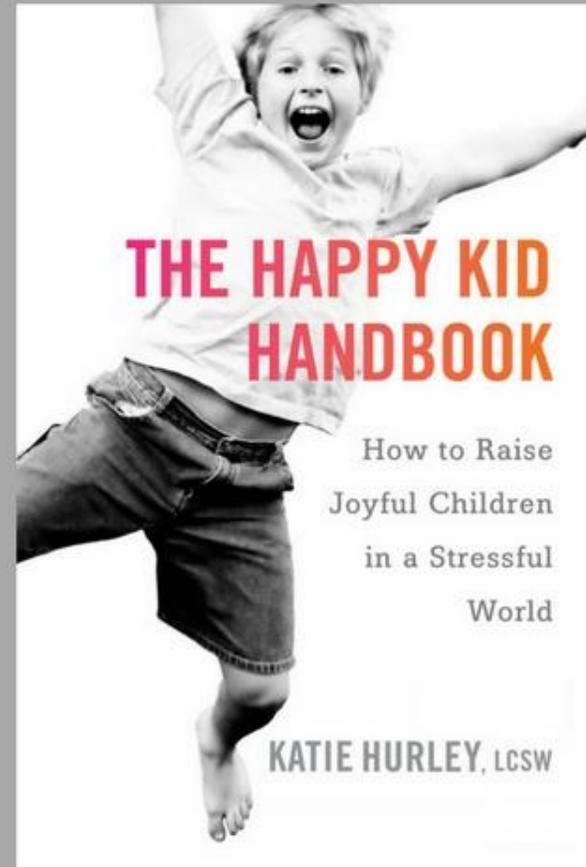
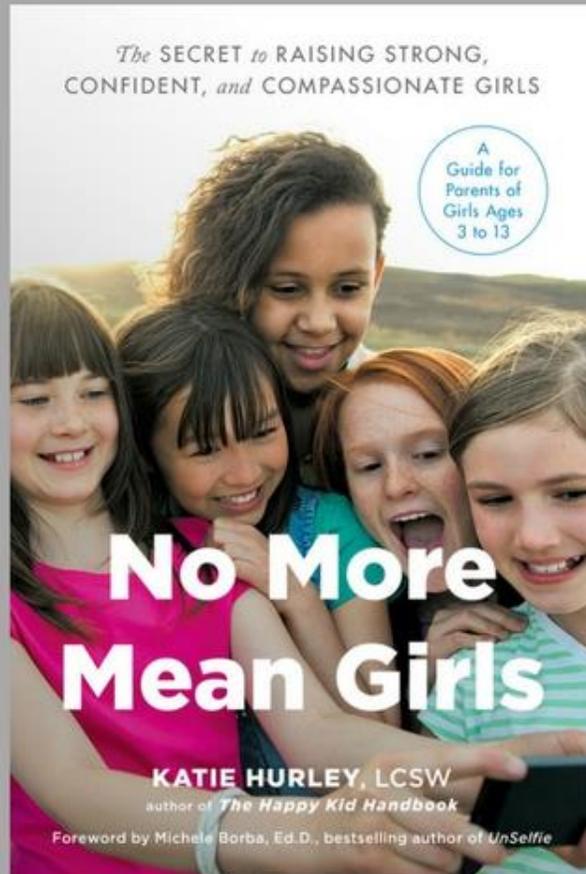


# How to Raise Kind, Compassionate, and Resilient Kids

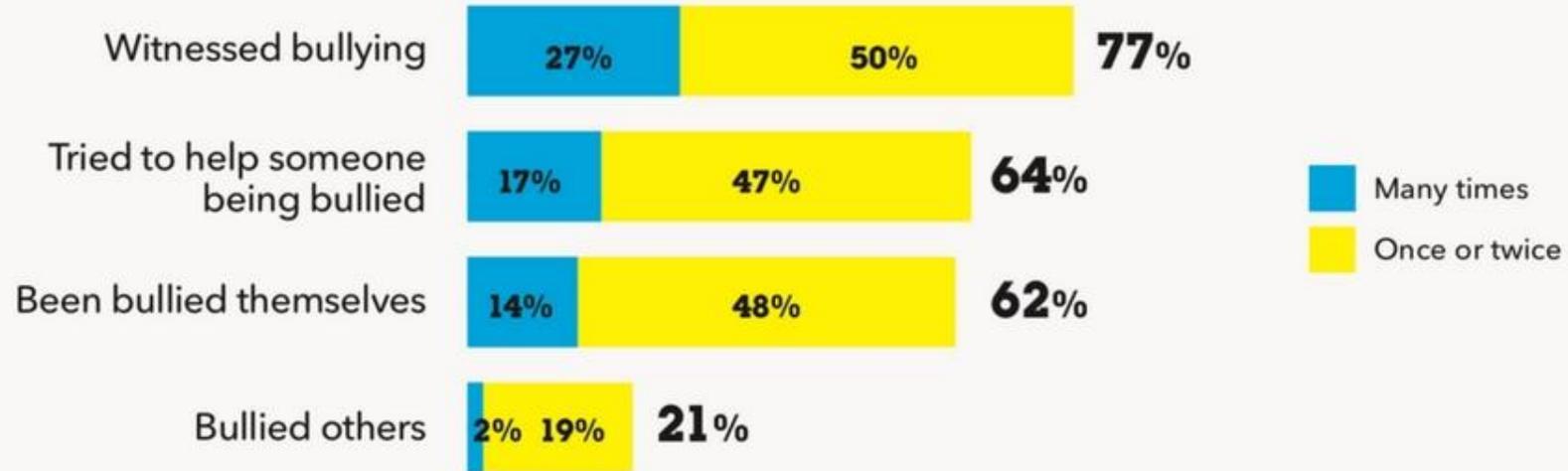


“The only way we will survive is by being kind. The only way we can get by in this world is through the help we receive from others. No one can do it alone, no matter how great the machines are.”

— Amy Poehler, *Yes Please*

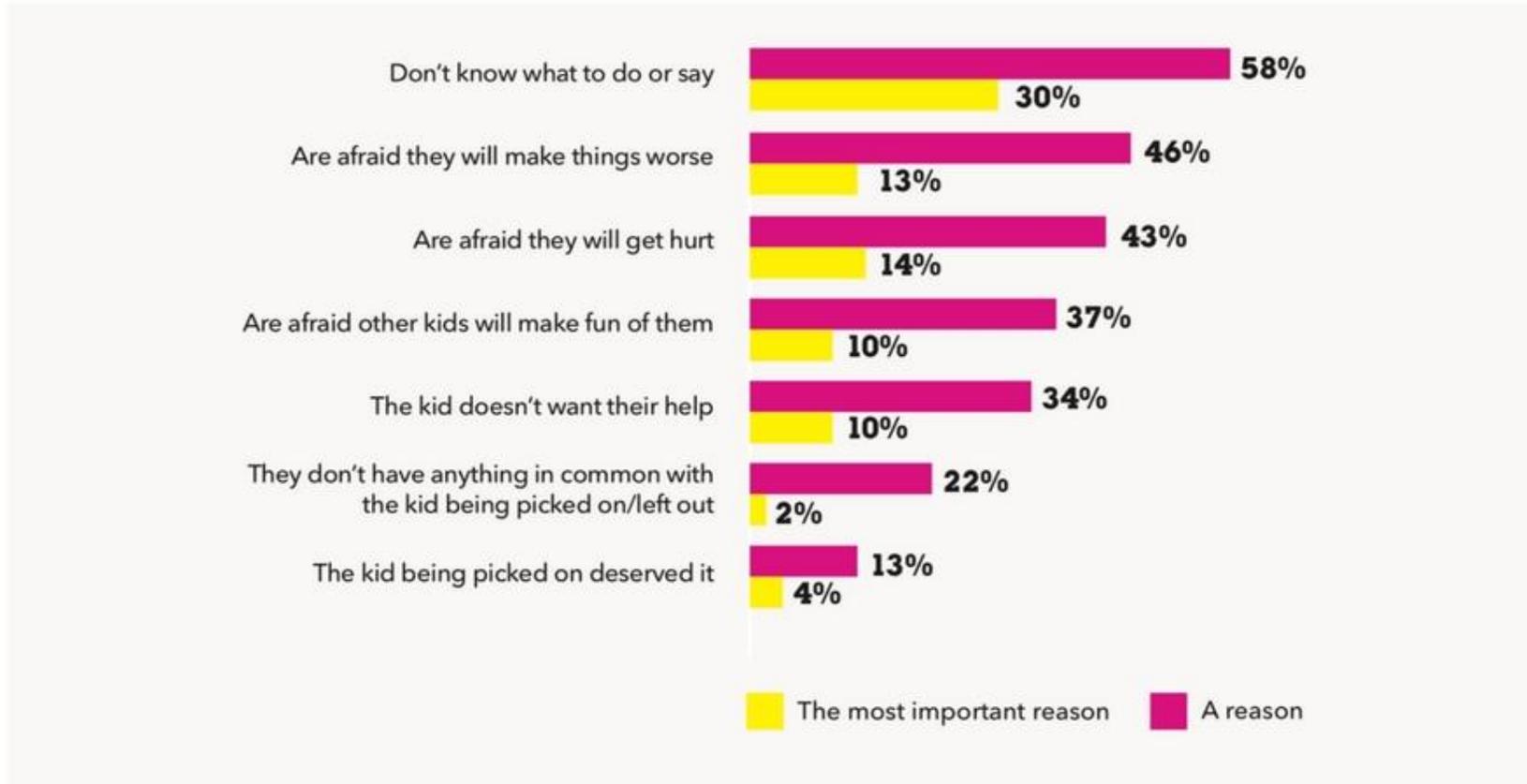
## EXPERIENCE WITH BULLYING

PERCENT OF 9- TO 11-YEAR-OLDS WHO SAY THEY HAVE EVER:



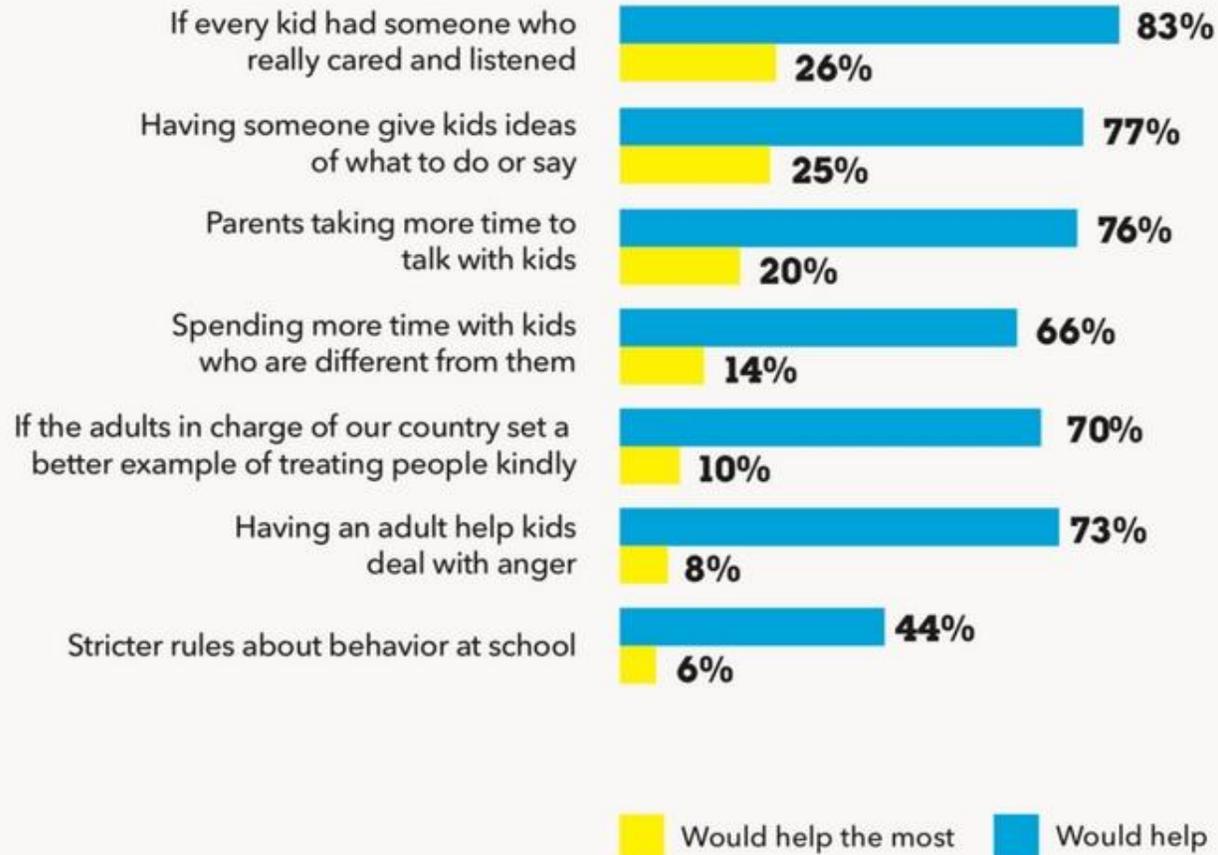
## REASONS KIDS SOMETIMES DON'T HELP OTHERS

AMONG 9- TO 11-YEAR-OLDS WHO HAVE SEEN KIDS BEING PICKED ON OR LEFT OUT, REASONS THEY SOMETIMES DON'T HELP:



## WHAT WOULD HELP KIDS BE KINDER

PERCENT OF 9- TO 11-YEAR-OLDS WHO SAY EACH IDEA WOULD HELP KIDS THEIR AGE BE KINDER:



**Gossip**

**Rumors**

**Exclusion**

**Cyberbullying**

**Alliances**

**Taunting**

**Public humiliation**

**WHAT IS RELATIONAL  
AGGRESSION?**

# Primary components of relational aggression:

- Imbalance of power
- Intent to harm – emotionally
- **PATTERN OF BEHAVIOR**
- Behavior is often “hidden”
- Can include comments, rumors, use of technology, notes, non-verbal behavior, exclusion, and public humiliation
- Hot spots = recess, lunch, passing periods, before and after school

# Public humiliation is used to push other kids down on the social hierarchy

- Cruel comments about appearance followed by “it’s a joke!”
- Using demeaning gestures behind another child’s back (pretending to cry, eye rolls, faces)
- Taunts or insults in public places to get a laugh (lunch, recess, hallways)
- Making a joke of hiding personal property
- Leaving notes or using technology to make cruel jokes and get others in on the joke

# Consequences of Relational Aggression

- School absences
- Depression
- Anxiety\*\*\*
- Suicidal thoughts
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Poor academic performance
- Behavioral problems
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse

# Signs of Relational Aggression

- Anxious or nervous behaviors, including regressed behavior
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints
- Often reports being alone at lunch/recess
- Appears withdrawn
- Changes in academic performance
- Acts out in school or at home, might turn the tables and bully others
- Talks about being hated or having no friends
- Talks about death or engages in self-harm
- Sleep disturbance
- Changes in eating habits

# Is my child the “mean” kid?

- Overly controlling
- Forms clubs and excludes others (more than once)
- Uses threats to control friends or siblings
- Secretive
- Relies on “JK” or “just joking” after dishing out insults
- Focused on popularity/status
- Frequently changes BFFs
- Ditches former playmates
- Lacks respect for adults
- Entitled
- Has a Finsta/slime account or other secret social media accounts
- Hyper-competitive with other kids
- KIDS SWITCH ROLES!

# What can parents do?

- Uncover the hidden problems
- Listen
- Teach empathy
- Teach coping skills
- Work with the school
- Teach “upstander” behavior

# Steps for parents

Listen

Empathize

Document

Contact the school

# Make helping a habit

Research shows that, on average, it takes 66 days to make and break a habit.

*European Journal of Social Psychology, 2010*

In just over two months, you can raise  
"upstanders"

Refute the rumor

Meet a negative with a  
positive

Say something kind to  
the victim

Get adult help

WHAT  
CAN KIDS  
DO?

Never underestimate the power of soft skills.



Katie Hurley, LCSW

# Google Study

- Results show 7 top characteristics of successful employees include “soft skills”
- Being a good coach
- Communication and listening skills
- Perspective taking – having insights into others
- Empathy
- Critical thinking skills
- Problem solving skills
- Making connections across complex ideas
- STEM skills = dead last in importance!

I see you.

# Making Caring Common

- The Harvard University Graduate School of Education surveyed 10,000 students
- 80% say achievement or happiness is their top priority
- 20% saying caring for others is their top priority
- 96% of parents *say* that moral character in children is “very important, if not essential”
- But 81% of youth think that achievement or happiness is their parents’ top priority

“College kids today demonstrate 40% less empathy than their counterparts of 20 or 30 years ago.”

-University of Michigan Institute for Social Research



# Risks of Raising Empathy Deficient Kids

- 30% of middle school students report being bullied
- 50% of girls, grades 7-12, reported at least one episode of sexual harassment in 2010-2011
- 50% of high school students admit to cheating
- 57% of high school students agree with the following statement: “In the real world, successful people do what they have to do to win, even if others consider it cheating.”
- 48% of students are regularly exposed to relational aggression
- Kids ages 11-15 are exposed to 33 acts of RA in a typical week

# Empathy Matters

- Make independent decisions – more self-confident
- Avoid negative peer pressure
- Better academic performance
- Better social interactions
- Happiness is directly related to empathy

# When does empathy emerge?

- Age two: soothe you by bringing you a favorite toy or blanket
- Preschoolers might become upset when another child or an adult is upset or want to save every animal
- School age children begin to understand the feelings around them and want to help
- Tweens and teens stand up for others

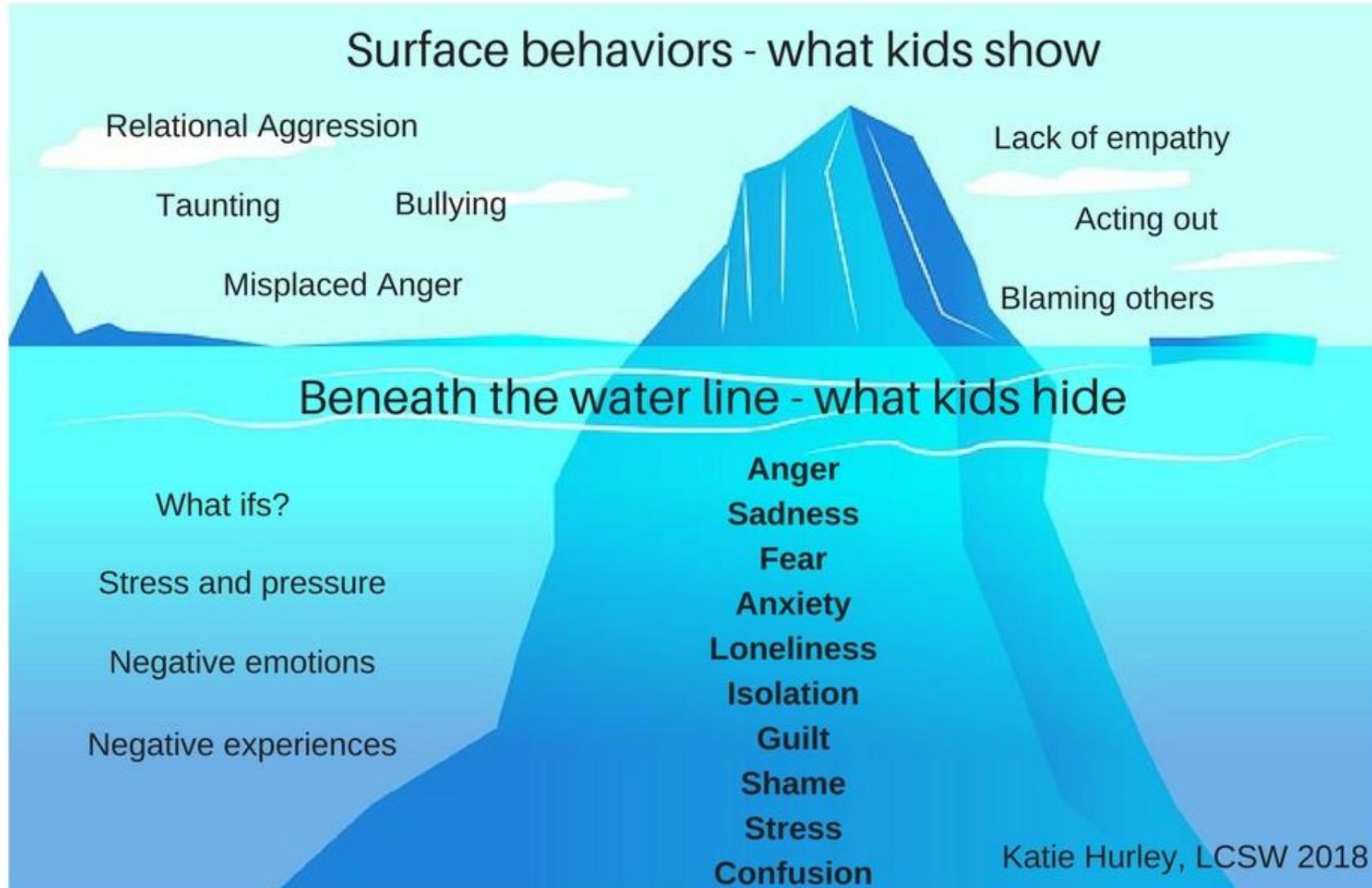
# Empathic kids:

- Aware of their own feelings
- Can read facial cues
- Can distinguish their own feelings from others
- Can anticipate how others might feel
- Understand how their behavior affects others
- Act as caretakers
- Are more aware of the feelings in the room

# Empathy deficient kids:

- Difficulty reading the feelings of others (facial cues)
- Difficulty understanding how others feel when they show signs of distress
- Difficulty expressing how others might feel
- Fail to anticipate the reactions of others
- Don't understand how their behavior affects others
- Put their feelings and needs above others

# Iceberg of Emotions



# How to nurture empathy:

- Model it
- Change makers
- Play social detectives
- Start a gratitude jar
- Family community service
- Plant a garden

# Barriers to empathy development

- Achievement pressure
- Toxic competition
- Success-driven culture
- Fast-tracking childhood
- Lack of free play
- Insufficient downtime
- Messages at home, in the media, in the community
- Child and adolescent stress

# Childhood Anxiety

- Stress and anxiety are on the rise among kids
- 2.6 million American children & adolescents diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression (*Journal of Dev & Beh Ped, 2018*)
- 31.9% of 13-18 year olds have mild to moderate anxiety (National Institute of Mental Health)
- Girls (38%) are more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety than boys (26%)
- Median age of onset = 11 years old
- 2015 study found 22.2% preschool participants met criteria for anxiety

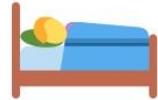
# Child Mind Institute Data 2018

- 117 million youth worldwide have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder
- 30% of children and adolescents meet the criteria for an anxiety disorder
- 80% never get help = TREATMENT GAP!

# Causes of anxiety

- Genetics
- Environmental factors
- Early life adversity
- Psychological factors (bullying, violence, etc.)
- Over-scheduling
- Insufficient sleep
- Lack of downtime and insufficient free play
- Social pressure, academic pressure, parental pressure

# What does anxiety look like in kids?



Physical complaints:

Headaches, stomachaches, muscle aches, chest pain, racing heart, dizziness, hair pulling, difficulty swallowing, "lump in throat"



Seeking validation, asking the same questions over and over, clingy, concerned about safety



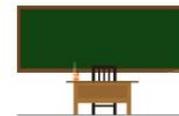
Sadness, frequent crying, overwhelmed, lonely



Anger, irritability, low frustration tolerance, verbally aggressive

**Childhood anxiety is sneaky. It doesn't always look like worry.**

Katie Hurley, LCSW



SCHOOL REFUSAL



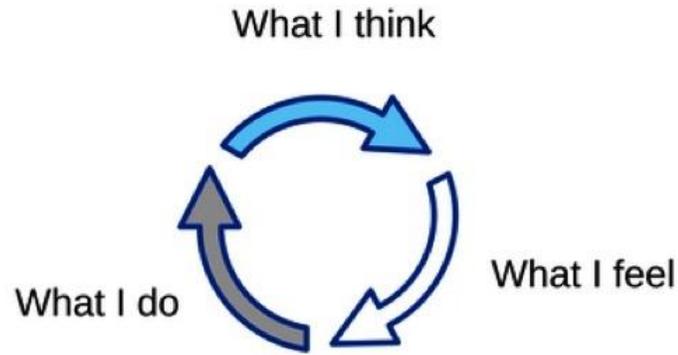
Frequent meltdowns or tantrums



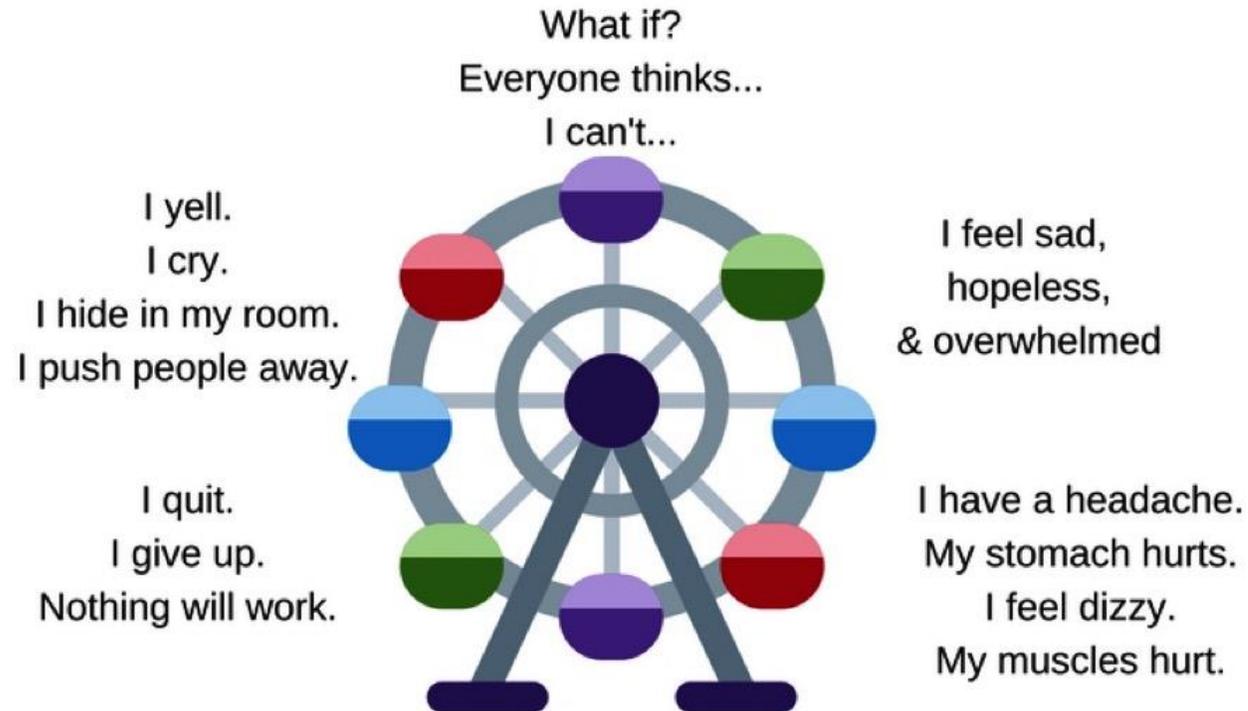
Social isolation, avoidance, procrastination,



Fatigue, "I'm just tired", exhaustion



## The worry cycle can make kids feel out of control



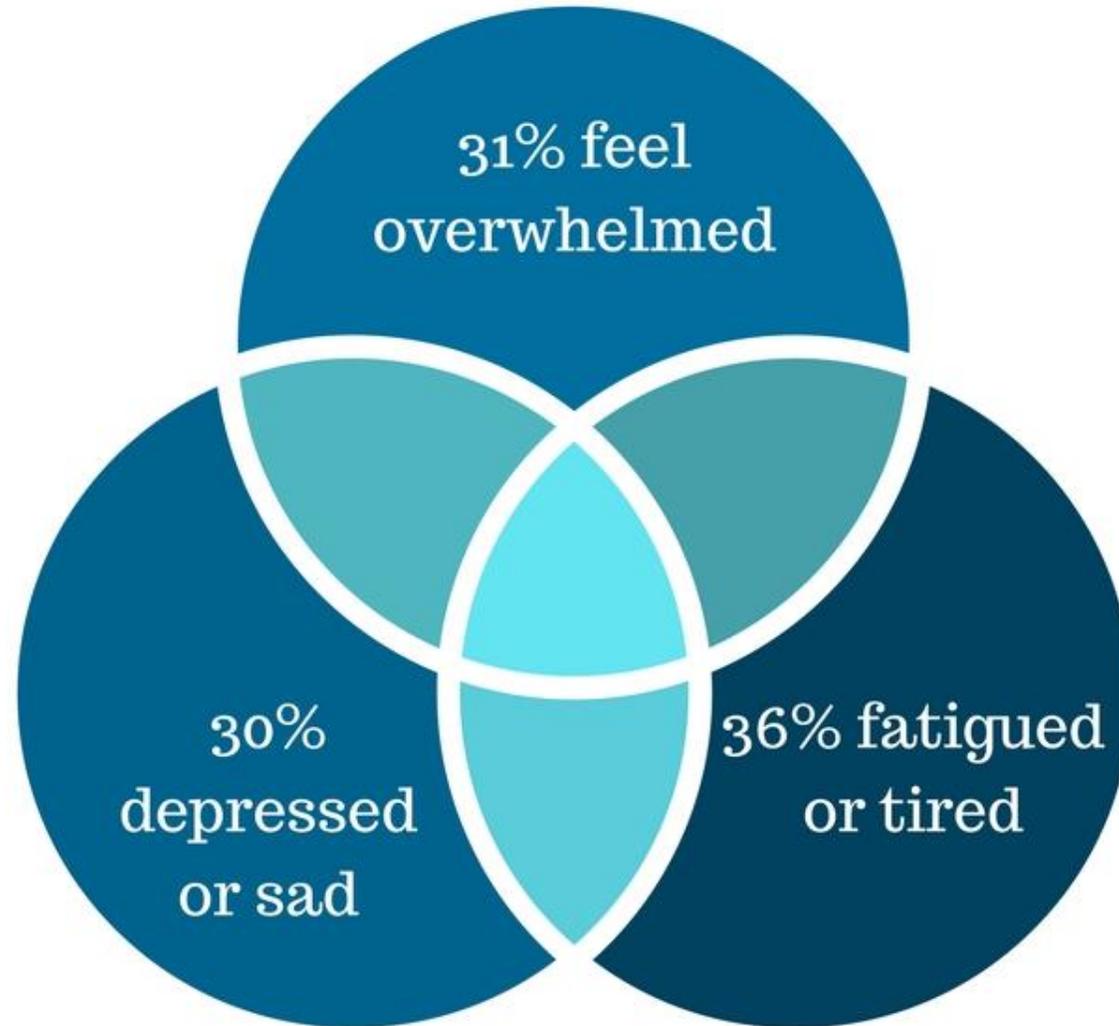
# Potential consequences of anxiety

- Poor school performance
- Poor social relationships
- Poor family relationships
- Depression
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Substance abuse

# Potential consequences of high stress levels

- Emotional responses
- Physical responses
- Impacts peer relationships
- Impacts family relationships
- Poor school attendance
- Poor school performance

# How stress affects teens



2014 APA Stress in America Survey

# Symptoms of stress:

- Stomachaches and/or headaches (including migraines)
- Sleep disturbance
- Nightmares or night terrors
- Changes in eating habits
- Difficulty concentrating
- Behavioral changes

# Triggers of stress:

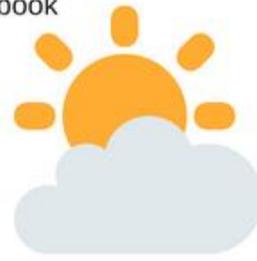
- OVERSCHEDULING!
- Separation anxiety
- Medical issues
- Family problems & parental stress
- Internal pressure
- Sibling issues
- Social problems
- Academic stress
- Pressured beyond developmental level

# Reducing childhood stress:

- Revisit the schedule
- Get back to basics (sleep, eat, play)
- Normalize it – talk about it
- Teach body mapping
- Increase quality time
- Teach relaxation skills
- Teach mindfulness (Mind Up & Stop, Think, Breathe)
- Journaling
- Stress free zone



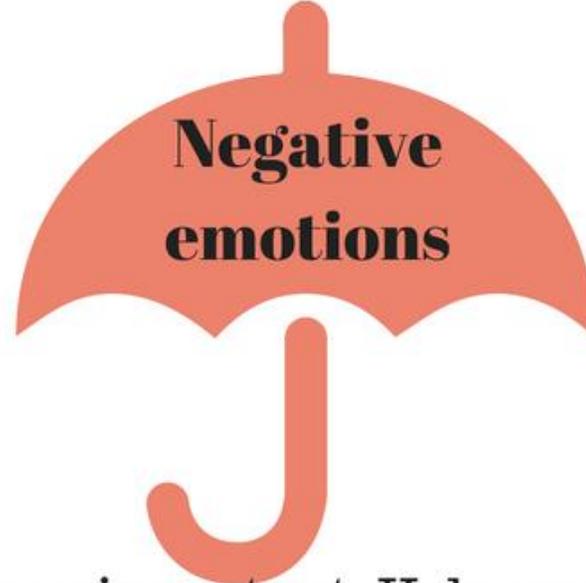
Angry  
Frustrated  
Irritable  
Jealous  
Annoyed



Confused  
Anxious  
Scared  
Worried  
Unsure



Sad  
Lonely  
Depressed  
Rejected  
Alone



All emotions are important. Help your kids learn to verbalize and process their feelings. Even the negative ones.

# Help Your Child Work Through Anxious Thoughts



I think: Label worries and fears

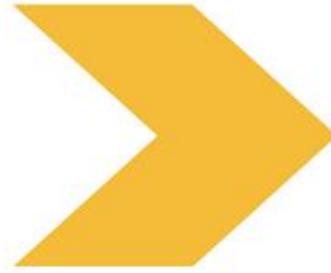


I feel: List emotional and physical symptoms



I can: Choose a strategy (breathe the rainbow, self-talk, progressive muscle relaxation).

# Flip it!



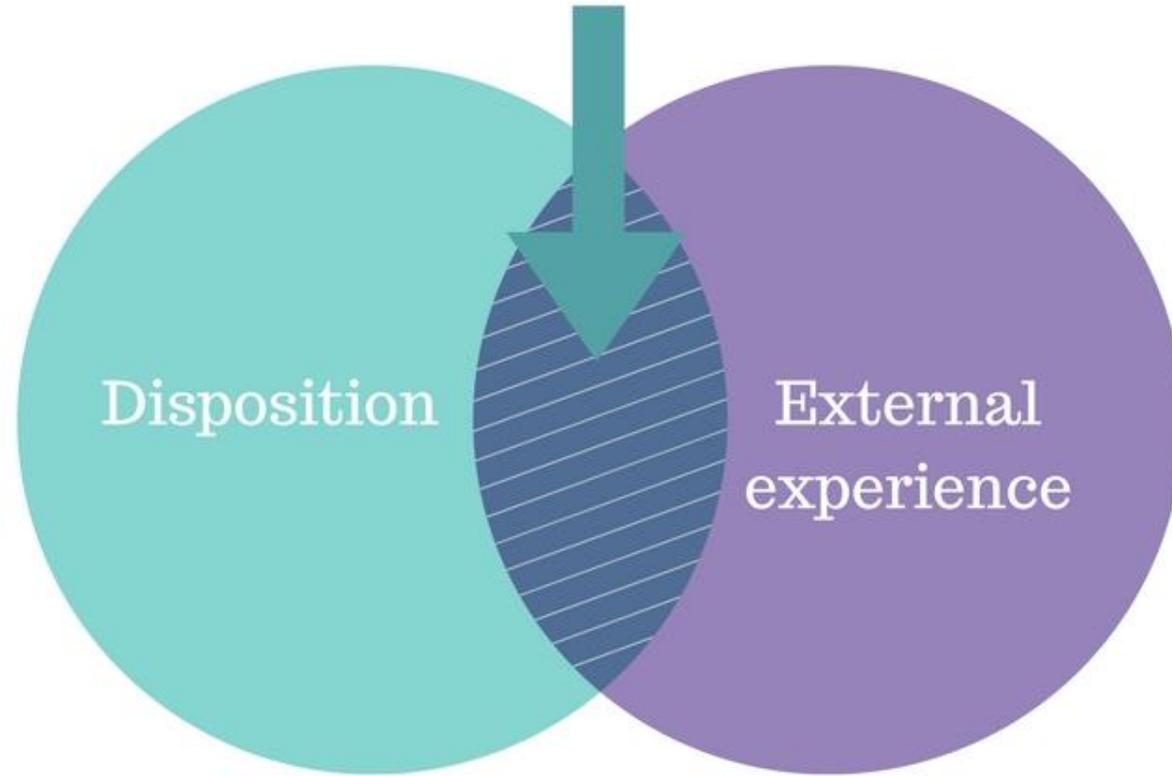
- State the negative thought.
- Write down the negative thought.
- Write down three positive thoughts to counter the negative thought.



# What is resilience?

- Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.
- Research shows that kids can thrive despite facing adversity.

# What makes kids resilient?



- Positive Relationships
- Adaptive capacities
- Positive experiences

# Resist the urge to fix!

- Empathize
- Listen more than you speak
- Ask questions about fun stuff
- Stop achievement praise
- Spend time together
- Stop focusing on grades, sports scores, and other evaluations
- Tell stories about when you were young
- Highlight your failures and missteps

# Raising compassionate leaders

- It's not your job to toughen up your kid
- Teach assertiveness
- Show compassion – look for the roses, not the thorns
- Build confidence
- Promote teamwork and helping others
- Encourage big ideas and passion
- Acknowledge your mistakes

# Teach social responsibility

- Talk about social media
- Watch your own behavior online – 3-minute rule
- Stop over-sharing! (\*Research shows kids think over-sharing on Facebook is embarrassing and wish parents had rules)
- Practice “upstander” behavior
- Talk about being change agents
- Empower socially responsible thinking

# Bring back kindness

- Kindness should be deliberate, not random
- Small acts of kindness build kindness muscles
- Model kindness
- Encourage relationships with grandparents, aunts & uncles, and faraway friends
- Pick up the phone, write letters, make gifts

# Practice caring

- Homework helper
- Mother's helper
- Read to little kids
- Pet animals at a shelter
- Carry groceries for a neighbor
- Visit an elderly friend or neighbor
- Help a friend or sibling with chores
- Use active listening skills

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