

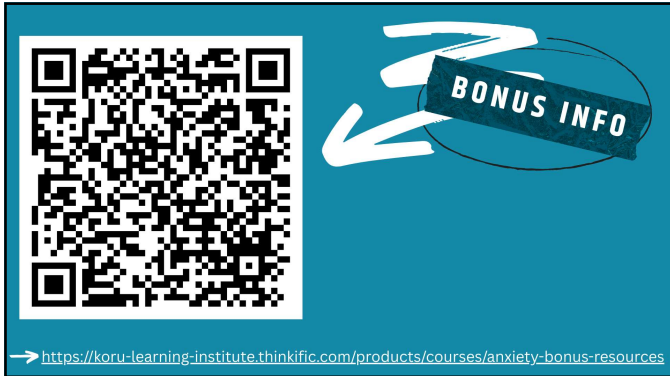
1



2



3



A blue rectangular graphic featuring a QR code on the left and a dark blue banner with the text "BONUS INFO" on the right, flanked by white arrows. Below the QR code is a URL: <https://koru-learning-institute.thinkific.com/products/courses/anxiety-bonus-resources>

4

Personal action plan

What traps do I need to get out of?	How can I improve my response to anxiety?	What can I do proactively?	How can I start encouraging students?
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

5

Foundations

Emotional Disorders are on the Rise...

Anxiety is the most common mental health problem in kids K-12




6



70% of all mental health problems begin in childhood and adolescence

7



Anxiety in the Classroom

Anxiety contributes to internalizing AND externalizing behaviours

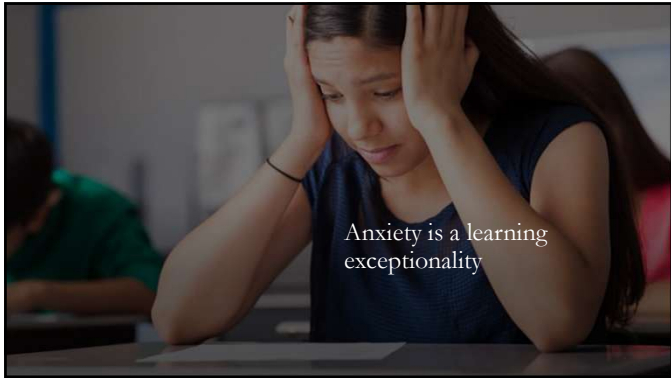
- Students who appear oppositional
- Students who seem defiant
- Students who seek constant reassurance
- Students who need to go to the bathroom frequently

8

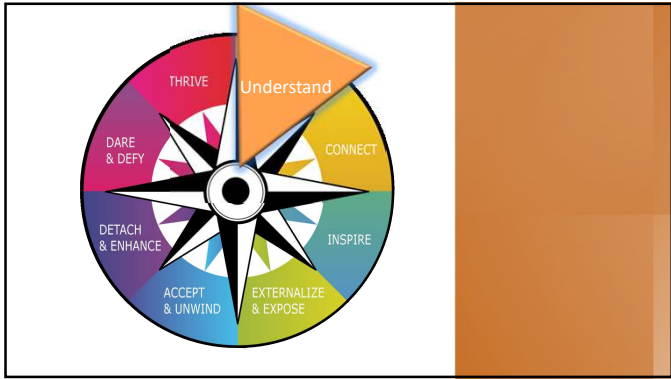


9

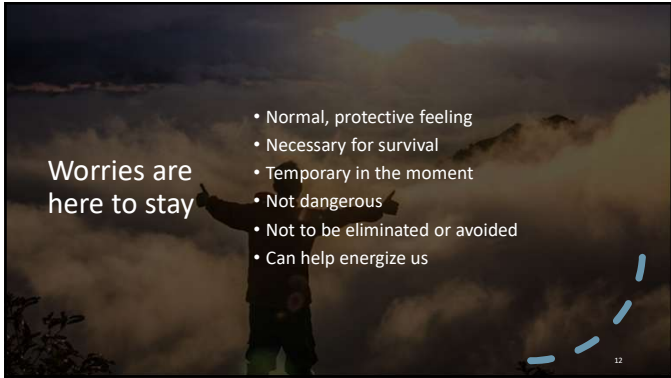
Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.



10



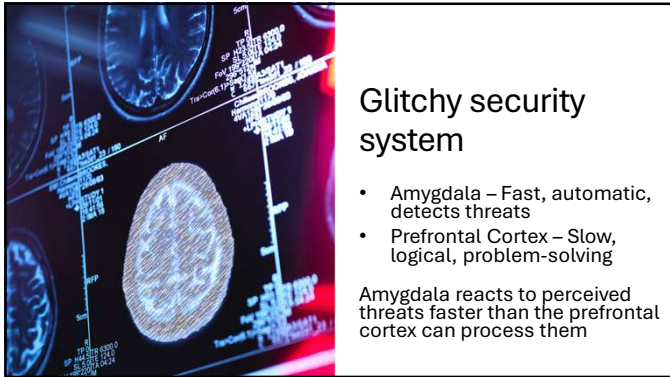
11



12



13



14



15

Dimensionality Reduction


Integrates sensory input + body needs

↓

Too much data → brain compresses info

↓

Creates summaries of summaries



Quick & dirty & sometimes WRONG


16

Knowledge Influences Sensory Information

(e.g., all faces are always convex)

- Our knowledge/ experience/ what we THINK misleads us into seeing the mask as convex

Bottom-up sensory information is overridden by top-down knowledge




17

Better Safe Than Sorry Processing

Our brain doesn't care if its hazardous or not

- Our brain will respond based on what we need to survive
- Can react in error



18

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

Brain has quick & dirty information to make sense of things & is NOT going to wait around
Brain fills the gaps with worse case scenarios
Worry: An act of imagination

Anxious students have more hypervigilant amygdalae
• Sends danger signals around anything that's even slightly uncomfortable.

Students literally scare themselves with their own thoughts

19

It's NOT about the trigger
This is not what they are avoiding!!!!

I can't handle it!

20

What is anxiety?
(And what are they avoiding?)

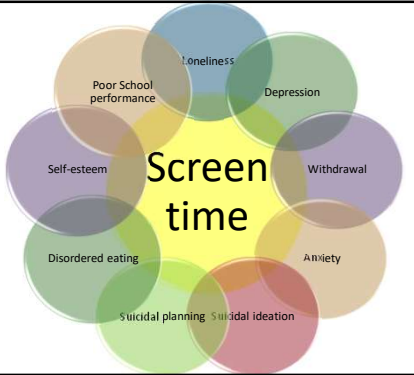
21

Kids are More Stressed, More Anxious, & Less Resilient than ever before



22

Major Psychological Risk Factor



23

Weakens Self-regulation

Resources used up

- Weaken kids' ability to manage emotions
 - Contributes to anxiety
- Increased emotional reactivity
- Proactive aggression
- Anti-social behaviours



24

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

US: Well-Meaning Adults
& the traps we fall into that make anxiety worse

- Kids learn anxious behaviours from important adults in their lives
- Rushing! *Freaking out and problem solving are not compatible*
- Unhelpful interactions, even when trying to be helpful
 - Adding stress
 - Creates loneliness
 - Failing to meet their needs
 - Unwittingly responding in punishing ways, even when trying to be supportive
- Catastrophizing words
- Minimizing language (e.g., little deal)
- Everybody gets a trophy just for showing up (and avoiding disappointment)

25

We talk TOO MUCH

Fixing	Correcting	Controlling	Reminding	Persuading
Pushing	Punishing	Directing	Lecturing	Arguing
Confronting	Threatening	Talking	Labelling	Telling

26



Impairs healthy independence

Inhibits resilience

Disrupts emotion regulation

Contributes to anxiety

Contributes to emotional exhaustion

Can lead to aggressive behaviour

Increases risk of substance abuse and risky behaviours

27




Unsolicited Support


- Swooping in can:
 - Undermine the equity in the relationship
 - Create a sense of obligation
 - Independence and self-esteem threatened
 - Feel invalidating
 - Seem unsympathetic
 - Shut down communication

28

Reassure or Co-compulse



Reassure everything is going to be fine!



Answer the same anxiety-driven question (e.g., "Am I safe?", "Is this okay?") more than once.

Creates dependency. Makes it a big deal. Feeds the anxiety loop.


29

Saying "Don't worry" doesn't work

- Minimizing
- No skills developed
- Creates dependency
- Get stuck in constant need for reassurance
- Act as enablers

30

Misapplying Strategies



BREATHING RELAXATION CHANGING THOUGHTS GETTING STUCK ON CONTENT

Need to teach the amygdala: I don't need to do ANYTHING.
• Otherwise, teach it something MUST be wrong, so you SHOULD be hypervigilant.

31



BE CAREFUL

- Decreases self-confidence
- Start to doubt their interpretation of the world

32



Suffocates Resilience

Leads to spikes in anxiety

33

Underestimate & Deprive Kids

- Freedom
- Unsupervised play
- Responsibility
- Opportunities for risk-taking

Critical for developing:

- Resilience
- Competence
- Confidence
- Maturity
- Mental health

34

Accommodations worsens anxiety & emotional dysregulation long-term

More impairing and severe with poorer treatment outcomes

- Fail to learn anxiety tolerance
- Fail to develop coping skills (and autonomy and self-efficacy)
- Prevents corrective learning and habituation
- Reinforce maladaptive beliefs
- Reliance on reassurance reinforces an overestimation of threats and undermines confidence
- Increased risk for other problems
- Decreased academic confidence and success
- Increased dependency
- Reinforced negative reinforcement cycle

35

Accommodation behaviours

Anything YOU do to make them feel better

- Participation**
 - Assist in checking behaviours
 - Assist in avoidance
 - Reassure
 - Making things predictable
- Modification**
 - Prevent distressing situations

36



Anxiety...

- Wants certainty
- Wants predictability
- Wants comfort

37

Speaking for the student	Allowing students to be excused	Ensuring predictability	Avoiding outings
Sitting out of anxiety provoking situations (e.g., gym)	Only having one substitute	Avoiding stress	Eliminating risk
Saving from mistakes	Rigid routines	Seeing school nurse unnecessarily	Leaving lights on

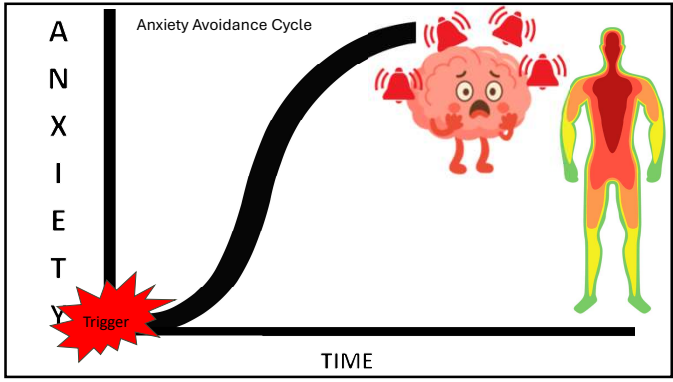
38

Reducing workload or grading standards	Allowing them to sit out/not participate (even in class discussions)	Frequent check-ins	Modified deadlines
Checking homework	Accompanying the child to certain parts of the school	Distraction	Adjusting routines
Alternate place for lunch	Fixed schedules	Pre-warnings and Transition warnings	Stress balls

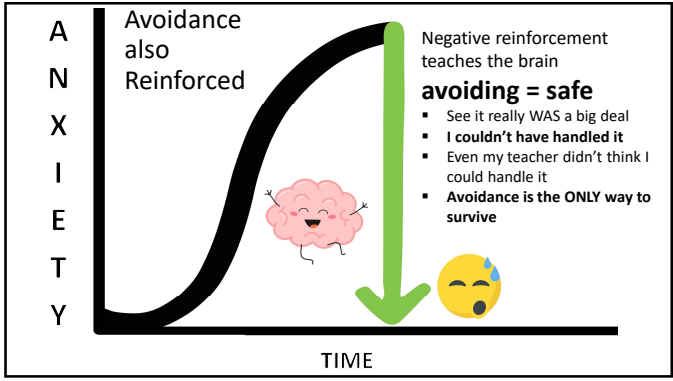
39



40




41



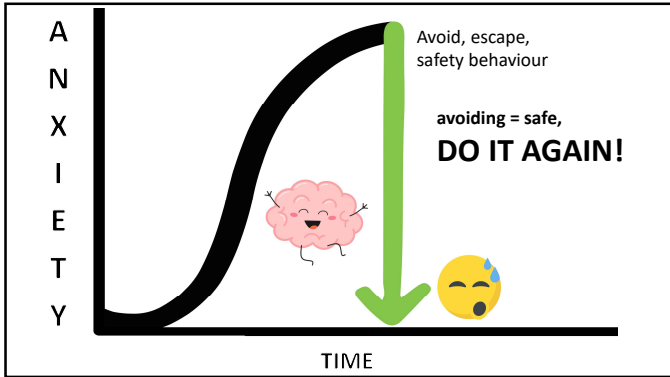
42

Remember:
The Brain is A
Prediction
Machine

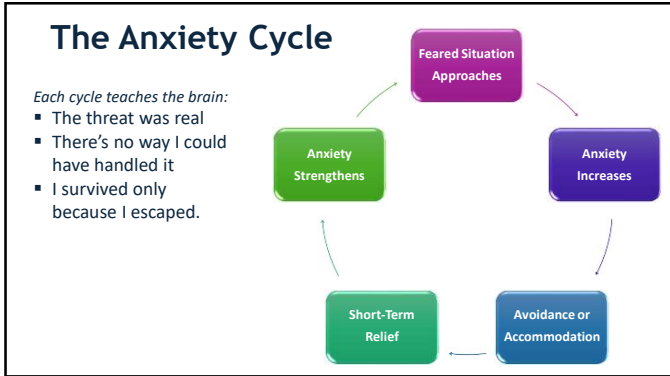
QUICKLY DETERMINES
WHAT BEHAVIOURS ARE
MOST REWARDING



43

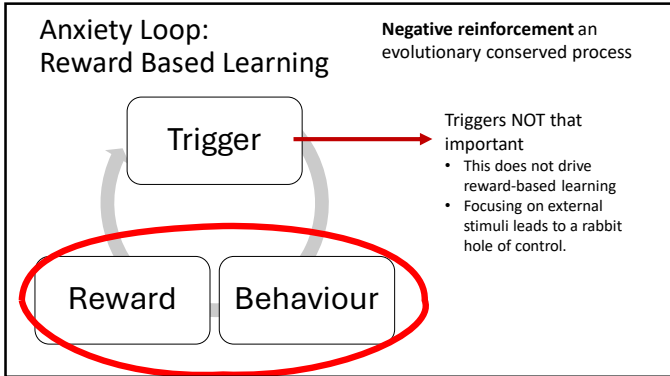


44

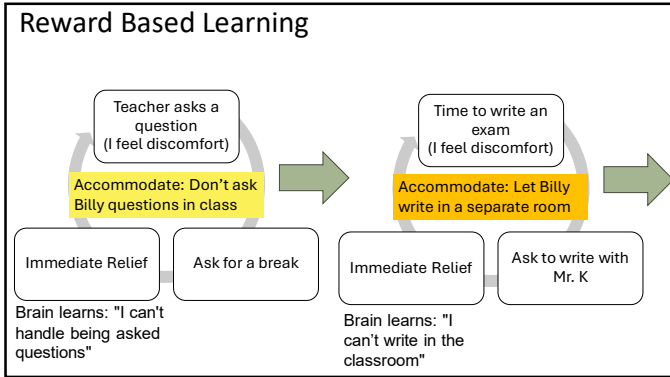


45

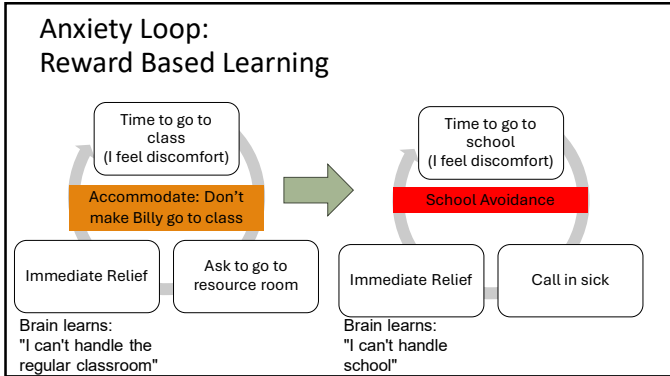
Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.



46



47



48



49

Anxiety is a System Problem

When adults reorganize around preventing distress instead of building tolerance

- 1 **Student Independence Erodes**
Self-efficacy shrinks as reliance on adults grows
- 2 **Avoidance Expands**
School refusal, perfectionism, shutdown behaviours increase
- 3 **Staff Burnout**
Constant "managing" of anxiety depletes energy
- 4 **Missed Learning**
No opportunities for exposure, mastery, or resilience-building


50

Distinction!


<p>Not About</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough love • Being harsh or uncaring • Forcing students beyond their capacity • Ignoring mental health needs • Removing legitimate accommodations 	<p>This IS About</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopping patterns that strengthen anxiety • Building capability alongside support • Knowing when you're helping vs. hindering
---	---

51


Your Big But...



Hard to tolerate seeing them in distress, leading to our own avoidance



What if's



Other buts

...they'll have a meltdown
 ...I don't have time
 ...they're not ready
 ...the other students need me
 ...they'll get hurt
 ...parents will complain


52

**Kids with low resilience DON'T think they're capable...
 ...and so avoid, give up, or lash out**

They stick with easy
 But we don't grow from easy...



53



What are you doing for students they can do themselves?

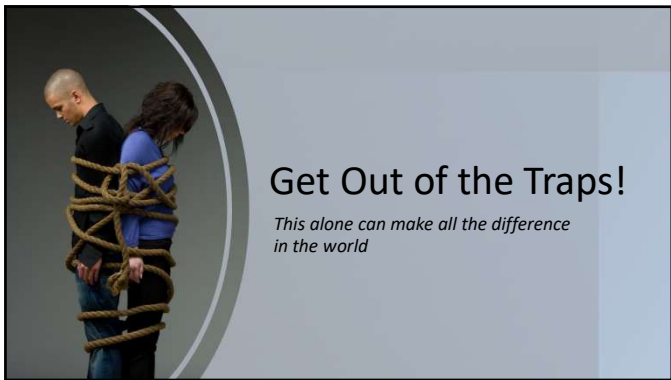
Harming kids when we do

- Changes brain development & ingrains emotional challenges
- Makes them MORE vulnerable: Stunts confidence, growth, & resilience
 - No opportunities to experience manageable amounts of stress
 - No chance to learn "I can handle hard things"

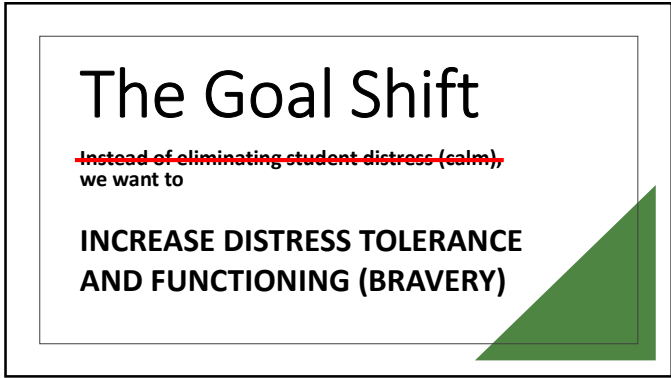
54



55



56



57

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

What is our job?	NOT To <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix • Solve • Reassure • Make them feel better • Be their therapist & treat anxiety 	To <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help them be the bravest versions of themselves • Build their capability • Remove obstacles to their own growth
------------------	---	---

58

Goal: Identify and reduce adult-driven behaviours (e.g., reassurance, task removal, rescue) that reinforce avoidance, hinder emotion tolerance, and communicate lack of confidence in student ability.

Identify patterns of enabling	What accommodations do you have in place that need to be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits • FBI/FBA 	

59

Goal: Identify and reduce adult-driven behaviours (e.g., reassurance, task removal, rescue) that reinforce avoidance and hinder emotion tolerance.

Identify patterns of enabling	Transition/replace accommodations with instructional supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits • FBI/FBA 	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px;"> <div style="background-color: #5dade2; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> By June, student will engage in 3 identified academic tasks previously avoided, using co-regulation and exposure strategies </div> <div style="background-color: #9b59b6; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Student may leave class when anxious </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">➔</div> <div style="background-color: #9b59b6; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Student will co-develop an exposure plan and use emotion regulation strategies to remain in class during anxiety-provoking tasks </div> </div>

60

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

Student goals

~~Common Accommodation~~
Student must present to class via video

Problem: Reinforces avoidance with no plan to build skills

Shift goals from symptom reduction to functional engagement

Growth-Oriented Revision

Presentation 1:
Student will present 1-2 slides to a small group, using coping strategy X.

Presentation 2:
Student will present 3-4 slides to small group, using coping strategy X.

61

~~Common Accommodation~~
Student must complete test in separate quiet room with support.

Creates dependency on external conditions; no self-regulation growth

Every accommodation needs a fade plan and skill-building component

Growth-Oriented Revision

Student will use personalized coping strategy pre-test, complete test in classroom with goal to reduce separate setting use by 50% in 8 weeks.

62

Consider IPP's/IEP's

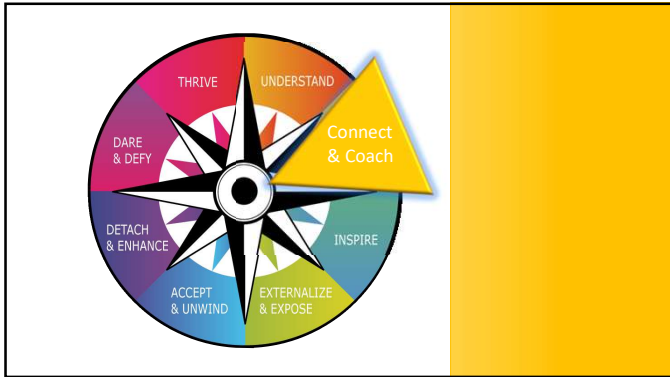
- Does it accommodate anxiety? Or prevent it from
- Are skills being taught (in the natural context)?
 - How do breaks/office visits help?
- Is there a transition plan to reduce supports?
- Does the plan address tolerance (physical symptoms)?
- Does it document how to maintain contact between home and school?

Help students move toward COURAGE, not comfort

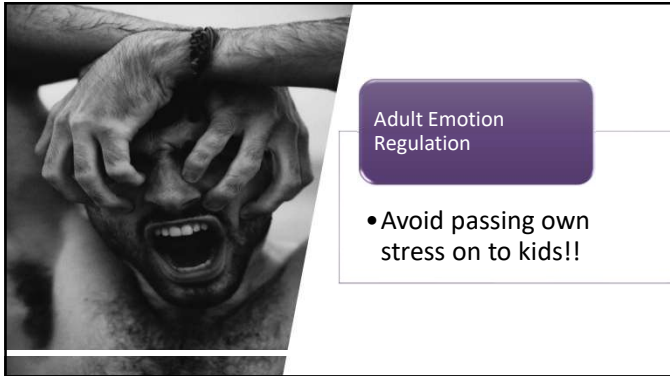
63



64



65



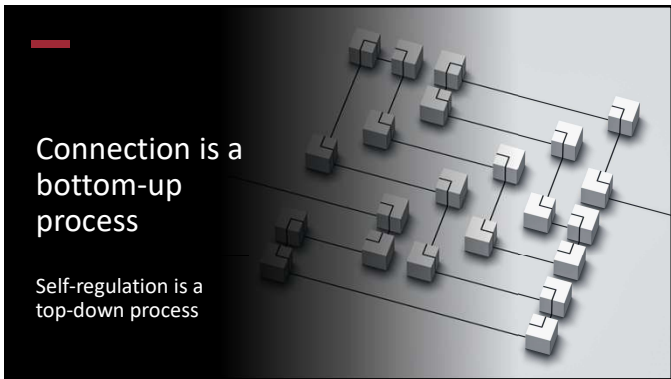
66



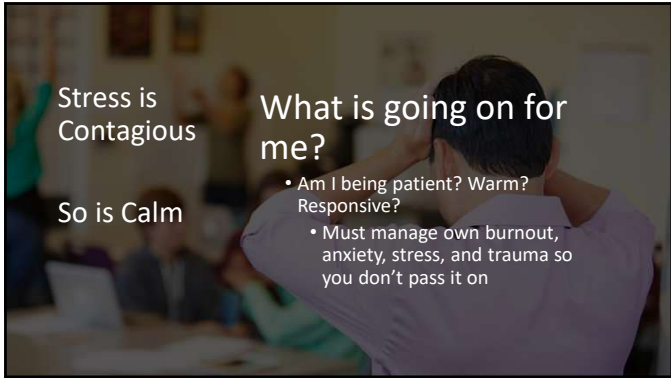
67



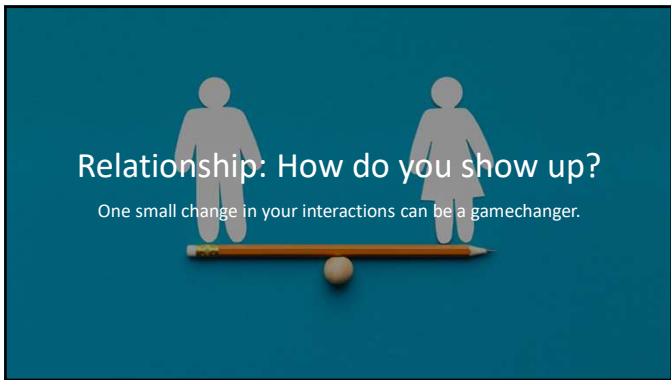
68



69



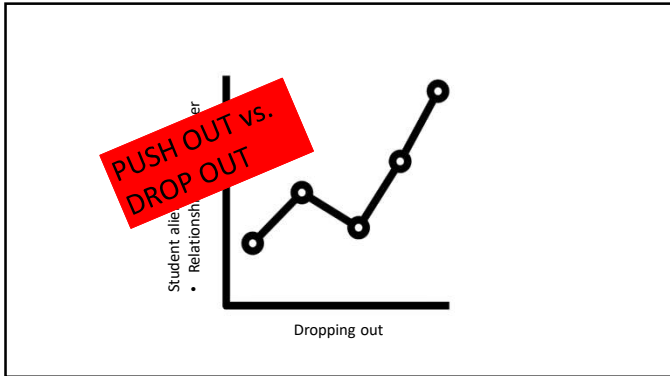
70



71



72



73

Greet Students Every Day!

Start each day with a "welcome ritual"
A positive start to class greatly improves engagement and behaviours

- Stand at the door
- Greet each student positively
- Say their name
- Eye contact
- Have a short positive interaction
- Follow student's lead

A positive start greatly improves engagement and behaviour

We have less than 6 minutes:
Kids need to feel liked and respected

- **Every** interaction matters:
 - How do you greet them?
 - How do you respond when they struggle?
 - What's your face telling them?
- What can you DO to strengthen your relationship with your students every day?

74

Modelling Resilience

Show kids how to handle mistakes and challenges.

Make comments like, "I am worried about this but this is what I am going to do..."

Use reflective problem-solving aloud: "This didn't go as planned—let's figure it out."

Show emotions BUT model how you manage them

75

Effective Communication

- Adults don't tend to understand children's experiences and needs
- Don't take the time to listen
- Talking only escalates the problem
- Adults use different parts of the brain
 - We all perceive things differently
 - Students experience situations differently than you
- Must understand THEIR viewpoint to provide effective support
 - Can't help if responding to YOUR interpretation

76

Effective Communication: Become a Master Listener

- Talk less listen more
- They need to feel heard
- Validate!!

Validation ≠ Agreement

- You can validate feelings without agreeing with behaviour
- "You're really angry right now" ≠ "It's okay to throw things"
- "This feels impossible to you" ≠ "You're right, you can't do it"
- Validation = I see you, I hear you, your feelings make sense

77

Validation Formula = Adjective!

That...	NOT:
✓ Sounds...	✗ I understand (<i>you don't fully</i>)
✓ Hard	✗ It's okay (<i>dismissive</i>)
✓ Frustrating	✗ At least... (<i>minimizing</i>)
✓ Overwhelming	
✓ Confusing	
✓ Disappointing	
✓ Sucks	

Just name what you see

How we talk is important
Replace negativity with curiosity

78

When Big Emotions show up...

- Kids need to learn to self-regulate!
- Big emotions disrupt connection
 - Their self-regulating brain is offline
 - No learning happening
 - No reasoning possible
 - They need TIME & space to process

Your job: Be the calm, create the space

For both:
SIT WITH IT without doing anything!!!

79

Example Scripts

Student Melting Down/Highly Dysregulated
Crying, yelling, shutdown, refusing to engage

✗ AVOID:	✓ INSTEAD:
Reasoning, lecturing, or explaining in the moment	Calm, low voice, give space
Asking "why" questions	I can see you're having big feelings. That's OK, I'll be here. Let me know when you're ready.
Giving consequences	When calm enough to talk (10-20 min.):
Matching their intensity	That was tough. What's next? (Debrief, problem solve etc.)

Less is more! Calm presence > words.

80

It is nearly impossible to maintain the intensity of the worry while tracking something else.

Attention Training

- We can choose to shift attention out of the head and into the room

81

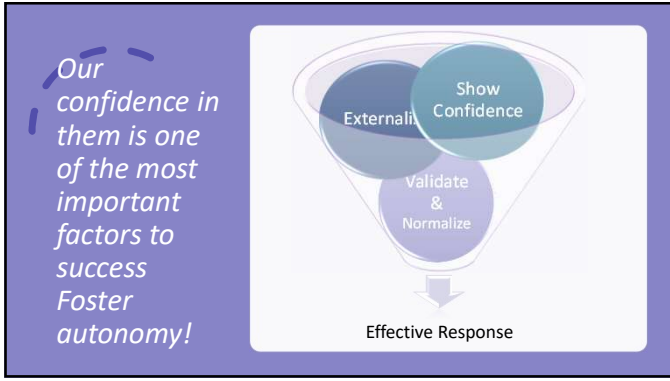
Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

Sometimes we need to focus on upregulating certain emotions
(instead of trying down-regulate all the time)

82

Validation + Use Mirror Neurons
Show confidence = FEEL confidence

83



84

Language Shift

- Acknowledge the challenge + express confidence

Don't be scared

• I know this feels scary AND I believe you can do this

It's easy!

• This is hard, AND hard things help us grow

85

Foster autonomy!

Kids need to figure out their own challenges: Put it back to them!

 VALIDATE & NORMALIZE You're worried about failing, that's tough. It makes sense your stomach feels gross.	 EXTERNALIZE Sounds like worry is trying to get you to avoid.	 SHOW CONFIDENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body language • Tone • Sit beside (vs. across) 	 PUT IT BACK ON THEM Open questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the plan? • What's the first step? • How do you want to do this?
--	--	--	--

86

Example Scripts

Student Refusing/Avoiding a Task

"I can't do this" / "My stomach hurts" / "This is too hard"

✗ AVOID:	✓ INSTEAD
You can skip it this time	This IS hard. Hard means your brain is growing.
Let me make it easier for you	I've seen you handle hard. Let's start with just one small piece.
Fine, just do half	

87

Parent Requests Accommodation

"Can you just let them skip the presentation?" / "Please don't call on them"

✗ AVOID:	✓ INSTEAD:	If parent is resistant:
Immediately agreeing	I can hear how much you want to protect Suzie from distress, which makes sense as a parent.	I understand this is concerning. I think discussing the best approach with the support team will help to make sure we're supporting Suzie's long-term wellbeing, not just short-term comfort.
Arguing with parent	When we allow avoidance, anxiety actually gets worse over time.	
Ignoring request	We need to support them through the discomfort to build their confidence that they CAN handle it.	
	I'd love to work together to build this up instead of complete avoidance.	
	Would you be open to trying that for a few weeks and seeing if Suzie surprises us?	

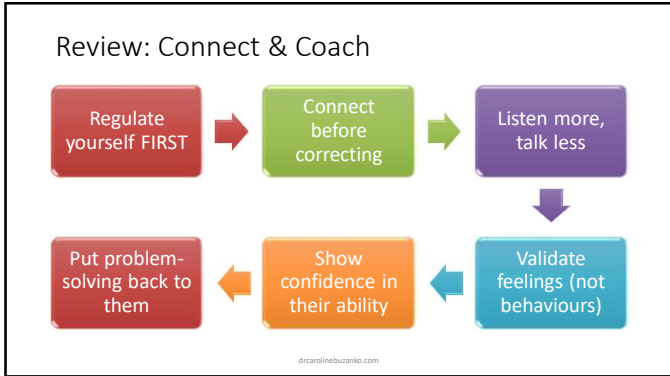
88

Student Making Negative Self-Statements

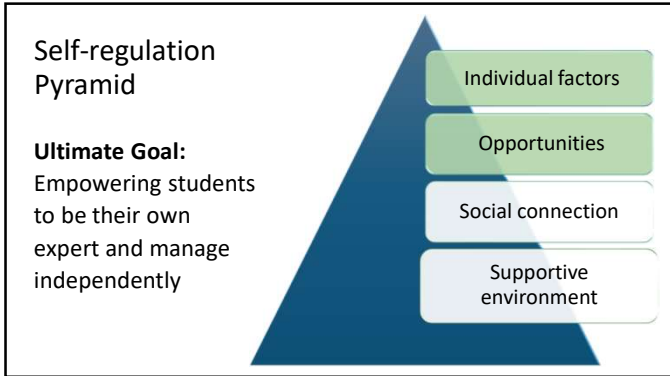
"I'm so bad at this" / "I always mess up" / "I can't do anything right"

✗ AVOID:	✓ INSTEAD:	Younger version:
"That's not true!"	I'm hearing that Critic Brain being really hard on you.	"Whoa, that's Mean Voice talking! Let's talk back to it: 'I'm learning, and learning is hard. My mistakes help my brain grow.'"
"You're great at lots of things!"	That critic brain likes to try to make you give up.	
Over-praising to compensate	Here's what I see: I see someone trying something hard. That takes courage. You haven't mastered this YET, but you're learning.	
	What's one small thing you did OK, even if the whole thing didn't turn out how you wanted?	

89



90



91

Build Skills & Promote Success:

The # 1 thing they need to learn?

How to manage the experience of big emotions when they show up
Not how to avoid anxiety/the trigger

92

92

Emotion Regulation...

It's not about avoiding, ignoring, or suppressing emotions

It's about being aware of emotions, acknowledging them, co-existing with them, and responding in helpful ways

93

93

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

<p>Emotional Awareness</p> <p>Emotions Are Adaptive!</p> <p>Alert us to what's happening</p> <p>Not good or bad - just data</p>	<p>Anger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerts us to threats or injustices & protects our well-being
	<p>Fear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerts us to danger & protects us from harm
	<p>Joy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R+ for doing things that promote well-being and survival
	<p>Shame</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompts self-reflection, processing, and change Maintains social harmony
	<p>Sadness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alerts us to loss or unmet needs & allows us to process Promotes personal growth and deeper social connections
	<p>Excitement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propels resilience and growth Fosters curiosity, creativity, learning, and adaptability

94



95

Emotions Manifest Physically

WE MUST have physical reactions to alert us to what is happening

(Cannot change reactions without this understanding)



96

 **Physical Symptoms are a Problem**

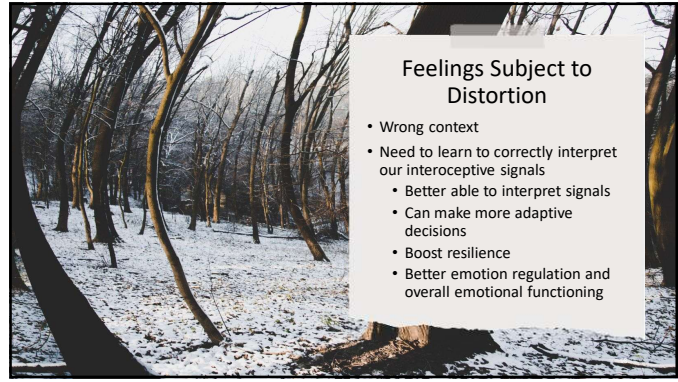
Defense response is FELT

They start to worry about the physical feelings, which are distressing, which they will do anything to stop

Become reactive
Misinterpret and leads to more sensations...



97



Feelings Subject to Distortion

- Wrong context
- Need to learn to correctly interpret our interoceptive signals
 - Better able to interpret signals
 - Can make more adaptive decisions
- Boost resilience
- Better emotion regulation and overall emotional functioning

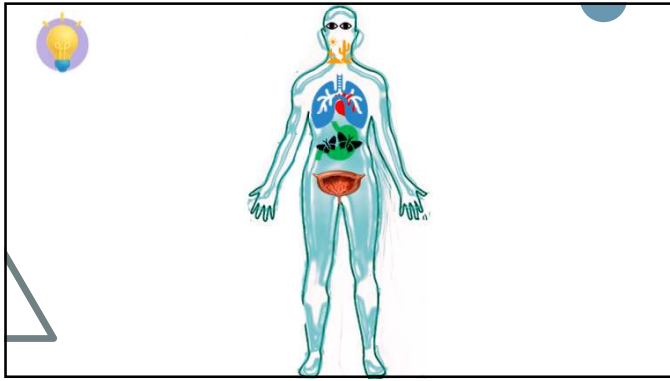
98

Remember: It's NOT about the trigger

Core skill: Mindful Awareness of Emotion:
What it feels like in the body!

Diluted life results from avoiding ANY discomfort.

99



100

Now we can respond in helpful ways!

Validate the suckiness!

That makes sense!
No wonder - your adrenal glands have sent out all that yucky stuff.

101

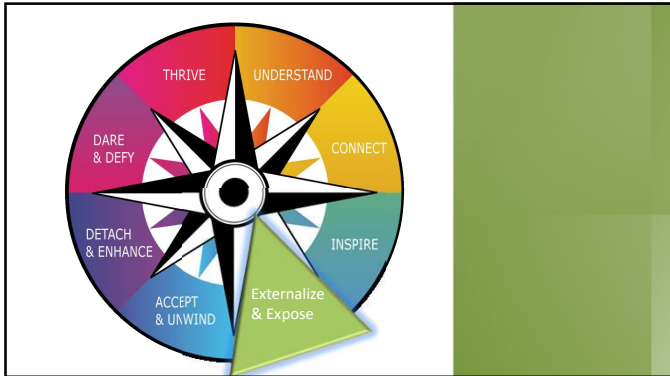
Understand how emotions shows up = Adaptive thinking

The mystery is gone

BONUS: Expecting physical sensations helps reduce signals to amygdala

Of course, I feel uncomfortable!
I know what my body is doing.
I can handle this.

102



103

Anxiety likes to Overwhelm & Keep us Stuck

Externalize

You are not your worry
(Or other big emotions)

104

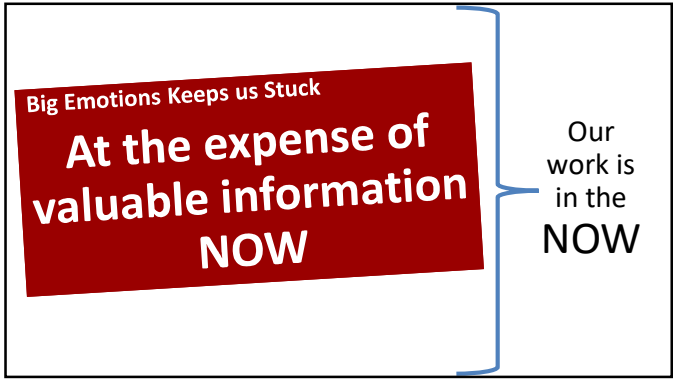
Saying it out loud gives us more power

- ✓ To create distance from it
- ✓ To expose it
- ✓ To take control of their self-regulating brain
- ✓ To use helpful coping strategies

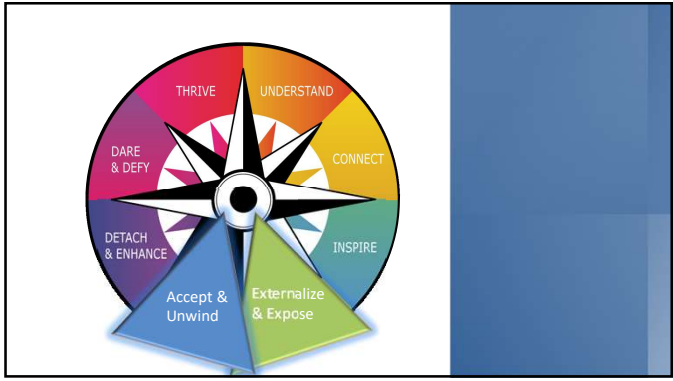
105



106



107



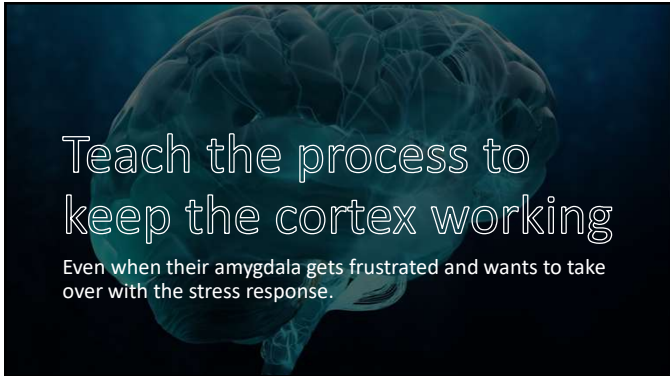
108



109




110



111

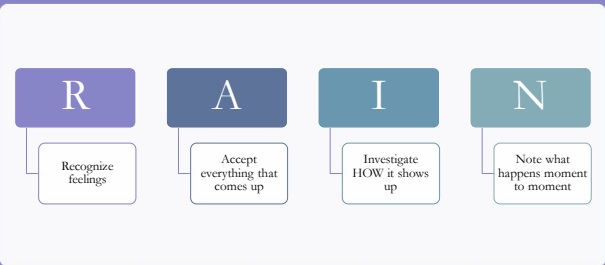
Curious kids feel safe & have nervous systems that self-regulates

Anxiety leaves no room for curiosity.



112

Teach the Process



113

Recognize


- With no words comes behaviours
- Label feelings
- Calms nervous system
- Builds confidence



114

Build Acceptance & Tolerance


- NOT resist, control, or eliminate emotions
- Focus on **ending fear of discomfort**
 - I am uncomfortable but I am going to do this anyway





118

Investigate

How do emotions show up?

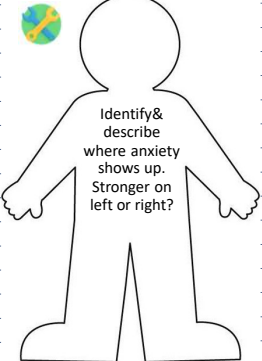
 **Sounds like:**
List the worried thoughts and images that come up:

 **Feels like:**
List physical symptoms associated with worries:

 **Looks like:**
List behaviours that result from the worries, including avoidance:

Feels like:
List physical symptoms associated with worries:

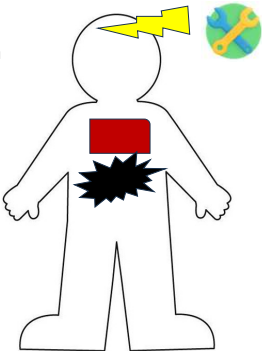
119

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ Dizzy _____ Racing _____ Tension _____ Achy _____ Sore _____ Hot _____ Cold _____ Tingly _____ Numb _____ Sharp _____ Breathless _____ Shivering _____ Sweating _____ Trouble swallowing _____ Tired 	 <p>Identify & describe where anxiety shows up. Stronger on left or right?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ Shivers _____ Increased heart rate _____ Weak legs _____ Ringing ears _____ Blurred vision _____ Muscle tension _____ Shaking _____ Trembling _____ Chest pain _____ Headaches _____ Burning skin/sweating _____ Blushing _____ Changes in breathing _____ Stomach-ache/ Nausea _____ Relaxed
--	---	---

120

Quick Daily Check-Ins

- Change our interpretation of the
- Change how our body responds
- Dampen amygdala's false alarm
- Turn on prefrontal cortex
- Learn that we have control over our responses
 - *I know what this is & I know how to handle it*
- Avoid getting sucked in – it's just piece of information
- Make adaptive decisions



121

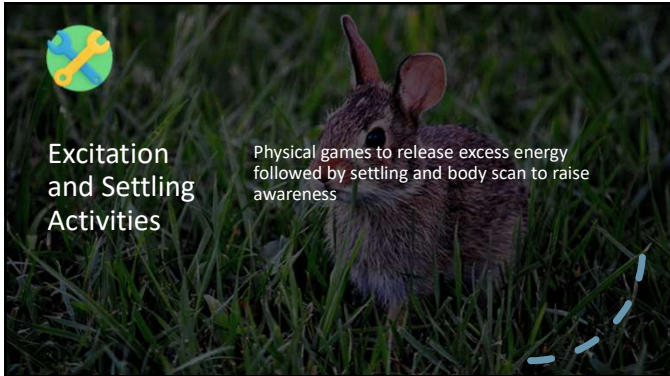
Can't just talk about it.
Practicing Emotional Awareness Key!



122

Excitation and Settling Activities

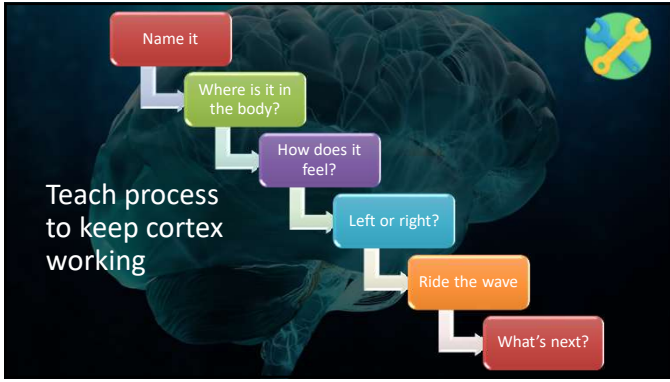
Physical games to release excess energy followed by settling and body scan to raise awareness



123




124



125



126



Did you know?
Fear and excitement
feel the same in the body?
But how we think about it makes all
the difference in the world....

127

When does the threat response trigger?

When does the challenge response trigger?

Threat vs. Challenge Response
Not good or bad, different purposes

Threat response

- Survival mode
- Situation we're not equipped for
- More cortisol (defend/protect)

Challenge response

- Growth opportunity
- Manageable but hard
- More adrenaline (achieve goal)

128

Different hormones released to prepare for what's to come.

How does our body know?

Depends largely on our evaluation of the situation, which

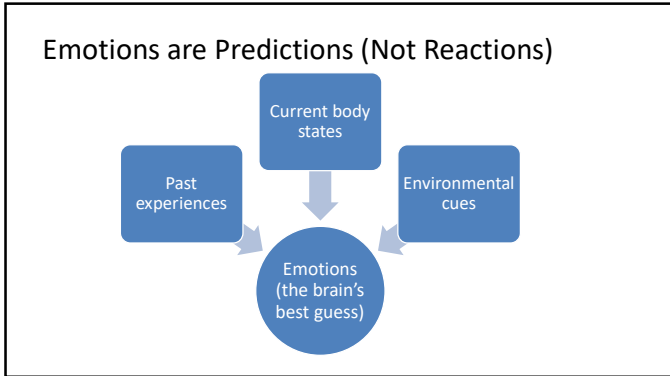
COMES FROM EXPERIENCE!

Amygdala Relies on Past Experiences

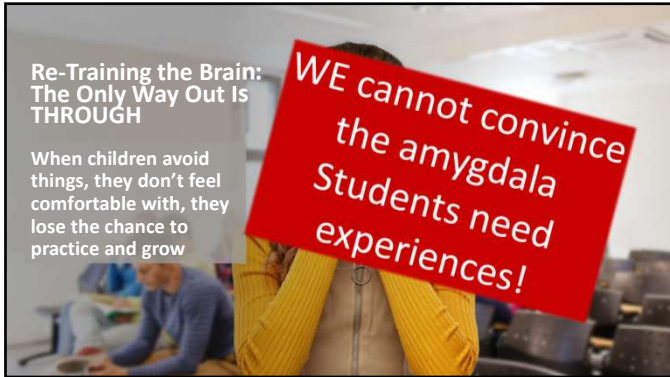
The amygdala is often mistaken
Doesn't have all relevant information
Always rather be safe than sorry
Does not know what will happen

Needs to be corrected!

129



130



131

Talking & thinking does NOT retrain the amygdala

The ONLY way the thalamus and amygdala learn is by EXPERIENCING

The ONLY way to teach your alarm system that you're safe:

- Face the scary thing
- Feel the feelings without trying to escape or fix them.
- Do nothing to make the anxiety go away — just let it be there.

The more you practice, the more your brain learns

132

Core skills:
 Identifying and modifying unhelpful emotion-driven behaviours to
MASTER ADAPTIVE RESPONSES

133

Resilience
 Ability to adapt well to **adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress.**
 Resilient kids effectively respond to and cope with everyday challenges+

THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS CAPABLE!

134

135

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

Resilience Needs Opportunities! Create an environment to practice!

Become so good at managing ANY emotion that you can't even feel it.

Learn to *respond differently* to LOTS OF EXPERIENCES

- Anxiety
- Shame
- Guilt
- Rejection
- Disappointment
- Frustration
- Self-doubt

Practice practice practice – make it so automatic they don't have to think about it

The more microsucks throughout the day, we build resilience, motivation, and tenacity

REINFORCE BRAVERY!

136

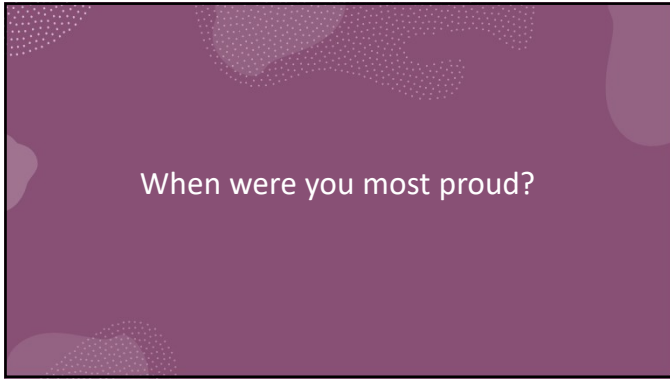
Practice Coping with Uncertainty and UNCOMFORTABLE Feelings!

137

Rejection Practice: Great Learning Opportunities in Rejection

- Ask a store to stay open an extra 30 minutes for me
- Ask a stranger to take a selfie with me
- Ask for a bite of a stranger's food at a restaurant
- Ask to make an announcement over the loudspeaker at a grocery store
- Ask a stranger for \$50
- Ask someone for their car
- Ask for a 50% discount at a store

138



139

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

MAKE IT A RULE, Do something hard everyday. You don't grow from easy. Experience to cope with challenges – realize they CAN manage Bravery Jar or CHALLENGE BOARD. Partners/groups with stretch goals - Check-in partners

140

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Missions for Self-Exposure You're only limited by your own creativity! Create weekly themes: Imperfection Week, Social Courage Week, Uncertainty Week. Includes a photo of a person on a rope course.

141

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Courage Stations

Station Examples	Simulation Scenario
Public Voice	Read a short poem or fact aloud to your group.
Social Spark	Start a conversation with a peer using a provided prompt (e.g., "What's your favourite snack?").
Share & Tell	Show your drawing or story to the group and describe it.
Uncertain Question	Try answering a tough riddle without knowing the right answer.
Silent Spotlight	Stand silently in front of the group for 10 seconds while they give silent applause.
Raise It Up	Practice raising your hand and sharing an idea during a mock class discussion.

142

142

Create Many Opportunities to Focus on Emotions & Work on it Every day!


Speak in front of a small group	Make small talk with someone new	Practice losing a game to someone who cheats	Use pictures, videos, or live encounters with feared bugs
Simulate test-taking conditions with practice exams or timed quizzes.	Role-play scenarios where express their concerns or assert themselves in a safe setting.	Create situations where they can safely express anger and practice coping strategies.	Tolerating not knowing what's happening today.
Engage in activities they've been avoiding due to emotional discomfort.	Experience and tolerate physical sensations like increased heart rate through exercises.	Watch sad video	Kindie running away with the soccer ball in the middle of a game

143

Use Real Challenges!

Challenges are part of life. Dealing with them is part of learning.

- Use teachable moments
 - ✓ Solve their own problems
 - ✓ Figure things out on their own
 - ✓ Take accountability
 - ✓ See the consequences
 - ✓ Work through next how to fix things
 - ✓ Let them fail (don't set them up to fail though)
 - ✓ Assert their own needs



144

Resilience in Everyday Moments
Micro-opportunities to build emotional strength throughout the day

Situation	Instead of (Accommodating)	Resilience-Building Response
Student makes a mistake	Minimize or fix it for them	Mistakes help our brains grow. What did you learn that you can now try differently?
Student says "I can't"	Lower expectations	You can't yet . Let's break it into smaller steps.
Student seeks reassurance	Provide unlimited reassurance	What do you think? I trust your judgment.
Student avoids challenge	Remove the challenge	I know this feels hard. I know you can handle hard things. Where do you want to start?

145

Unexpected event/mistake of the day & how you handled it

- SKILLS: TOLERATE UNCERTAINTY AND THINK ABOUT DIFFERENT OPTIONS THEMSELVES
- NEED TO KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE UNEXPECTED

146



147

I don't know!
(We can't know, so avoid reassurance.)

Let's figure that out.

What do you think?

What could you do? ..

148


What I know	What I don't know
• We are going to the zoo	• if I have to go to the bathroom
• We are going by bus	• Where the bathrooms are
• We are leaving at 9:10	• Who will be in my group
• We will get back at 2:55	• if I will get lost
	• Where to go if I get lost
	• What parent will be in our group
	• If we will see the gorillas
	• If I will fall down and get hurt
	• If I have an allergic reaction

149

Perfectionism is the most serious thinking trap & root of depression

Focus on core concepts

- **Unrealistic expectations**
- Rumination
- Need for approval
- Concern about mistakes
- Doubts about actions
- Additional traps like circumstantial thinking, quality/quantity



150

Avoiding mistakes limits opportunities for creativity, innovation, and learning.

DO NOT try to eliminate stress or avoid mistakes – capitalize on them for growth and learning.

Help students view frustration as a sign of learning, not defeat, and emphasize the importance of sustained effort.


151

Adult Role: Master the Art of Stepping Back & Letting Children Learn from Mistakes



- To maximize student learning, independence, problem-solving, confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, and overall growth, we must allow them to **experience and navigate mistakes**
 - If a child is struggling:
 - Pause and ask if this is a growth opportunity
 - Validate their struggle and show confidence in their ability to figure it out
 - Encourage reflection with open-ended questions (e.g., what could you try next?)
 - Acknowledge persistence and small improvements (vs. the end result)

Trust the process. If they stumble, they will rise stronger.

152



Break into Parts
Ex: Perfectionism

	
Helpful parts	Unhelpful parts
Helps us prepare	Become paralyzed
Helps us strive for excellence	Procrastinate & create more stress
	Stifles learning and growth
	Narrows our world
	Makes us perform worse

153

Perfectionism doesn't work alone

<p>All-or-nothing Al</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never, always, no matter what, nothing can change, no one likes me 	<p>Negative Nellie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus only on negative while missing positives 	<p>Overgeneralizing Ollie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe one experience is always going to happen again
--	--	---

154

Perfectionism likes to work with Pals

Henchmen Guesses

- You never do anything right
- No one likes you
- Everything you do sucks
- You always fail and will continue to fail

Break into parts

- Good and not so good
- This part is hard
- I will focus on one step at a time

155

All or nothing: I can't do anything

Some things are easy

I can't write

Math: Easy	Reading: Easy	Gym: Easy	I can brainstorm	I can follow a template	I can edit	Coming up with ideas is hard (when assigned)
------------	---------------	-----------	------------------	-------------------------	------------	--

156

Difficulty scale

Easy Hard

|-----9-----|

What is easy that makes it 9 (and not 10)?
What can I already do?

What can I do to bring this down to 7 or 8?

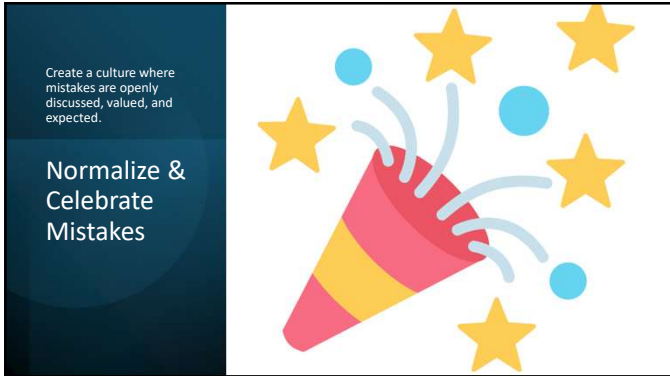
157



Reframe Mistakes as Opportunities

First though, **MUST** feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them.

158




Create a culture where mistakes are openly discussed, valued, and expected.

Normalize & Celebrate Mistakes

159

Celebrate Mistakes

- Have a "Mistake of the day" to share a mistake or challenge they faced, how they fixed/handled it, and what they learned
- (Most top performers know they haven't tried hard enough if they haven't met a certain # mistakes in a day)



160

Embrace mistakes

What was this experience like?

What did you learn today?

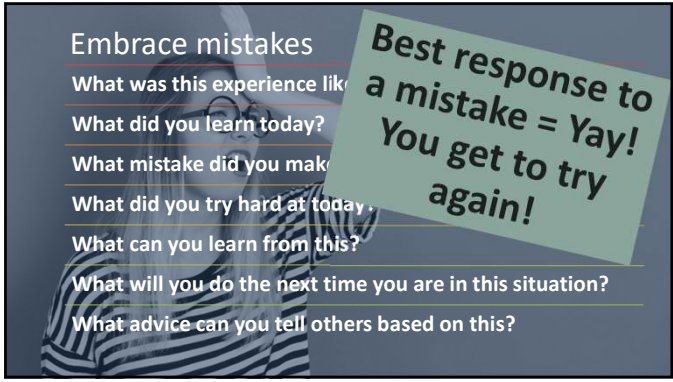
What mistake did you make?

What did you try hard at today?

What can you learn from this?

What will you do the next time you are in this situation?

What advice can you tell others based on this?



Best response to a mistake = Yay! You get to try again!

161

Important!

It is not what they did wrong that counts, but *what they do next.*



162

Build Procedural Thinking!

- Strive for excellence, but address unrealistic standards
 - Emotions related to expectations
- Focus on what's next (vs. circumstances, rumination, should's)

163

Yes!

Learning requires a state of discomfort (agitation or frustration), which signals the brain that something needs to change.

Frustration = learning!

When frustration does hit...

164

Take Accountability, & Forge Ahead

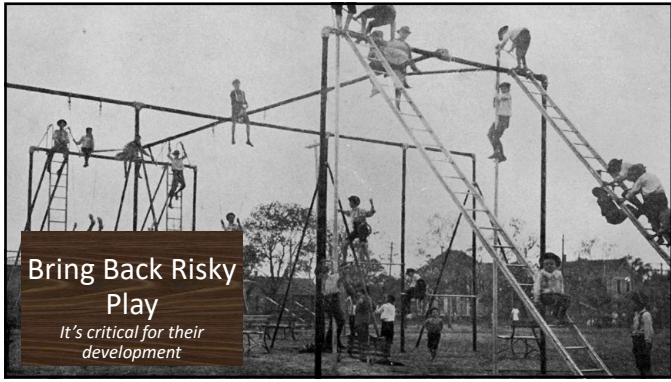
Talk through mistakes vs. deflect or avoid

- Focus on their role to learn, grow, & improve
 - What did you do?
 - What could you do differently?
 - What did you learn?
- Avoid getting stuck
 - No need to ask why, lecture, or explain the problem
 - Have students think of **hows**
 - How will you fix this mistake?
 - How will you move on? What's next?
 - How will you handle _____?

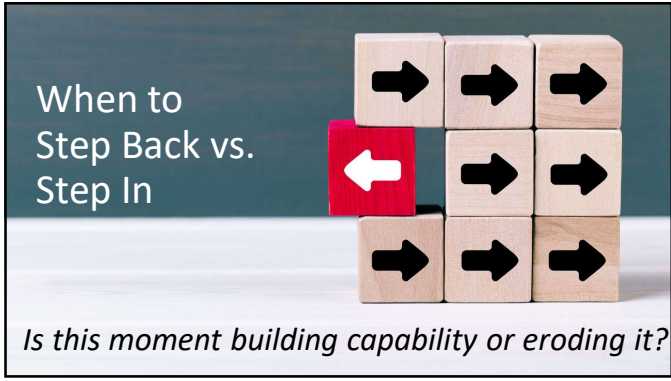
165



166



167



168

When to Step Back vs. Step In

Step Back When *Must learn "I did that" (not "I need rescuing")*

- The struggle is productive**
 - There's effort, some frustration
 - Hard but not overwhelming
- The risk is tolerable**
 - Might feel disappointed, uncomfortable, or fail
- You're responding to *your* discomfort, not their actual need.**

Step In When

- They are drowning**
 - Distress overwhelming
- They've tried but lack a critical skill.**
 - Sometimes scaffolding is needed vs. encouragement.
- The context is already overwhelming.**
 - If they're dealing with multiple stressors, sometimes we protect in one domain so they can build skills in another.
- Underlying needs like sensory processing**
- There is real physical danger**

169

Capitalize in Learning

BUT, Don't Take Over! Still Teaching Opportunity

- Offering a tool or prompt rather than a solution
- Co-regulating alongside them without removing the challenge
- Reducing one variable while keeping the growth edge present
- Being a steady, confident presence that communicates "this is hard AND you can handle it"

Step In When

- They are drowning**
 - Distress overwhelming
- They've tried but lack a critical skill.**
 - Sometimes scaffolding is needed vs. encouragement.
- The context is already overwhelming.**
 - If they're dealing with multiple stressors, sometimes we protect in one domain so they can build skills in another.
- Underlying needs like sensory processing**
- There is real physical danger**

170

Debrief Sticky Note Worries

How was it carrying that worry while learning?

- Did it stop you from engaging?
- Did you forget about it sometimes?
- Can you do things even WITH worry present?

This is the skill we're teaching students!!!

171



172

Students need to learn new associations in multiple contexts with different people where anxiety is likely to occur.

Committed action

Daily Doses of Stress Inoculation to Maximize Success

173

Your Committed Action to Supporting Students

You don't need to do everything at once. Small, consistent changes = big impact

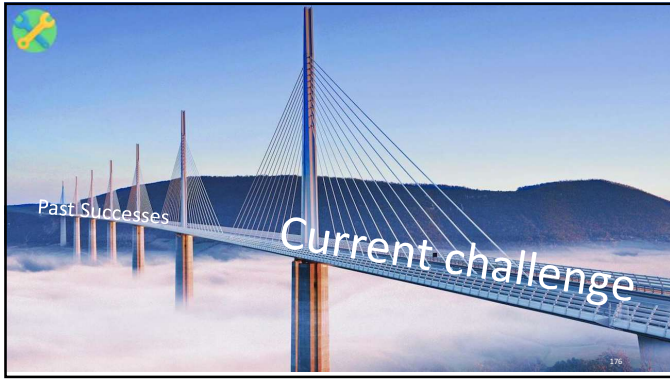
This week I will try:

- **Connection (pick 1)**
 - Greet every student by name daily
 - Practice validation language
- **Reduce Accommodations (pick 1):**
 - Identify one accommodation to stop with one student
 - Use "I don't know" instead of reassuring
 - Let a student solve their own problem
- **Build Tolerance (pick 1):**
 - Practice body awareness (2 min daily)
 - Externalize emotions ("There's Worry Brain")
 - Create one "courage challenge"
 - Normalize mistakes publicly
 - Show my own mistake/uncertainty

174



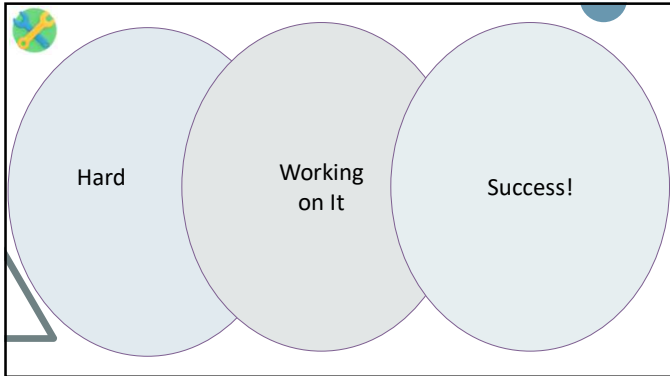
175



176



177



178

Putting it Together

- Jordan Grade 8, Expert Vanisher
- During group work, goes to the bathroom for 20+ minutes
- When called on in class, Jordan gives one-word answers
- Oral presentations result in sick days
- Started eating lunch alone in the library
- Teachers describe Jordan as "quiet but capable" and have mostly stopped calling on Jordan to avoid causing discomfort.

What's Problematic?

179

The Accommodation Audit

Accommodation	Short-Term Effect	Long-Term Cost
Never called on in class	Jordan stays calm	Never learns to tolerate being "on the spot"
Written reports replace oral presentations	Jordan still earns good grades	Public speaking fear grows; high school/career options narrow
Unlimited bathroom breaks during group work	Avoids social interaction	Misses collaboration skills; peers stop including Jordan
Library lunch pass "for studying"	Avoids cafeteria anxiety	Social isolation deepens; friendships don't develop

180

Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

The Teacher's Response: Step 1: The Collaborative Conversation

Mr. R	Jordan, I've noticed you're doing really well on written work, but I don't hear your voice in class much. I'm curious about that.
Jordan	I just... I don't like talking in front of people. I'm better at writing.
Mr. R	That makes sense. A lot of people feel that way. What help you participate more?
Jordan	I don't know.
Mr. R	What gets in the way?
Jordan	I don't have ideas and I worry people will think I'm stupid.
Mr. R	That's a common worry. And not speaking feels safe but it's also keeps you from finding out if it's actually true. What do you think would happen if you answered one question in class?
Jordan	I'd probably turn red and everyone would notice.
Mr. R	"Okay, so you'd turn red. And then what?"
Jordan	I don't know. People would laugh? Think I'm weird?
Mr. R	That's what your brain predicts. I would love to test that prediction. Let's make a plan for next period.

181

Step 2: Build a Bravery Chart Together

- Jordan collaborates on creating the chart to increase buy-in.
 - Encourage him to start somewhere with a rating of 5-7.
 - Not too easy, we need the amygdala to activate! Not too hard it's so overwhelming.
 - Whatever level he chooses, everything else below it will be easy!

Brave Challenge	SUDS (0-10)
Full 3-minute presentation to the whole class	9-10
Present 3 slides to half the class (other half doing another activity)	7-8
Read one paragraph of own written work aloud to class	6-7
Answer a pre-planned question in class (Jordan knows it's coming)	5-6
Present to Mr. R + one peer after school	4-5
Contribute one idea in small group (3 students)	3-4
Ask Mr. R one question after class (private)	2-3

182

Step 3: Prediction Testing

Before each exposure, Mr. R helps Jordan make specific predictions, then compare to reality afterward:

Jordan's Prediction	What Actually Happened	What Jordan Learned
"If I answer a question, I'll turn red and everyone will laugh" (90% sure)	Jordan's face felt warm. No one laughed. Two students nodded. One said "good point."	"Even if I feel embarrassed, that doesn't mean anything bad actually happens."
"If I present to the small group, I'll freeze and look stupid" (80% sure)	Voice shook a little at the start, then steadied. Got through all points. Partner asked a question.	"My voice shaking isn't the same as failing. I can still communicate even when I'm nervous."

183

Step 4: Address Safety Behaviours


- Mr. R works with Jordan to gradually eliminate subtle avoidance behaviours that prevent full exposure learning:

Safety Behaviour (Reduces Learning)	Bravery Target (Maximizes Learning)
Reading directly from notes without looking up	Use note cards with bullet points only; make eye contact 3 times
Speaking so quietly others can barely hear	Speak at a volume where the back row can hear
Rushing through to get it over with	Normal pace with deliberate pauses
Only presenting when seated (not standing)	Standing presentations, even if shorter at first
Only speaking when partnered with best friend	Rotate partners; present with different classmates

184

Step 5: Coordinate Across Teachers

- Mr. R emails Jordan's other teachers with a brief summary of the plan, asking them to:
 - Call on Jordan for low-stakes questions (yes/no, factual answers) once daily
 - Limit bathroom breaks during group work to 3 minutes maximum
 - Require Jordan to contribute at least one idea during collaborative activities
 - Acknowledge effort with brief, specific praise ("Thanks for sharing that, Jordan")



185

Responding to Escalation and Setbacks

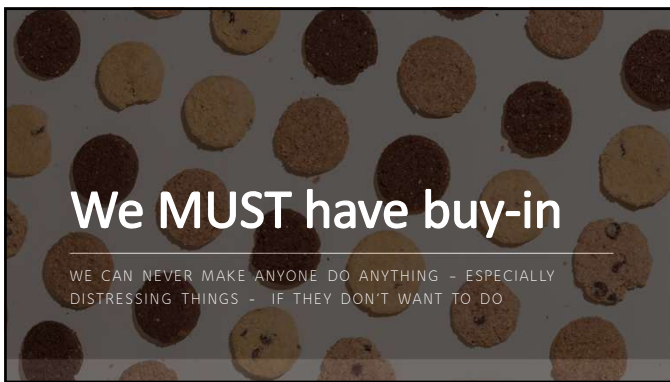
Jordan	"I really need to go to the bathroom."
Mr. R	(quietly, near Jordan's desk) "I know this feels uncomfortable right now. That's the worry brain talking, and the uncomfortable feeling will pass. To show who's boss, you can first share an idea with the group. I'll check in with you in 5 minutes."
Jordan	"I really have to go though."
Mr. R	"I hear you and can see you need to go. And right now, your job is to give one idea to the group. Let me know when you have. You've got this."

186

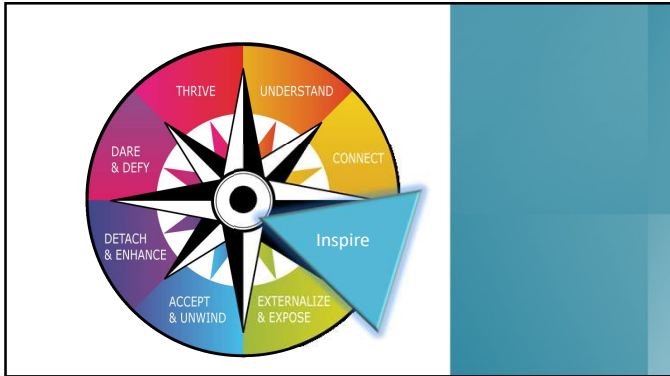
Making Resilience Happen. One Student at a Time.

What to Expect	
Initial resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Jordan may seem frustrated or withdrawn when avoidance options are limited.
Gradual confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">After 3-4 successes, will likely report "it wasn't as bad as I thought."This is the expectancy violation that rewires the anxious brain.
Variability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some days will be harder, which is to be expected.
Peer interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Peers are often far less interested in Jordan than he predicts.Most are focused on themselves.

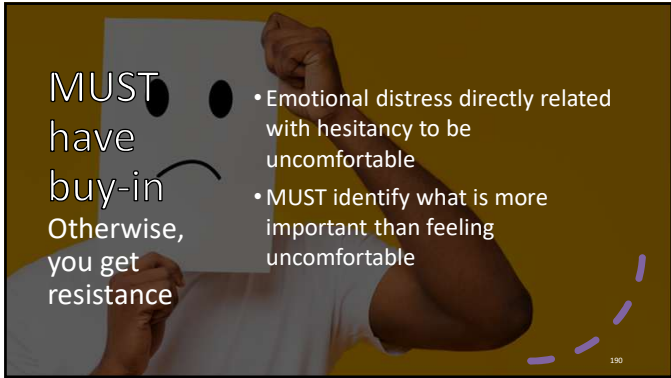
187



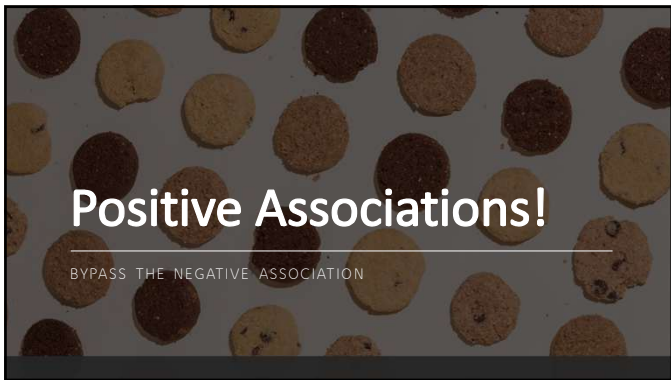
188



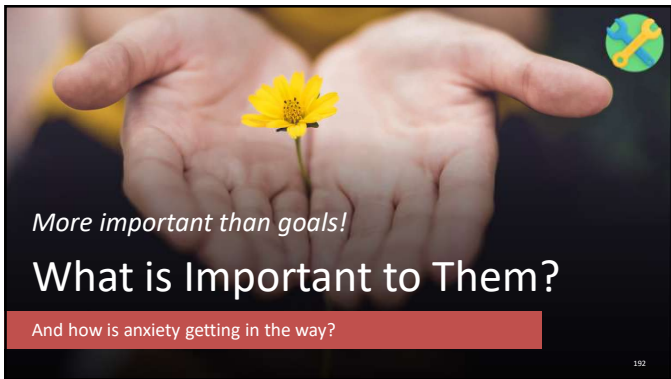
189



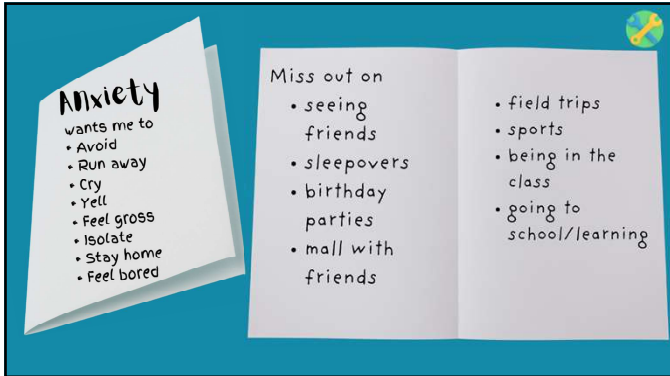
190



191



192



Anxiety
wants me to

- Avoid
- Run away
- Cry
- Yell
- Feel gross
- Isolate
- Stay home
- Feel bored

Miss out on

- seeing friends
- sleepovers
- birthday parties
- mall with friends
- field trips
- sports
- being in the class
- going to school/learning

193

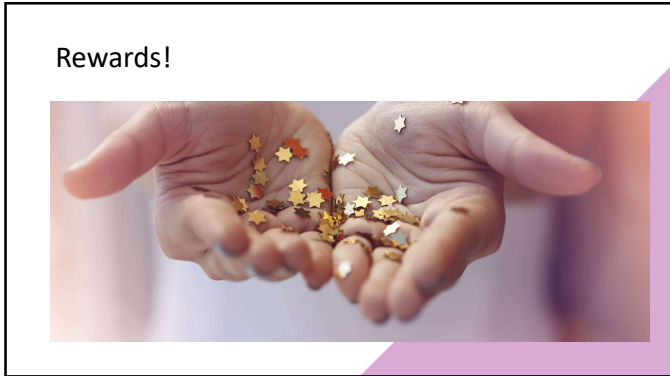


What story DO you want to buy into?!

Write it out!

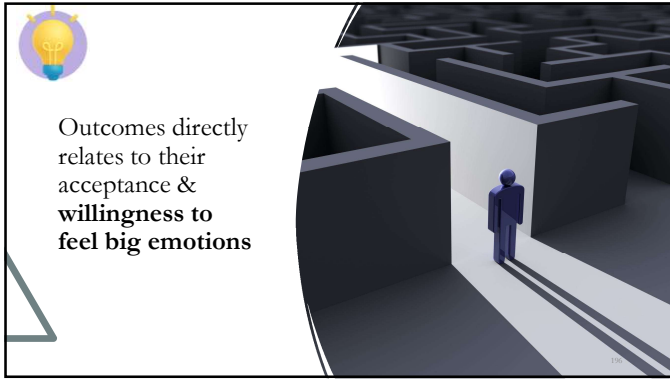
- I want to go on the outing and have fun
I am willing to not know what's going to happen
- I want to be in the play
I am willing go to the audition nervous
- I want to show my science project
I am willing to go to the science fair even if I feel like I am going to puke

194



Rewards!

195



196



197
