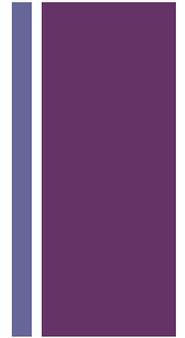


Anxiety and Stress in Children: What Parents Need to Know

Laura Paret, PhD and Jessica Stack, MD
March 7th, 2016

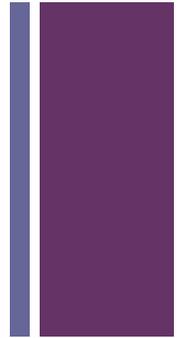
+ A bit about Dr. Laura



- Child Clinical Psychologist at Union Square Practice
- Treat youth experiencing struggles including anxiety:
 - Cognitive-behavioral therapy
 - Parent-coaching and school consultation
- Pediatric psychology



+ A bit about Dr. Jessica



- Board certified Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist at Union Square Practice
- Treats a wide range of psychiatric illnesses including anxiety disorders
 - Medication Management
 - Psychotherapy



+ Outline

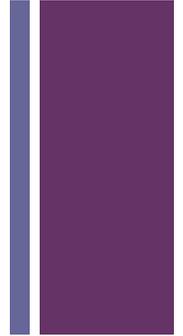
- What is anxiety?
- When does anxiety become a problem?
- Breaking anxiety down
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy
- Parent's Role: How to Help
- When to see a psychiatrist





+ What is anxiety?

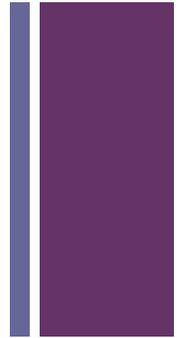
+ We all experience anxiety!



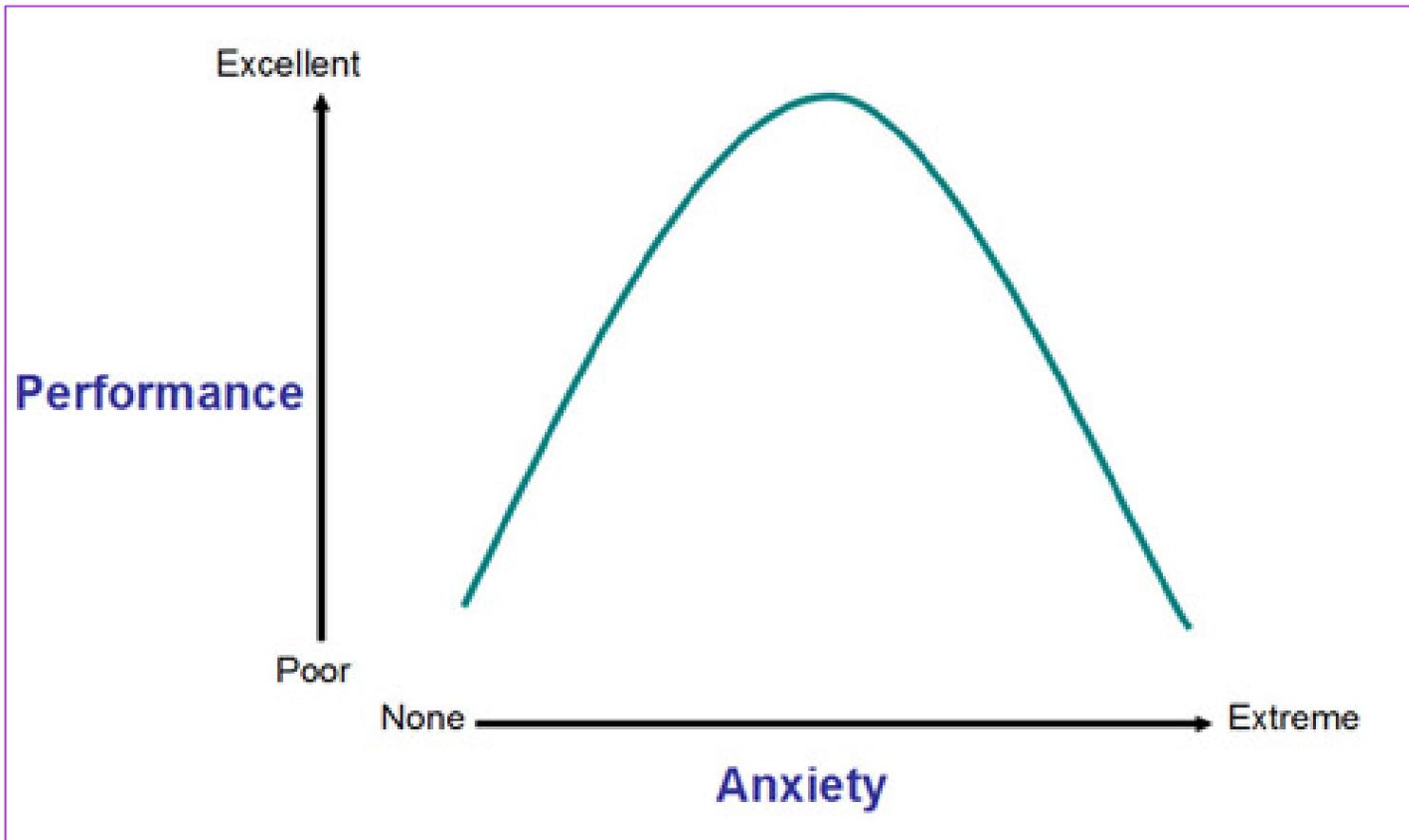
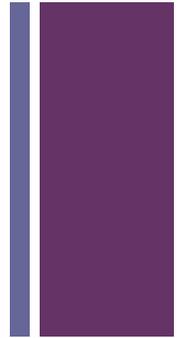
- Keeps us safe
- Helps us to succeed!
- Associated with new or unexpected events (e.g., 1st day of school; thunder)
- Associated with uncertainty (e.g., awaiting admissions decisions)

+ Causes of anxiety

- Biological variables
 - Heritability, temperament
- Shared environment
 - Family factors, modeling
- Non-shared environment/experiences
 - Specific, negative experiences

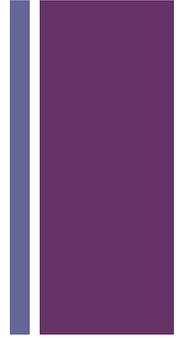


+ Anxiety can help with performance





Anxiety in Children

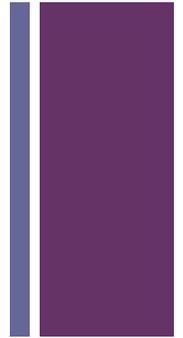


- Developmentally expected and changing over time
 - Separation, strangers, loud noises
 - Ghosts, monsters, the dark, sleeping alone
 - Family, school, health
 - School performance, social situations, the future
- Typically outgrown or decreasing with maturity



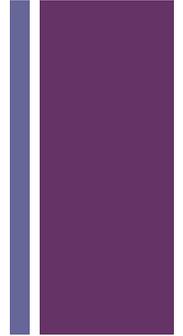
+ When does anxiety
become a problem?

+ Clinical anxiety



- Affecting ability to learn, have friends, have fun
 - Intensity
 - Impairment
 - Inflexibility
- Avoidance of the feared object, event, situation
 - Maintains anxiety

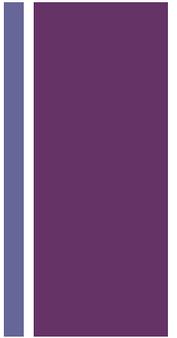
+ Clinical anxiety



- The most prevalent mental health problem in children (1/10 children)
- Easy to overlook and not treat
- More present in females after puberty
- High comorbidity with ADHD, Depression, ODD, substance misuse
- Functional impairments: school failure and/or dropout, peer/social difficulties, family dysfunction, restricted career opportunities



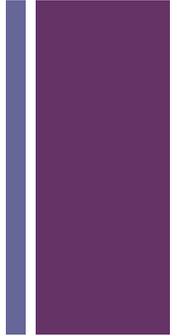
Anxiety Disorders in Children



- **Separation Anxiety Disorder:** separation from caregivers, concern bad things will happen to them
- **Selective Mutism:** Failure to speak in specific social situations despite speaking in others
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder:** uncontrollable excessive worry about many areas of life functioning (e.g., school work, family, friends, health)
- **Social Phobia:** fearful of social or performance situations



Anxiety Disorders in Children

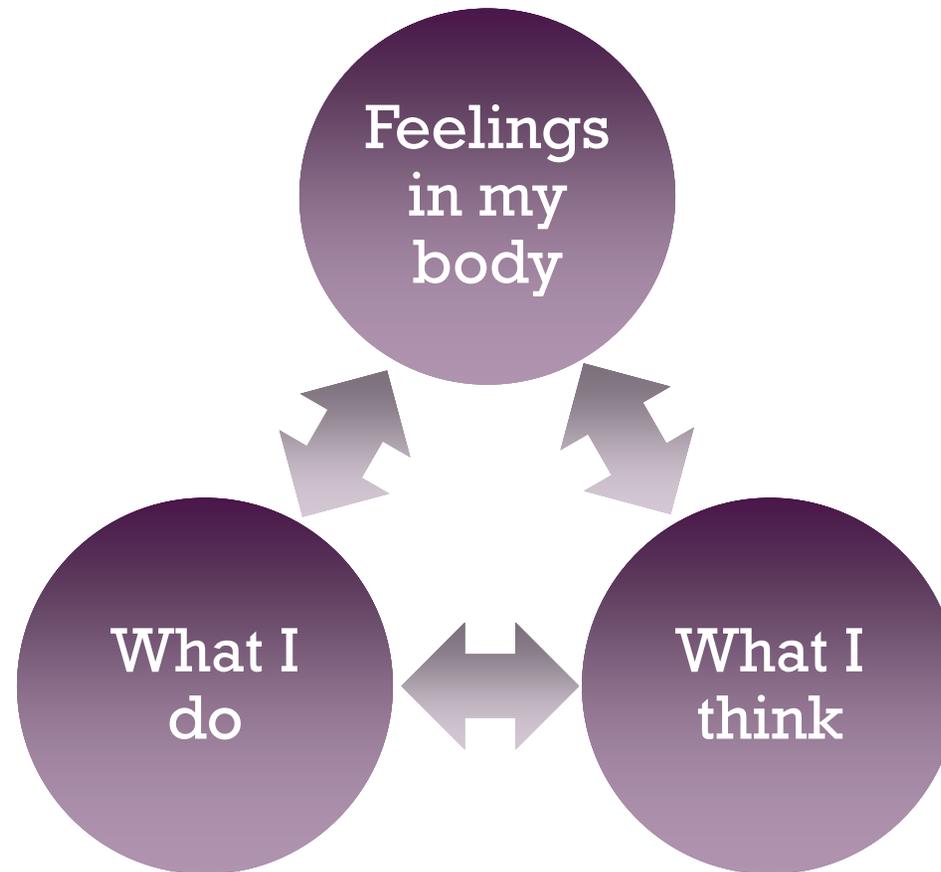


- **Specific Phobia:** fear of particular objects or situations
- **Panic Disorder:** misinterpret bodily changes and have a fear of losing control
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:** the presence of intrusive repetitive thoughts (obsessions) or behaviours (compulsions), >1 hour/day
- **Post traumatic Stress Disorder** Experience traumatic event, re-experiencing, avoidance and numbness, increased arousal, >1 month

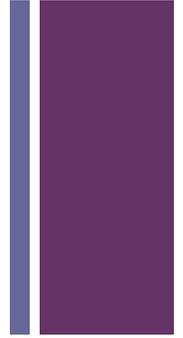


+ Breaking anxiety down!

+ Targeting Anxiety



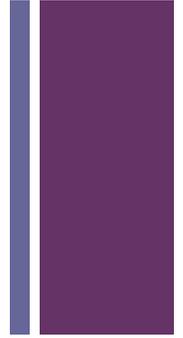
+ Thinking



Anxious children have unrealistic or extreme thoughts that centre around harm or threat.

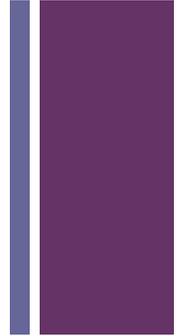
- “My mom is late, she’s been in a car accident.”
- “I will get sick in school and throw up, and everyone will know.”
- “I will get in trouble if my work is not perfect.”

+ Thinking Errors



- Anxious children **overestimate** how likely it is that an unpleasant event will happen.
- They **overestimate** how bad the consequences will be if the event does happen.
- They **underestimate** their ability to cope with the anxiety and the unpleasant event

+ Feeling



- Anxious children and teens become “pumped up” or aroused.
- This is the *flight-fight* response.

+ Doing- Anxious Behaviours

- **Pace, fidget, cry, cling, shake**
- **Avoid**
 - Refusing to go to school or class
 - Refusing to go somewhere alone
- **Reassurance seeking.**
 - “Are you sure _____ won’t happen?”



+ Cognitive-behavioral
therapy for anxious
children

+

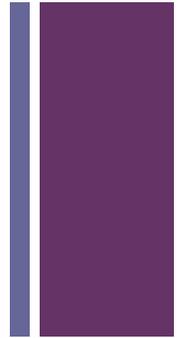
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy



- Education about anxiety
- Noticing and changing unhelpful thoughts
- Behavior Change through skills training
 - relaxation, problem solving, social skills
- Exposure
- Encourage and reward positive steps in fighting anxiety
- Parent modeling and involvement

+ Cognitive Strategies

- Realistic Thinking or Detective Thinking
 - What is the evidence that anxious thought is true or false?
- Problem Solving
 - Identifying problem and generating solutions and potential outcomes
- Positive Self Talk

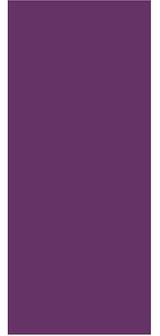




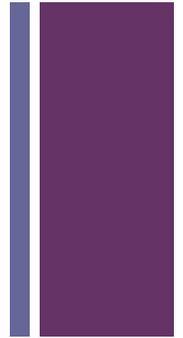
When I'm Scared, I Can:

OR:

OR:



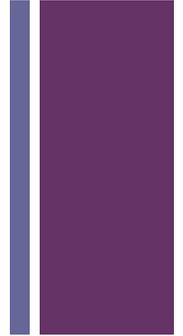
+ Skills and Coping Strategies



- Muscle Relaxation
- Deep Breathing
- Refocusing – e.g. Five senses
- Worry Time
- APP: Mindshift



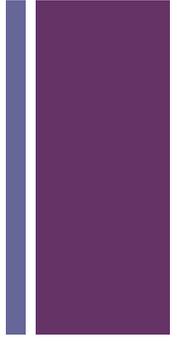
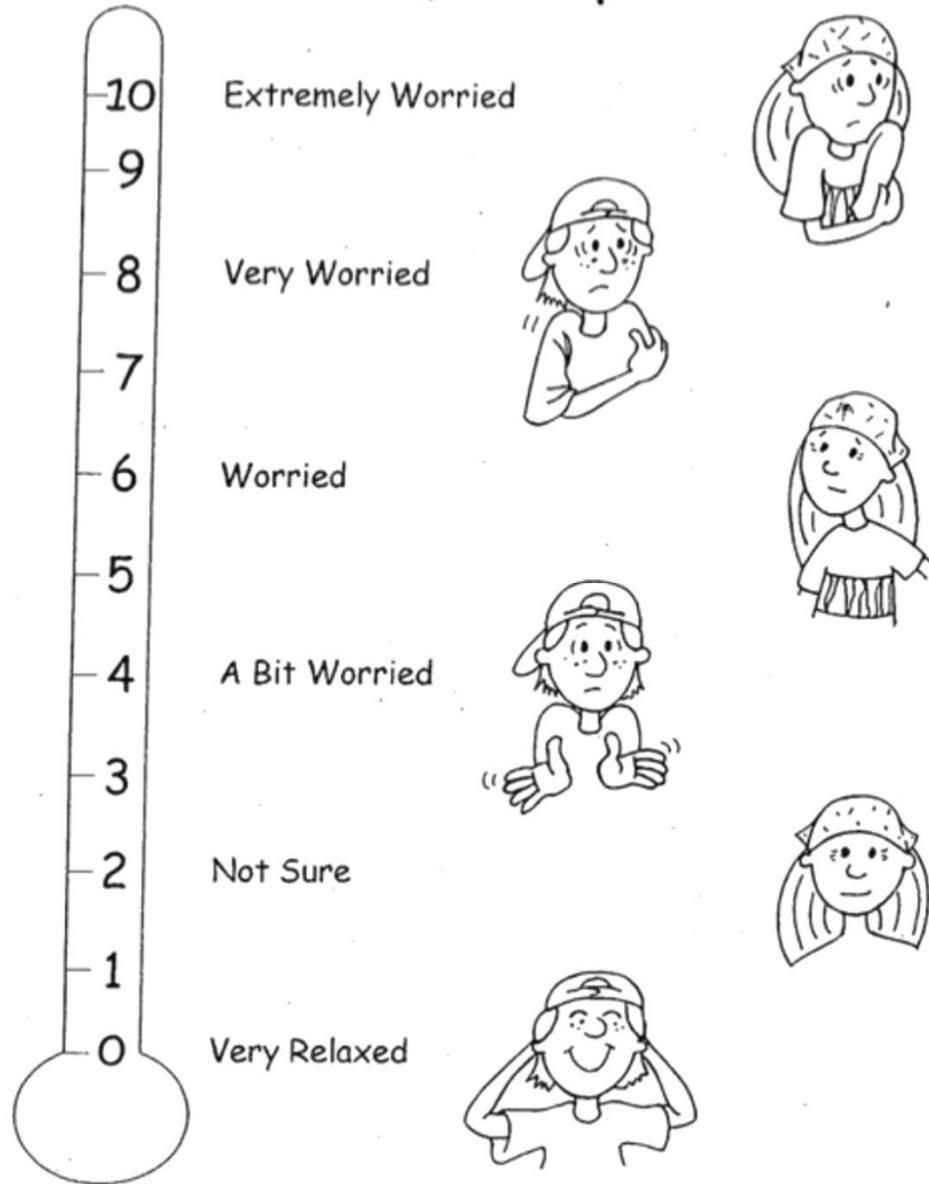
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy 101



- Identify what is an anxious behaviour, thought or physical feeling. Label it for them.
 - “Do you think your stomach ache is really because you are anxious about the test”
 - “Your heart is racing because of worry.”
- Once a behaviour is identified, help the child think of ways to cope on their own:
 - Take a deep breath.
 - Coping self talk (e.g., “Its just my worry, I am not going to forget everything. I can do this.”)



The Worry Scale





Climbing my Fear Ladder

What is my goal?

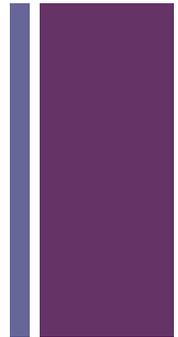
To play at Jack's house without mom there



**Fear
Rating**

Spend evening at friend's house	10/10
Spend evening at friend's house, check in with mom once	9/10
Have dinner at friend's house	8/10
Go to birthday party, mom leaves for an hour	8/10
Get dropped off at a different friend's house and play for 1 hour	7/10
Get dropped off by mom at friend's house, play there for 1 hour	7/10
Get dropped off by mom at friend's house, play there for 30 minutes	6/10
Go to friend's house with mom, mom leaves for 20 minutes	5/10
Go to a friend's house with mom, mom leaves for 10 minutes	4/10
Go to a friend's house with mom, but she stays in another room	3/10

Anxietybc
.com

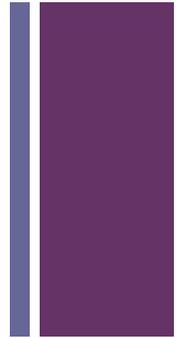




+ How to Help: Parent's Role

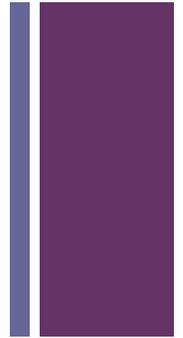
+ Strategies that help

- Communicate empathy
- Communicate expectations clearly
- Keep specific, clear, consistent rules
- Reward brave or coping behavior (in a way that's reinforcing for the child)
- Encourage and practice the use of problem-solving and coping skills/strategies



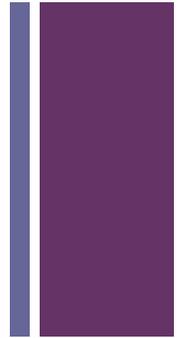
+ Strategies that help

- Decrease attention for anxious behavior
- Pay attention to own behavior
- Model brave, coping behavior
- Enlist the help of teachers to generalize to school



+ Strategies that can harm

- Permitting excessive avoidance or accommodation of or rescue from anxiety
- Being overly directive or doing things for the child
- Excessively reassuring the child
- Dismissing anxiety
- Becoming impatient or angry with the child





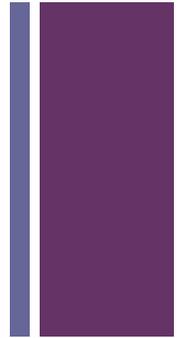
+ What about Psychiatry?

+ So . . . when do I take my child to see a psychiatrist?

1. If good CBT is not enough

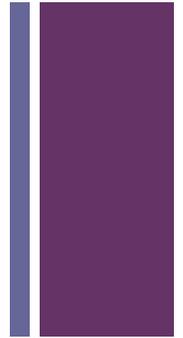
or

2. If child/adolescent is too ill to participate in CBT



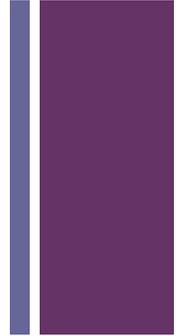
+ Treatment for Anxiety:

- Evidence Base for children established in 2008
- Combination (meds + CBT) most effective – 80% response rate



+ Which medications work?

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) medication of choice



+ Additional Resources

Helping your anxious child: A step-by-step guide for parents by Ronald Rapee, Ph.D.

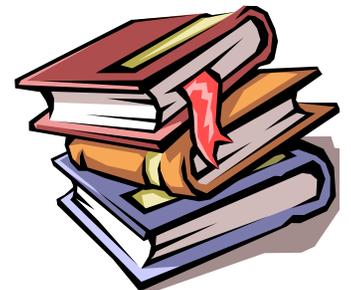
Keys to parenting your anxious child by Katharina Manassis, M.D.

Freeing your child from anxiety by Tamar Chansky, Ph.D.

Sleeping Through the Night: How Infants, Toddlers, and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night's Sleep by Jodi A. Mindell, Ph.D.

Take Charge of Your Child's Sleep: The All-in-One Resource for Solving Sleep Problems in Kids and Teens by Judith A. Owens, M.D. and Jodi A. Mindell, Ph.D.

What to Do When You Dread Your Bed: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Problems With Sleep by Dawn Huebner, Ph.D.





Thank you!

Questions?



Laura Paret, PhD

Child and Adolescent Psychologist

Laura.Paret@unionsquarepractice.com

Jessica Stack, MD

Child, Adolescent, Adult Psychiatrist

Jessica.Stack@unionsquarepractice.com

Phone: 212.335.2100

Website: www.unionsquarepractice.com