



Building resilience and managing anxiety

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What we will cover

- What is anxiety/ stress?
- What is typical?
- Adult support and anxiety
- Building resilience and positive coping at a family level



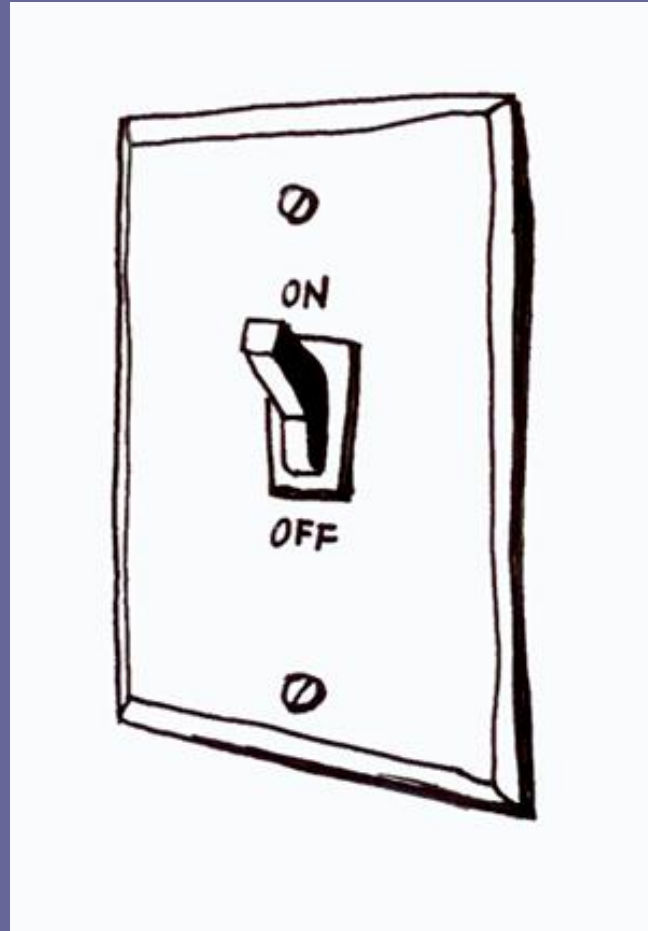
What does anxiety look like in a child?



Fight, flight or freeze?



What happens when threat levels remain 'on'?



Potentially unhelpful ways of responding

(1) Reassurance seeking

(2) Denial

(3) Avoidance

Rather we want to move towards having both a language of feelings and ways of accessing supports if needed

Remembering the younger you!

Full of confidence, ready to conquer the world, not afraid of new challenges

OR

Slow to warm up, cautious, reflective rather than impulsive, shy



Parenting influences

- Parenting style
- Parents are human – we have our own learnt reactions, beliefs, responses
- Coping with anxiety – our own, our child's
- As parent, our job is to protect – this can be complex!



Influences on children

- What are the values of the child's school, other parents, other children? How do they impact the child?
- Do they match their capabilities?
- Is there a mismatch between skills and expectations?

Parenting support

- Parents as a safe base who can support children to:
 - Recognising when anxiety/ fear is around
 - Model appropriate responses
 - Help build child's resilience and coping responses
- Family based approach

- Children learn from what they see and take cues from parents so...
- How do parents cope with when anxious and stressed...





" I don't worry about anything. My Mom does all the worrying for me. "

Anxiety at different stages

- What is typical?
- Consider child's age and temperament
- Look at onset
- Does it interfere with everyday functioning?

Anxiety at different ages

- Late infancy: separation, strangers
- Toddlers: imaginary, creatures, the dark
- Early childhood: natural disasters,
- Later childhood: school performance, animals, peer rejection
- Adolescence: peer rejection



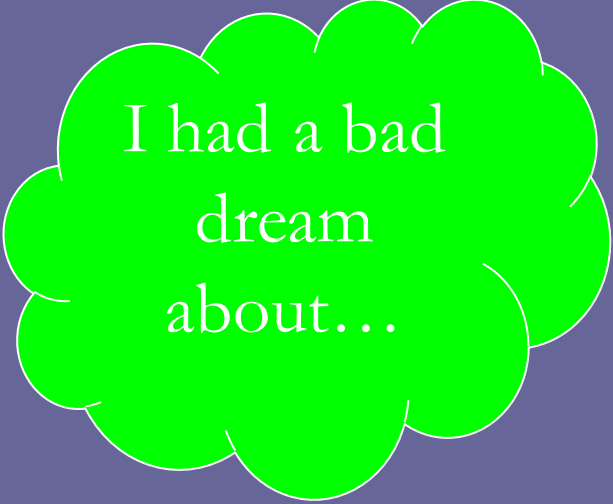
Separation anxiety

What time will
you pick me
up?...

Will you
stay with
me?...

I love you and
want to stay with
you...

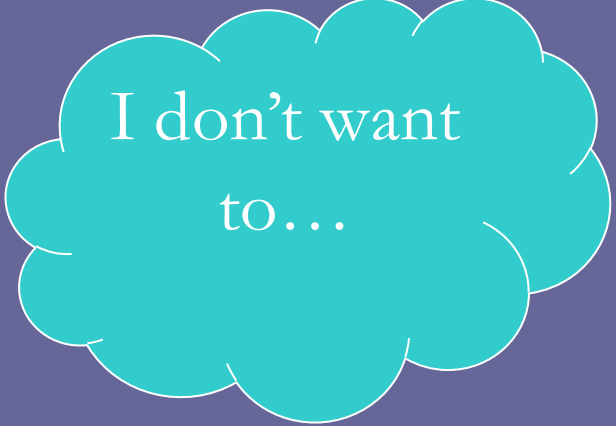
Phobias



I had a bad
dream
about...



What if...




I don't want
to...

General Anxiety



I have a pain in
my tummy...



I know they
don't like
me...



I cant do it...

What helps?

- Listen and empathise – ‘that sounds like it was really difficult for you’
- Labelling emotions – ‘emotion coaching’
- Resist reassurance
- Modelling coping – letting the child know that you can handle his/her feelings and you see their strengths and skills
- Externalising – the child is not the problem

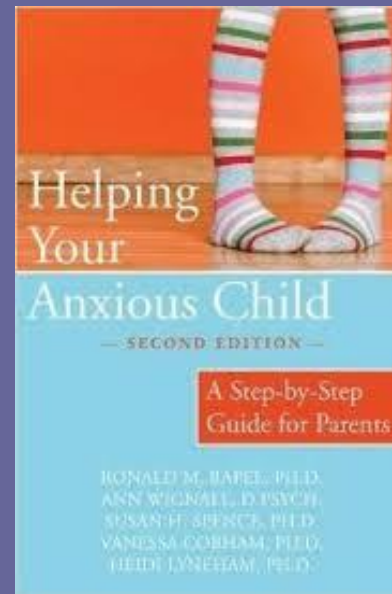
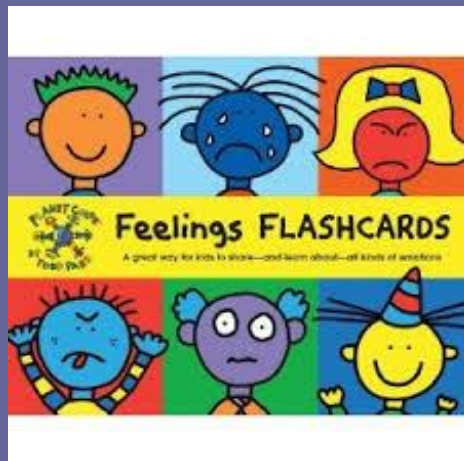
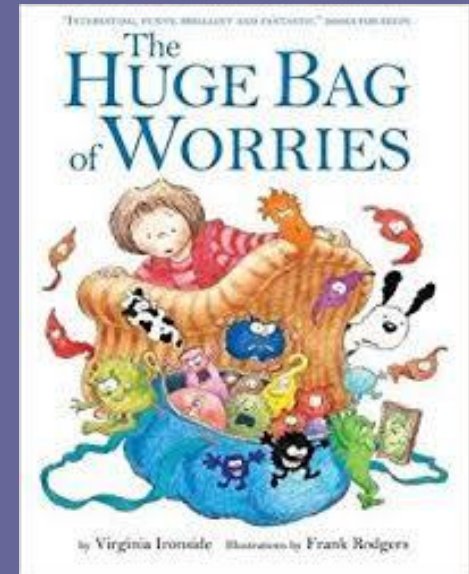
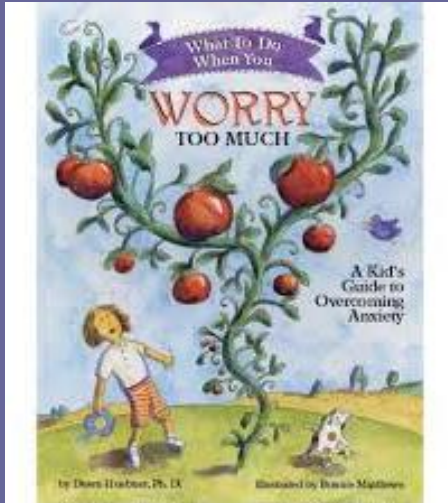
Practical skills

- Distraction
- Worry time
- Breathing and visualisation exercises
- Physical activity that promotes 'regulation' e.g. tai chi, chi gung, other martial arts
- Challenging fears – experimentation
- Coping skills talk
- Transition planning

Using external supports



Books/ resources



When to seek support

- Home-school liaison to determine if similar across contexts
- Anxiety/ stress is interfering with school, friendships, home life
- No improvement with parental supports
- GP, HSE services (primary care), CAMHS/ Lucena, Psychology services

