

Untangling Anxiety For Parents and Caregivers



Dealing with the Stresses of Modern Parenting

- You are not alone
- You are doing the best you can
- Being a strong leader will help your children navigate difficult emotions
- It's OK to have strong boundaries



This is helpful when temporary, healthy and adaptive

The Stress Response

A physical and emotional response to a real **or perceived** threat tied to a specific situation.

Characterized by feelings of apprehension, worried thoughts, and physical symptoms

Alerts us to danger and prepares body by triggering the fight-flight-freeze response



Big Eyes

Dizziness

Sweating

Headache

Can't talk

Dry Mouth

Lump in your throat

Clenched fist

Cold hands and feet

Tingling

Butterflies in or sore stomach

How Anxiety Can Impact The Family: When To Get Extra Help

Distress
Disruption
Duration
Development



Strategies For Coping with Worry and Anxiety

- Mindfulness
- Emotional Literacy
- Let fun times in
- Lighthouse Parenting
- Take care of yourself

Hope in Neuroplasticity!!!



Distress Tolerance and Acceptance: How to Respond to “What if” Moments

Giving Information Versus Accomodating Reassurance Seeking

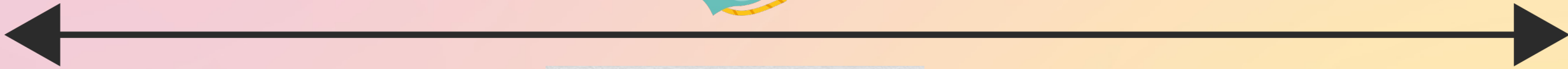
There are things we know and things we don't know.

We know: _____

We don't know: _____

And we can handle not knowing everything. Make the unfamiliar familiar AND teach about tolerating the unknowm

Mindfulness



Past



Future



Mindful Parenting



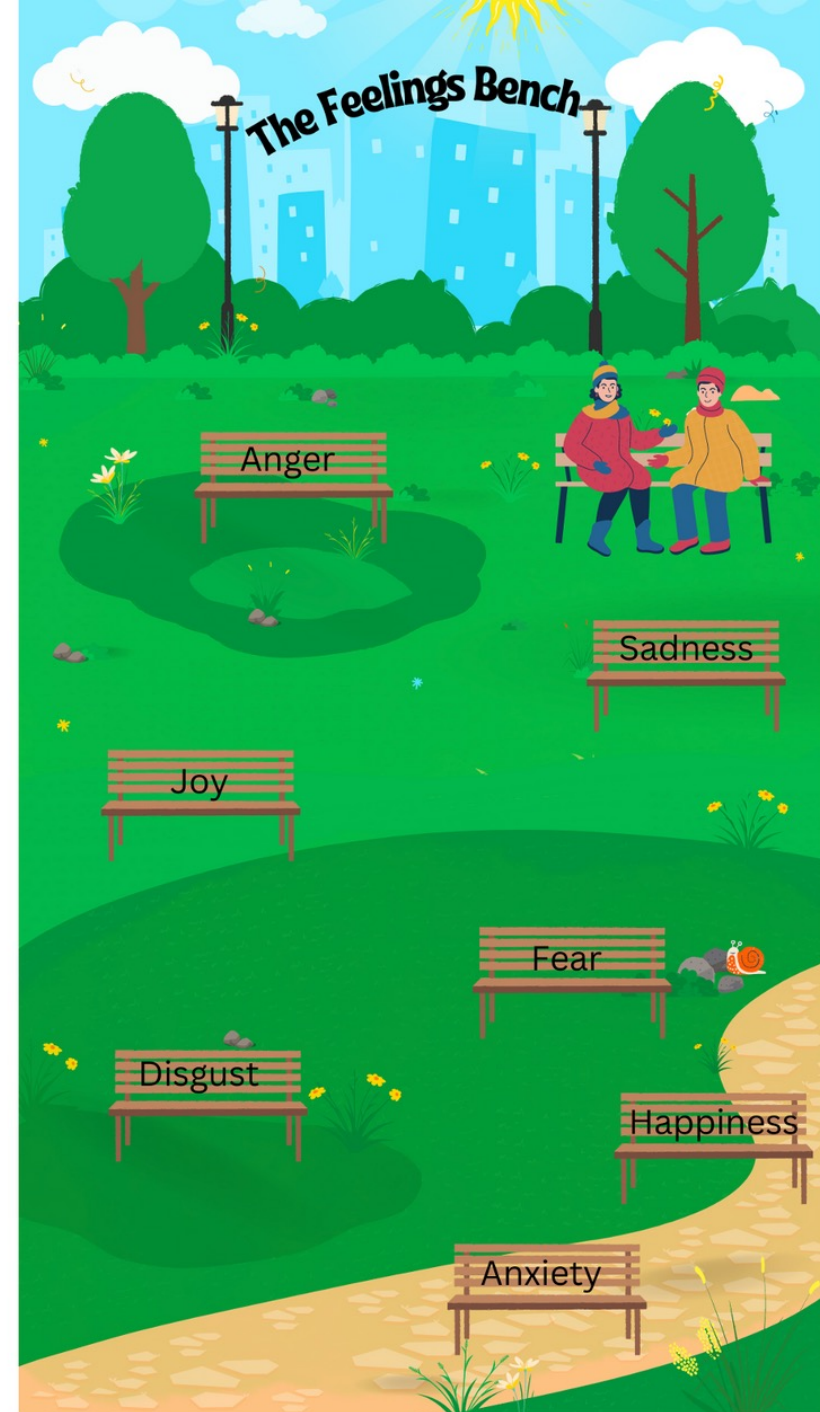
- Being fully present with your children, free from distractions or judgment, and an open mind.
- We are attentive, aware, kind, and understanding in our interactions with youngsters. We learn to take care of one thing in this moment, and another thing in the next. Moment by moment. Task by task.
- Setting an ongoing intention to be present at the given moment. This presence can take many forms: it may look like paying attention to your child, noticing your own feelings when you're in conflict with them, pausing before responding, and listening to your child's viewpoints, even if they differ from your own.
- Pausing so that you can be attuned to your child's deeper needs and respond to them in an appropriate and loving way.
- We create an opportunity to be more responsive and more productive, as well as being less in auto-pilot mode and less overwhelmed.

Emotional Literacy

Try to get granular about feelings. Is this excitement? Worry? Let's talk about it. You know your own body and mind.

Big Idea: Big Feelings Come and Go

1. Use the language of parts
2. Say "of course you feel _____"
3. Say "Hello" to the feeling and hang around with it.
4. Feelings are internal and biological and using externalizing language helps process them.



Emotional Literacy

Nervous means new. Nervous doesn't mean bad
We don't want to show our kids, verbally or non-verbally, that we are afraid of some of the harder emotions.

You don't have to make your kid feel not nervous or not anything. Just acceptance.

"There's something about _____ that doesn't feel good to you.
And I believe you."

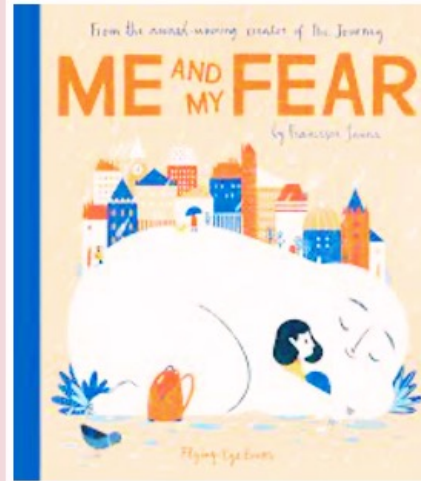


@THEMINDGEEK

IN IRISH WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT EMOTION, YOU DON'T SAY, 'I AM SAD'. YOU'D SAY, 'SADNESS IS ON ME' - 'TÁ BRÓN ORM'.

AND I LOVE THAT BECAUSE THERE'S AN IMPLICATION OF NOT IDENTIFYING YOURSELF WITH THE EMOTION FULLY. I AM NOT SAD, IT'S JUST THAT SADNESS IS ON ME FOR A WHILE. SOMETHING ELSE WILL BE ON ME ANOTHER TIME, AND THAT'S A GOOD THING TO RECOGNISE.

P. Ó TUAMA



Let Fun Times In

Make it fun!

Roses and Thorns

Two truths and a lie

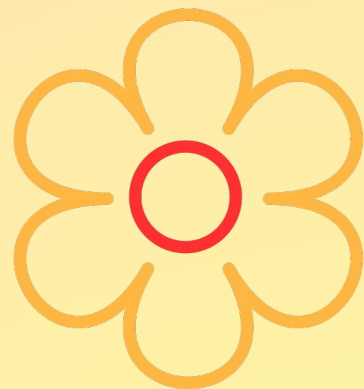
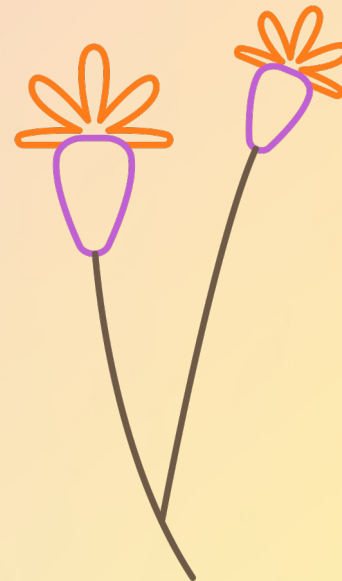
Magical storytelling

Weird thing of the day

Joy and Gratitude Practices

Acts of Kindness

Movement



Lighthouse Parenting

Curiosity

Safe Harbour

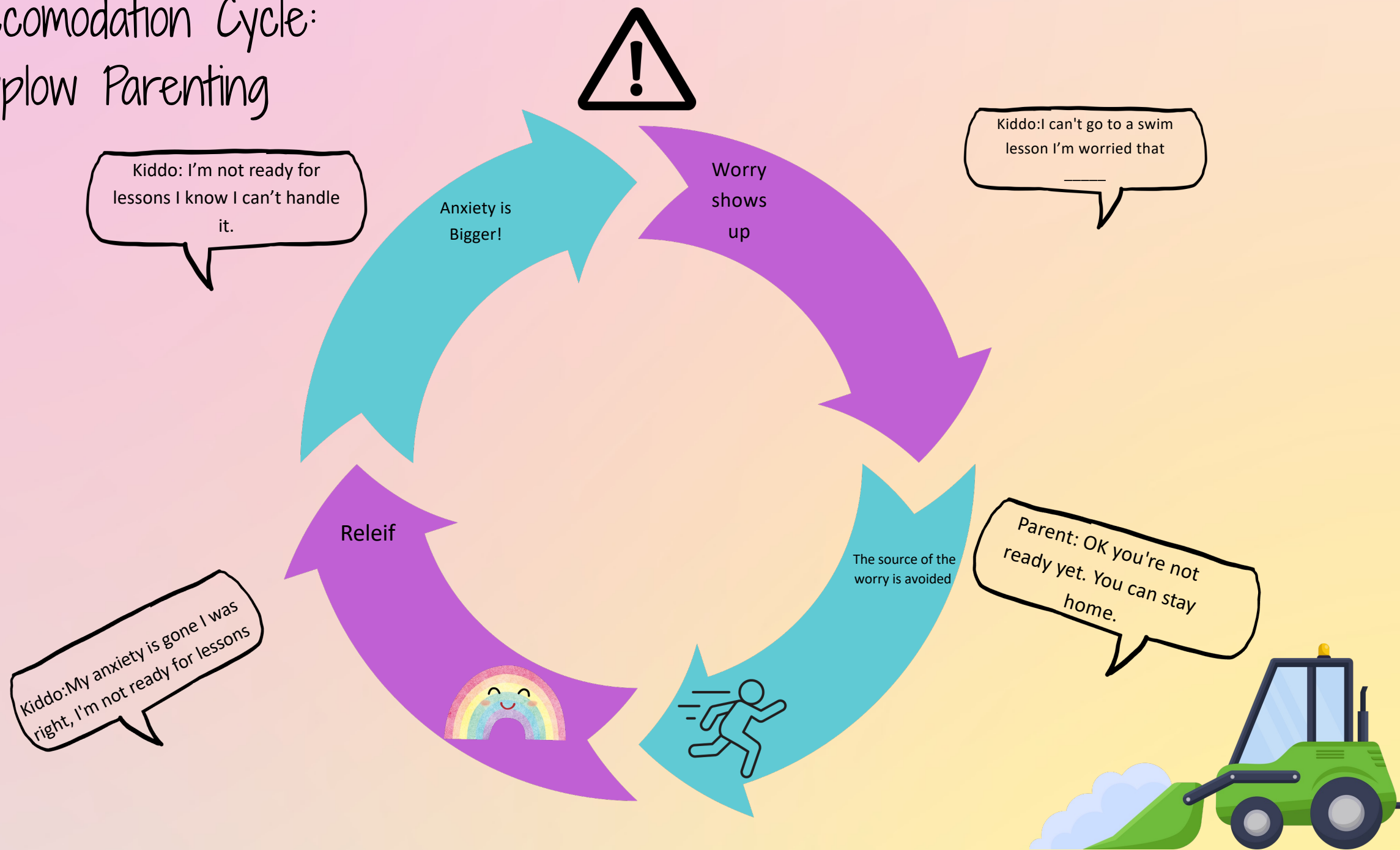
Children look to you for guidance

Boundaries

Strong Leadership



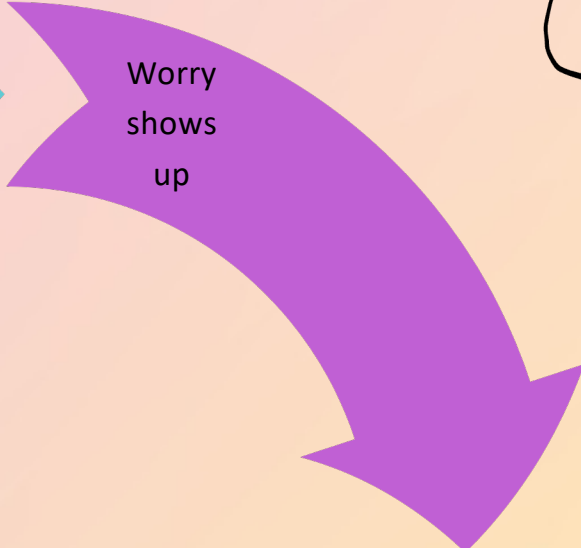
The Accomodation Cycle: Snowplow Parenting



Breaking The Accomodation Cycle: Lighthouse Parenting



Kiddo: I can't go to my lesson I'm worried that

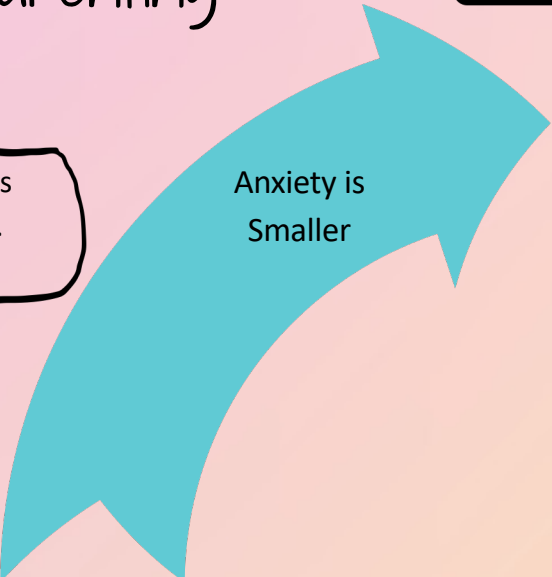


Worry shows up

Parent: I know your scared let's talk about it. I know that you can handle it.

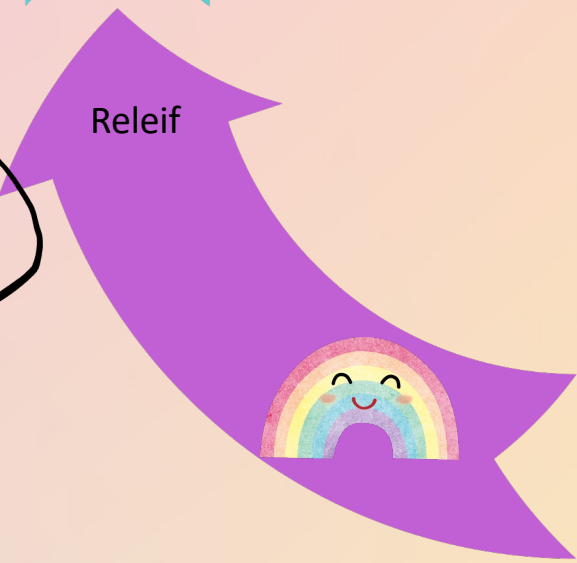


The source of the worry is faced



Anxiety is Smaller

Kiddo: I'm ready for lessons and I know I can handle it.



Releif

Kiddo: My anxiety got smaller, mom was right, I am ready for lessons and I can handle fear.



Practical Talking Points in Moments of Higher Anxiety: Supportive Statements = Empathy Plus Confidence

"I hear that you are nervous about _____. I believe you. I am 100% sure you can handle it."

" You don't want to go to _____ I get it. I believe you. I also know that you can do this. Let's talk about what you're going to say and do on the first day. Let's role play."

"The idea of _____ is really scary for you. I believe you. I also believe that you can handle it. Every person has to go through uncomfortable moments. Let's step in, feel uncomfortable and get through it. The more you do it, the easier it gets."



Self-care: Strategies to Cope with Your Own Anxiety

Hot Cocoa Breathing

Stop when you notice emotions arising

Take a step back

Observe what's happening

Proceed to mindfully appraise the situation in a new way

Acknowledge "I notice I am thinking about/ feeling_____"

Validate "It makes sense that _____"

Permit "I give myself permission to _____"

Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion is related to happiness, well being, a decrease in stress, depression and a increase in connection with others.
- Take 3 steps towards self-compassion – notice feelings, remind yourself that raising children is a big job, and be kind to yourself.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_3ybiY_Do8 -
- Dr. Becky and Dr. Kristin Neff talk about Parent Self-Compassion



Community Resources

Family Doctor
School Counsellor

FamilySmart - <https://familysmart.ca/>

Kelty Mental Health - <https://keltymentalhealth.ca/>

Anxiety Canada - <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>

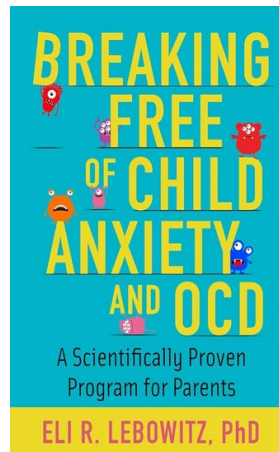
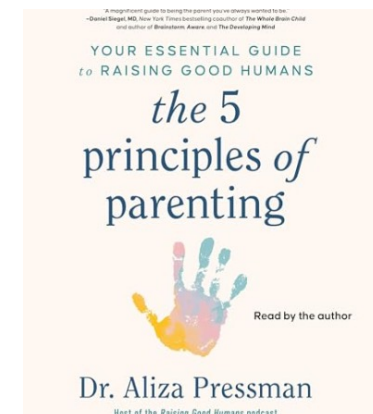
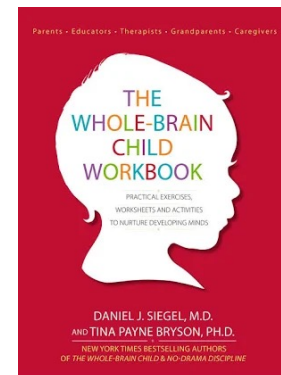
Greater Good Magazine - <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

Podcasts:

Flusterclux. (Dr. Lynn Lyons)

Ask Lisa (Dr. Lisa Damour)

Good inside With Dr. Becky (Dr. Becky Kennedy)





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