

RESPONDING TO YOUR CHILD'S WORRY & ANXIETY





GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Identify Stress and stressors
- ☐ Learn the signs of stress and anxiety
- ☐ Learn interventions to reduce stress and anxiety.

WHAT IS STRESS?

- ❑ A normal occurrence
- ❑ When something pleasant or unpleasant happens around you, which puts you in a state of strain or pressure



WHAT ARE SOME TOPICS THAT CAN CAUSE STRESS?



- ❑ COVID-19
- ❑ Racism
- ❑ Domestic violence
- ❑ Poverty
- ❑ Lack of support system
- ❑ Health issues
- ❑ Etc...

What is stress for a young child?

- Acute stress – “Sudden, intense onset and then the subsidence of stressful stimuli.”
 - Loved one becoming ill
- Chronic stress – Prolonged stress
 - Separation anxiety from loved one
 - Death in the family
- Extended amounts of stress on a child can result in behavioral issues
- “Children’s stress moved from 8th on the top 10 list in 2009 to fifth in 2010.”



- Jewett, J., & Peterson, K. (n.d.). Stress and Young Children. *At Health Mental Health*. Retrieved January 28, 2012, from <http://www.athealth.com/consumer/disorders/childstress.html>
- Soulliere, J. (2010, August 16). Top 10 health concerns for kids; Obesity, stress, teen pregnancy worsening | University of Michigan Health System. *UMHS: File Not Found*. Retrieved January 28, 2012, from <http://www2.med.umich.edu/prnc/media/newsroom/details.cfm?ID=1682>



INDICATORS OF STRESS: ELEMENTARY LEVEL

- ☐ Emotional withdrawn/
sudden changes in behavior

- ☐ Irritability/ crying
excessively

- ☐ Hair chewing

- ☐ Thumb sucking

- ☐ Fingernail biting

- ☐ Inability to sleep

- ☐ Rocking

- ☐ Teeth grinding

- ☐ Headaches/ stomach
aches

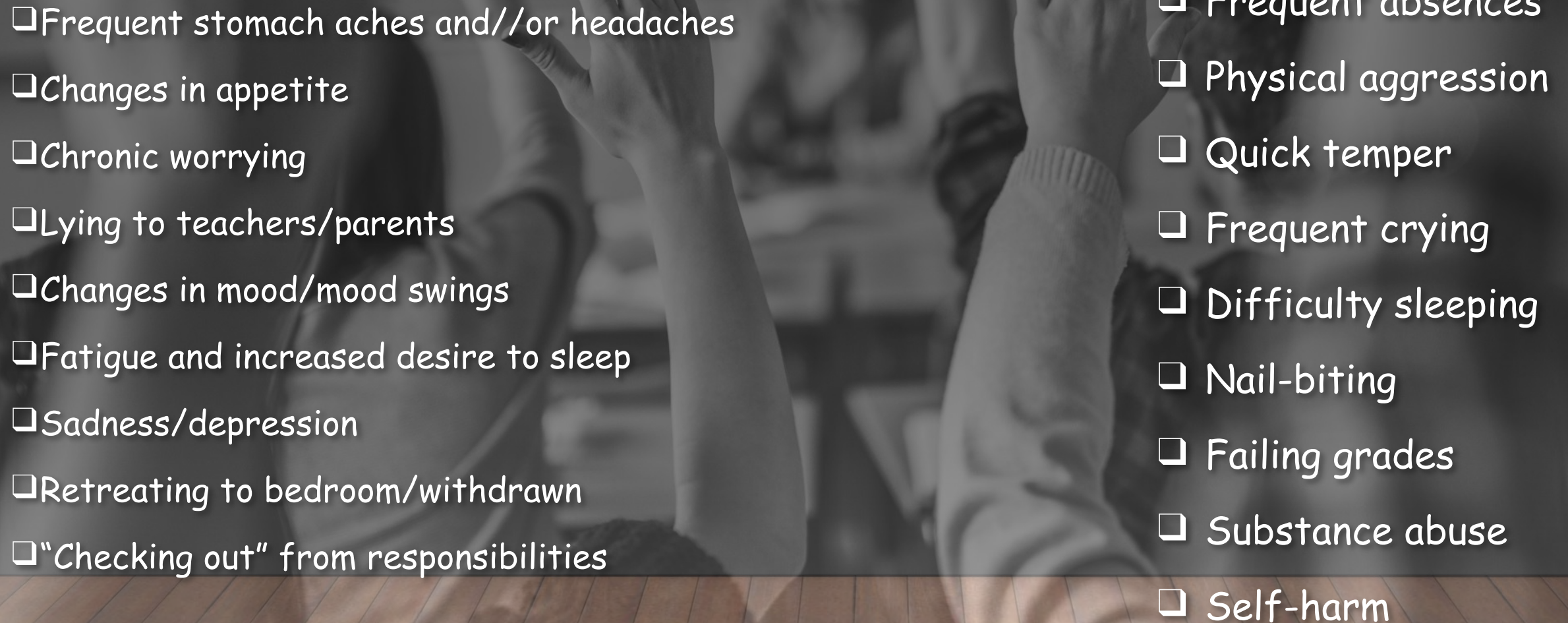
- ☐ Bed wetting

- ☐ Temper tantrums

- ☐ Developmental regression

- ☐ Startled response

INDICATORS OF STRESS: MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

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- A grayscale background image showing a classroom full of students. Many of the students have their hands raised, suggesting an interactive or active learning environment. The image is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the text overlay.
- ☐ Frequent stomach aches and/or headaches
 - ☐ Changes in appetite
 - ☐ Chronic worrying
 - ☐ Lying to teachers/parents
 - ☐ Changes in mood/mood swings
 - ☐ Fatigue and increased desire to sleep
 - ☐ Sadness/depression
 - ☐ Retreating to bedroom/withdrawn
 - ☐ "Checking out" from responsibilities
 - ☐ Frequent absences
 - ☐ Physical aggression
 - ☐ Quick temper
 - ☐ Frequent crying
 - ☐ Difficulty sleeping
 - ☐ Nail-biting
 - ☐ Failing grades
 - ☐ Substance abuse
 - ☐ Self-harm

INDICATORS OF STRESS: HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Irritability/
Anger

Substance Use

Neglecting
Responsibilities

School
Avoidance

Headaches and
Stomachaches

Sleep Issues

Educational
Problems

Increased
Irritability

Changes in
Socialization

Frequent Illness

Negative
Changes in
Behavior

Difficulty
Concentrating

Negative Talk

General Sense
of Worry



TECHNIQUES TO REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY

VISUALIZATION-IMAGINE A PEACEFUL PLACE

- It can be a beach, a rainy day sleeping in, a meadow, the clouds-use your imagination
- Really build up the image.
 - ❖ What does it smell like?
 - ❖ What do you hear?
 - ❖ What do you see?
 - ❖ What can you touch?
- Come up with a name for your peaceful place
- Practice visualizing the peaceful place with your child so that they can go to it anytime they need to.
- Find a symbol to represent the place that the child can keep with them

Power of Positive Thinking

POSITIVE THINKING

Self-image + Self-Talk = ***Self-esteem***

- ☐ Self-Image
- ☐ Acknowledge positive qualities
- ☐ Don't compare yourself to others
- ☐ Positive support network
- ☐ Take advantage of personal growth programs

POSITIVE THINKING

Positive Self-Talk Statements

☐ Replace a negative thought with a positive one

"I will pass this test because I am prepared" vs. "I am a bad test taker"

"I can do this"

"I haven't reached my goal yet, but I know my areas of improvement"

"I have done this before"



STRENGTH TREE ACTIVITY



Mindful Eating

www.eatingmindfully.com



Susan Albers PsyD 2012@ Eat, Drink & Be Mindful

Susan Albers PsyD 2015@ Eat, Drink & Be Mindful

MINDFULNESS

- ❑ State of active, open attention on the **present**.
- ❑ When you're mindful, you observe your **thoughts** and **feelings** from a distance, without judging them good or bad.
- ❑ Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means **living in the moment** and awakening to experience. – Psychology Today
- ❑ Mindfulness is a variety
 - ❑ Mindful breathing
 - ❑ Mindful observation
 - ❑ Mindful listening
 - ❑ Mindful eating
 - ❑ Mindful appreciation
 - ❑ Mindful immersion

A close-up photograph of several lavender flower spikes. The flowers are small, purple, and densely packed along the stems. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of purple and warm, golden-brown tones, suggesting a sunny day in a garden.

THE POWER OF SCENT

- ❑ We use all our senses in relaxation including scent.
- ❑ Think about relaxing scents in your life like fresh baked bread, pasta sauce that has been simmering all day, or chocolate chip cookies coming out of the oven.
- ❑ Scent helps the mind focus on the present moment.
- ❑ Lavender is known for relaxing properties and using lotion with relaxing smells can help remind children of that relaxing feeling during times of stress.

DEEP BREATHING

- ❑ Fast shallow breathing= anxiety, dizziness, upset stomach, insomnia, heart palpitations, and visual problems
- ❑ Fast shallow breathing results in: reduced energy, premature ageing, poor immune system, and numerous other factors
- ❑ Deep breathing will “help lungs and ribs increase flexibility, which allows [you] to take in more oxygen”
- ❑ Breathe through *nose* and out of *mouth!*
- ❑ Deep breathing c a l m s the nervous system, helps eliminate toxins for the body, assists digestion of food and weight control
- ❑ Other benefits: helps blood circulate better, burns more fat, reduces skin wrinkles, relaxes the body and mind, makes lungs more powerful and healthy

BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR CHILDREN

- ❑ Because there is no competition, yoga promotes cooperation and compassion over opposition with other kids
- ❑ It is a great activity for all skill levels and ages, from preschoolers to teens
- ❑ Builds focus and develops in-the-moment discipline
- ❑ Helps kids develop their listening and observation skills
- ❑ Yoga is used as a preventative medicine approach to health and wellness
- ❑ Kids have an opportunity to learn how to relax and become calm
- ❑ Yoga promotes overall well-being and highlights the harmony between the kids' inner actions and outer actions.
- ❑ When practiced with the family, yoga acts as a healthy bonding activity and promotes wellness to the entire family unit.

MEDITATION

- ❑ Meditation reduces racing thoughts and helps children better cope with stress and can help with relaxation as well as focus. It is like blowing fresh air into your body to clean it up and feel calm and peaceful.
- ❑ It is a great gift to be able to teach your child this tool and to lead by example and start your own meditation practice!
 - ❑ Create a calm and quiet place and minimize distractions
 - ❑ Sit comfortably and designate a small amount of time for quiet-5 minutes is perfectly fine
 - ❑ Focus on breathing-using some of the great techniques learned earlier!
 - ❑ You can either pick a focal object like a candle to look at or simply close your eyes
 - ❑ Notice thoughts that come in your brain but let them float by like clouds
 - ❑ Use a mantra like ohm or visualize breathing in calm and cool and breathing out stress and worries
- ❑ Use a script for guided meditation

MUSIC

- ❑ Music is another powerful way to help the body relax as well as to impact mood
- ❑ Music is also an area of great interest to many students and picking meaningful lyrics or a theme song can be a fun activity.
- ❑ Ideas from the room

SELF- REGULATION

- ❑ Its not what you see, but how you see it.
- ❑ Reframing: Interpreting misfortune as a temporary setback
- ❑ Benefit finding: Looking for positive aspects of a challenging situation
- ❑ Benefit reminding: Knowing that challenging situation build resilience
- ❑ Reordering priorities: Shifting your priorities to focus on what matters
- ❑ Empathetic bond: Connecting with others, but standing apart from their trauma
- ❑ Infusing ordinary events with positive meaning: Engaging in the positive every day
- ❑ Adaptive goal process: Letting go of unrealistic goals



LIMIT DISTRACTIONS

- ❑ We are constantly receiving new stimuli – emotional, psychological, intellectual, technological.
- ❑ Distractions can become part of our lifestyle and coping mechanism when we are often faced with difficult emotional content.
- ❑ We feel less like ourselves, dissatisfied with what may have been enjoyable in the past.
- ❑ Use strategies to avoid excessive media immersion.

Tips: Use a screen time monitoring app, ask yourself, “why am I reaching for/using my phone now?” Put your phone out of sight when not needed – especially in meetings or during time with friends and family – don’t use a smartphone as your alarm clock.

BONUS IDEAS

- ❑ Early preparation for the day can reduce anxiety before school starts.
 - Lay out clothes the night before
 - Have backpack by the door the night before fully packed and ready to go
 - Ensure any notices that require parent signature are taken care of the night before so there are no morning surprises
 - Ensure enough time to make it to school on time
- ❑ Seek Help from the school team-talk with a teacher or school counselor
- ❑ Figure out the reason for the anxiety and problem solve from that angle-be a detective!
- ❑ Physical Activity
- ❑ Rest

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO WITH KIDS

- ❑ Use art. Have children draw to express their feelings.
- ❑ Encourage reflection on inner strengths.
- ❑ Create songs, poetry, short stories, and books about their feelings, thoughts, and experiences.
- ❑ Do deep breathing, relaxation, and visualization exercises.
- ❑ Find books about how to deal with stress and children from your local library.
- ❑ Give lots of hugs and kisses.
- ❑ Play with intention. Card games, board games.
- ❑ Physical activities, sports etc.



CONCLUSION

What can you try by next Wednesday?

Questions?