



April, 28 2021
1:00pm-3:00pm



Keeping Youth Engaged in a Pandemic World: The Impact of Anxiety & How to Overcome It

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he/him/his

What to expect today

- You will be muted -
 - Please ask questions during our question breaks or using the chat!
- We will have one 15-minute break about halfway through
 - If you need to take additional breaks, please turn off your camera if you need to move around to minimize distraction for others
- If you feel comfortable, have your camera on
 - This workshop will be recorded, so please keep that in mind

Objectives

1. Understand impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health across all ages
2. Gain foundational knowledge of trauma & anxiety responses
3. Develop skills for improved validation, supportive problem solving & proactive self-care for stress management
4. Improve attunement by learning about our own emotional responses

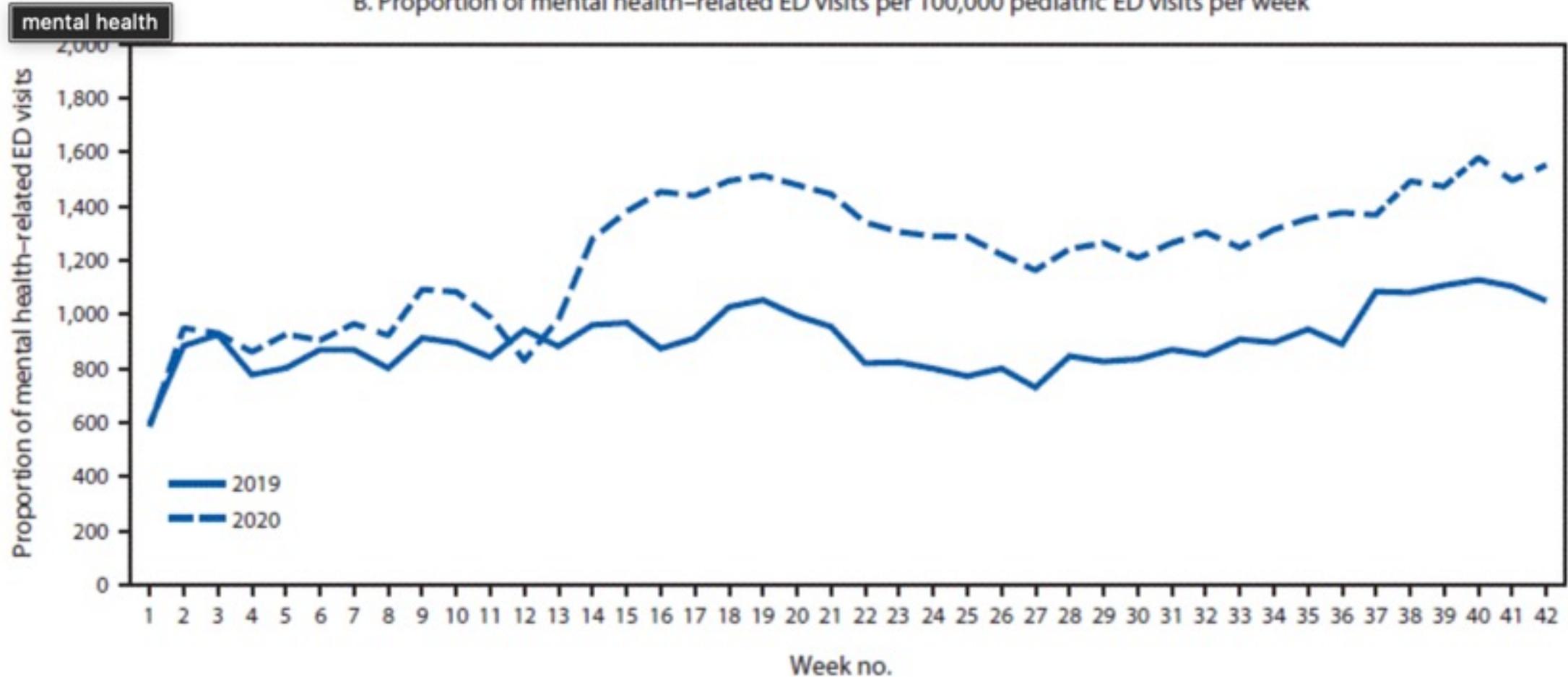


Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Disturbance of routine & familiarity
- Lack of socialization (isolation)
- Broad experience of grief & loss

Mental Health in a Pandemic

B. Proportion of mental health-related ED visits per 100,000 pediatric ED visits per week



Mental Health in a Pandemic

During late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use*

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS



STARTED OR INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE



TRAUMA/STRESSOR-RELATED DISORDER SYMPTOMS



SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE†



*Based on a survey of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years during June 24-30, 2020

†In the 30 days prior to survey

Mental Health in a Pandemic

- Increased Risk Factors –
 - Pre-existing mental health conditions
 - Childhood temperament
 - Minority populations & communities
- Improved Resilience Factors –
 - Embedded in supportive family/peer system
 - For Youth - Having a supportive “other” adult
 - Strong coping abilities for emotion regulation & distress tolerance

Anxiety: What is it?

COGNITIVE

- Excessive Worry, Catastrophic Thinking

EMOTIONAL

- Dread, panic, nervousness, overwhelm, fear

PHYSIOLOGICAL

- Body sensations in response to cognitive & emotional processes

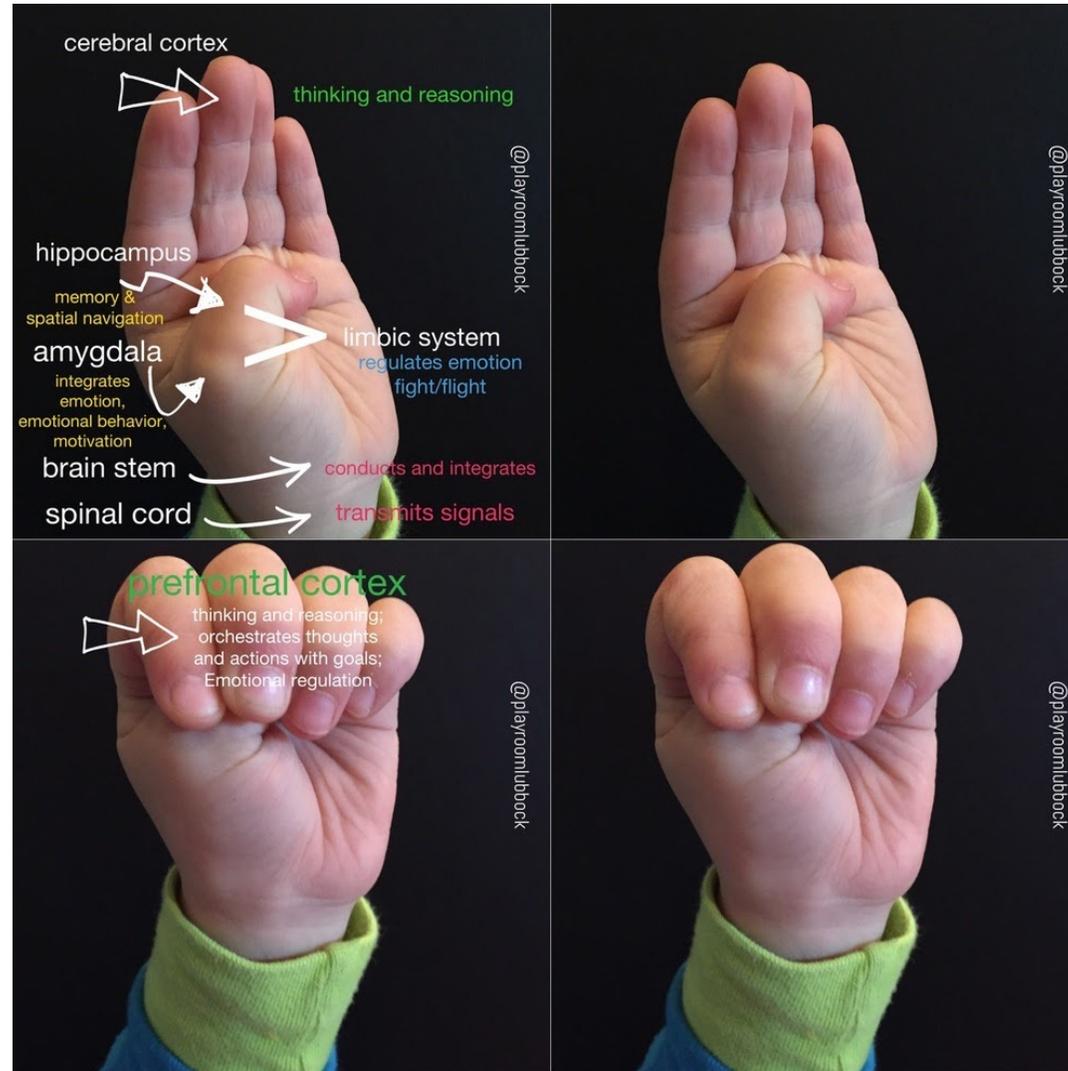
BEHAVIORAL

- Compulsions, sleep disturbance, avoidance

Anxiety: What is it?

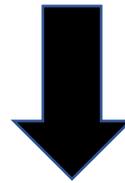
- EVERYONE experiences anxiety at some level
- Not always pathologized
- Anxiety is something that HAPPENS; it is not who you are
- Adaptive response

Anxiety: The Developing Brain

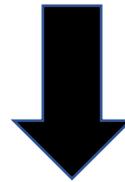


Anxiety: How does it happen?

Experience of **stimulus or stressor**



Activation of the **Limbic System (emotional brain)**



Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioral Response (“Flip your lid”)

Fight – Flight - Freeze

- Evolutionary to maintain safety & protection
- FIGHT
 - Aggression to protect self from threat
- FLIGHT
 - Immediate response to avoid threat
- FREEZE
 - Inability to respond or react to impending threat

Fight – Flight - Freeze







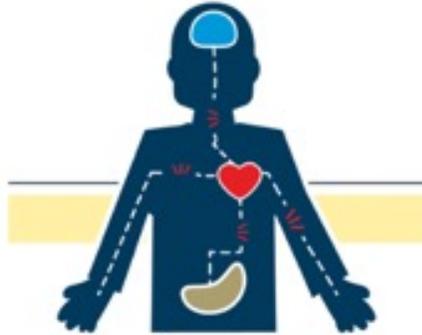
Trauma: What is it?

- Exposure to threat of or actual death
 - Direct (self) or indirect (family or close friend; knowledge of threat)
- Trauma and Other Stress-Related Disorders
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Acute Stress Disorder
 - Adjustment Disorder*

Trauma: What is it?

- COVID-19 Pandemic as collective trauma
 - Experienced by everyone in our social circles
 - Managing response of self and others
 - Exposure to threat/death through news & social media
- What is considered a normative response to a global pandemic?*

Trauma: How do we see it?



Physical

Tonic immobility, auditory exclusion, inability to form words or speak.



Cognitive

Memory loss or memory is out of order (memories may return after sleep cycles), difficulty concentrating, or confusion.



Emotional

Disproportionate reactions, irritability, defensiveness, unexpected mood swings, or anger.



Social

Avoidance/withdrawal from people and activities, hypersensitivity, etc.

Trauma & Anxiety : The Similarities

TRAUMA

- Exposure to threat of or actual death
- Negative thoughts in response to trauma event (trigger)

- Negative thoughts
- Physiological response
- Avoidance
- Anger/Upset
- Difficulty engaging in life

ANXIETY

- Exposure to stressor (internal or external)
- Negative thoughts without specific trigger

Trauma & Anxiety : The Similarities

Young people are...

Not resisting, but hurting;

Not refusing but trying to heal.



How do I help?

- Validation
- Supportive problem solving
- Encouragement for self-care strategies

How do I NOT help?



How do I help?: Validation

- Used to normalize emotional experiences shared by another person & help them feel heard
- Not arguing with irrational thoughts or beliefs
- Must understand your own emotional response before supporting

How do I help?: Validation

CONNECT – How can you open connection?

- I wonder / I can imagine / It sounds like

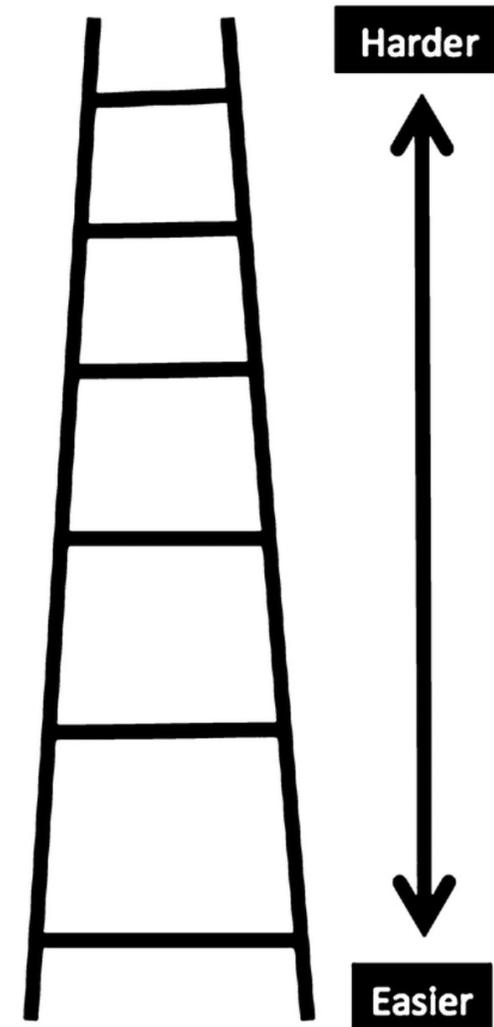
NAME – What emotion do you hear? What could be underneath?

- Angry / afraid / confused / worried

NORMALIZE – How might you feel? Others?

- I bet a lot of people feel that way right now / That makes total sense to me

How do I help?: Supportive Problem Solving



How do I help?: Supportive Problem Solving

- Collaborative development of goal ladder to achieve task
 - 5-10 small steps leading to one overall goal
- Adjust steps as needed to maintain engagement
- Reward, reward, reward!

How do I help?: Self-care

- Self-care acts as stress management
 - Brains and bodies require rest & relaxation in order to function
- Youth need to learn through observation & modeling
 - May view adults as always “having it together” or “never needing downtime”
- Self-care is multi-faceted
 - Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Spiritual, Professional

How do I help?: Self-care

Self-Care Assessment Worksheet

This assessment tool provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care. After completing the full assessment, choose one item from each area that you will actively work to improve.

Using the scale below, rate the following areas in terms of frequency:

- 5 = Frequently
- 4 = Occasionally
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never
- 1 = It never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when needed
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- Take time to be sexual—with yourself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes you like
- Take vacations
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Make time away from telephones
- Other:

Psychological Self-Care

- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
- Decrease stress in your life

Source: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

- Assess needs to determine approach
- Develop a variety of strategies
 - Frequency
 - Location
 - Cost

Referral Information

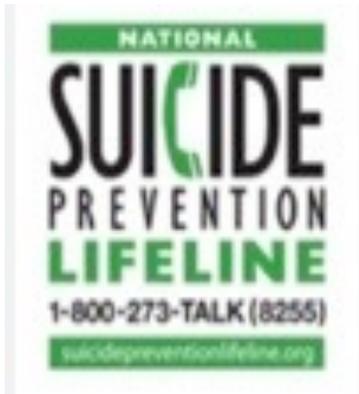


National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

<https://www.nami.org/help>

IL DHS Crisis/Emergency Mental Health

<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30893>



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>



AND THE THING TO DO, IT SEEMS TO ME
IS TO PREPARE YOURSELF SO THAT YOU CAN
BE A RAINBOW IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S CLOUD

Maya Angelou

Contact Information

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Resources & References

- **3-minute Mindful Body Scan:** <https://www.mindful.org/3-minute-body-scan-meditation>
- **Quick Mental Vacations:** <https://www.anxietycanada.com/mental-vacations>
- **Self-care Assessment Tool:** <https://www.mentoring.org/Self-Care-Assessment>

References:

Leeb RT, Bitsko RH, Radhakrishnan L, Martinez P, Njai R, Holland KM. Mental Health–Related Emergency Department Visits Among Children Aged <18 Years During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January 1–October 17, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1675–1680. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6945a3external icon>.

Czeisler MÉ , Lane RI, Petrosky E, et al. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1049–1057. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1external icon>.

NIMH Press Release, February 2021; <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2021/study-identifies-risk-factors-for-elevated-anxiety-in-young-adults-during-covid-19-pandemic.shtml>

Image (Fight or Flight), used from <https://deathtobob.wordpress.com/2018/09/04/fight-or-flight/>