



**POWER**  
*TO*  
*THE* **KIDS**

# Quick overview of brain growth

- 0-3. Attachment style.
- 3-6. Emotional regulation
- 6-12. Relationships / consequences/ explore through play
  
- Above strongly influenced by **family of origin**
  
- 12-14. Am I normal ?
- 14-16 Who am I ?
- 16-20 Where am I going ?
  
- Above strongly influenced by **peers**

# Still face experiment

- Consider consequences of children who :
- Parents are unwell, absent, mental illness, drug affected
- Are put in front of TV regularly as babysitter
  
- Bottom line, don't think you can fool them with words, they can read you!!
- Your body language is critical.

# Yes / No exercise

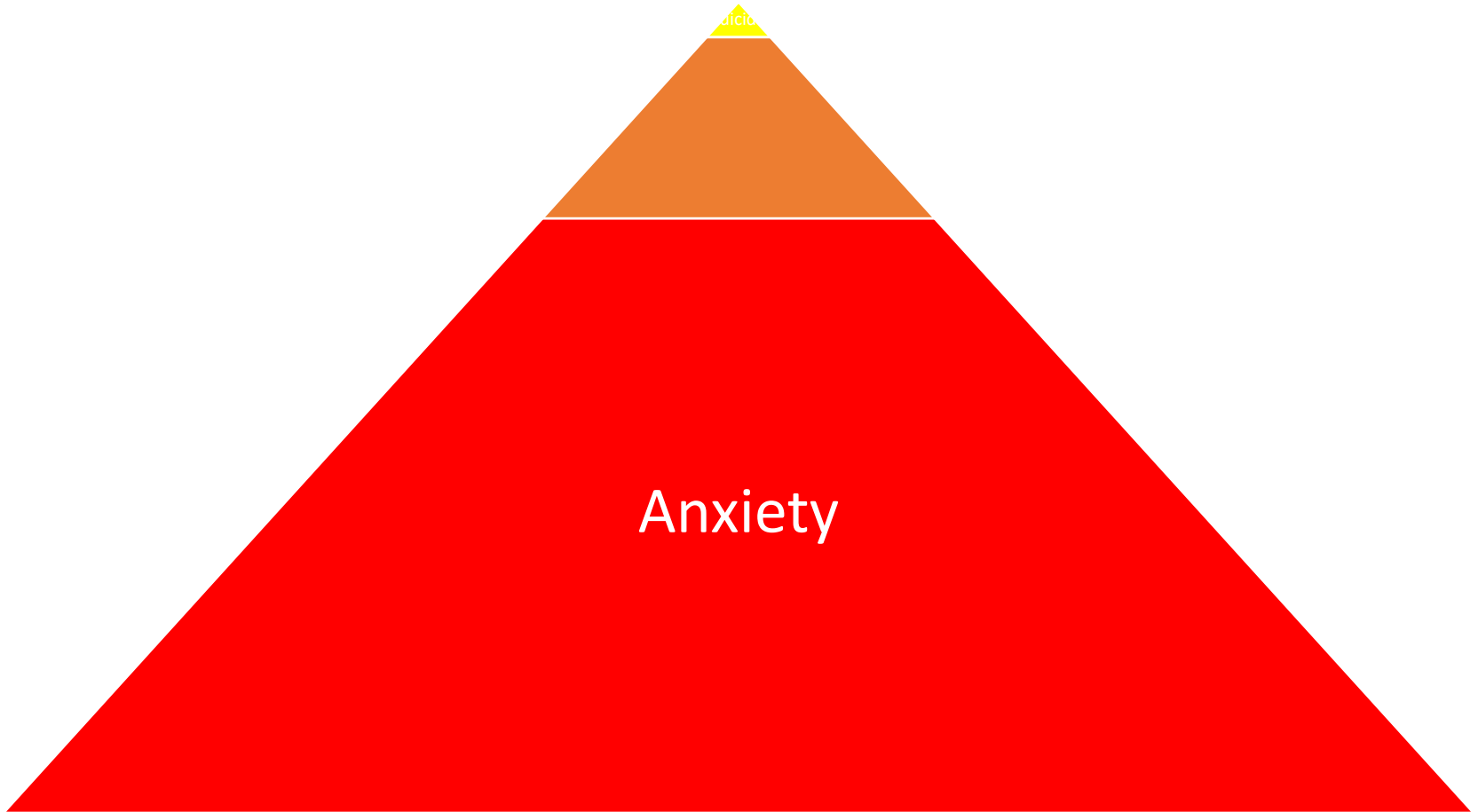
- What is happening in our bodies will be felt by our kids.
- We can help regulate our kids emotions by focussing on regulating ours.

# Making up for lost time

- Never too late to help people learn safety and attachment.
- Trauma or difficult beginnings create brain changes that make it hard to
  - 1 Trust people
  - 2 Regulate emotions
  - 3 Have sense of self
- Most therapies work on behaviours. I can think or feel xyz but I have a choice on what I do.
- Building muscle in actions around values.

<b>Causes of Death ABS</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>1–14 years</b>		
Car Accidents	56	45
Congenital	37	
Brain cancer	32	29
<b>Suicide</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>
Drowning	28	32
Blood cancers	27	32
Epilepsy	10	
Pneumonia and Flu	6	14
Choking	6	
Assault	6	22
<b>15–24 years</b>		
<b>Suicide</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>391</b>
Car accidents	227	187
Poisoning	63	43
<b>25–44</b>		
<b>Suicide</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>1,245</b>
Poisoning	538	606

Suicide is the tip of the iceberg  
Anxiety is the most common issue



# How Kids get Anxious

- Epigenetics
- In Utero Mum has anxiety or depression
- Language and body language of carers= Core belief
- “Be careful”, “watch out”, “don’t do that you will get hurt”
- Need to be aware of projecting your anxieties onto your child.
- Model “can cope with anything, all problems have solutions



# What is good for growing brains

- Traffic light model
- Increase serotonin by:
  - Sunlight
  - Good sleep
  - Healthy nutrition
  - Exercise
  - Meaningful relationships
- Build good roads by modelling and psychology (think of family of origin)

# Be careful of Praise

- When you praise children's work they are developing an "external locus of control" eg I do things to please someone else.
- This in turn leads to distress (and poor self esteem) if not praised in the future.
- **Instead use curiosity:**
- Be aware of what gets praised in your household. Eg finishing all dinner, being tidy and organized, being on time, compliance..... Being kind, listening well, having a go, generosity, compassion

# Toughen up also not good

- Example of child falling and getting hurt
- Ignoring event leads child to believe “my needs will never get met, I am not important”
- Over responding leads child to believe “wow what a lot of good things happen when I am hurt”
- **Care and security is what is needed**
- Excessive punishment leads to fear as motivation

# Failure is good

- Failure indicates effort, effort is always good.
- You cannot walk without falling in the learning process.
- Experiential learning is the most powerful
- Knowing you can cope and get on after failures is what really drives us forwards and into very innovative and creative spaces.
- Think about how failure in your family is responded to.

# Routines are good.

- Kids love routines eg christmas family holidays, Friday pizza and games night.
- Routines are essential in functioning families
- eg family meals together, candle on the table at meal times, family pizza movie night, christmas cookies, night time stories, night time greetings, camping trips, Birthday celebrations, Grief rituals.

# In the moment anxiety tips

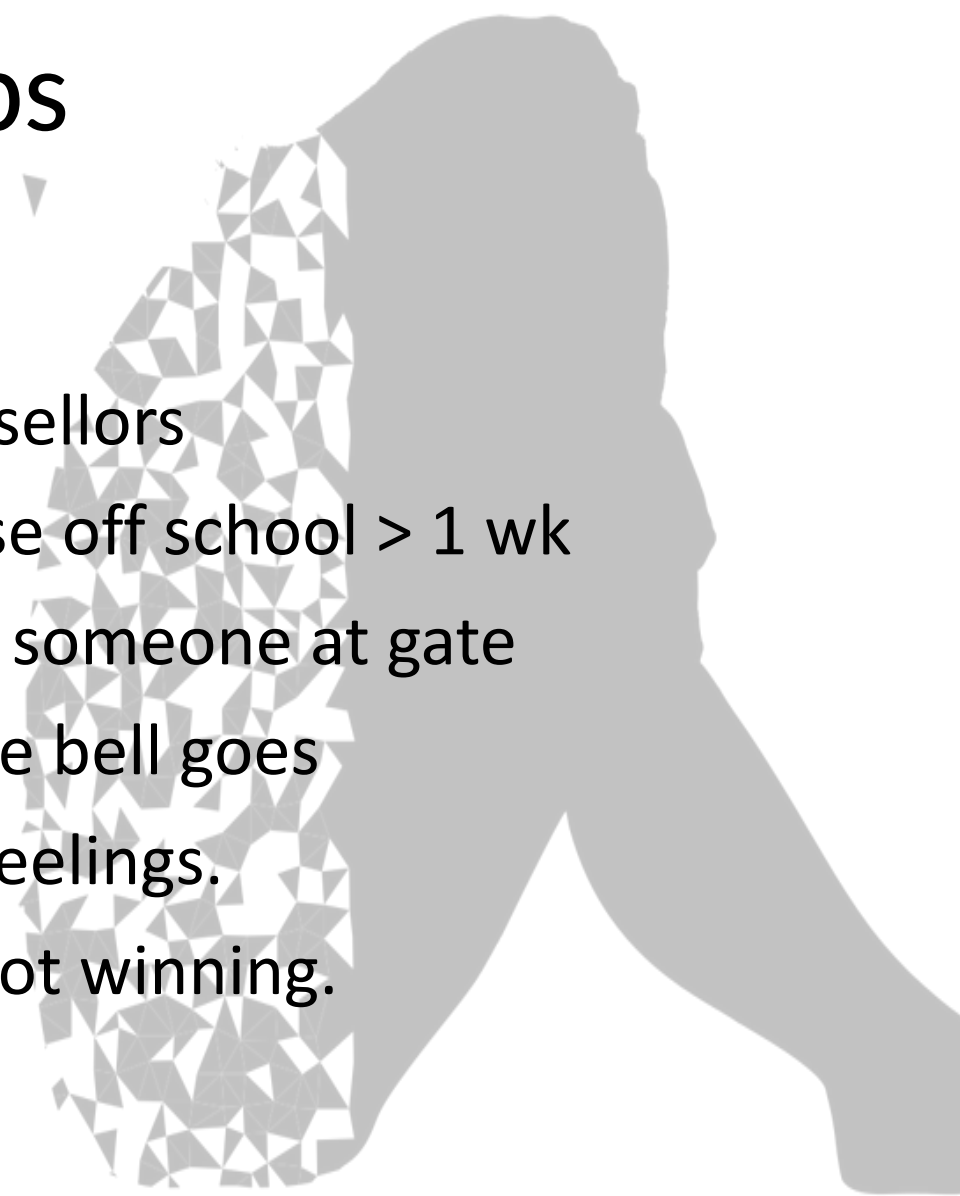
- Slow breathing exercises
- (mindfulness/ meditation/) routinely (smiling mind)
- Normalizing body feelings
- **Don't allow kid to avoid.**
- “Sharks or dolphin thoughts”
- Sushi train of thinking
- What can I see?
- Fiddle toys, bravery wombat.





# School Refusal tips


- Need team approach
- Discuss with school/counsellors
- Graded approach for those off school > 1 wk
- Buddy system of meeting someone at gate
- Plan of where to go before bell goes
- Normalize anxious body feelings.
- Psychological support if not winning.





# TREATMENT FOR ANXIETY IS DOING

- Avoidance makes anxiety much worse in long term
- Doing builds capacity, having capacity means I can cope
- Eg graded exposure to talking in front of class
- Graded exposure to more adult tasks, shopping, phone etiquette, house jobs
- Graded exposure to separation/sleepovers/school camps etc

A young girl with curly hair is reading a colorful book. The background is softly blurred, showing a plant and a window. The text is overlaid on the image.

Head to Health mental health support

• **1800 595 212**

- Good Books
- “The anxious generation” by Jonathon Haidt
- “Big bag of worries” Virginia Ironside (for kids)