

# All About Anxiety

*Olde Providence Elementary School PTA  
January 2020*

Presented by: Taylor Shirkey, SSP



# HELLO MY NAME IS:

**Taylor Shirkey** - *School Psychologist*

Email: [taylorf.shirkey@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:taylorf.shirkey@cms.k12.nc.us)

Website: <http://www.schoolpsychfilepile.weebly.com>

- BS - Wofford College
- Masters & Specialist Degrees - Winthrop University



# Objectives

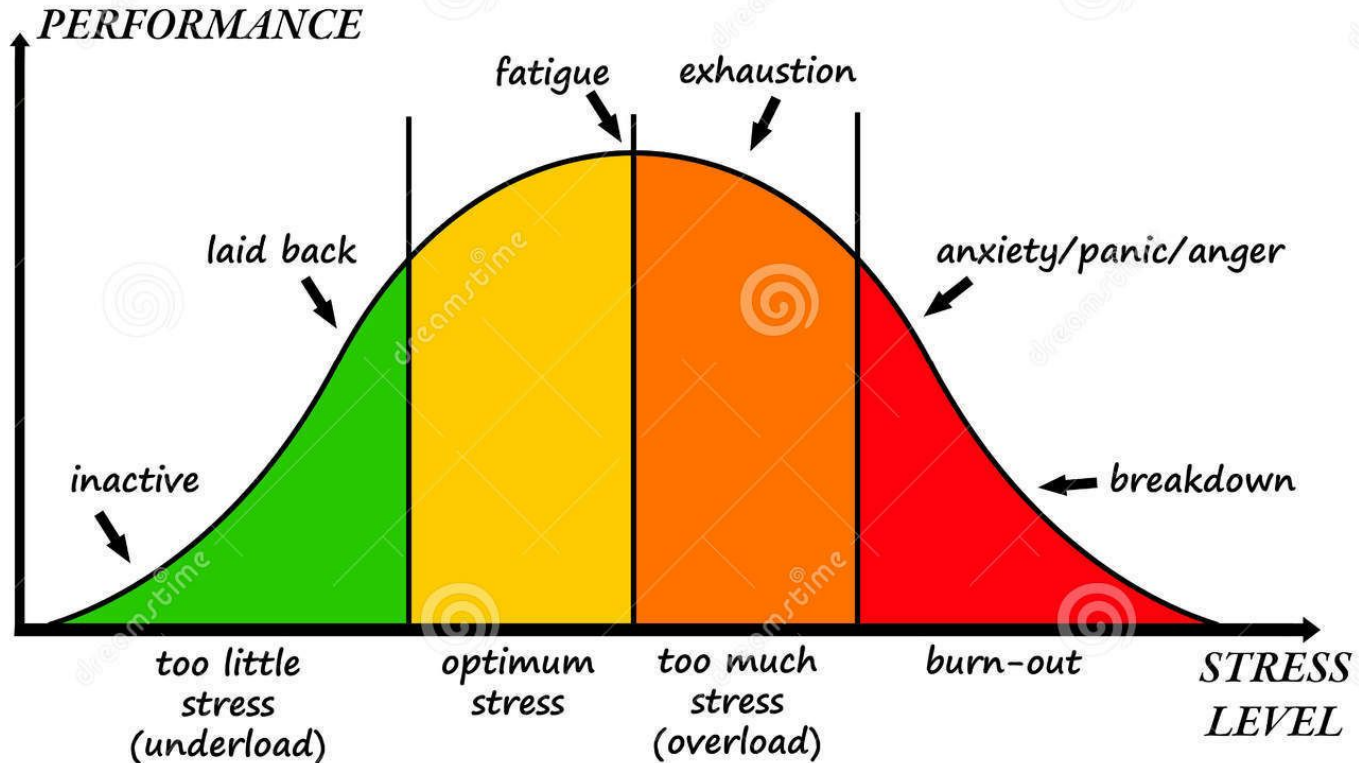
What are we talking about today?

- Anxiety
  - Definition
  - What is normal?
  - Developmental Progression
  - 3 Levels
- When Anxiety is a Problem
- Anxiety Disorders
  - Types of Anxiety Disorders
  - Epidemiology
  - Anxiety in Kids
- How to Help
- Q&A
- Resources

# Developmentally Appropriate

1. **Infancy:** fear of strangers; growing ability to differentiate familiar-unfamiliar faces
2. **Early childhood:** separation anxiety emerges (emerges at age 1, improves by age 3); fears of big dogs, spiders, monsters, the dark
3. **Elementary school:** real word dangers—storms, burglars, illness, vomiting
4. **Middle school:** Worries about social status, social acceptance, academic and athletic performance
5. **High school:** Social acceptance, finding their niche; big world issues—environment, future success

# STRESS CURVE



# When does anxiety become a problem?

| <u>Normal/ Helpful</u> |     | <u>Problem</u>   |
|------------------------|-----|------------------|
| • Reasonable           | vs. | • Excessive      |
| • Productive           | vs. | • Detrimental    |
| • Manageable           | vs. | • Uncontrollable |
| • Mobilizing           | vs. | • Paralyzing     |
| • Specific             | vs. | • Pervasive      |
| • Time-limited         | vs. | • Chronic        |
| • Age-matched          | vs. | • Age-mismatched |



# Anxiety Disorder Overview

## Anxiety-Based Problems

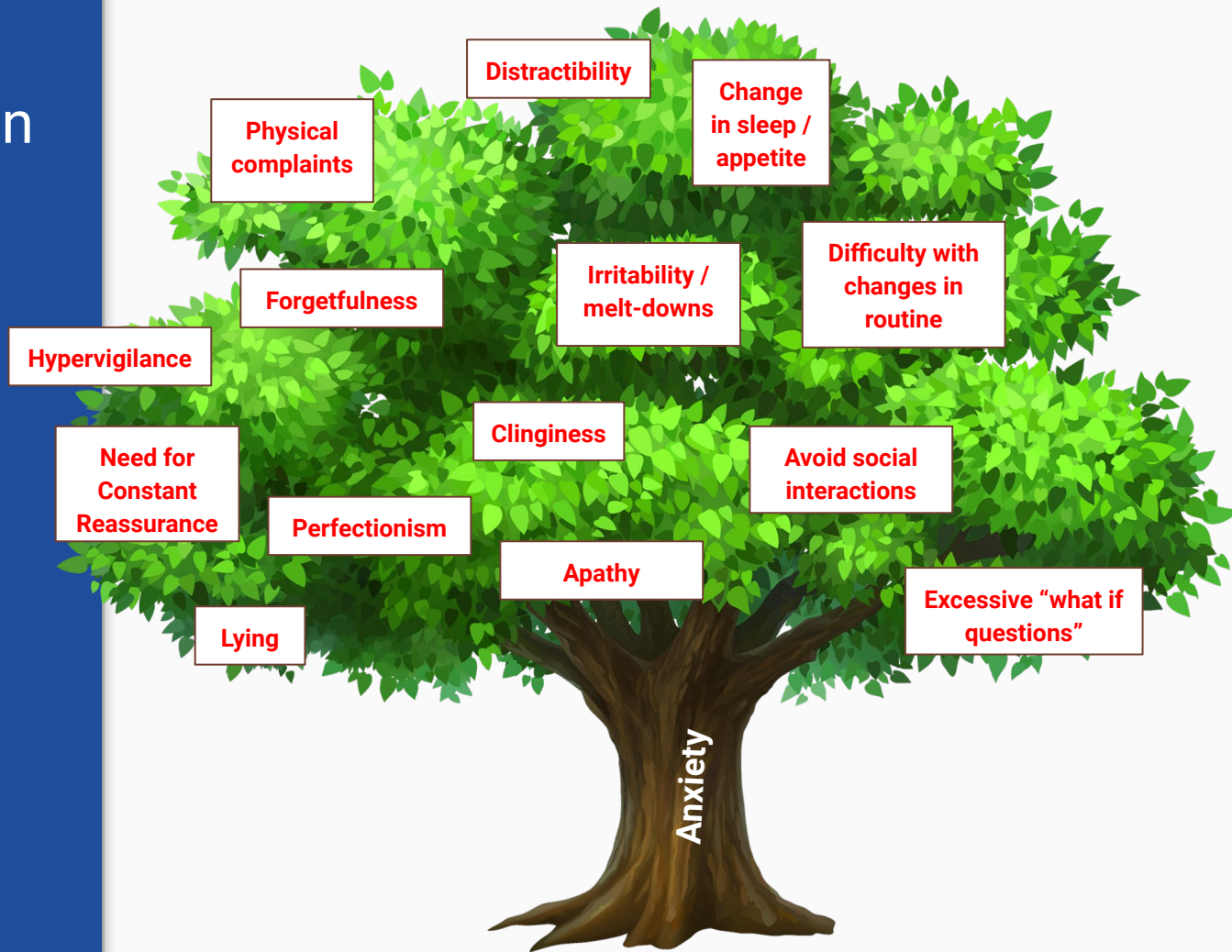
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Social anxiety / Selective Mutism
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- School Refusal
- Social Phobia
- Specific Phobias

## Epidemiology

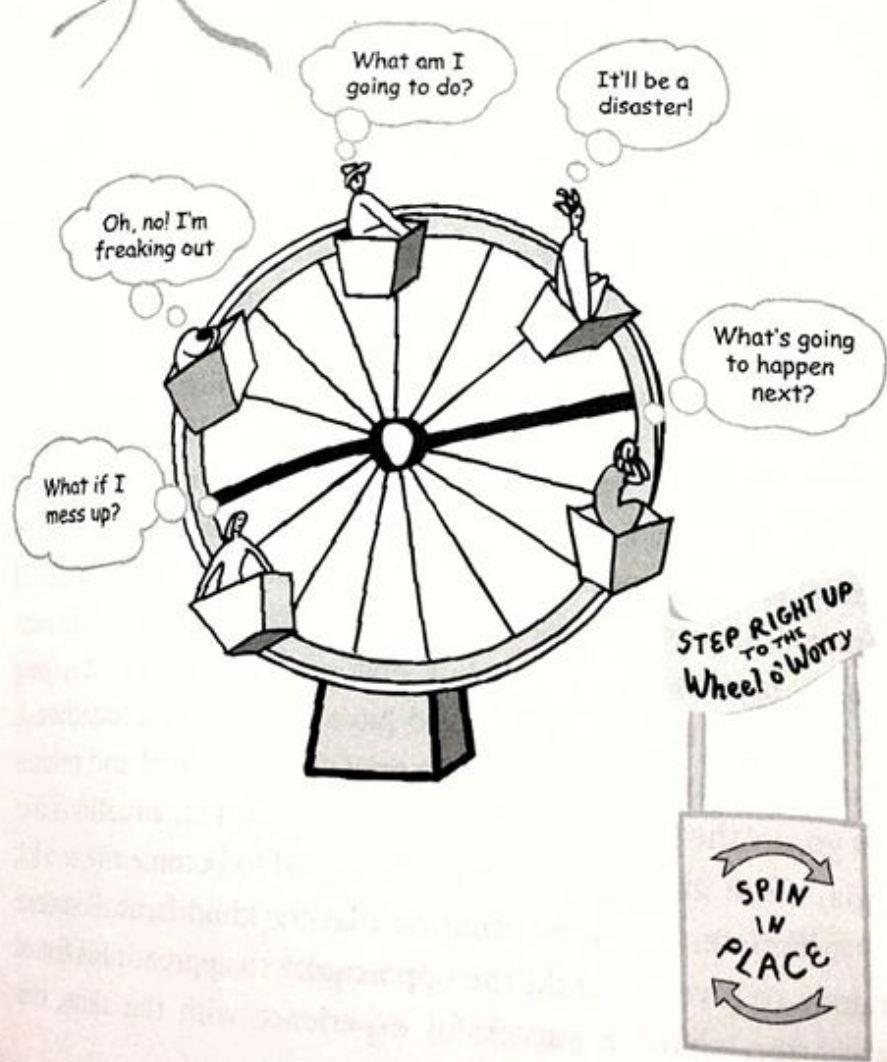
- Girls > Boys
- Childhood Prevalence: 6-20%\*\*
- Increased risk of developing depression and substance abuse disorders.
- 2-3x more likely to developing depressive and anxiety disorders in adulthood.

Angold et al. 1999. Am. J. Psychiatry 150:1779-1791

What it looks like in  
kids:







Chansky, T.: *Freeing your Child from Anxiety*

# The Vicious Cycle of Avoidance



Great... so what  
do we do?

# 1. Keep Track

Take notes on when and where your child gets anxious.

2-3 weeks

- Google Form
- Understood.org:

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/21NFCbB2HOwWjgi8tUb5zZ/ca6c483e8aa834860ea22fb8dbdcea6a/Anxiety\\_Tracker\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/21NFCbB2HOwWjgi8tUb5zZ/ca6c483e8aa834860ea22fb8dbdcea6a/Anxiety_Tracker_Understood.pdf)

## Anxiety tracker

Take notes on when your child gets anxious. How stressed you felt is a key detail — because a caregiver's behavior can impact a child's anxiety.

| Timing                                   | Setting   | Signs  | Outcome   | Child rating   | Caregiver rating   |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| • Time of day<br>• Day of week<br>• Date | What was happening just before your child began to feel anxious?                      | Which physical, emotional, or behavioral signs of anxiety did you see? | Getting clothes and backpack ready for school the next day        | How intense was your child's anxiety? (1=low, 10=high) | How stressed were you feeling at this moment? (1=low, 10=high) |
| • 10pm<br>• Sunday<br>• 4/21/2019        | Getting clothes and backpack ready for school the next day                            | Crying, yelling, didn't want to try to sleep                           | I rubbed Matteo's back for a long time                            | 7  | 5  |
| • 7:30am<br>• Monday<br>• 4/22/2019      | Wasn't eating his breakfast and didn't want to go to school                           | Stomachache, then total meltdown                                       | He calmed down pretty quickly after I said he could stay home     | 10   | 10   |
| • 9:30pm<br>• Wednesday<br>• 4/24/2019   | Trying to plan an essay. He kept saying things like "What if I pick the wrong topic?" | Clenching his jaw, tugging at his eyebrow, being mean to everyone      | Dad role-played how to ask teacher for advice on choosing a topic | 6  | 4  |

## 2. Identify Patterns

Reviewing your notes → identify patterns → guide intervention

- Example: Understood.org

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/3WUvNvw3YTGNPHvzMMHSbz/fae2ea8518d224fd85a20713d3d7c924/Anxiety\\_Pattern\\_Finder\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/3WUvNvw3YTGNPHvzMMHSbz/fae2ea8518d224fd85a20713d3d7c924/Anxiety_Pattern_Finder_Understood.pdf)

### Anxiety pattern finder

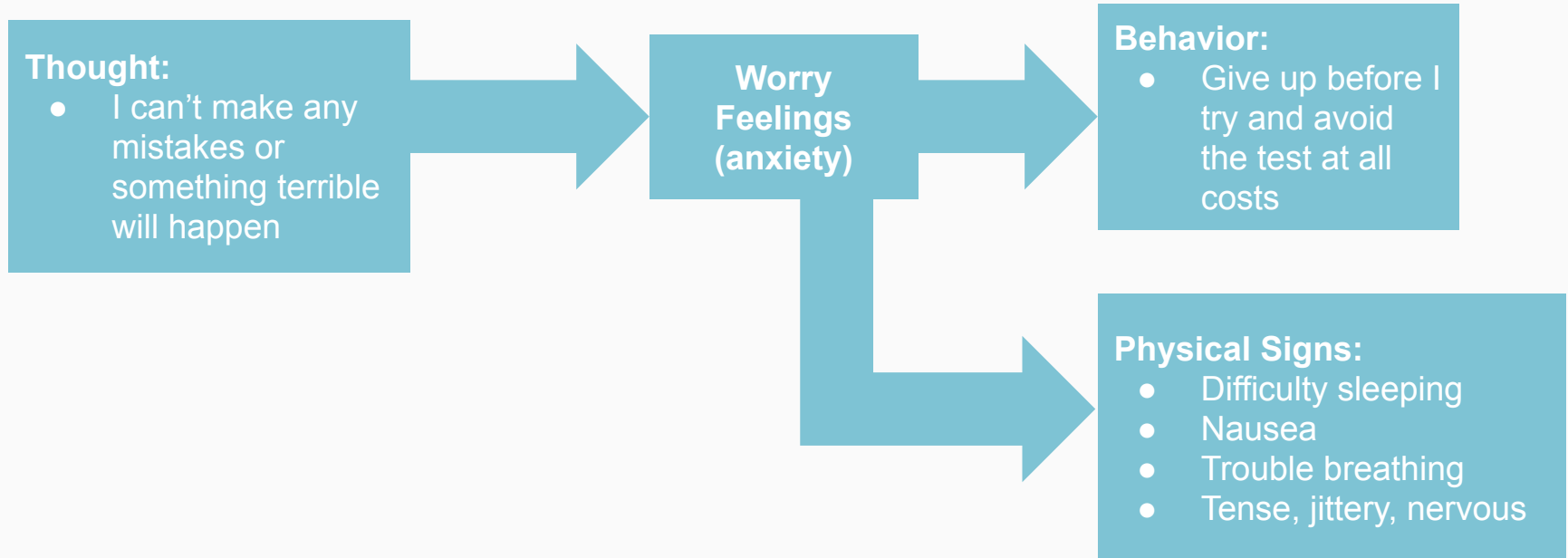
Look at your notes in the anxiety tracker to find patterns in your child's behavior. Two to three weeks of entries may be enough to help you spot trends.

| Timing   | Frequency   |
|--|---|
| <b>When does your child tend to get anxious?</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In the morning before school<br><input type="checkbox"/> At school<br><input type="checkbox"/> After school before dinner<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> After dinner before bedtime<br><input type="checkbox"/> Around mealtimes<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bedtime<br><input type="checkbox"/> Weekends<br>Other: _____  | <b>How many days a week does your child:</b><br><u>4</u> Worry a lot about school<br><u>2</u> Worry a lot about social situations<br>____ Worry a lot about other things<br><u>5</u> Feel overly angry or irritable<br>____ Get distracted easily<br><u>5</u> Have trouble sleeping<br><u>5</u> Get tired or restless during the day  |
| <b>Physical signs</b>  | <b>Negative outcomes</b>  |
| <b>What physical signs have you noticed?</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Faster heartbeat or trouble breathing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Light-headed or weak in the knees<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headache or stomachache<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shaky voice, dry mouth, or lump in throat<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sweaty hands or face that feels hot<br><input type="checkbox"/> Urgent need to go to the bathroom<br>Other: <u>Clenches jaw, pulls out eyebrow hair</u>   | <b>What happens when your child feels anxious?</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rips up or refuses to do homework<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refuses to go to school<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has tantrums or meltdowns<br><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't eat much<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is unfriendly, rude, or withdrawn<br>Other: _____<br>Other: _____   |
| <b>Possible triggers</b>   | <b>Other factors</b>  |
| <b>What makes your child anxious?</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being away from a parent or caregiver<br><input type="checkbox"/> Going somewhere new, noisy, or crowded<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interacting with siblings and/or peers<br><input type="checkbox"/> Doing a task in front of other people<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doing homework and/or taking tests<br><input type="checkbox"/> Reacting to social media, TV, or movies<br><input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about germs, disease, or illness<br><input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about snakes, spiders, etc.<br>Other: _____ | <b>What might be adding to your child's worries?</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic struggles<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family changes (divorce, new sibling, etc.)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sick relative<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caregivers' stress levels<br><input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with siblings<br><input type="checkbox"/> TV very loud and/or always on<br>Other: _____<br>Other: _____ |

## 3. Make a Plan!

1. Label the problem
2. Triggers
3. Coping Skills (turn off the alarms)
4. Supportive Relationships

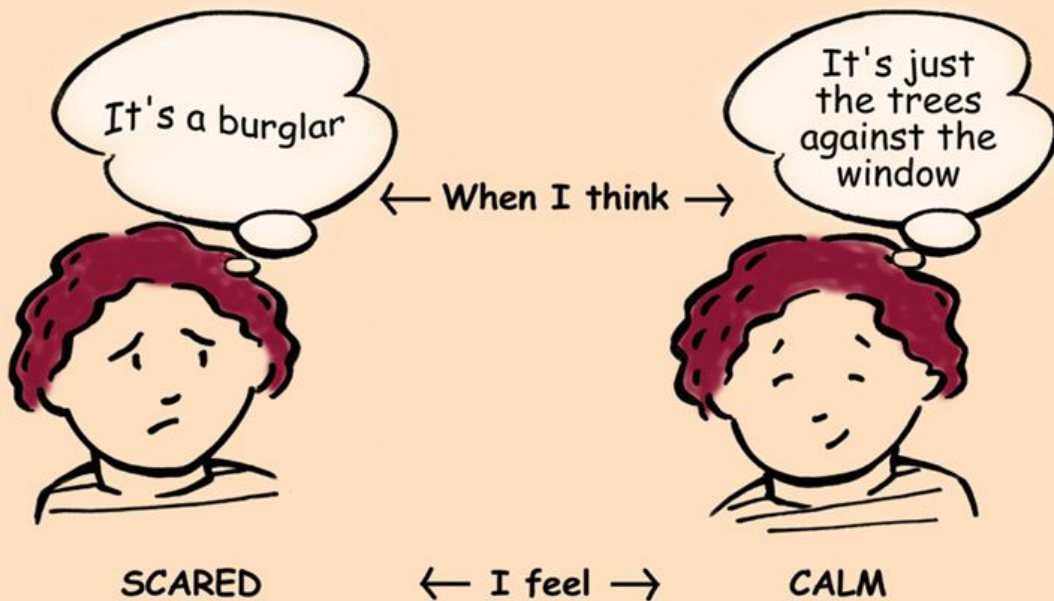
# Cognitive Behavioral Strategies



# The Noise at the Window

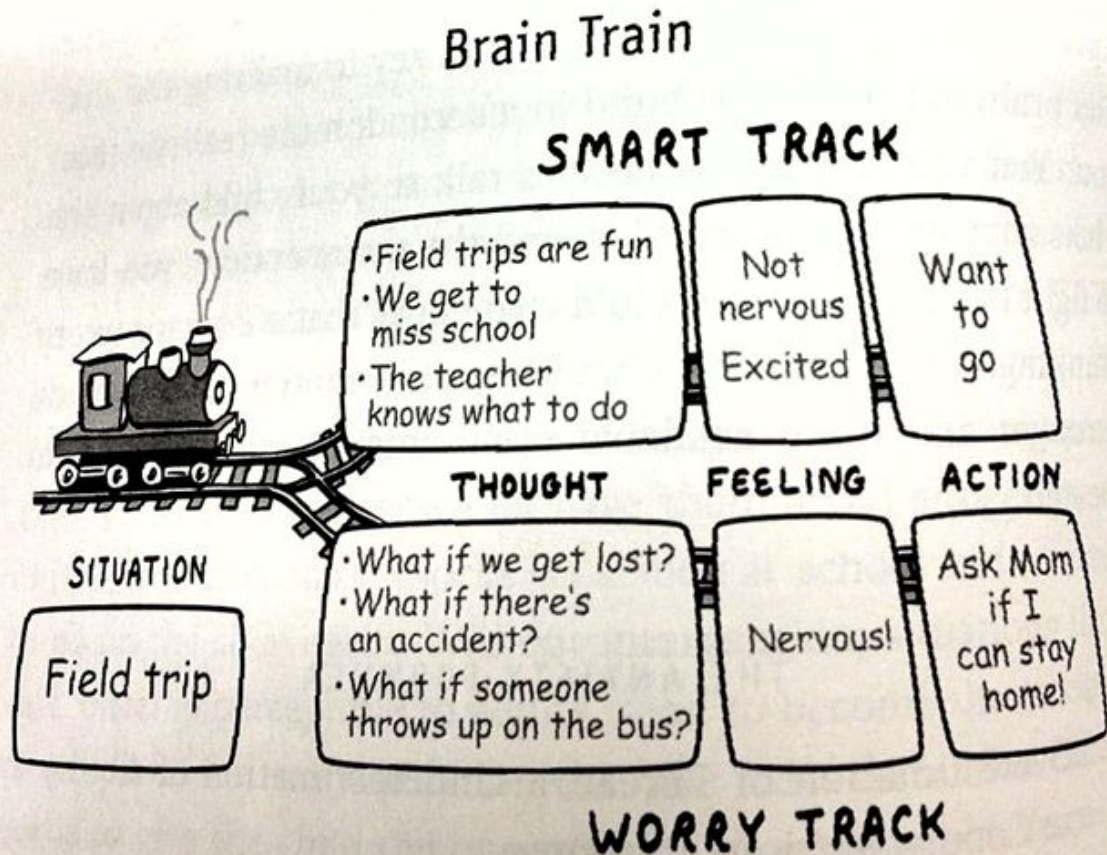
## MY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

What's Happening: I'm in my bed at night and I hear a noise at the window





“Worry talk leads to worry walk”



# Challenging thoughts with questioning

1. What am I worried about?
2. Why does it worry me?
3. What are the chances it will happen?
4. What proof do i have that it will happen?
5. So what if it happens?
6. How could I handle it if it does happen?

# More Tips

- Encourage kids to talk about feelings
- Listen and reflect
- Physical exercise
- Routines
- Healthy eating and sleep
- Modeling cognitive problem solving

Let's Talk!

# Resources:

1. <http://www.Understood.org>
2. What to do When You Worry Too Much by Dawn Huebner  
<https://www.amazon.com/What-When-Worry-Much-What/dp/1591473144>
3. Worried No More: Arueen Wagner, Ph.D
4. <http://www.worrywisekids.org/>

# More Resources

1. Biegel, Gina M., MA, LMFT The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens Instant Help Books 2009
2. Buron, Kari Dunn When My Worries Get Too Big! A Relaxation Book for Children Who Live with Anxiety Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Company
3. Chansky, Tamar E. PH.D Freeing Your Child from Anxiety New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004
4. Chansky, Tamar E. PH.D Freeing Your Child from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001
5. Schab, Lisa M., LCSW The Anxiety Workbook for Teens Instant Help Books 2009
6. Shapiro, Lawrence PH. D and Sprague, Robin K. LCPC The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook for Kids Instant Help Books 2009