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Motto: Serve others, not for reputation but because you changed lives.

Objectives

- To understand anxiety and its symptoms
- An overview of treatment for anxiety
- Strategies to help the school environment to understand the importance of empathy and listening

Is there something wrong with me?

I have a big project which is due in two weeks. On top of that, I have practice for band and for track. To make matters worse, the STARR exam is coming up. I am freaking out. I mean, I know I will accomplish everything but, it seems impossible to see the light. My friends think I am crazy because they are calm. Can you help me?

What is Anxiety?

It is a form of an existential openness that tells us that something must be recognized mentally and physically. It is a reaction to possible threats but most often, it is the false ego who tells us to hyperfocus on the problem rather than the solution.

What is normal anxiety?

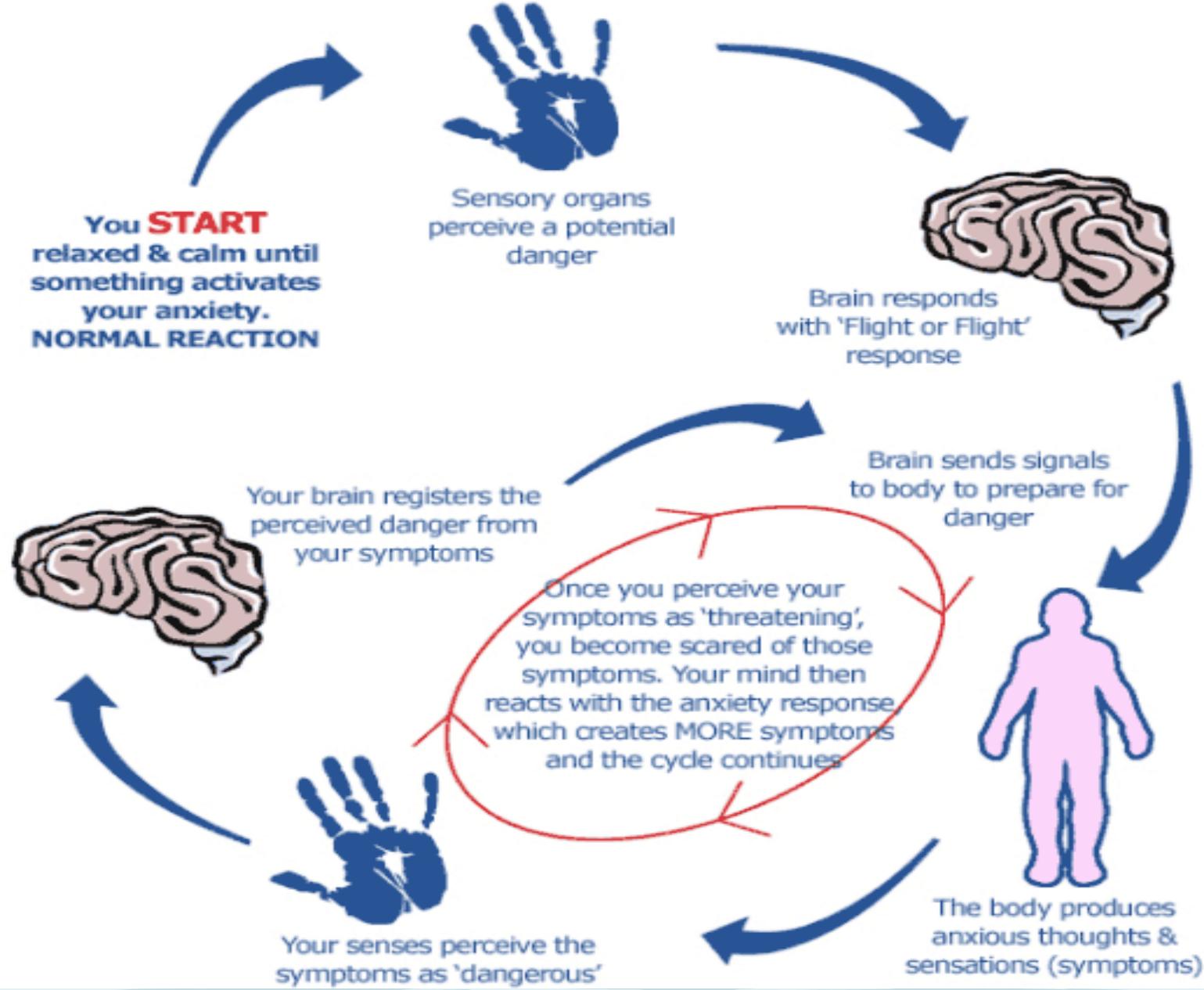
Situation or trigger:

Preparing for an exam

Preparing to perform

Preparing a speech

Normal anxiety does not interfere so much with our lives as much as hyper anxiety does. Normal anxiety tells us that something must be recognized internally. It pushes us to create something new in our lives. It is measured with courageous decisions.



When does anxiety become a disorder?

- Most children, adolescents and adults use anxiety to help them make good choices. And, believe it or not, great creativity is found when anxiety is in place.
Suggestion: Make good use of your anxiety.
- Anxiety becomes a problem when you fixate over and over for the same problem. It becomes distressful, causing you headaches, dry mouth, and sweaty hands.

What causes anxiety?

- Anxiety runs in the family
- Common for at least one parent to be anxious
- Research has shown that what is passed on from parent to child is not a specific tendency but, a general personality type or a cognitive style in which a child learns from their parent.

What causes anxiety?



Parent Reaction

- Reactions to child or teen's anxious behavior might also play a role in increasing Anxiety (e.g., being over-protective, helicopter parenting).

Modeling

- Children and teenagers copy their parents coping strategies (e.g., avoiding fearful situations).

Stressors/Traumatic Life Events

- Death of a loved one, being bullied, getting sick, not passing several classes

Anxiety in the Classroom

- Tiredness
- Decline in grades
- Withdrawal from peer groups
- Use of alcohol/drugs
- Poor coping skills with everyday stress
- Calling home frequently to reassure comfort
- Anger outbursts

Exercise:

What would I see differently if anxiety and depression were placed as a picture? What can I edit from the photo?





Now that you edited your anxious picture, what NEW picture will you take?

How will you know that this picture will bring you closer to a meaningful life?

Imagine for a moment, that your NEW picture represents everything you imagined: good grades, success, happiness, and positive peer groups.

Now, take those steps to take NEW pictures in your mind and slowly rescript a new narrative, one that brings new flourishing to your life.

Thinking, Feeling, and Doing

- Children, teenagers, and adults who have too much anxiousness, they begin to yield towards extreme thoughts. For instance:
- My mom is not responding to my calls or texts. She must have fainted or probably ended up at the hospital.
- I can't do presentations in class because my friends will think I am dumb and laugh at me.

Thinking:
unrealistic
or extreme
thoughts

Feeling:
flight-fight
response
causes you
to sweat

Doing:
Pacing,
crying
spells,
shaking

Thinking Errors

- Students **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

- Students either become “pumped up” to tackle the situation or, they back out in fear. This is the *flight-fight* response.
- Immediate or short-term anxiety is named the *flight-fight* response. It’s the body’s way of protecting you from danger. This can be confused when you are taking your STARR exam or preparing for a sport’s event or, giving a speech. Those events are absolutes. You know that you must show up and give your best. But, somehow, we feel threatened and our hearts begin to race, with our hands sweating.
- Other examples in school situations: oral presentations, tests, answering a question when the teacher selects you, or reading in front of the class.

Doing

- Pacing, crying spells, shaking, cannot utter the correct usage of words.
- It becomes a cycle
- You try to reassure yourself that whatever may seem unpleasant, you convince yourself that it will be that way.

Cognitive Strategies

- Realistic thinking or detective thinking
- What is the evidence that my anxious thought is true or false? If, it is true, what steps can I take to make my anxious thought go from a 10 to a 5?
- In the past, I coped with my anxiety pretty good, what can I do today to make myself happier?

Realistic Thinking

Event → Thought/Belief → Emotion

Test I will fail Worried

Test Honestly, I do not care Irritated

Test I can pass if I study Hopeful

Coping Strategies

- Muscle relaxation
- Deep Breathing
- Refocusing on your five senses
- Staying on task with attainable goals

Methods to turn your anxiety into creativity

Get in touch with the protector role. In our deepest most Self, why is our unconscious mind telling us that there is danger with our anxiety? If we know that our anxiety is provoked by irrational fear, then we can move with these questions:

- 1.) What part of me needs healing from the past that hasn't fully recovered in the present moment?
- 2.) Has the protector role added meaning to my life or, has it subtracted from my human flourishing?
- 3.) How can I blend the protector role with the current Self?

Exercise: Identifying the Emotional Center

- When you experience anxiety, depression, grief, or anger, try to give them a face. Pinpoint its parts. Wrestle with the emotions that are presented to you.

Name of part _____

What it feels like emotionally _____

What it looks like _____

What message is it conveying _____

How does it make me behave _____

What does it want from me _____

The steps that I will take to make my life meaningful are _____

Activating the Higher Self

- The Higher Self is your most inner enlightened Being who guides you that is separate from your body. Imagine it as a 24/7 motivational coach/counselor. One way to activate the Higher Self is to notice how different your life would be once it has reached a new flourishing.

By shifting my current Self to my Higher Self, I would feel _____

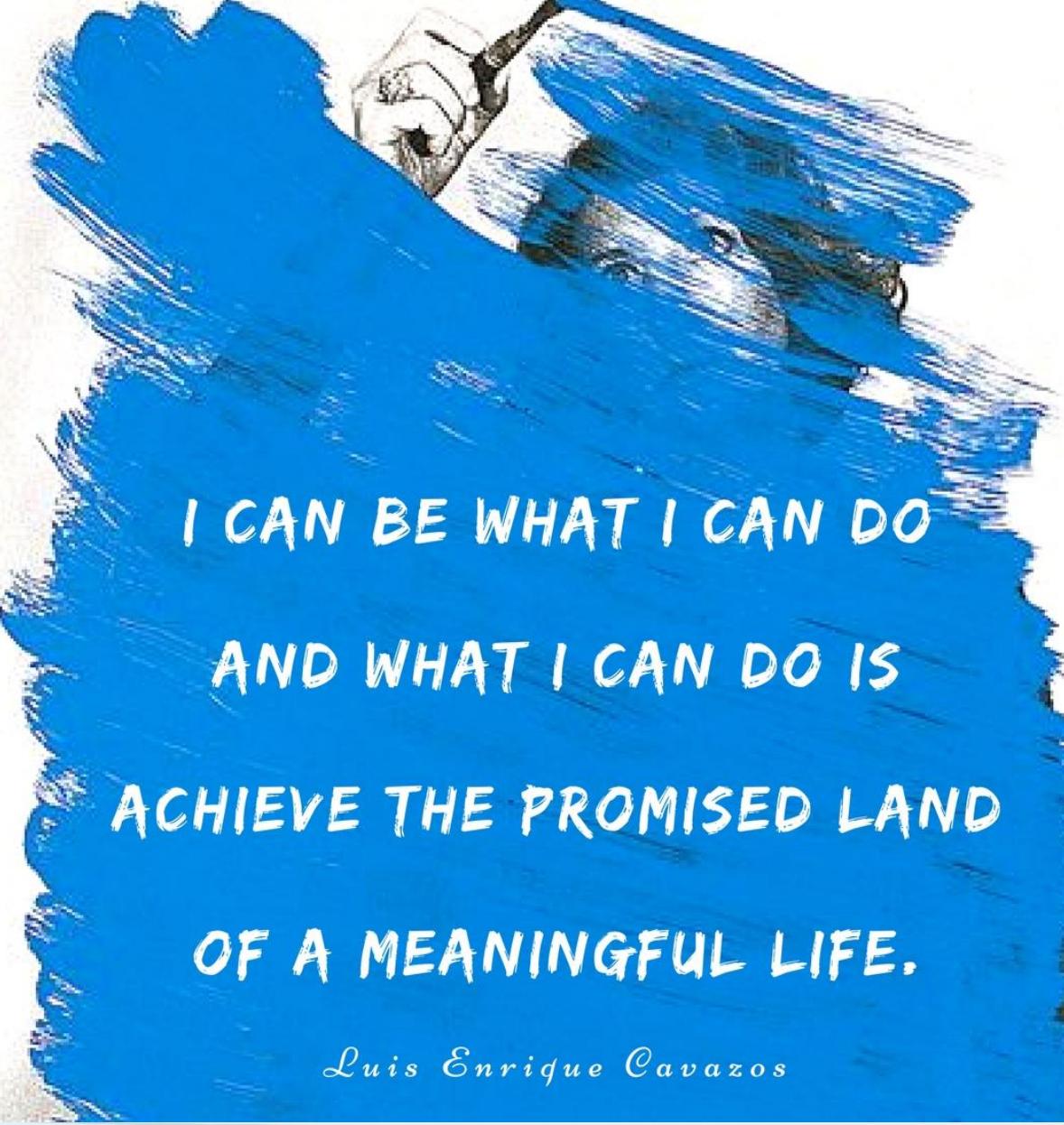
By changing the target parts of irrational fear, I would feel _____

Being centered with my emotions and with my Higher Self, I am able to accomplish _____

If, it is true that anxiety is protecting me, what steps will I take for it to trust me _____

Exercise: Carrying the Weight of Anxiety and Depression

Grab two objects. For example, two books. One on each hand. Stretch out your arms perfectly, side by side. And stand straight for about a minute or two. You will recognize the fatigue and the frustration in your body. This is a paradox of you carrying the same emotions for months and years. It's as if the body is saying, "I am frustrated in being anxious and depressed. Let's do something creative so we can live a meaningful, authentic life."



I CAN BE WHAT I CAN DO
AND WHAT I CAN DO IS
ACHIEVE THE PROMISED LAND
OF A MEANINGFUL LIFE.

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