (10% of males and 5% of females)
- 4% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed depression (3% of males and 6% of females).

- Death by suicide increased 62% from 2007 to 2021 among 10- to 24-year olds
- Suicide is also rising significantly among preteens, as young as 8 years of age, 8.2% annual increase from 2008-2022
- Mental health challenges were the leading cause of death and disability in this age group. These trends were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Childhood:

Supporting Social Development in Elementary School



Helping Your Child Build Friendships, Communication, and Social Skills

Why Social Development Matters

- Social skills help children build friendships, cooperate, and resolve conflicts.
- Strong social-emotional skills lead to better academic and life success.
- Children develop empathy, confidence, and self-regulation through social interactions.



Key Social Skills by Age

Preschool (Ages 3–5)

- Identifying basic emotions
- Learning to share and take turns
- Following simple rules

Examples:

- Saying "I'm sad" when upset
- Waiting their turn in a game

Kindergarten – 1st Grade (Ages 5–7)

- Managing emotions with adult help
- Recognizing others' feelings
- Building early friendships

Examples:

- Asking for help when frustrated
- Playing cooperatively

2nd – 3rd Grade (Ages 7–9)

- Beginning to solve conflicts with peers
- Showing empathy
- Understanding fairness and group rules

Examples:

- Apologizing after hurting a friend's feelings
- Working in small groups

4th – 5th Grade (Ages 9–11)

- Deepening friendships and loyalty
- Handling peer pressure
- Managing strong emotions independently

Examples:

- Comforting a friend
- Walking away from peer pressure

Stages of Friendship Development t

Early Friendship (Ages 3–6)

- Friendships are based on play and shared activities.
- Friends are often “who I play with today.”

What it looks like:

- Playing side-by-side at recess
- Saying “You’re my best friend” after one fun game

Developing Friendship (Ages 6–9)

- Friendships begin to include trust and preference for certain people.
- Children start to notice when friends are kind or hurtful.

What it looks like:

- Choosing the same partners often
- Beginning to understand loyalty (“She’s my friend because she’s nice to me.”)

Middle Friendship (Ages 9–12)

- Friends are chosen based on shared interests, values, and deeper connection.
- Friendship includes empathy, loyalty, and forgiveness.

What it looks like:

- Sharing personal thoughts or feelings
- Handling small conflicts and making up



Key Things to Remember About Friendship

Development:

- Not all friendships grow at the same pace—and that's okay.
- Friendships change over time as kids' interests and emotional needs grow.
- Learning to manage conflict, forgive, and understand others' feelings is part of healthy friendship growth.
- It's normal for friendships to shift as kids mature.

Encouraging Positive Social Behavior

- Model good social skills at home.
- Teach and practice turn-taking and sharing.
- Encourage children to use “I” statements when expressing feelings.
- Role-play different social situations (e.g., joining a group, handling rejection)



Dealing with Social Challenges

- **Shyness** : Encourage participation in small group activities.
- **Friendship Conflicts** : Teach problem-solving and perspective-taking.
- **Peer Pressure** : Role-play decision-making scenarios.
- **Bullying Prevention** : Encourage open conversations, reinforce kindness.

A large, light blue dashed circle is centered on the page. The corners of the page are decorated with various colored circles: top-left has pink, orange, and yellow circles; top-right has green, lime green, and cyan circles; bottom-left has lime green, yellow, and green circles; bottom-right has cyan, lime green, and blue circles.

How is CDS supporting social growth in lower school?

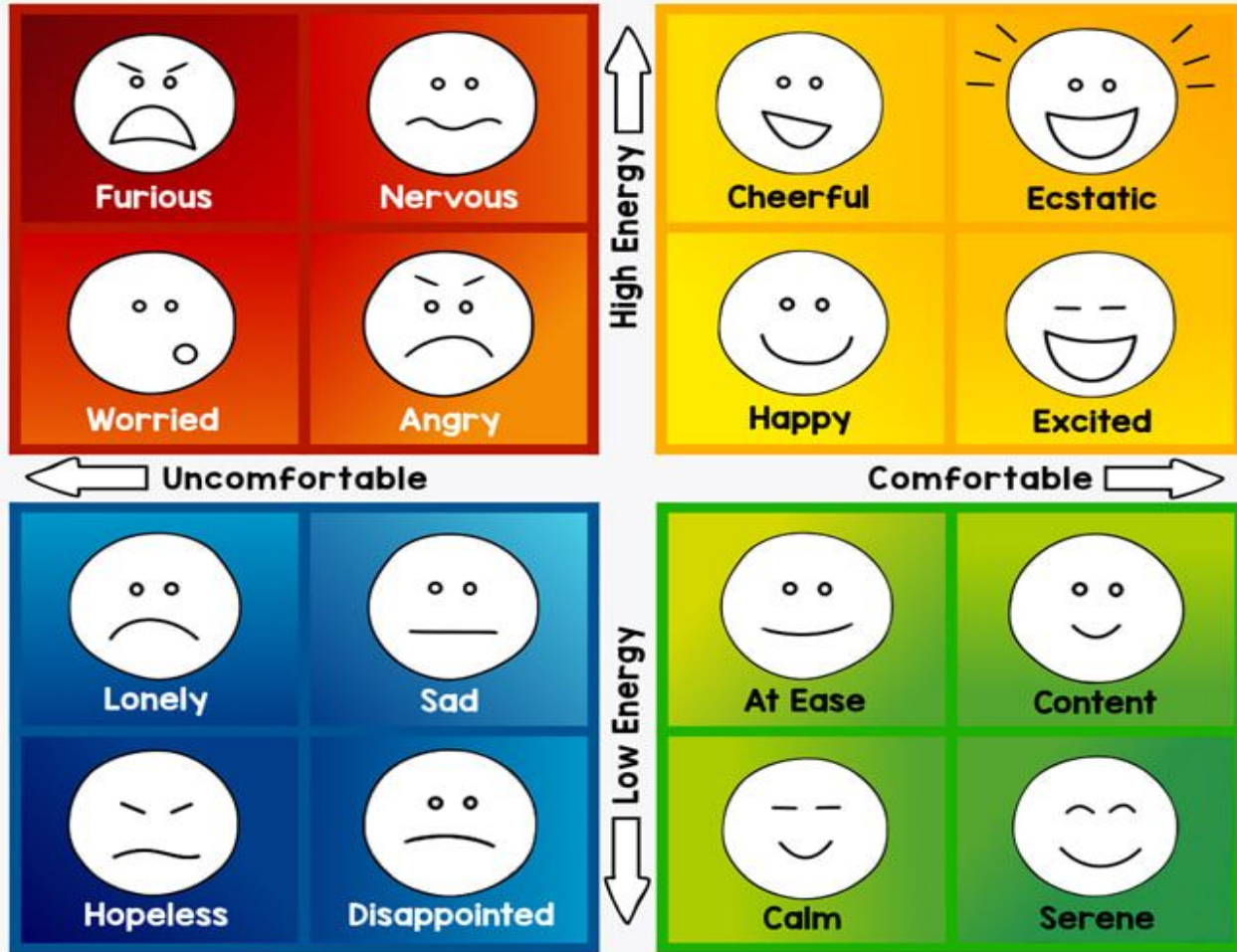
IT'S **OK** TO FEEL:



EVERYBODY FEELS THAT WAY SOMETIMES.
WE DON'T LIKE IT, BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE US WEAK. IT MAKES US

HUMAN.

Mood Meter



Mood Meter

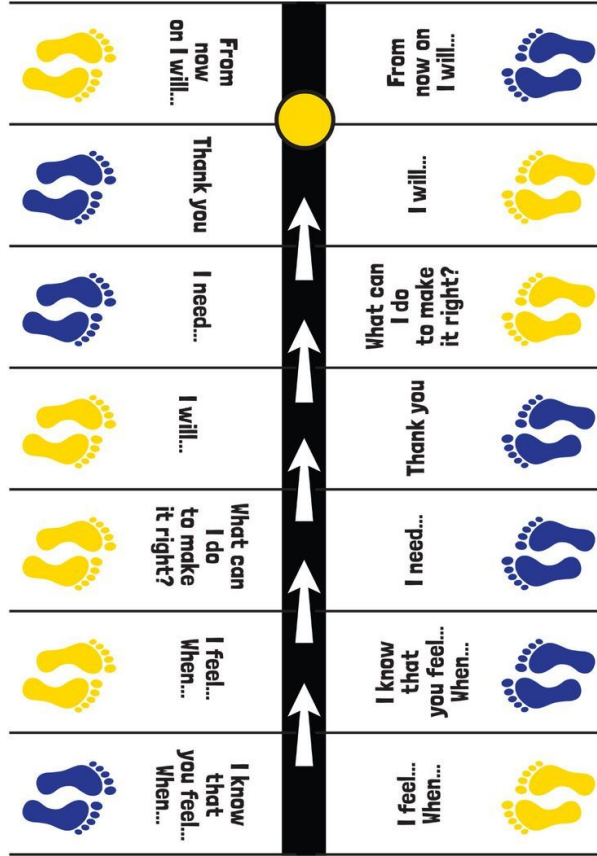
Energy ↑

Enraged	Furious	Frustrated	Shocked	Surprised	Upbeat	Motivated	Ecstatic
Livid	Frightened	Nervous	Restless	Hyper	Cheerful	Inspired	Elated
Fuming	Apprehensive	Worried	Annoyed	Energized	Lively	Optimistic	Thrilled
Repulsed	Troubled	Uneasy	Peeved	Pleasant	Joyful	Proud	Blissful
Disgusted	Disappointed	Glum	Ashamed	Blessed	At Ease	Content	Fulfilled
Mortified	Alienated	Mopey	Apathetic	Humbled	Secure	Chill	Grateful
Embarrassed	Excluded	Timid	Drained	Calm	Satisfied	Relaxed	Carefree
Alone	Down	Bored	Tired	Relieved	Restful	Tranquil	Serene

← Feeling →

The Mood Meter was created by the Yale University Center for Emotional Intelligence

**SHAKE HANDS
LEAVE IN PEACE**



PEACE PATH

Yellow feet go first

Healthy Relationships Curriculum

Pre-K & Kindergarten	Third Grade	Sixth Grade
Identifying feelings, Mood Meter, Peace Path, personal space	Safe spaces, class norms, expected behavior, self esteem, support systems, understandign feelings, non-verbal communication	Behavioral expectations, body language, empathy, bystanders & upstanders, boundaries, sexual harrassment
First Grade	Fourth Grade	Seventh Grade
Asking for help, personal space, Mood Meter, self regulation	Friendship Skills, expected behaviors, coping strategies, trusted adults: building a web of support, mind and body, boundaries	Showing support, coping strategies, taking responsibility, empathy, expectations, boundaries
Second Grade	Fifth Grade	Eighth Grade
Boundaries, how to apologize, empathy, advocacy, coping strategies	Empathy, recognizing boundaries of others: staying on your side of the net, "checking in" with friends and family, gratitude	Safe classroom expectations, gender stereotypes, consent, risk factors and resources, positive self-regulation



Middle Ages





Changes to Expect

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social

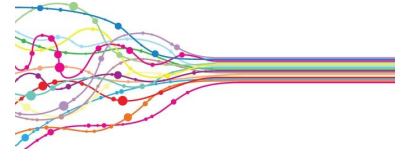


PHYSICAL

- ⦿ Growth spurts
- ⦿ Acne
- ⦿ Menstruation
- ⦿ Voice change
- ⦿ Body Odor

COGNITIVE

- More complex thinking
- Connectivity wiring back to front
- Neural plasticity
- Pruning and myelination
- Optimum period for learning



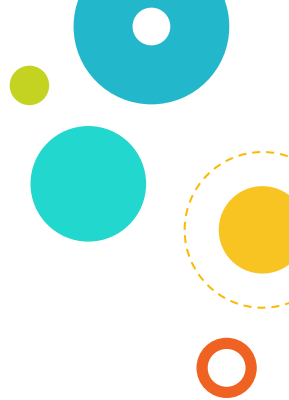
EMOTIONAL

- Amygdala online early
- Prefrontal cortex develops later
- Intense emotions can compromise complex thinking
- Mood swings, irritability, impulsivity, volatility
- Like a car with an accelerator, but no brakes

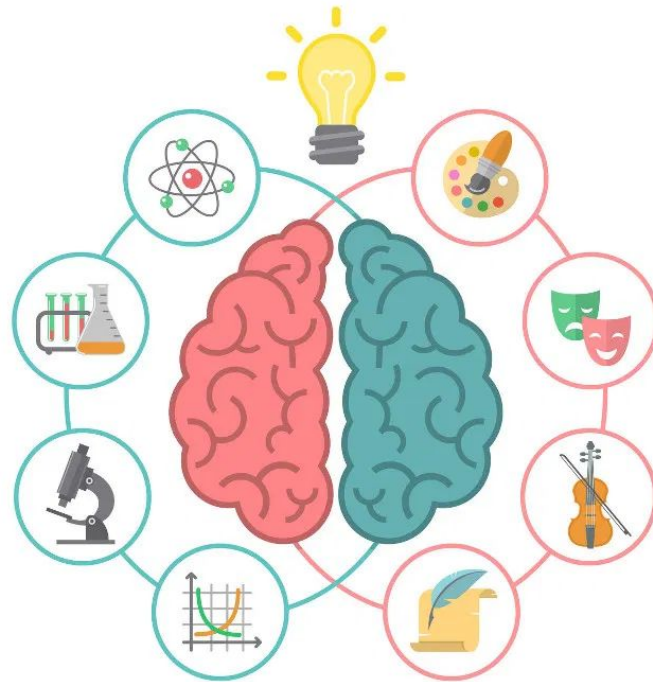




SOCIAL CHANGES

- ◎ Sensitive about physical changes
 - ◎ Friend groups increasingly important
 - ◎ Peer opinions matter a lot
 - ◎ Peer pressure - clothes, music, activities
 - ◎ Feelings are easily hurt and easy to hurt - may stem from vulnerability
 - ◎ Increasingly capable of self-awareness, insight, and empathy
- 

COGNITIVE CHANGES





Teenagers & Young Adults – AKA High Schoolers

© The cognitive and the physical changes continue....

- While still thinking about who they are, they start to think about how the world works (thinking beyond themselves)
- Improved understanding of consequences not just in the moment, as well as the development of deeper moral reasoning
- Better ability to look ahead at the future and set related short and long term goals
- SLEEP - they need more sleep and their circadian rhythm has shifted - late nights not early mornings
- Visual-Spatial Coordination - it improves and the timing is good because they are getting their license

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features several overlapping circles and rings in various colors: a large yellow ring with a white center and a dashed green inner circle, a pink circle with a white center, an orange circle, a green circle, a blue circle, and a light green ring. On the right side, there are more circles and rings, including a green circle with a white center, a yellow circle, a green ring, an orange circle, a red dashed circle, and a pink circle.

Identity Development

- ◎ As teens are developing their identities, they're trying to answer the question “Who am I?”
- ◎ Lots of the things that teens do, like trying new activities or wearing different kinds of clothes, are part of their search for an identity.
- ◎ Even though identity development often begins during the teen years, it can be a lifelong process; people can change the way they think about themselves when they experience changes in life, like starting a new job or becoming a parent.



Identity Development Continued

How do teens develop an identity?

Psychologists who study identity have described two processes that are involved in identity development:

- Exploration, which involves trying out different roles or options, and
- Commitment, which involves committing to some aspect(s) of identity.

Identity Exploration

In order to try out different roles and options for themselves, teens might try things like:

- Hanging out with a new group of friends
- Trying new activities
- Learning more about something that interests them

Teenagers & Young Adults

9th grade:

Understanding the social dynamics of HS

- How do I fit into this new community?
- How do I make new friends?
- How do I “do” school?

SOCIAL AWARENESS

10th grade:

In the groove of school

- Have figured out how HS works
- Honing in on who they are
- Building social structures/identity

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

11th and 12th grade:

Thinking beyond high school

- Making decisions about courses
- Choose the college that is right for them

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING



Teenagers & Young Adults

Programming

- Advisory
- Intentional Schedule
- Wellness Sessions:
 - Substance Use
 - Healthy Relationships/consent
 - Sexual Health
- Freshman Seminar & Overnight
- College Exploration
- Clubs & Athletics





How to Help

- ◎ Parenting Style
- ◎ Dialogue
- ◎ Coping Skills
- ◎ Modeling
- ◎ Seek Support

The Types of Parenting Styles



Authoritarian:
domineering, dictatorial, enforce
punishments, unresponsive



Permissive:
lenient, few
demands, "friend"



Authoritative:
enforce rules, provide
warmth and support



Uninvolved:
may be neglectful, provide
little guidance and support

Dialogue



Dialogue

When?

- Times of low distraction
- Predictable and often

How?

- Open-ended questions
- Listen to learn
- Sounds like...

Empower!

- Teach your kids to problem solve

Teach Coping Skills

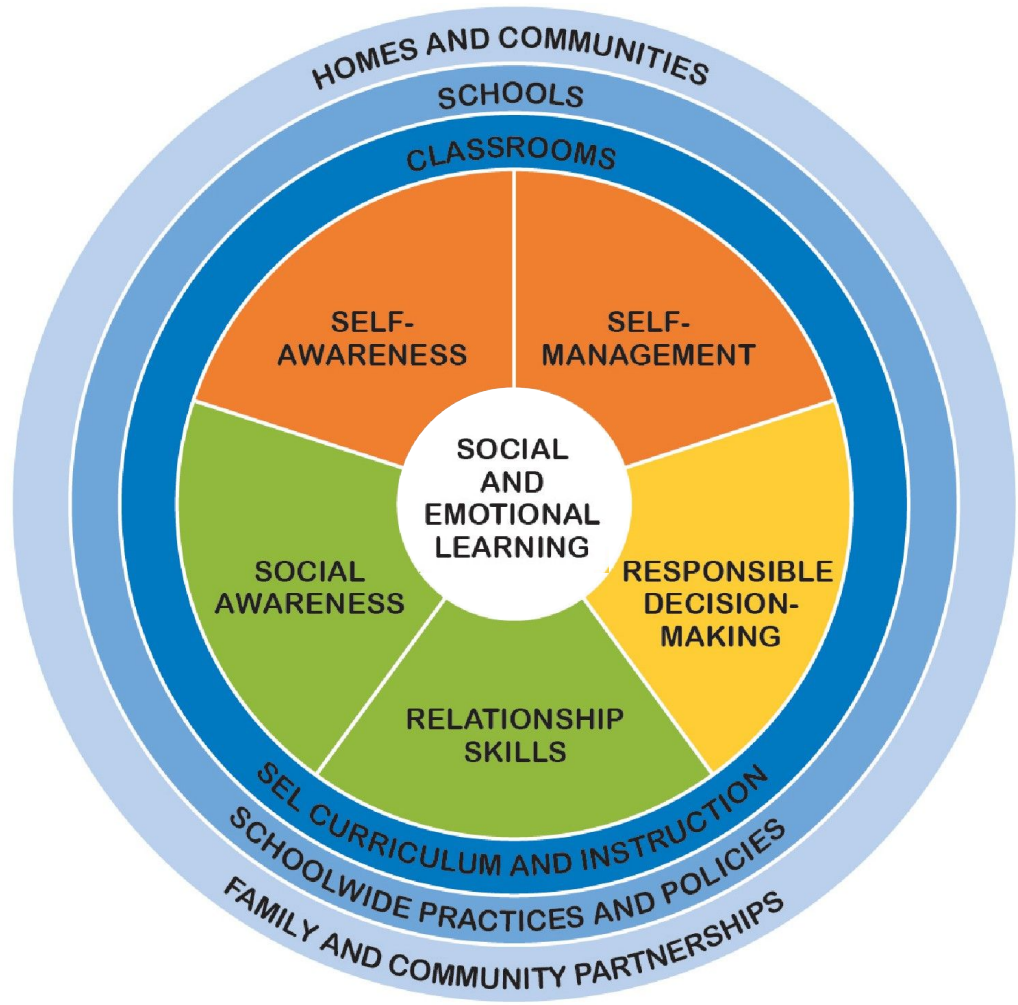
- Belly breathing
- Running
- Get adequate sleep
- Manage screen time
- Make a gratitude jar
- Count back from 100
- Expressive journaling / drawing
- Use affirmations

Modeling

- Always watching
- How *you* cope is what you teach
- Make your thinking visible







SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ⇒ ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- ⇒ RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- ⇒ SELF-CONFIDENCE
- ⇒ SELF-EFFICACY

SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ⇒ IMPULSE CONTROL
- ⇒ STRESS MANAGEMENT
- ⇒ SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ⇒ SELF-MOTIVATION
- ⇒ GOAL SETTING
- ⇒ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ⇒ PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- ⇒ EMPATHY
- ⇒ APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- ⇒ RESPECT FOR OTHERS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ⇒ COMMUNICATION
- ⇒ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- ⇒ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ⇒ TEAMWORK

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- ⇒ SOLVING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ EVALUATING
- ⇒ REFLECTING
- ⇒ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY



Consider Additional Support

Younger Children

- Frequent tantrums or very often irritable
- Often fearful or worried
- Frequent stomach aches or headaches with no known medical cause
- In constant motion and unable to sit quietly except when engaged in activity they enjoy
- Sleeping too much or too little, have frequent nightmares, or seem sleepy during the day
- Difficulty making friends or not interested in playing with other children
- Struggle in academically or recent decline
- Repeat actions or check things many times due to fear something bad will happen

Consider Additional Support

Older Children

- Low energy
- Loss of interest in things once enjoyed
- Sleeping too much or too little, seeming sleepy throughout the day
- Periods of elevated energy and activity, while requiring much less sleep than usual
- Increasingly spending time alone, avoiding social activities with friends or family
- Excessive diet or exercise - fear of weight gain
- Self-harm, e.g. cutting or burning
- Smoking, drinking, using drugs
- Risky or destructive behavior
- Thoughts of suicide
- Saying someone is controlling their thoughts or hearing things that others cannot

The background features several decorative elements: a large orange ring in the top left, a large dashed blue circle in the top center, a large teal ring in the bottom right, and various smaller solid and dashed circles in green, yellow, pink, and cyan scattered throughout.

Questions?