Anxiety

How Parents of Adolescents Can Help

What is Anxiety?

- Anxiety is a normal reaction to many stressful or threatening situations or to uncertainties of life.
- Anxiety can be positive
- When feelings of anxiety or worry are so severe that they interfere with daily living, it becomes an anxiety disorder
- There are different types of anxiety (handout)

What is Anxiety?

Is Anxiety on the Rise?

- More awareness
- Culture of Achievement
- Technology

What are the risks?

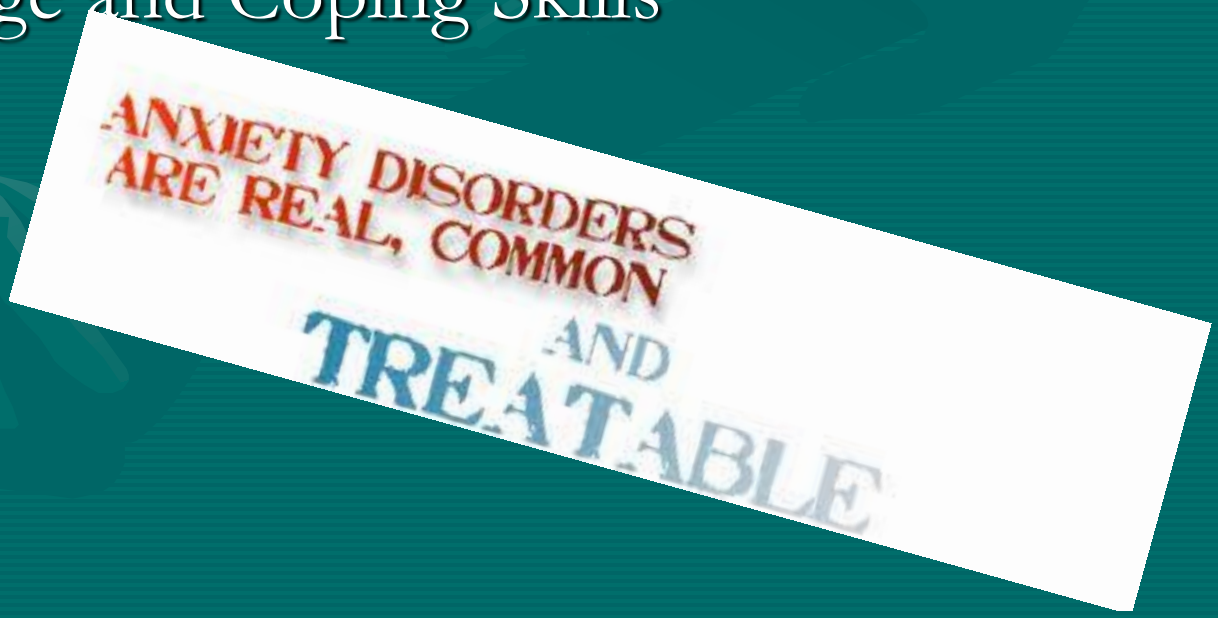
If untreated, anxiety disorder can lead to:

- Depression
- Substance Abuse/ Addiction
- Other Mental Health Concerns

Good News!!

Anxiety is Treatable!

- Medication & Counselling
- Psychotherapy (CBT)
- Lifestyle Change and Coping Skills



What is Anxiety?

Three Ingredients to Anxiety:

- Biological Sensitivity

  (overly sensitive, avoids discomfort)

- Personality Traits

  (responsible, perfectionist, pleaser, prefers structure, difficulty relaxing, worrier, avoids conflict, low assertiveness)

- Stress Overload

  Signals (mood, behaviour)

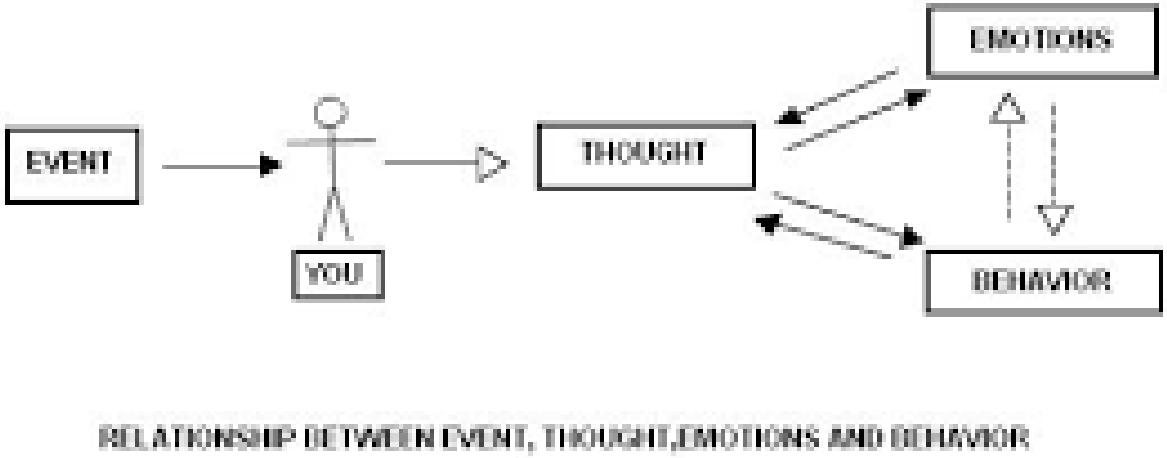
  Sources (family, friends, school, future)

  Solutions (time management, relaxation, wellness, reasonable goal setting)

The Body and Stress

- The body creates adrenaline in response to a *PERCEIVED* threat
- The adrenaline prepares our body to fight or take flight
- Our instincts are not helpful with modern stressors
- Anxiety is a false alarm going off in our head! Change the thoughts and change the behaviour.

Steps of Anxiety



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVENT, THOUGHT,EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOR

- Thoughts (I am powerless. The world is dangerous)
- Feelings (mild to severe)
- Behaviours (avoidance/ escapism)

What Does Anxiety Looks Like?

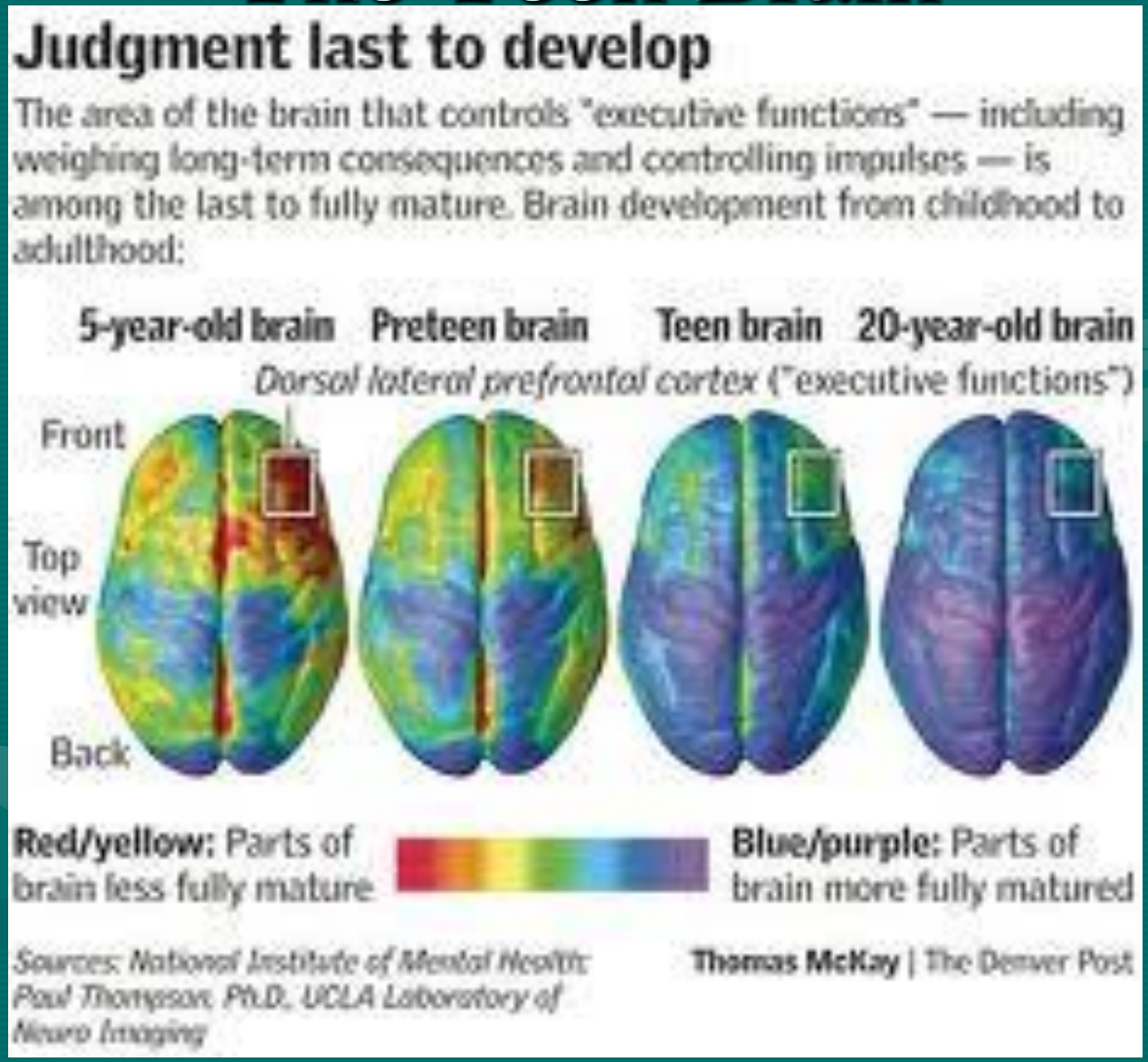
Physical Sensations

- Low energy
- Stomach problems
- Dry mouth
- Rapid heart rate
- Tightness or pain in the chest
- Dizziness
- Difficulty swallowing
- Change in eating habits
- Lack of concern for self care

Emotional Sensations

- Trouble sleeping
- Irritability
- Easily frustrated
- Worry
- Poor concentration
- Social withdrawl

The Teen Brain



The Teen Brain

- Black and White Thinking
- Catastrophizing/ Negative Spiralling
- Social Fears
- Parents……..

Silence fool!
You know nothing!

Activity

Deep Breathing Exercise

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExvXmsr--Mk

Talking With Your Teen

Encourage your teen to open up about fears and worries

- Acknowledge their fears and worries
- Tell your teen what you are seeing
- Ask your teen to rate how anxious they are
- Discuss your problem solving skills
- Model what you want to see
- Provide opportunities for check ins

Talking With Your Teen

Teach Your Teen About Anxiety

- Anxiety is normal
- Anxiety is not dangerous
- The fight or flight response
- The chain reaction (Incident-feelings-thoughts)

Help Your Teen Recognize Anxiety

- Raise awareness of thoughts and feelings (handout)
- Ask the teen to name where the anxiety is in the body

Strategies to Help Teens Build Coping Skills

- Empower teens to solve their own problems. Ask what would help or what they need to do to feel better.
- Help break large tasks into manageable parts. Create a hierarchy.
- Help raise teen's awareness of what is happening
- Encourage realistic thinking (handout)

Realistic thinking means looking at all aspects of a situation (the positive, the negative, and the neutral) before making conclusions. In other words, realistic thinking means looking at yourself, others, and the world in a *balanced* and *fair* way.

Unhelpful and unrealistic thought	More realistic and balanced thought
I always screw things up. I'm such a loser. What's wrong with me?	Everyone makes mistakes, including me – I'm only human. All I can do now is try my best to fix the situation and learn from this experience.
I can't do it, I feel way too anxious. Why can't I control my anxiety?	It's OK and normal to feel anxious. It's not dangerous, and it doesn't have to stop me. I can feel anxious and STILL go to the party.

Strategies to Help Teens Build Coping Skills

- Challenge anxious thinking
- Build awareness of anxious thinking
- Help teens create new thought patterns
- Practice relaxation exercises with your teen (progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, imaging exercises). Practice makes better!
- Stress the importance of sleep, nutrition and exercise in your family

Activity

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9x3tl81NW3w

Reducing Stress in the Home

- Learn to say “no”
- Be aware of stress levels in the home (video games, TV, conflict, parental stress levels)
- Manage your time (weekly family planning sessions, visual calendars)
- Set clear, realistic expectations and routines
- Manage your reaction as a parent (time outs)
- Take time during the day to relax as a family (read, listen to music, go for a walk, yoga, laughing)

Food For Thought

- What are some things that could change in your home to reduce your family stress?
- What does "relaxing" look like in your home?
- How can you build time for relaxing into your family schedule?