

Mental Health Online Resources for Educators



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Territorial Acknowledgement



Community Education Service acknowledges that the land on which we virtually gather today is the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta,

2021

Region 3.



AGENDA

1. Getting to know panic & anxiety
 - 3 components
 - Cycle of panic and anxiety
 - When is it problematic?
2. Strategies for youths and caregivers
 - Based on 3 components
3. Parenting stress and self-care

WHAT IS PANIC AND ANXIETY?

- **Fear:** emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat



WHAT IS PANIC AND ANXIETY?

- **Fear:** emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat



- **Panic**= surge of intense fear or discomfort
- **Anxiety:** emotional response in anticipation of *future* threat



WHAT IS PANIC AND ANXIETY?

- **Panicattacks**
 - Surge in fear or discomfort
 - Peaks around 10 minutes
 - Physiological symptoms (e.g., heart racing)
 - Cognitive symptoms (e.g., "I'm going to faint")
 - Response can be expected or unexpected

WHAT IS PANIC AND ANXIETY?

- **Panic attack physiological symptoms**
 - Increased heart rate
 - Sweating
 - Trembling or shaking
 - Sensations of difficulty breathing (e.g., shortness of breath)
 - Feelings of choking
 - Chest pain or discomfort
 - Nausea or abdominal distress
 - Feeling dizzy, unsteady, light-headed, or faint
 - Chills or heat sensations
 - Numbness or tingling
 - Fear of losing control or "going crazy"
 - Fear of dying

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WHAT IS PANIC AND ANXIETY?

- **Anxiety**
 - Excessive or persistent fear
 - Physiological symptoms (e.g., heart racing)
 - Cognitive symptoms (e.g., "I'm going to embarrass myself")
- Type of anxiety depends on situation or object (e.g., social situations, objects)

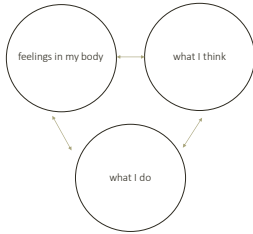
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WHAT DOES PANIC AND ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

- 3 components
 1. Physiological = feelings in my body
 2. Cognitive = what I think
 3. Behavioural = what I do

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WHAT DOES PANIC AND ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?



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PHYSIOLOGICAL COMPONENT



- Common symptoms
 - Over-breathing (aka hyperventilation)
 - Racing heart
 - Sweating

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PHYSIOLOGICAL COMPONENT



- Causes
 - Expected

FIGHT

OR

FLIGHT
 - Stimulants (e.g., caffeine)
 - Unexpected or "out of the blue"
 - Occurrence and noticing of physiological symptoms

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COGNITIVE COMPONENT



- o Thinking traps (aka cognitive errors)
 1. Probability overestimation
 2. Catastrophic thinking

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COGNITIVE COMPONENT: THINKING TRAPS



1. **Probability Overestimation** = predicts unlikely event will happen
 - "I'm going to have a panic attack at school!"
 - Persistent belief



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COGNITIVE COMPONENT: THINKING TRAPS



1. **Probability Overestimation** = predicts unlikely event will happen
 - "I'm going to have a panic attack at school!"
 - Persistent belief
2. **Catastrophic thinking** = thinking the worst
 - "I must be losing control"



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COGNITIVE COMPONENT



- Thinking traps (aka cognitive errors)
 1. Probability overestimation
 2. Catastrophic thinking
- Looking for danger (aka vigilance)



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BEHAVIOURAL COMPONENT

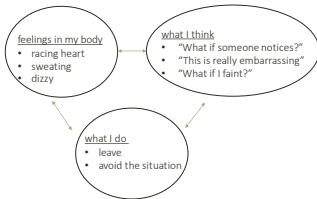


- Avoidance
 1. Leaving the situation
 2. Safety behaviours
 - e.g., being on cell phone



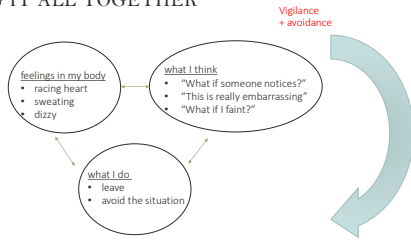
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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



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BUT WAIT, IT'S NOT ALL BAD!

- o Panic and anxiety can be
 - Natural
 - Normal
 - Harmless

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BUT WAIT, IT'S NOT ALL BAD!

- o Panic and anxiety can be
 - Natural
 - Normal
 - Harmless
 - Maybe even helpful?



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BUT WAIT, IT'S NOT ALL BAD!

- o Panic and anxiety can be
 - Natural
 - Normal
 - Harmless
 - Maybe even helpful?
- o Panic and anxiety *are* problematic when:
 - You're not in real danger
 - You can't do the things you want or need to do

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BUT WAIT, IT'S NOT ALL BAD!

Keep helpful fear, get rid of unhelpful fear



- o Panic and anxiety can be
 - Natural
 - Normal
 - Harmless
 - Maybe even helpful?
- o Panic and anxiety *are* problematic when:
 - You're not in real danger
 - You can't do the things you want or need to do

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PANIC, ANXIETY, AND SCHOOL

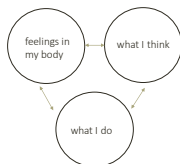
- o Perhaps a mix of
 - Excitement
 - Relief (for kids and parents?)
 - Sadness holidays have ended
- o Possible stressors
 - Unfamiliar or perhaps new environment
 - Time and work demands
 - Social expectations, scrutiny, stress
- o Potentially heightened worries and/or added stressors due to Covid-19 pandemic



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WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Strategies for each component
- Youth + caregiver



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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?



1. Objective observer
 - Buoy & ocean analogy
 - Flexible for use at school



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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?



1. Objective observer
2. Face feared body sensations

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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?

feelings in my body

2. Face feared body sensations

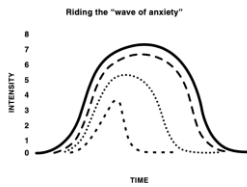


Figure 8.1 Habituation Curve

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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?

feelings in my body

2. Face feared body sensations

- Run up and down stairs for 30 – 60 seconds (racing heart, breathlessness, chest discomfort).
- Shake head from side to side for 30 seconds (dizziness).
- Stare at your hand for two to three minute (feelings of unreality – things looking and seeming weird).



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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?

feelings in my body

3. Relaxation

- Deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation

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SUMMARY: FEELINGS IN MY BODY

- Youth + caregiver strategies

Objective observer
Face feared body sensations
Relaxation



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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



1. Emotion coaching
 - Stay calm
 - Help label and validate
 - "You're starting to feel anxious. That makes sense because [you haven't been to school in a long time]"
 - Reminder of skills
 - "remember to use some of your skills to help yourself calm down"

Panic goes away

Panic continues

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



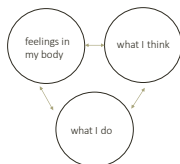
- If panic continues:
- Stay the course (calm, label, skills)
 - "You're having a panic attack. I know it's uncomfortable, but remember you're not in danger and this will pass. We can't leave, otherwise the panic wins, so let's sit here until it passes"
 - Post-panic praise
 - "great job for sticking through the anxiety!"

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SUMMARY: FEELINGS IN MY BODY

- Youth + caregiver strategies

Objective observer
 Face feared body sensations
 Relaxation
 Emotion coaching



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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?



- Detective thinking (aka catching thinking traps)
 1. Treat thoughts like guesses, not facts
 2. Is there a thinking trap happening here?
 - Evidence for the worry thought
 - Evidence against the worry thought
 3. What else could be happening?



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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



- Model detective thinking skills
- Praise, praise, praise



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SUMMARY: WHAT I THINK

- Youth + caregiver strategies

Objective observer
Face feared body sensations
Relaxation
Emotion coaching



Detective thinking
Modeling
Praise

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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?



- Facing feared situations (aka anxiety exposures)

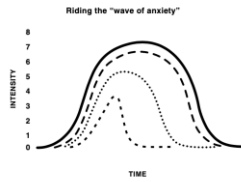


Figure 8.1
Holtzworth-Gunne

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WHAT CAN YOUTHS DO?



- Facing feared situations (aka anxiety exposures)
 1. Start with least anxiety-provoking situation
 2. Stay in situation until anxiety lowers
 - No safety behaviours
 3. Repeat until little to no anxiety
 4. Celebrate success
 5. Move to next anxiety-provoking situation
- Tip
 - Spend time at school doing fun activities!

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



- Supporting anxiety-exposures
 - Develop a practice plan
 - Acknowledge the difficulty of practicing
 - Prepare for irritability or anger
 - Setbacks happen, use skills learned and stay the course

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



- Supporting anxious youth in general
 - Approach
 - Avoid pushing, giving in, or anticipating needs
 - Aim for encouraging, compassionate
"I know you're not feeling well. This usually happens before a big test. Use the skills you've learned in therapy. I know it's hard, but I also know that you can do this"

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



- Supporting anxious youth in general
 - Approach
 - Avoid pushing, giving in, or anticipating needs
 - Aim for encouraging, compassionate
 - Build autonomy and motivation
 - Youths' cost/benefits of practice

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?



- Supporting anxious youth in general
 - Approach
 - Avoid pushing, giving in, or anticipating needs
 - Aim for encouraging, compassionate
 - Build autonomy and motivation
 - Youths' cost/benefits of practice
 - Reduce rewarding alternatives
 - E.g., watch tv if stay home, ride to school if late

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SUMMARY: WHAT I DO

- Youth + caregiver strategies

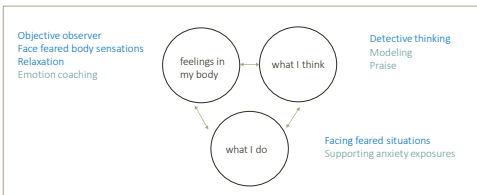


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SUMMARY: WHAT I DO

+ Self-care

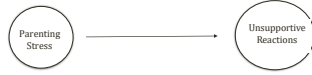
- Youth + caregiver strategies



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PARENTING STRESS

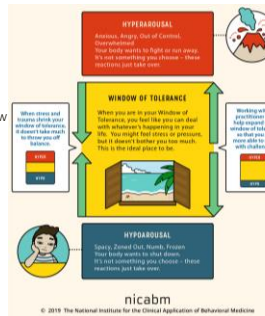
- Parenting stress influences how we teach children about emotions (aka emotion socialization)
 - Supportive socialization: responses, express, discuss
 - Unsupportive socialization: minimize, punish, dismiss



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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?

- Window of tolerance
 - What expands and shrinks your window



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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?

- Window of tolerance
 - What expands and shrinks your window
- Relaxation strategies
 - Deep breathing, box breathing

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?

- 1. Window of tolerance
 - What expands and shrinks your window
- 2. Relaxation strategies
 - Deep breathing, box breathing
- 3. Enjoyable activities

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WHAT CAN CAREGIVERS DO?

- 1. Window of tolerance
 - What expands and shrinks your window
- 2. Relaxation strategies
 - Deep breathing, box breathing
- 3. Enjoyable activities
- 4. Enhance your support network
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Therapeutic supports

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Durber, C. M. & Rinaldi, C.M. (manuscript in preparation). *Understanding Parenting Stress and Emotion Socialization.*

Pincus, D. B., Ehrenreich, J. T., & Mattis, S. G. (2008). *Mastery of anxiety and panic for adolescents riding the wave, therapist guide.* Oxford University Press.

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