

ANXIETY AND THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

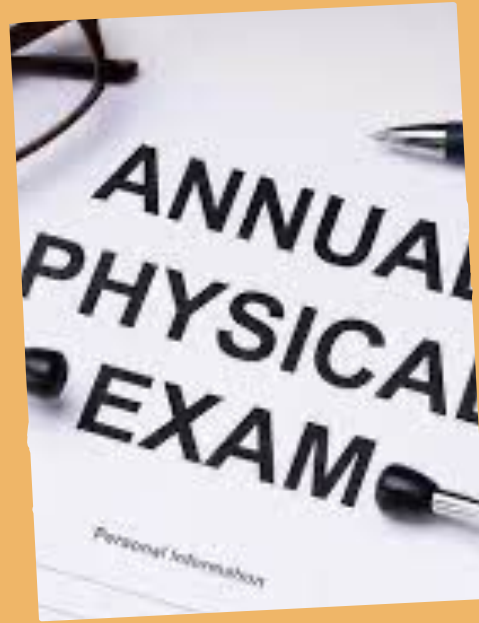
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Licensed Brain Health Instructor

Crisis Counselor





**MENTAL HEALTH IS
PHYSICAL HEALTH!**





We need to heal emotionally,
just like we do physically...



As You Wish...

***Your Brain is the organ that makes you feel
what you dominantly think***

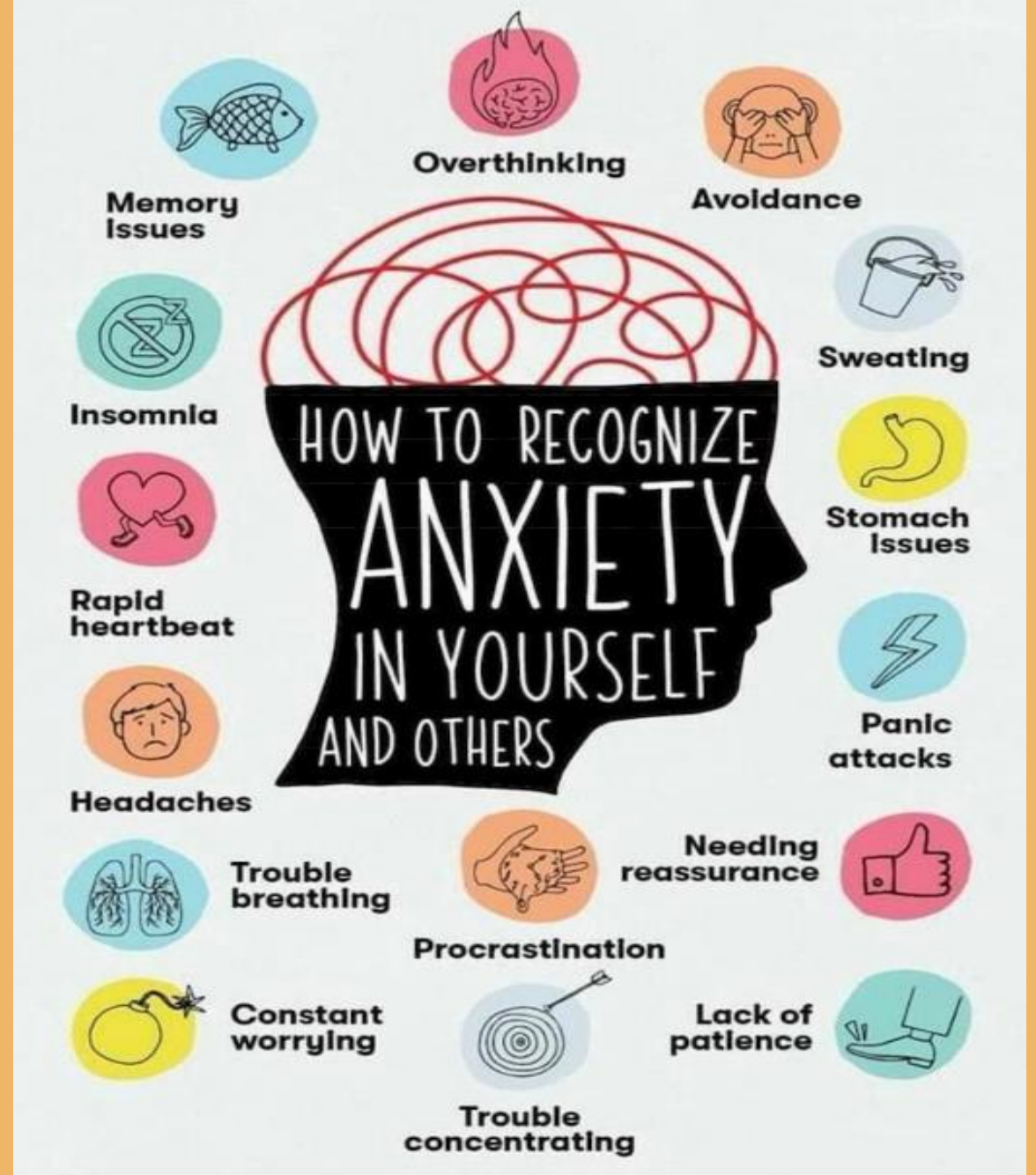
YOU'RE UNWELL?
YOU'RE NOT EVEN RUNNING A FEVER!



Dr. Victor Fornari, vice chair of child and adolescent psychiatry at Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, N.Y., said he has seen firsthand the increase in mental health problems among the young.

"We've seen in our emergency rooms a 50% increase in suicidal adolescents presenting over the past 12 months and an almost 300% increase in admissions for eating disorders amongst adolescents," he said.

- Newsweek, 8/9/21



PREFRONTAL CORTEX

- Attention
- Concentration
- Focus

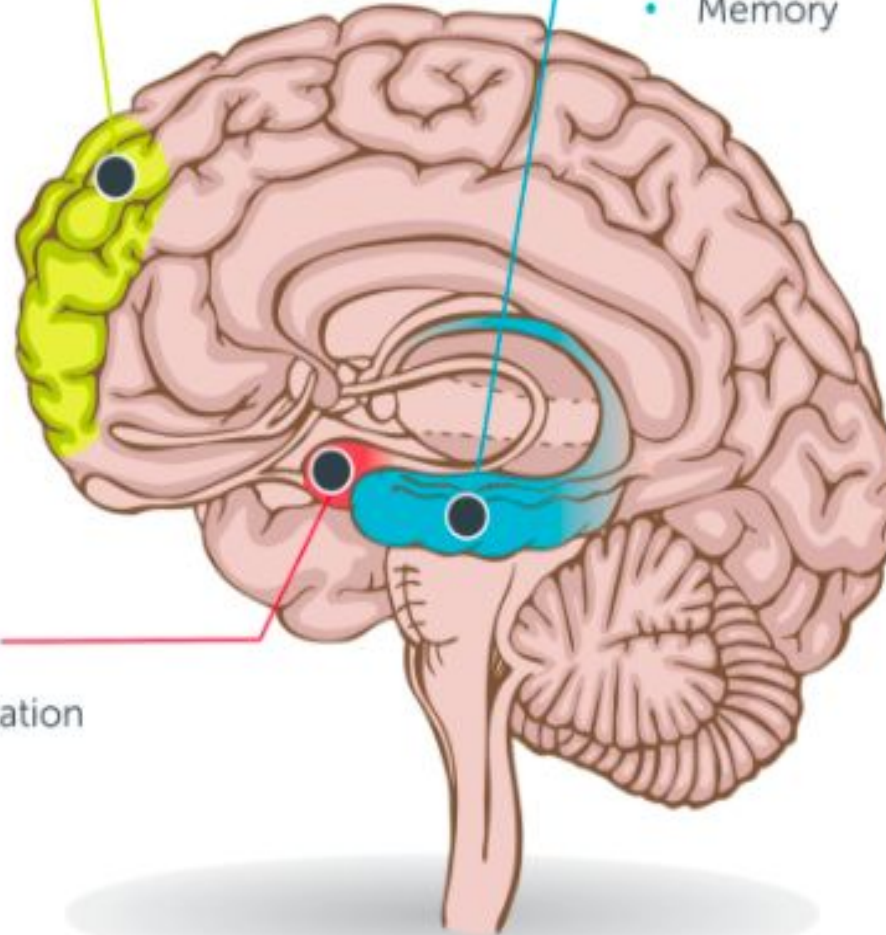
HIPPOCAMPUS

- Learning
- Memory

AMYGDALA

- Emotional Regulation
- Reactivity

LIMBIC SYSTEM



Adolescent Brain Development

The Prefrontal cortex fully develops at age 25-28

PREFRONTAL CORTEX FUNCTION

- Focus
- Forethought
- Judgment
- Impulse control
- Organization
- Planning
- Empathy
- Learning from your mistakes



**Sensory
Input**



Amygdala

**Prefrontal
Cortex**

**Balanced
Response**

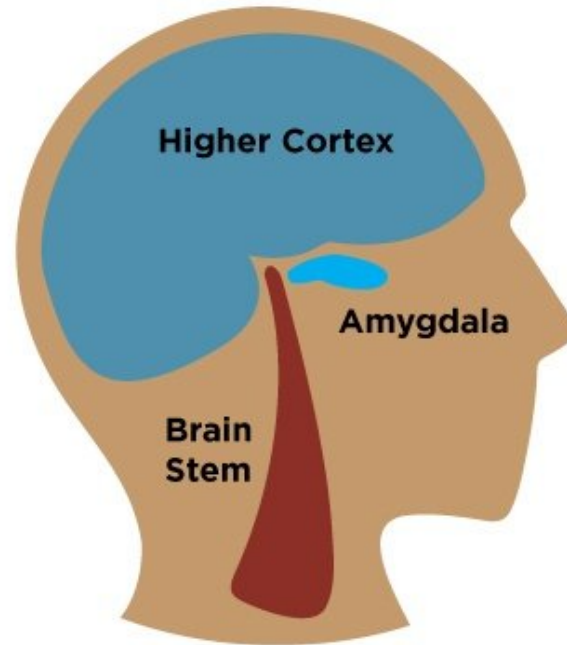
Amygdala

**Prefrontal
Cortex**

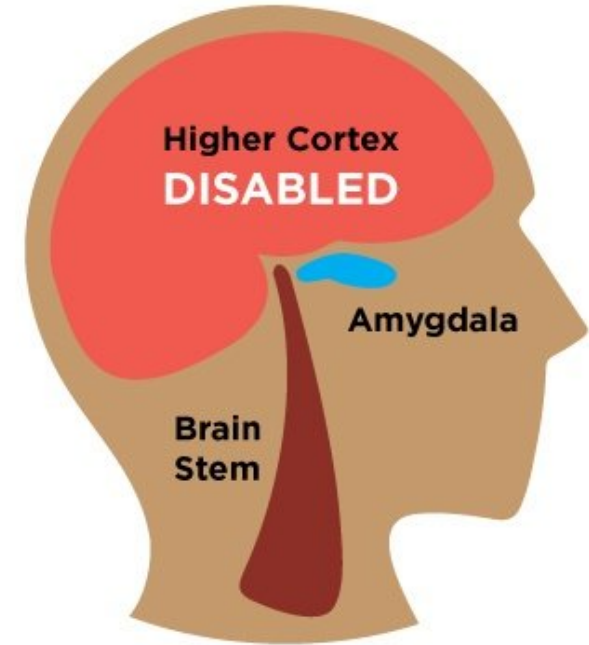
Fight, Flight, Or Freeze Response

BE AWARE:

**THE AMYGDALA IS
THE FASTEST
MOVING PART OF
YOUR BRAIN, AND
IT CAN EASILY
SHUT DOWN YOUR
THINKING BRAIN!**

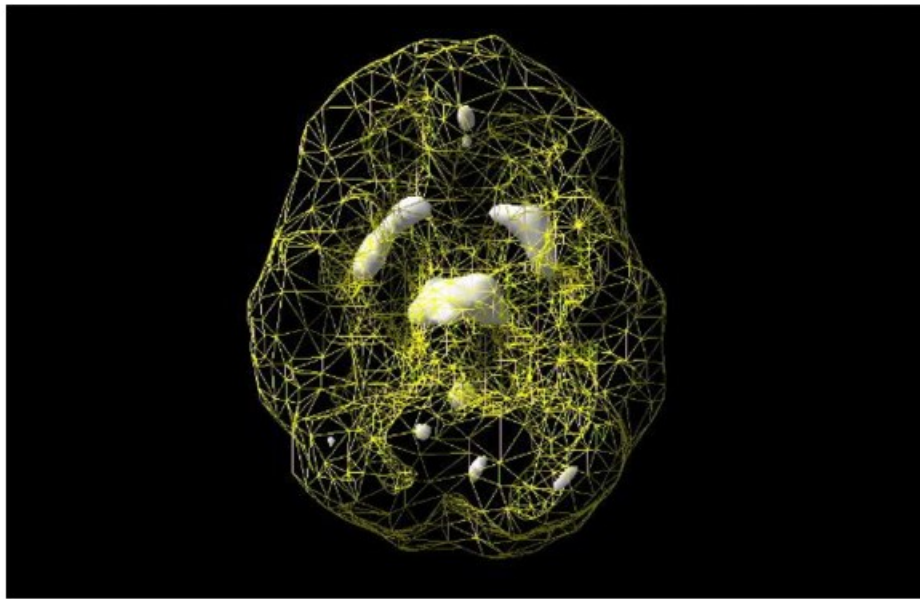


LOW Emotion
(Calm, Relaxed)

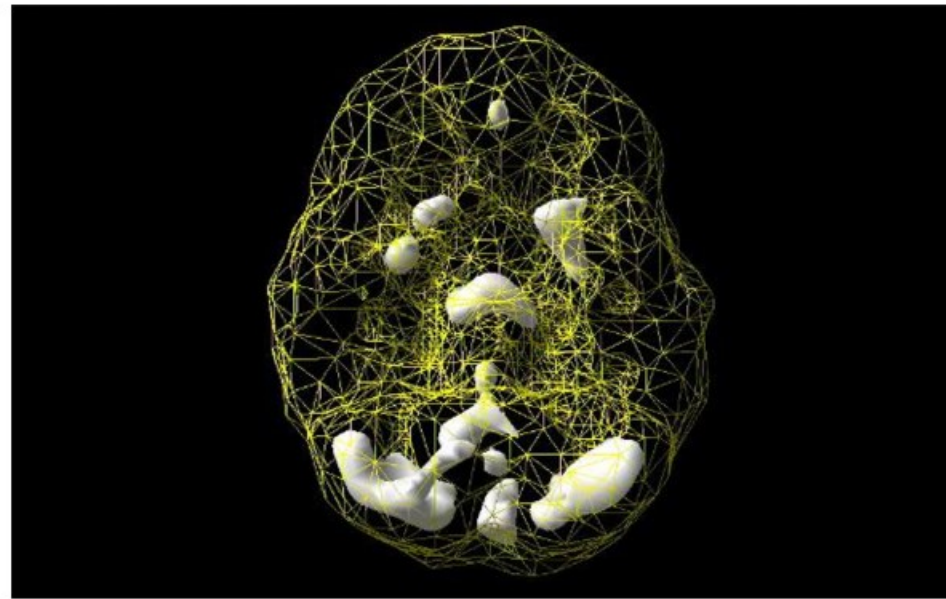


HIGH Emotion
(Anger, Fear, Excitement, Love,
Hate, Disgust, Frustration)

An inside view of an anxious brain



Anxious/Fearful



Calm/Grateful

PANIC ATTACK

•Panic attacks come on quickly, often without warning and are more intense. Although they only last for 10 minutes, one can have multiple panic attacks and it could seem longer.

- Chest pain and a pounding or racing heart, causing someone to think they are having a heart attack
- Hyperventilation and shortness of breath can lead to feeling lightheaded and dizzy
- Shaking, sweating, hot flashes, or chills
- Nausea or stomach pain
- A sense of being choked or smothered
- Feeling detached from their body or surroundings



5 STEPS TO BREAK A PANIC ATTACK

- 1. Stop and take 3 slow, deep breaths.**

Practice diaphragm breathing- inhale for a count of 3, hold 2 seconds, and exhale to the count of 4, and repeat.

- 2. Do not leave the area unless you are in real danger.**

It's helpful to stay and overcome the adrenaline reaction in the same space.

- 3. Break your tunnel vision.**

Look slowly from side to side, help us to become aware of our surroundings and can begin reasoning that there is no danger.

- 4. Focus on something outside of yourself or warm your hands.**

Once you feel safe, name 3 things you see, 3 things you hear and move 3 parts of your body. Warming your hands immediately relaxes the amygdala.

- 5. Speak out loud in complete sentences.**

This will prevent hyperventilating and our brain is distracted by speaking in sentences.

**When we think
anxiety is one
emotion, we never
address the
individual thoughts
bringing on the
anxiety.**



HOW WE THINK RULES OUR LIFE!

THINK-FEEL-DO Cycle

CIRCUMSTANCE:

The neutral facts, separate from any thoughts or opinions.

THINK

The sentences that run through your mind, helping you assign meaning to our circumstances.

FEEL

The vibrations and emotions that run through your body as a result of your thinking.

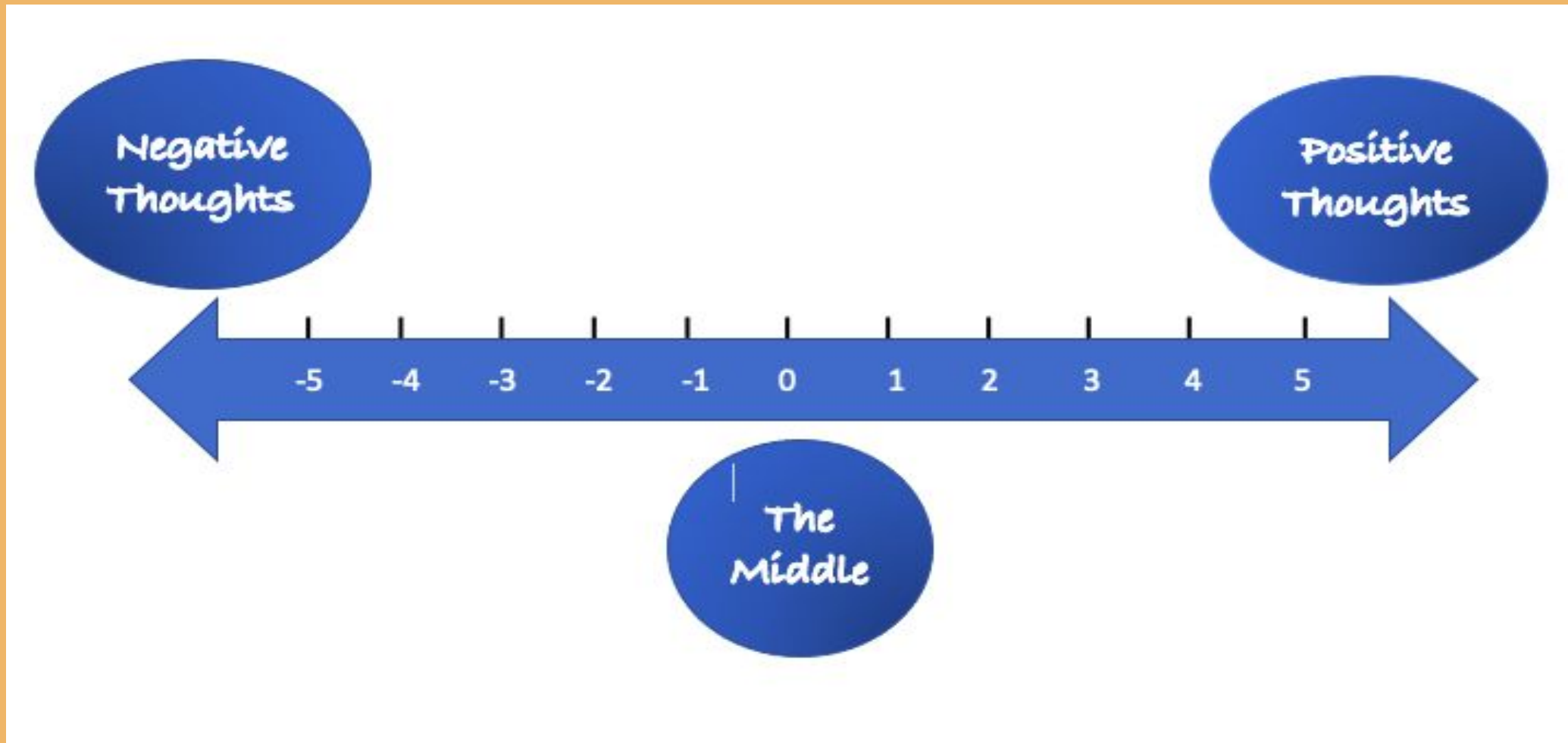
DO

The actions and behavior inspired by your emotions and feelings.

RESULT

The outcome of the actions that you do or don't take.

Whatever the **CIRCUMSTANCE**, the way you **THINK** determines how you **FEEL** which impacts what you **DO** to create your life **RESULT**.



WHERE ARE YOUR THOUGHTS MOST OF THE TIME?

HOW TO SHIFT AN EMOTION...



- **Identify the feeling. Name it and separate it from you, without judgement. Think of emotions as signals- what is it trying to tell you?**
- **Express it physically: walking, running, draw, yoga, dance, music.**
- **Mindfulness! Being present, practice breathing, noticing focus.**
- **Be aware of thoughts and challenge them. Use logic, by enabling the pre-frontal cortex to step back and look at the other side.**
- **If we want to shift a feeling, we have to shift our thoughts.**
- **Name 3 things we are grateful for every night.**

As parents, how well do we manage our emotions?

Adolescents are just starting to feel emotions, and they feel intense. Are we easily sucked into their emotions?

We can't help them if we are sucked in with them

We can't be IN the hole and help them to get out...

Strong emotions can show up in strong behaviors.





What is their behavior trying to tell us? Their behavior reflects their thoughts and feelings- not your parenting. Validate what they feel and you learn about their story.

Language to calm anxiety in youth

DO's

“Tell me about it...”

“I’m Listening.”

“Let’s Breathe.”

“How can I help?”

“What are the feelings like?”

Don'ts

“Calm down.”

“You’ll get over it.”

“It’s all in your head.”

“It’s not that bad.”

“You’re fine.”

Behind every
young child
who believes in himself
is a parent
who believed first

A decorative flourish consisting of a central heart shape flanked by symmetrical leaf-like patterns on either side, positioned below the text.

**The more we grow and learn,
the better we can model.**

THANK YOU for being here
to best support your child.

**Never underestimate the
impact of your influence.**

For additional information, contact:

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