



Mental Health: Anxiety & Depression & More

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Anxiety



• What Makes
You Anxious?

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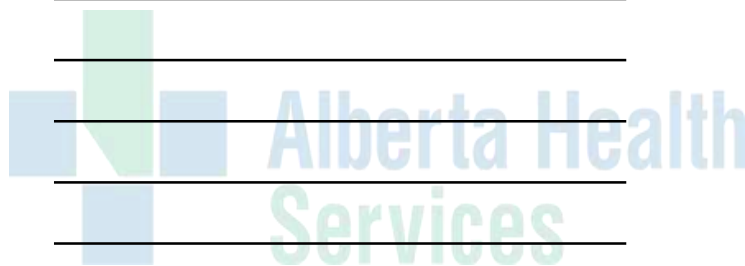


Signs of Anxiety and Depression

Think about your children..

○ What are some of the signs of anxiety you see
in their appearance and behavior?

○ What are some of the signs of depression you see
in the appearance and behavior?



Warning Signs: Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety



Excessive:

- Worry (anticipatory)
- Avoidance
- Attention to threat
- Fast and sustained physiological arousal
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Shyness
- Social withdrawal
- Perfectionism
- Difficulty in resting and going to sleep

Depression



Excessive:

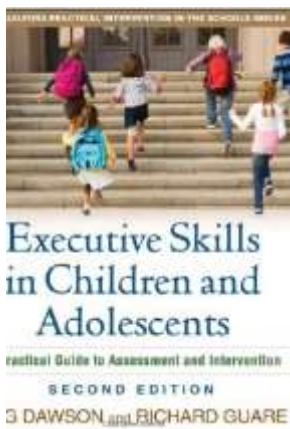
- Sadness
- Flat affect
- Irritability
- Loss of pleasure
- Hopelessness and helplessness
- Negative memory biases
- Social withdrawal
- Poor concentration
- Early morning insomnia
- Appetite changes

Presentation varies across individuals, lifespan, and culture



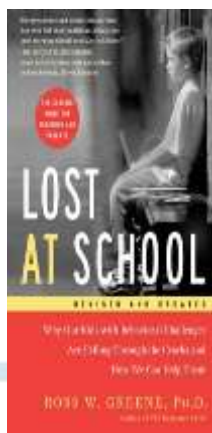
ADHD

- Hyperactivity
- Distractibility
- Impulsivity
- Irritability
- Strong Emotional responses
- Sleep Problems
- Social Challenges



Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Repeated temper tantrums
- Excessive arguing with adults
- Refusal to comply with requests and rules
- Attempts to annoy or upset others and/or easily upset by others
- Blames others for his/her mistakes
- Frequent outbursts of anger and resentment
- Spiteful and seeks revenge
- Frequent swearing and obscene language
- Says mean things when upset





Normal Developmental Fears

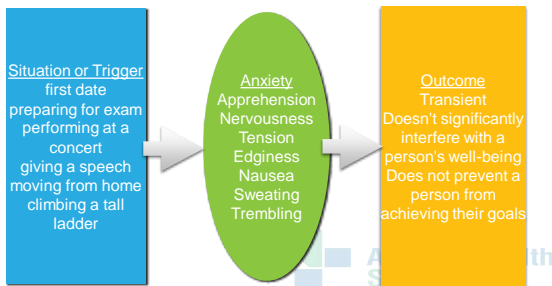
Age Appropriate & Usually Transitory

- **Infancy** – strangers, loud noises
- **Early childhood** – separation, monsters, the dark, being kidnapped, getting lost
- **Middle childhood** – real-world dangers, new challenges, death
- **Adolescence** – social status, performance, physical appearance, embarrassment, global fears

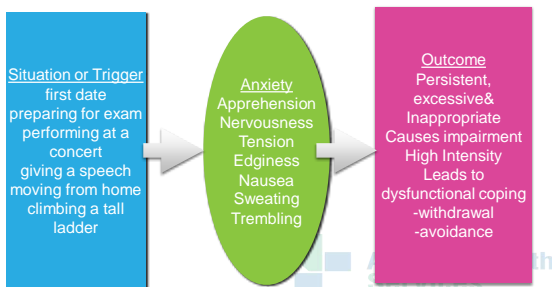


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What is Normal Anxiety?



What is Clinical Anxiety?



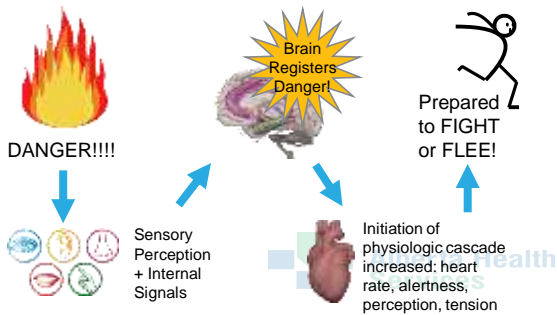
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Why Kids Worry

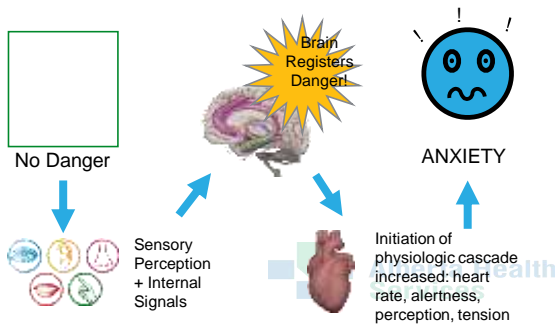
- It can serve a useful function
 - Helps us slow down when it's smart to take our time
 - Helps us back away from even when it's smart to avoid them
 - Helps us run away or fight when the danger is real
- Genes
- Modeling from parents
- The stresses of the world
- Their imaginations
- Being rigid– requiring predictability and perfection

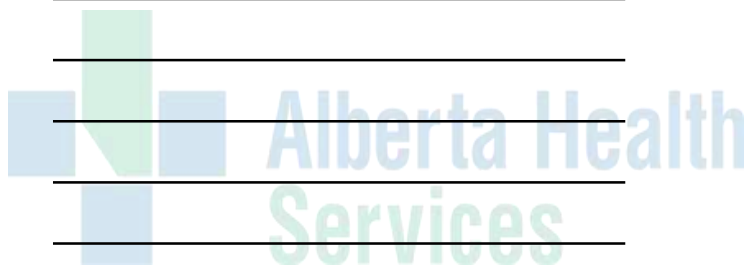


Adaptive Signaling

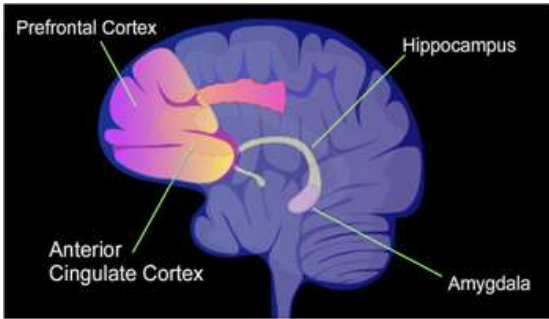


Anxiety Signaling

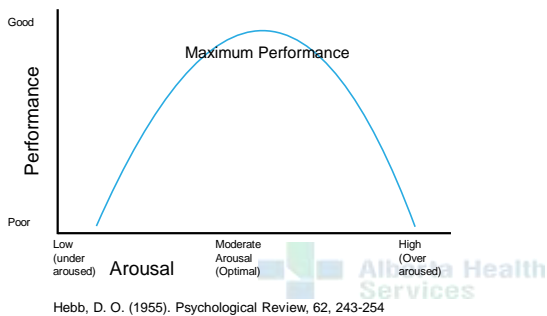




This is Your Brain on Anxiety



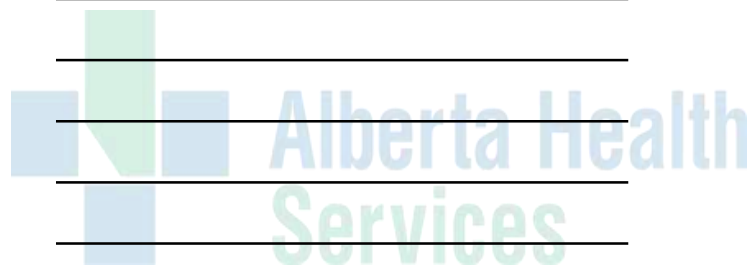
Inverted U-Shaped Relationship Between Arousal and Performance





The Impact of Anxiety

- **Interferes with normal functioning** (e.g., social isolation, underachievement, depression).
- Is **highly co-morbid** with other disorders
- Often **precedes depression**- associated with greater impairment
- Is **chronic** – without intervention likely to lead to significant problems into adulthood.

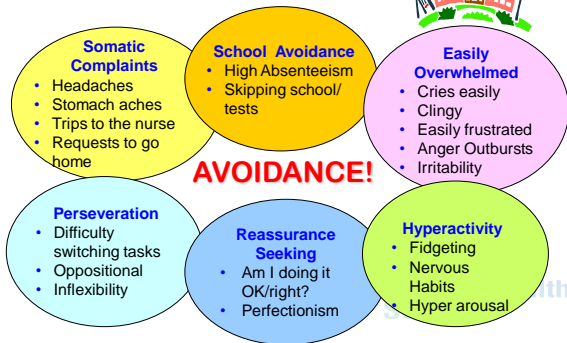


Jacob the Worrywart

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RSdV9R8wXQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnuRZH0fMdk>



Anxiety at School



Universal Supports

- CDA and Guidance Counsellor Support
- Social-Emotional Learning Programs.
 - (e.g., Friends, Deal with It, Roots of Empathy, MINDUP etc.)
- Stepping Stones to Mental Health.
- Go-To Educator Mental Health Training
- Student Learn-It Lunches on Wellness Topics
- Presentations in CALM, Community initiatives, comprehensive school health, partners in schools
- PL for staff
- Mandt
- Wellness Events
- Parent Workshops





Targeted Supports

- Programs Orchestrated by Guidance Counselors and CDAs.
 - Friends, Zones of Regulation, Mind Up
- Links to Local AHS Mental Health.
- Group Treatment with AHS Employees and Contractors.
- Intern Students providing intervention
- Gender Diversity
- FNMI Groups and PL
- Heartmath
- Girls Circle, Boy's Council



Specialized Supports

- RCSD Mental Health Staff.
- In-School Counselling from External Partners.
- Enhanced Mental Health Supports.
- Referral Forms for Emergency Departments.
 - (e.g., NSSI)
- Links to Community Resources
- Contract Counselling
- Group Therapy in Schools with Guidance Counsellors
- Psychology, FSL

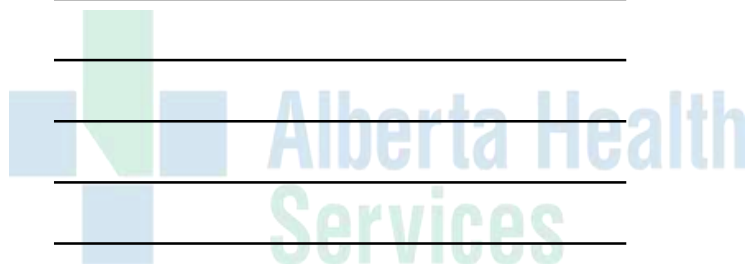


Supporting Students with Anxiety

- Discuss concerns with other teachers and staff as soon as possible
- Let the student know that you are concerned about how they are feeling and how their feelings are getting in the way of their success
- Reassurance is not helpful – it encourages avoidance
- Do not support avoidance behaviors. Encourage self-management (breathing; thought stopping; graded exposure). KNOWLEDGE & ORGANIZATION
- Help develop a self-management plan involving key teachers



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First Step to Support is Detection



- Social Anxiety- Does the student:
- Get very anxious in one or more social situations that involve strangers or groups – such as classrooms or lunch rooms? Avoid, miss, hang back?
- Avoid speaking up in class or are there specific situations that are avoided – the locker room in gym class for example. Recent onset school refusal?
- Get easily embarrassed in a social situation or think that other people are judging him/her or paying particular attention to him/her. Speaking out in class.
- Ever have a panic attack in social situations or places where many people congregate?



Test Anxiety



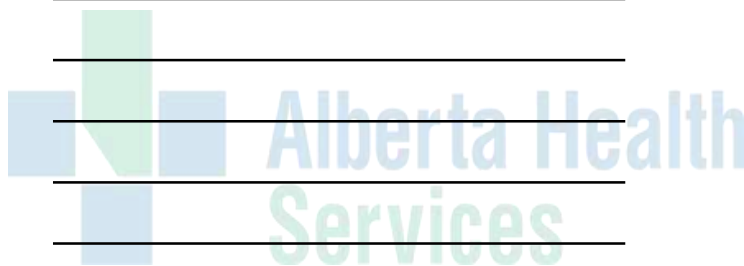
- Normal response to the expected and usual stress of an examination
- Most people experience some degree of examination anxiety – adaptive
- A few people may experience excessive anxiety – maladaptive
- Those with maladaptive anxiety may often have pre-existing mental health problems
- Can exam anxiety be helped by accommodations or can some accommodations contribute to continuation of exam anxiety?



Dealing with Test Anxiety



- Do not pathologize normal as abnormal
- Prepare students from the beginning of the year – praise hard work not being "smart". Expose to testing situations
- Usual stress response interventions (exercise, healthy eating, breathing, mindfulness, muscle relaxation, no drugs, etc.)
- Effective study: sufficient; avoid binge and all-nighters; review; make notes; voice learning; key review points
- Get a good nights sleep – review keys in AM
- Preparation: location; details; no gossip
- Psychological: realistic perceptions
- Failure can be adaptive – some people need to have this experience to work harder
- Reframe anxiety as excitement- "I'm excited for this to be over"



Build Relationships

- Check in with the student
- Catch them doing things well
- Tell them you care about their success
- Notice things about them and comment on them
- Body Language
- Do these things **more often** with students with mental health concerns



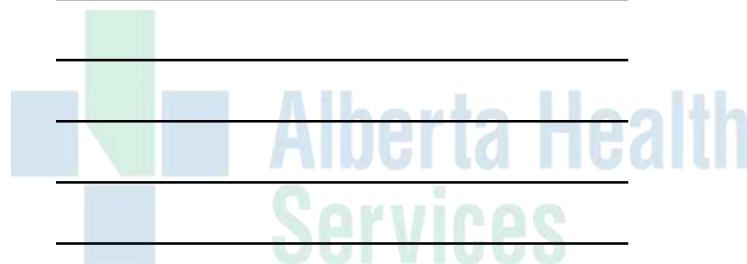
Social-Emotional Learning

- Giving students social-emotional skills can limit the impact of mental illness, and reduce the impairment caused by mental health issues
- Friends
- Mind Up



Anxiety's Demands!

- **Certainty:**
– “I have to know what’s going to happen next...and I want to control it!”
- **Comfort:**
– “I want to feel safe and comfortable...or else I want out!”



Shift Perspective

- Expect to worry
- Talk to your worry (Externalize it)
- Be unsure and uncomfortable on purpose
 - Learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable
- Breathe!
- Know what you want and go for it
 - Anxiety wants to prevent you from this
- Link to Previous Success



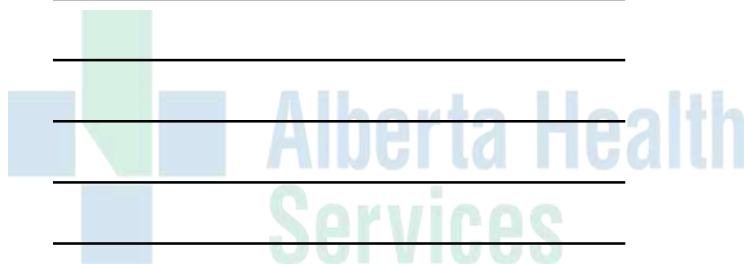
Children of Anxious Parents...

- Perceive ambiguous situations as more threatening
- Engage in all----or----nothing thinking
- (perfectionistic)
- Have lower estimates of competency to cope with such situations
- Experts at assuming the negative will occur



Sorry Parents...

- Children of parents who are also anxious are up to 7Xs more likely to develop anxiety
- Genetic play a influence
- So does the environment...
- Family may not “create it” but can inadvertently “sustain it”
- AVOID THE FAMILY (or school) DANCE!
- What no one tells you...the work is with the ADULTS...☺



Cognitive Patterns

- Global: *never, always, no one, everyone*
– *What ifs? And Yeah but(s)...*
- Catastrophic: *worst case scenario*
- Permanent: *things won't change*
- Kids running schema of the world is important...*help change their internal NARRATIVE...CHOOSE YOUR WORDS!*

Wilson & Lyons, 2013



Critical Cognitive Skills

Teach children to:

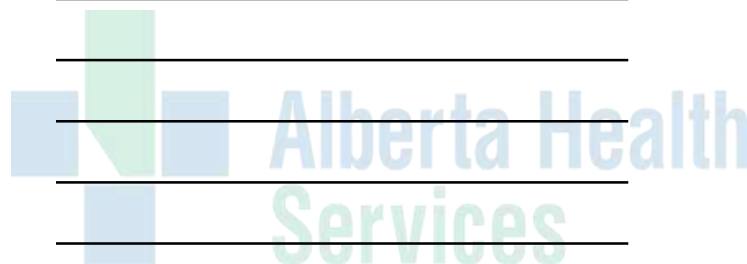
- tolerate (and normalize) discomfort
- externalize/react differently to thoughts
- learn by doing, failing, & succeeding
- handle the uncertainty of life
- be more flexible (malleability!)
- problem solve (vs. ruminate)

Wilson & Lyons, 2013



Beware of Pitfalls

- Too much focus on eliminating symptoms
- Interventions that focus on **content over process**,
– *This maintains or increases anxiety over time!*



Focus on Process

Avoid...

- Focus on & talk about how to fix SPECIFIC problem
- Reassure about that SPECIFIC problem
- Give data, stats, rational information
- Go over plans & specifics repeatedly

DO MORE OF...

- Focus on HOW worry operates & what it's up to
- Cue "worry-managing" strategies
- Be general: "That sounds like worry to me..."
- Prompt independent, internal reassurance & problem solving

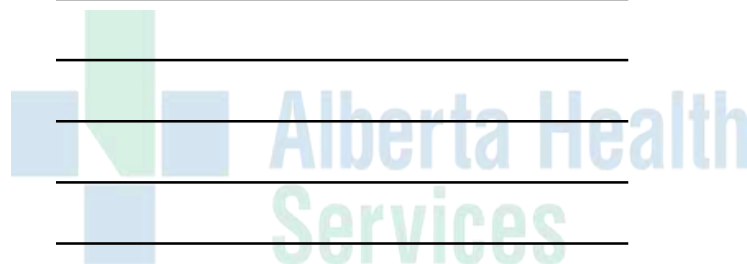


Mindfulness & Metacognition



Challenging Unhelpful Thinking

- Teach children to ask these questions to critically examine their own thoughts
 - What evidence do you have for this?
 - What would a friend say?
 - What would you say to a friend?
 - Is this a helpful thought?



Practice Helpful Thinking

- I can do this
- I've done this before
- This my body over-reacting
- People will help me
- I'll feel great when I'm done
- This feeling will pass soon



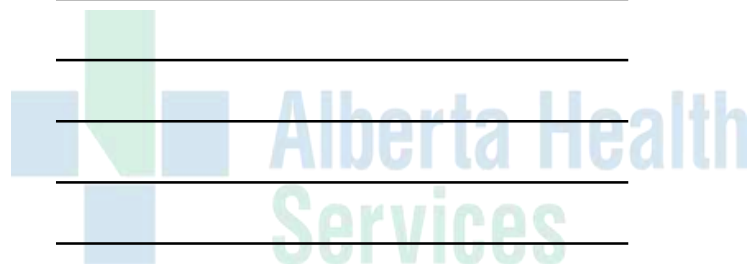
Helpful Thinking

- I'm willing to feel uncomfortable
- I'm willing to feel unsure & to not know what will happen
- I'm willing to grab onto my courage & do it
- I'm uncomfortable but I will be fine
- Anxiety is annoying but this will pass
- I've felt this before and I managed it then
- NOT TODAY ANXIETY...GO LAY DOWN!
 - Externalize it for kids



Avoid...

- Reassuring, rescuing & overprotecting
- Providing certainty
- Identifying child as "worrier" ...genetics!
- Allowing "bad" behavior (yelling, swearing, tantrums, hitting) because it's part of anxiety
- Modeling with your own anxious behavior
- Pushing too hard, becoming angry & reactive



Avoid, Avoiding!

- We must seek to build skills not....
 - Adjusting family routines or schedules
 - School accommodations with no “weaning” plan
 - Creating “escapes” that are warm, safe, & cozy...and support avoidance
 - Diminishing anxiety by creating certainty (giving child schedules & warnings of change throughout the day)



School Plans/IPPs...

- Is this plan accommodating the anxiety?
- Does this plan address the teaching of skills that reduce anxiety?
- How will the child learn about and understand the plan?
- Is there a weaning-off component to the plan?
- What role will visits to the school counsellor have?
- Does the plan specifically address physical symptoms?



Worry Hill: Teach Kids To Get Over the Hill

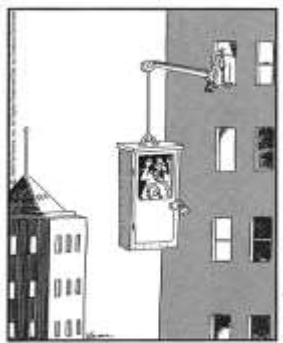




REMEMBER...

- Parents and Teachers: shift from overprotecting to promoting competency = decrease in childhood anxiety
 - Build the narrative and connect to past successes!
- Don't remove hurdle, teach them to jump or climb over it!
 - WORRY HILL
- Wilson & Lyons, 2013., *Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children*

THE FAR SIDE® By GARY LARSON



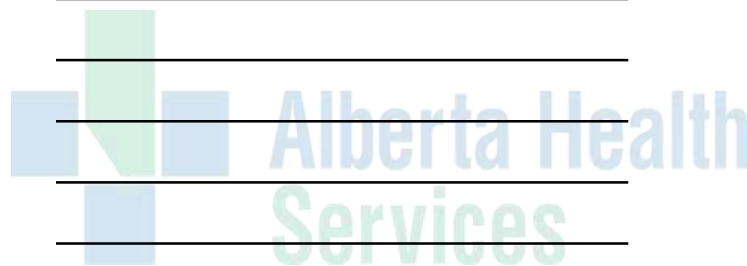
Professor Gallagher and his controversial technique of simultaneously confronting the fear of heights, anxieties, and the dark.

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Resources

- www.anxietybc.com
- <https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/parenting/good-parenting-practices-and-tips/>
- www.youth.anxietybc.com
- www.teenmentalhealth.org
- http://www.playingwithanxiety.com/images/playingwithanxiety_ebook.pdf
- <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/mental-health/disorders/anxiety-children-and-youth#view-tabs-1>

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Books

- **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day** by Judith Viorst (a humorous story about how everyone has a bad day sometime)
- **Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 ways to stop the worry cycle and raise courageous and independent children** by Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons (2013)
- **Grumpy Bird** by Jeremy Tankard (bird wakes up grumpy but is able to shake his bad mood with the help of exercise and his friends)
- **How Are You Peeling?** Foods with Moods by Saxton Freymann (cleverly provides images and vocabulary for a wide range of feelings depicted by real fruit and vegetables)
- **My Many Colored Days** by Dr. Seuss (a rhyming book where colors are assigned to moods to help children express how they feel)
- **Sad** by Sarah Medina (normalizes and helps children recognize sad feelings in themselves and others) *she also has other feelings books (Shy, Embarrassed)
- **Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go To Sleep** by Joyce Dunbar and Debi Gilori (Willa's big brother helps her to get to sleep by pointing out happy things that await her in the morning)
- **The Feel Good Book** by Todd Parr (inspires children to celebrate all the little things in life that make them feel good and happy) * he also has books about many other social/emotional topics
- **What Are You So Grumpy About?** by Tom Lichtenheld (a very funny book for children in a bad mood and in need of cheering up)
- **The Red Beast** by K.L. Al-Ghani (an accessible and fun way to talk about anger)
- **Zach Gets Frustrated** by William Mulcahy (teaches students about frustration and what to do about it)



46

Learning How to Relax your Body

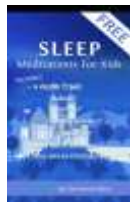
- Students can come up with their own ways they relax (talk to a friend, stretch, share a joke, go for a walk, play outside)
- Relaxation Exercises:
 - **A Boy and a Bear: The Children's Relaxation Book** by Lori Lite (helps children learn how to use deep, abdominal breathing and calm themselves)
 - **Peaceful Piggy Meditation** by Kerry Lee MacLean, (children learn to find a peaceful place and become more mindful and calm through breathing and being still)
 - **Flower Breath:** Imagine smelling a beautiful flower, breathe in through the nose and out the mouth, releasing any tension. Stop and smell the roses, daffodils, daisies or any other flower they like.
 - **Bear Breath:** Inhale through the nose, pause; exhale out the nose, pause. Breathe in to a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2; breath out for a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2. Repeat a few times



47

Scripts and Audio

- Indigo Dreams by Lori Lite (CD)
 - Inner Health Studio (scripts and audio)
- www.innerhealthstudio.com/



48

The **ZONES** of Regulation®

BLUE ZONE Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	RED ZONE Mad/Angry Mad Terrified Yelling/Hitting Out of Control

health

Designing for Executive Functioning

- Problem Solve with the Student
- Model by Thinking Out Loud
- Make a Plan with The Student
- Break Tasks into Steps
- Model Appropriate Coping
- Scaffold Instruction



Thanks!

