



Supporting Your Child's Mental Health

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Our Task as Parents and Educators

To prepare our children/students to be:

- ✓ Ready for the post secondary and employment world
- ✓ Positive contributors to society
- ✓ ***Healthy and Thriving***

“ How can we prepare kids for the

tests of life

rather than a

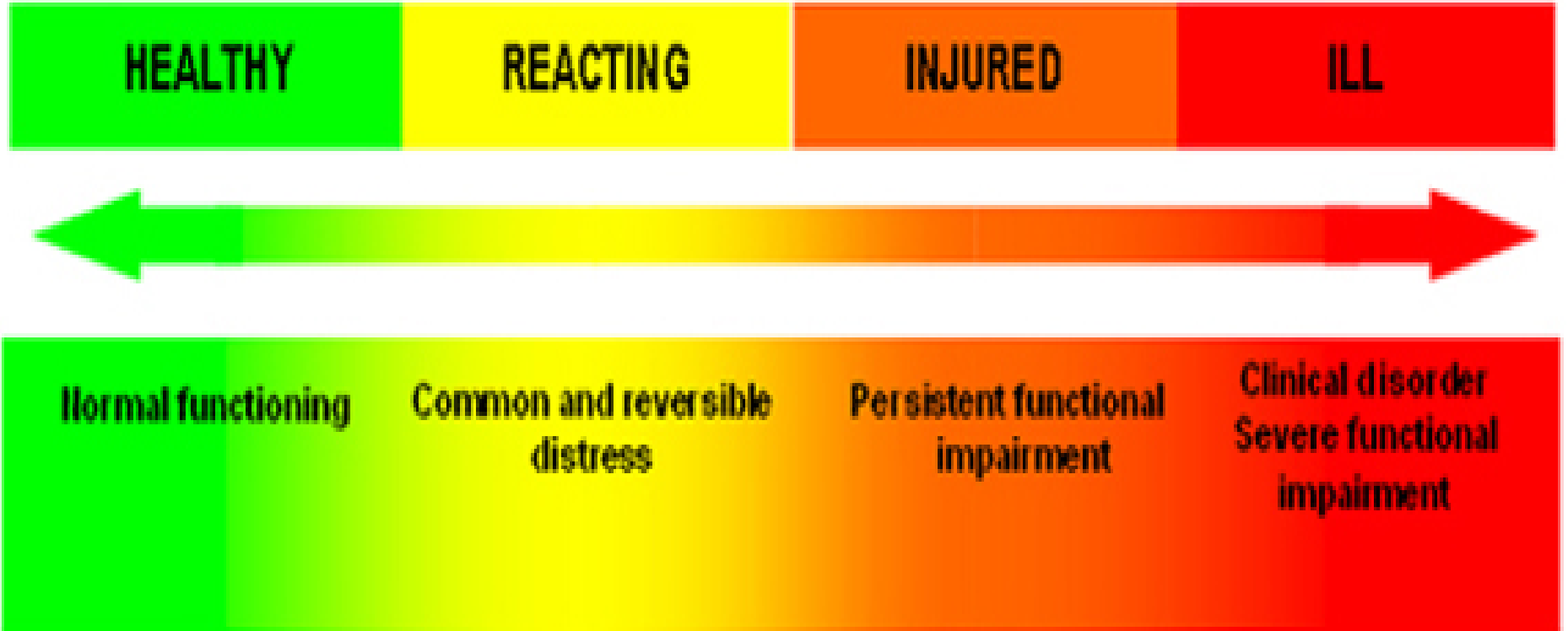
life of tests?”

Linda Lantieri

What do we mean when we talk about mental health?



Holistic Approach



How can we together promote
mental health for all?

Our Students

“I feel like people won’t value me if I don’t do well at school”

32% Elem

39% Sec

“I usually hide my feelings of anxiety and sadness”

58% Elem

64% Sec

“I feel like I am expected to be perfect ”

46% Elem

54% Sec

Your Brain on Anxiety





Why Does this Happen?

The Power of the Brain



- Designed to keep our body in balance
- Our body craves homeostasis
- The brain supports *adaptive functioning*
- It is hardwired to protect us



A Helpful Brain Model

[Dr. Daniel Siegel](#)



Why is this important?

Flight,

Fight,

or

Freeze



Changing the Brain

We need our brain to have the alarm system, we wouldn't want to turn it off BUT higher level cortical functions help us moderate it

- ***Plasticity*** allows us to strengthen how the brain regulates
- ***Pruning*** gets rid of circuits we don't use

Our starting place

- Negativity Bias
- Trauma
- Attachment disruption
- High expectations (internal or external)



When to be Concerned

How to know if your child is struggling with stress, anxiety, or perfectionism

Frequency

Intensity

Duration

Development

How can we help?

*Your role in supporting your child's
mental health*



Creating Safety

*Increasing Connectedness
at home and at school*



The Significance of Safe Space

*To learn students need to feel safe. When students don't feel safe, the fight or flight center of the brain, the amygdala, fires and incapacitates the hippocampus, the new-learning center of the brain. Students then become **survivors vs. learners** (Nussbaum, 2012).*

The Power of Relationships

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Cultivating relationships which
promote mental health

We all have a primal need to



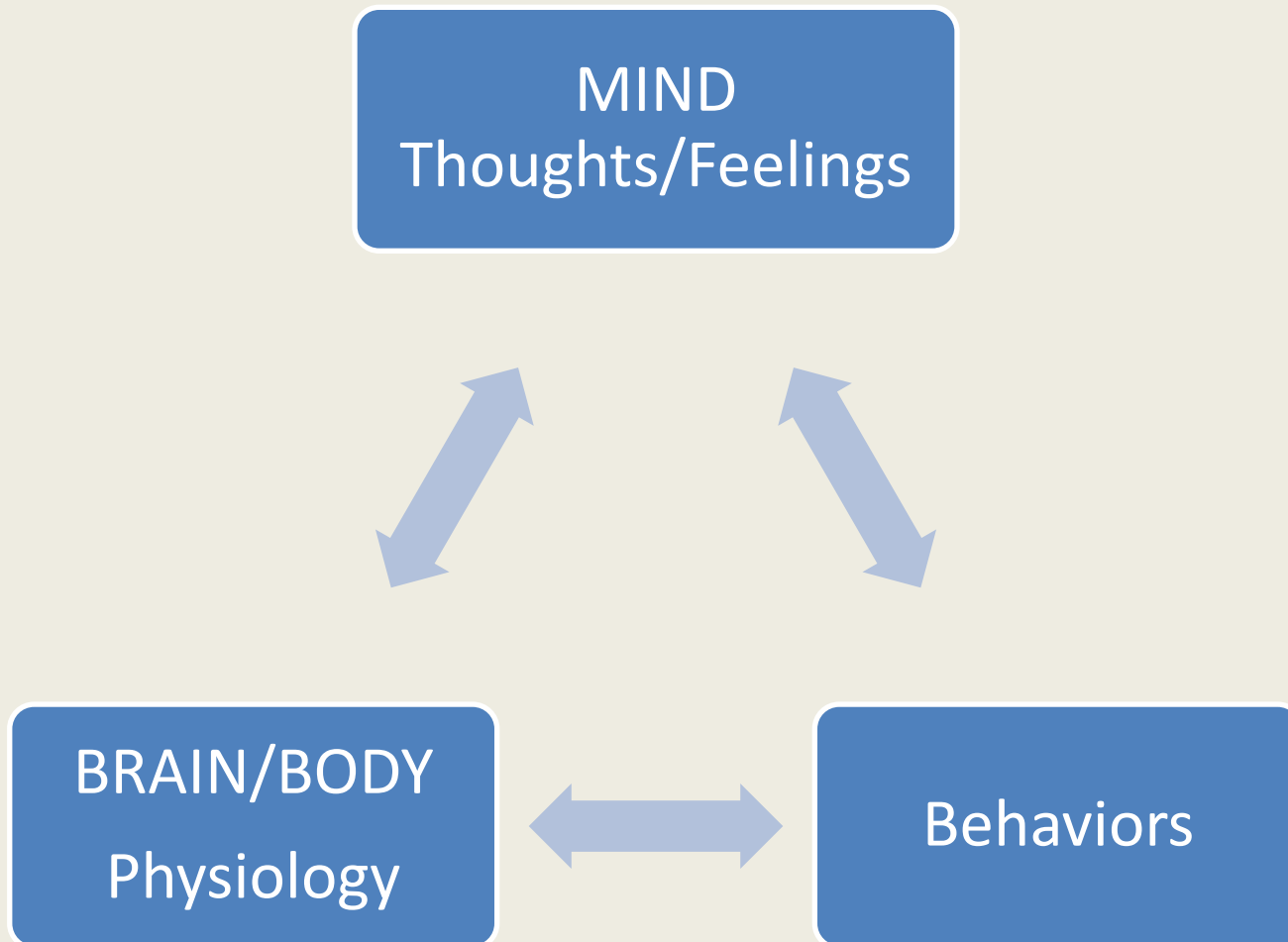
The Myth of **SELF** Regulation



<https://youtu.be/Wz1pnFBLZM4>

*....teach me HOW to
calm down
don't just TELL
me to...*

Understanding the Triad
S.O.S
STOP....OBSERVE....SHIFT





Shifting the Triad: *Modifying thoughts*

Thoughts/Feelings



Shifting the Triad: *Modifying Thoughts*

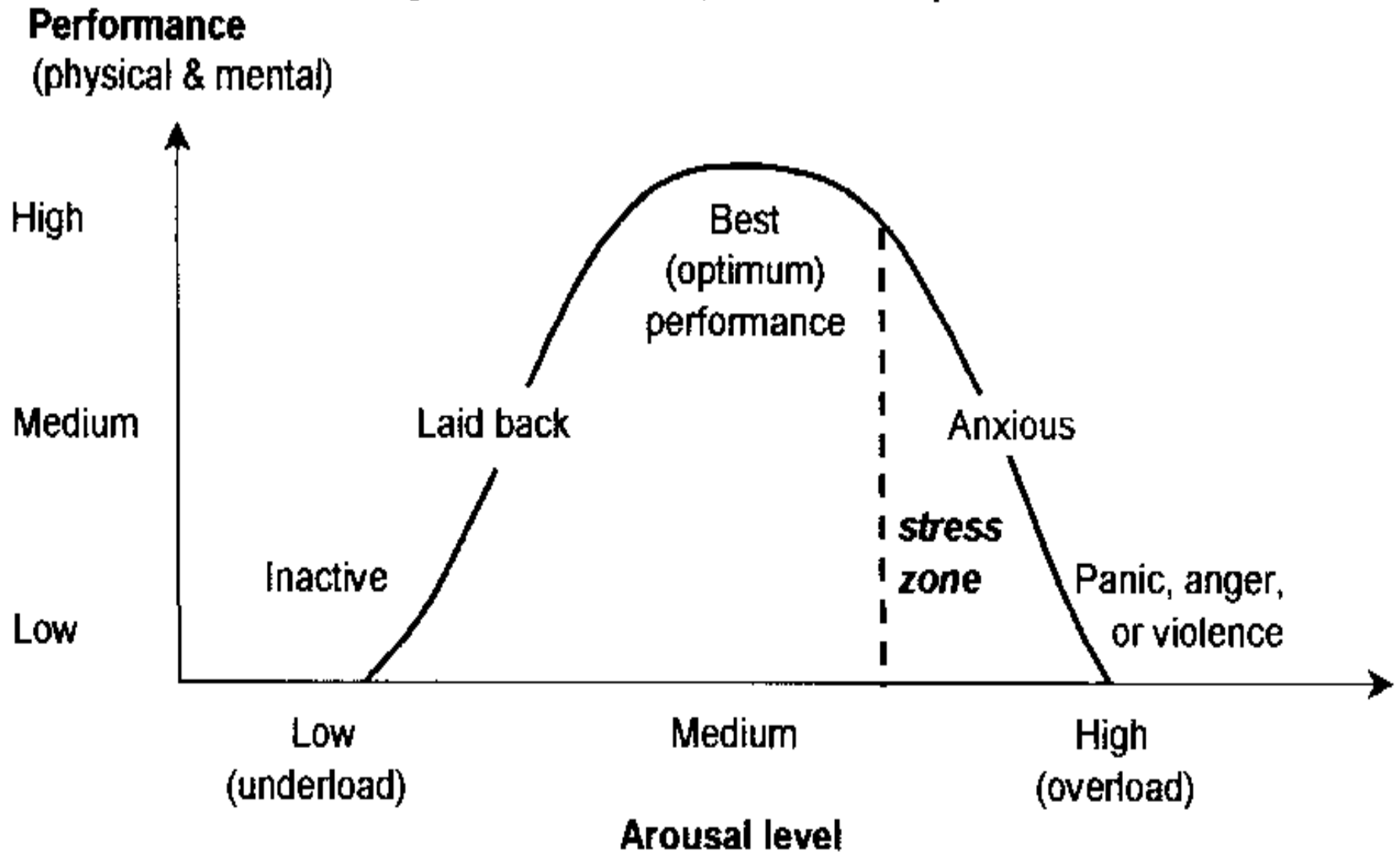
Anxiety: overestimate the threat, underestimate ability to cope

Trying to ***judge perceived threats
using a more rational scale***

Decrease perception of threat

Increase capacity to cope

Anxiety Curve



Cognitive Reframing

Adapted from: D. Bilsker, M. Gilbert, D. Worling & E. J. Garland

Situation	Thoughts Thinking Error	Realistic Thoughts
	All or Nothing Thinking Overgeneralization Disqualifying the positive Jumping to conclusions	What proof do I have? Would most people agree with this thought? If not, what would be a more realistic thought? What would I say to a friend in a similar situation?

Self Compassion

Not about judging ourselves positively, but a way of relating to ourselves kindly, embracing ourselves lovingly flaws and all



Changing the Story

- Recurrent challenge or default way of responding?
- Change the ending and practice it
e.g. choose forgiveness, wish them happiness

Quit hits to support brain health...

- ***The Gratitude List...OR***
- ***The Three Good Things List***

Adapted from:

<http://anxietyfreechild.com/positive-psychology-guide/>



Changing our Response: Modifying Physiology

Sensation/Physiology

Strategies: Take up Smoking

Just kidding!

Why this works:



- Taking a break physically from place/environment which generates stress
- Deep breathing

Let's practice...

4, 7, 8 Breathing



Shifting the Triad: *Modifying Behaviour*

Behaviour

Mindfulness

- A seated meditation may be easiest OR a body scan

Seated Body Scan

- MARC.ucla (Mindfulness Awareness Resource Centre) meditation recordings iTunes U

Guided Mindfulness

(free audio guided meditations)

Behaviour

“Fake it until you make it”

Get the body moving

Quit hits to support brain health...

- ***The Joy List***
- ***The Random Act of Kindness***
- ***The Strengths List***
- ***The Savoring***
- ***The Social Support Squad***
- ***Daily Gratitude***

Adapted from:

<http://anxietyfreechild.com/positive-psychology-guide/>



Your role in supporting your child

- Practice stress reduction with your child
- Celebrate all aspects of your child—character, personality, school, work etc.
- Find places you can give them control and autonomy
- Deliver messages of self compassion
- Get help if you feel their/your stress level is impacting you in ways you cannot manage

*If the day ever came when we
were able to accept ourselves
and our children exactly as we
are and they are, then, I
believe we would have come to
an understanding of what
"good parenting" means.*

Fred Rogers

Are you ready to change the lens?

[The Power of Positive Psychology](#)

The 21 day Challenge

Daily:

1. Write down 3 new things you were grateful for that day
2. Journal one positive experience
3. Exercise
4. Meditation
5. One random act of kindness

Resources

Websites:

[Parents for Children's Mental Health](#)

[Anxiety BC](#)

[Anxiety BC Parent Toolkit](#)

[Mind Your Mind](#)

Books:

- *Building Emotional Intelligence* (Linda Lantieri)
- *Flourish* (Dr. Seligman)
- *The Mindful Child* (Susan Kaiser Greenland)
- *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain* (Daniel Siegal)
- *The Highly Sensitive Child: Helping Our Children Thrive When the World Overwhelms Them* (Elaine Aron)
- *Keys to Parenting Your Anxious Child*, (Dr. Katharina Manassis)
- *Worried No More, Second Edition: Help and Hope for Anxious Children* (Aureen Wagner)
- *Freeing Your Child From Anxiety*, (Tamar Chansky)
- *Helping Your Anxious Child* (Ronald M. Rapee)

Questions?