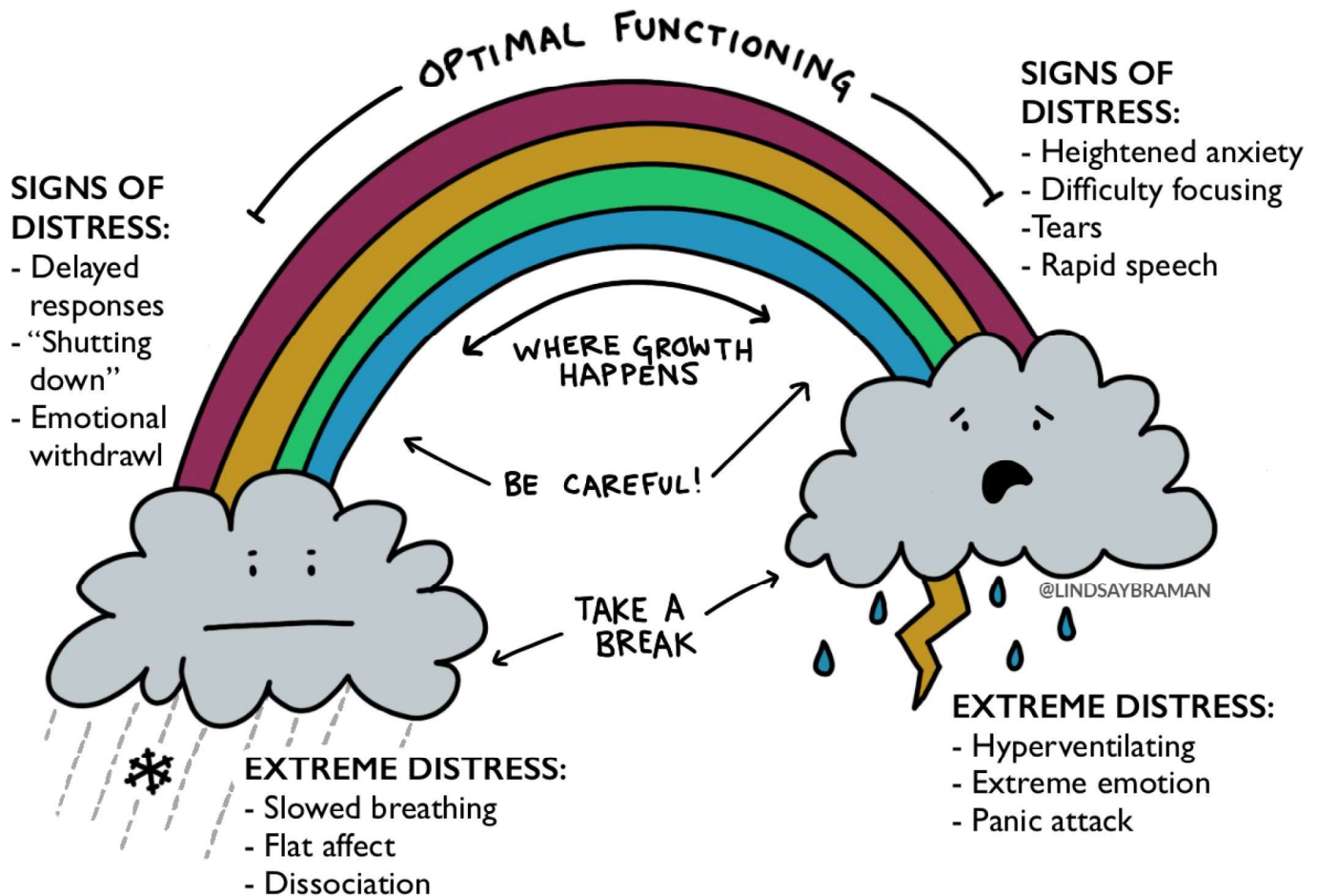
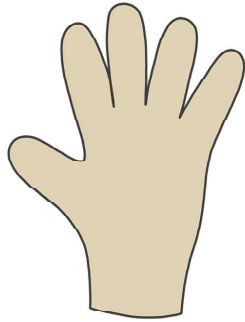


WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

(IN RAINBOW FORM!)



A "HANDY" MODEL OF THE BRAIN:



At the base of your brain, represented here by your wrist, is the brain stem. It's responsible for basic things like breathing and keeping your heart pumping.



Your thumb, tucked in, sits in the middle, just like the amygdala is in the center of a brain. The amygdala is responsible for sensing danger & telling the rest of our brain + body.



Your fingers are like your pre-frontal cortex- that's the part of the brain that helps us manage emotions and make complex decisions.



When our amygdala sounds the alarm, our pre-frontal cortex can't do its job and we "flip our lid." That's why it can be so hard to make thoughtful decisions when we are upset.

In these moments, our brains need to take a break to reflect and reconnect.

How Kids/Teens Experience Anxiety



EMOTIONS

Irrational Outbursts
Depression
Low Self-Esteem

Mood Swings
Overwhelmed
Hopelessness

MIND

Worry/Hopelessness
Indecision
Irrational

Lack of Thinking
Negativity
Looping Thoughts

BODY

Tired
Headaches
Body Pain/Tension

Heart Racing
Gets Sick Often
Trouble with Breathing

BEHAVIOR

Meltdowns/Tantrums
Isolates/Withdrawn
Restless/Clingy

Arguing/Yelling
Control Battles
Appetite & Sleep Changes

How Adults Experience Anxiety



EMOTIONS

Indifference	Irritability
Depression	Overwhelmed
Loss of Confidence	Hopelessness

MIND

Worry	Impaired Judgement
Indecision	Negativity
Impulsive Decisions	Looping Thoughts

BODY

Fatigue	Heart Racing
Headaches	Frequent Infections
Muscle Tension	Trouble with Breathing

BEHAVIOR

Loneliness/Withdrawn	Numbing (substance use, overworking, etc)
More Accident Prone	
Restlessness	Appetite & Sleep Changes

Parenting With The Brain In Mind



"Be the Thermostat, NOT the Thermometer."

REGULATE

Parents must 1st BE REGULATED THEMSELVES in order to help their child/teen regulate!

Happens in the BODY & the focus is on soothing.

Ways to Regulate: breathing techniques, touch, physical activity (rhythmic), change in environment

RELATE

Connection is vital to help other get back into their "Window of Tolerance." (AKA Manage their anxiety)

Ways to Connect: eye contact, tone of voice, validate their feelings, stay CURIOUS (*CURIOSITY TO KEY)

Examples: "This is really hard." "I know you are really overwhelmed."

REASON

Only when we are in our WINDOW can we talk about things and approach the issue from a logical.

Reasoning for Anxiety: brainstorm ideas/problem solve, challenge irrational thinking (tricky brain), practice radical acceptance, mind/body awareness, present focused, focus on what we can control

Anxiety Coping Tools

KIDS & TEENS



Focusing on the PRESENT- Trying to help them get out of future thinking & ruminating about past.

Imagination/creativity: Racing thoughts= left brain & creativity= right brain. It helps to use imaginative stories, journaling, painting to activate the right brain and quiet the left.

Body Scan- There are great apps that offer guided body scans or parent can talk through scanning each part of body. Focus on sensations. *great @ bedtime & overtime they can learn to do this skill on their own when they recognize they need it.

Breathing- Breath is an incredibly effective tool to help manage anxiety. Instead of saying "take a breath" say "breathe out slowly" or "follow your breath." *Exhalation is what calms the mind.

Mirroring- Parents modeling ways to reduce anxiety. Practice self care together through things like: yoga, physical activity, mindfulness, journaling.

Challenging the Narrative- Help prep for uncertainty, making them part of the discussion and using the power of story to help empower and connect family as in together instead of members feeling overwhelmed & alone.

KIDS

Bubble breathing, Tricky Brain, Bossing back your anxious thoughts, Make worry doll, shared ways to express anger

TEENS

Radical acceptance, Getting curious with what they need from you: "Do you need me to listen, problem-solve or help/advocate?"

SYNERGETIC PLAY THERAPY

Regulation Activities

Run, jump, spin, dance with pauses to take deep breaths	Make a game and have child jump high to touch something high or in a door frame	Bounce on a yoga ball	Roll across the floor back and forth	Sit in a chair and push up with your arms (as if trying to get out of the chair)-keep some resistance
Deep pressure on arms and legs (slow pressure down arms and legs in a long stroking motion)	Drink through a straw	Run, jump, etc and crash into something soft (i.e. jump on bed and crash repeatedly)	Eat (particularly something crunchy)	Take a bath or shower
Wrap up in a blanket and snuggle(a little tightly for some pressure, safely)	March or sing during transitions	Play Mozart music in the background during challenging times of the day (if in hyperarousal)	Play Hard Rock/Fast/Bass music (if in hypoarousal)	Carry heavy things or push heavy things around
Walk quickly	Do isometrics (wall pushups or push hands together (like you're praying))	Shake head quickly	Run up and down steps	Play sports
Hang upside down off of a bed or couch	"Doodle" on paper	Hold or fidget a Koosh ball, rubber band, straw, clay	Put a cold or hot wash cloth on face	Swing
Dim the lights (if in hyperarousal)	Turn on the lights (if in hypoarousal)	Dance	Move, move, move - any way that it feels good to your body	Breathe, breathe, breathe - make sure your inhalation is same length as your exhalation

SOURCE: "AGGRESSION IN PLAY THERAPY:
A NEUROBIOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR INTEGRATING INTENSITY"
(COMPILED BY LISA DION, LPC, RPT-S, UPDATED 10/16)

Still Have Questions

If you would like additional information or have more questions we are happy to help. We offer FREE 20 minute phone consultations that you can schedule directly through our website. Also feel free to email me with any questions and I would be happy to help in any way I can.

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