

A stylized, colorful illustration of a landscape. The foreground features rolling green hills with dark brown soil. On the left, there is a green tree, a purple flower, and an orange flower. A small red bird is flying in the sky. The background consists of light blue and white wavy lines representing a sky or water.

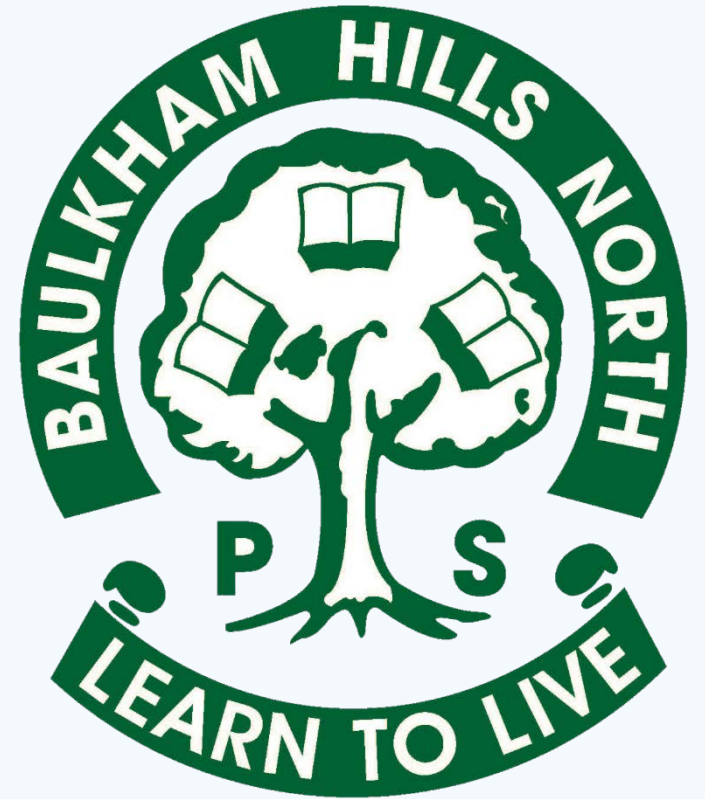
PUPIL Program Session 1 Student Wellbeing

Presenters –
Hannah Johnson (School Counsellor)
Belinda Yates (LaST- Learning and Support Teacher)

The Vision at Baulkham Hills North PS

- Spirited, successful students;
- Creative, connected citizens;
- Inspired, innovative individuals.

Every student; Every teacher; Every family

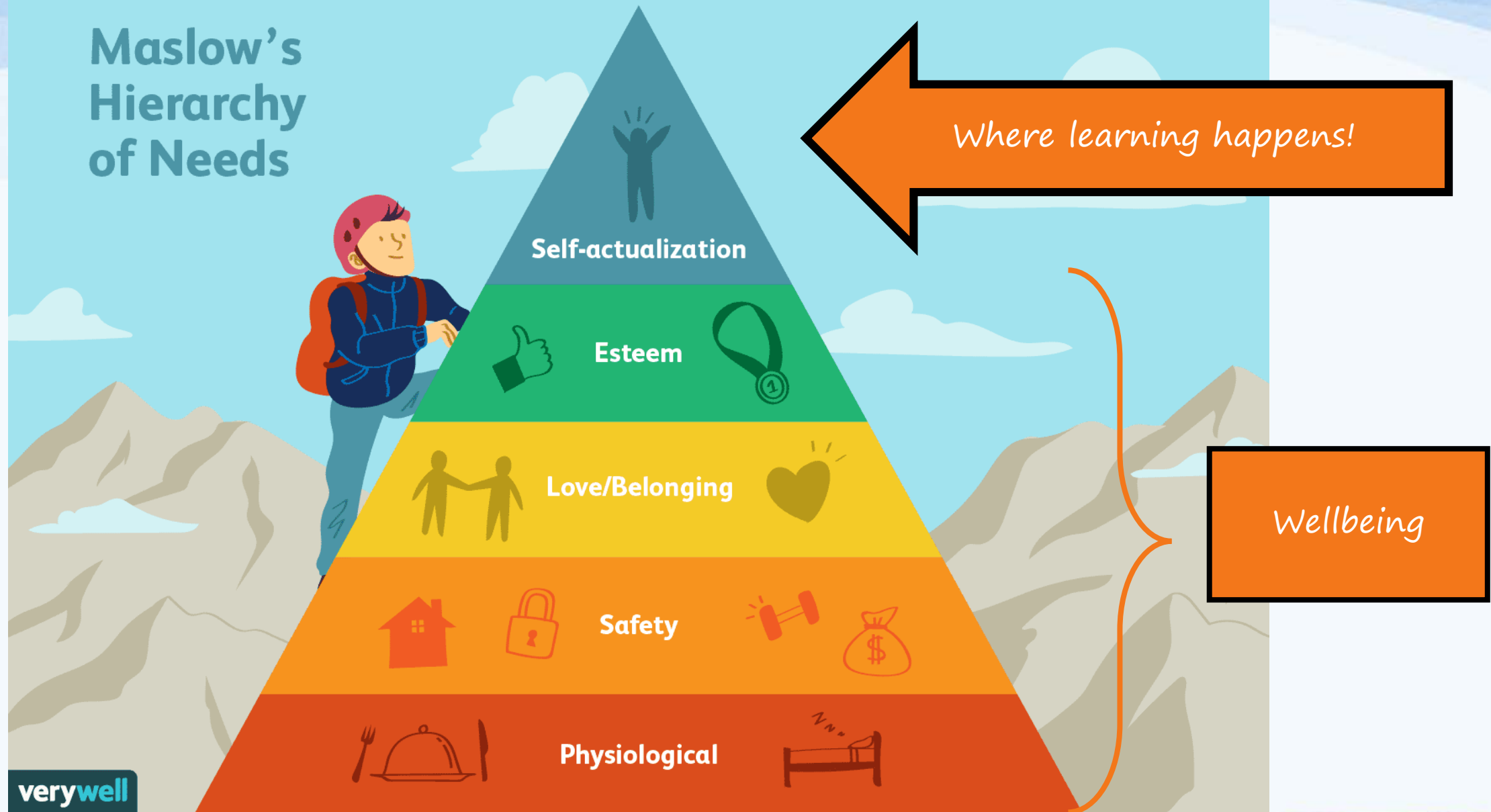




PBL
Positive Behaviour for Learning
Safe Respectful Learner



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- *What is anxiety?*
 - *What does it look like?*
 - *When does it become a problem?*
 - *Different types of anxiety*
- *How to help your child deal with anxiety?*
 - *Strategies for children to manage anxious feelings, cognitions, and behaviours*
 - *Tips for carers to manage your child's environment*
 - *Additional resources and support*

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- A feeling of worry or nervousness about *situations of uncertainty or perceived threat*
- *Normal human emotion* which can be protective from danger!
- Humans and other animals have the “*Flight or Fight*” response
 - When we perceive a threat, our body releases *hormones* that automatically trigger several *physical changes* to prepare us to either fight or flee from the threat

...Yet, often the perceived threat is exaggerated or inaccurate

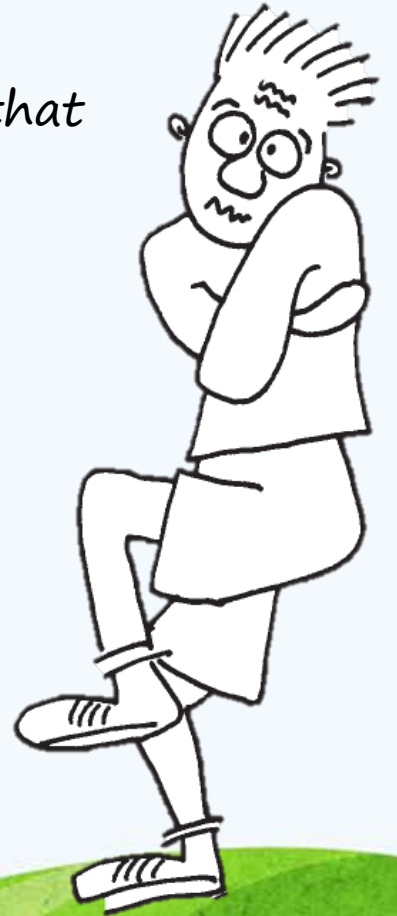


WHAT DOES ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

PHYSICAL <i>What do they feel?</i>	COGNITIVE <i>What do they think?</i>	BEHAVIOURAL <i>What do they do?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid heartbeat• Abdominal pain• Dry mouth• Tightness in chest• Shortness of breath• Dizziness• Sweating• Muscle tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “What if...” thoughts• Threat-based thinking• Hyper-vigilance• Inability to concentrate (impacts learning)• Unrealistic thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoidance• Crying, tantrums• Freezing• Aggression• Reassurance seeking• Sleeping problems (worries at night)• Physical complaints of illness• Perfectionism (e.g. too much effort)• Withdrawal (impact relationships)

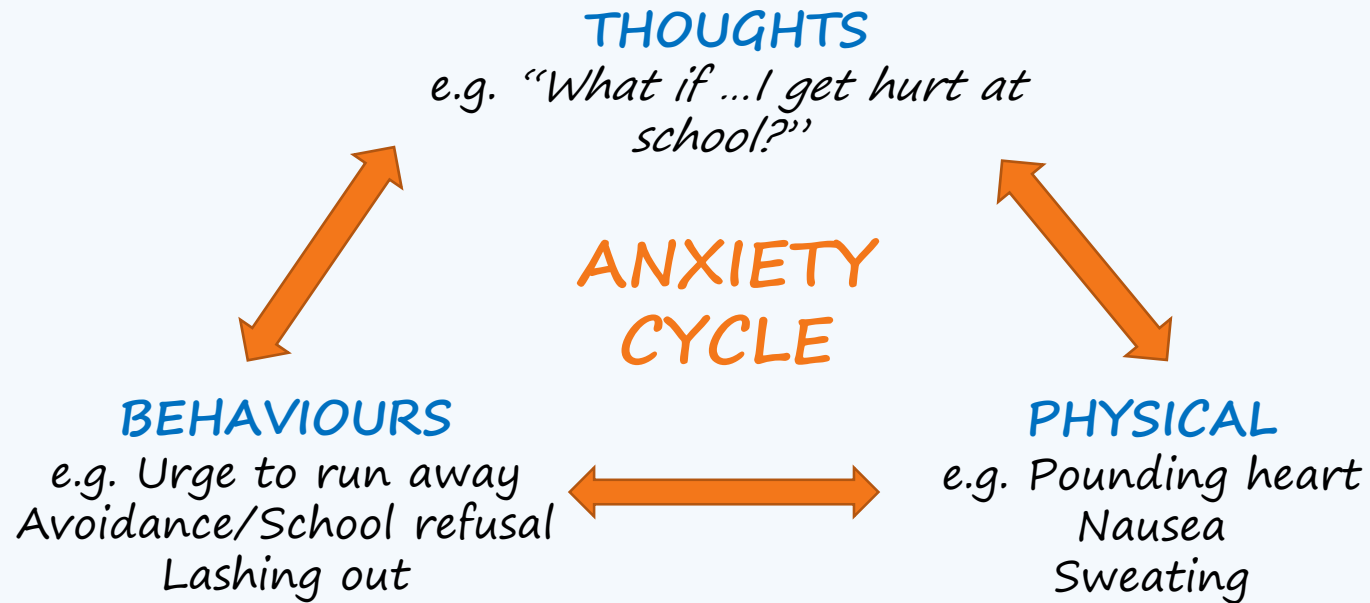
WHEN DOES IT BECOME A PROBLEM?

- Remember – anxiety is common and necessary at times!
- Do they experience **persistent** and **excessive distress** (e.g. worry or fears) that typically **interfere** with their ability to carry out their daily tasks?
- **The Four D's**
 1. **D**isproportionate (e.g. excessive for their age and/or the situation)
 2. **D**isruptive (e.g. interfering)
 3. **D**istressing (e.g. easily upset and unhappy)
 4. **D**uration (e.g. typically one month at least)



MAINTENANCE CYCLE OF ANXIETY

- These elements can start to **negatively influence each other** in an ongoing cycle



- Interventions** typically focus on targeting **all three** of these areas

RISK FACTORS

- Potential **medical problems** should be ruled out
- **Stressful life events** and traumatic experiences
- Learning from social interactions:
 - **Over-protection**: Learn they need to be protected, and can't manage things themselves
 - **Modelling**: Learn to be anxious by observing anxious behaviour
- Temperament and genetics – **emotional sensitivity** can run in families
 - But, having experienced anxiety yourself means you may be more able to help and relate to your child's difficulties!

COMMON TYPES OF ANXIETY

- **Generalised anxiety:** Worries about several different events/activities in their life
- **Specific phobia:** Excessive and irrational fear related to exposure to specific objects or situations (e.g. dogs, flying, injections)
- **Social anxiety:** Intense fear of being criticised or embarrassed in social situations
- **Separation anxiety:** Concerning separation from those to whom the child is attached
 - Separation anxiety disorder is the most common anxiety disorder in 4 to 11-year-olds
 - Headache and nausea
 - Reluctance/refusal to go to school, or to go to sleep without being near a carer
 - Nightmares involving the theme of separation

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD?

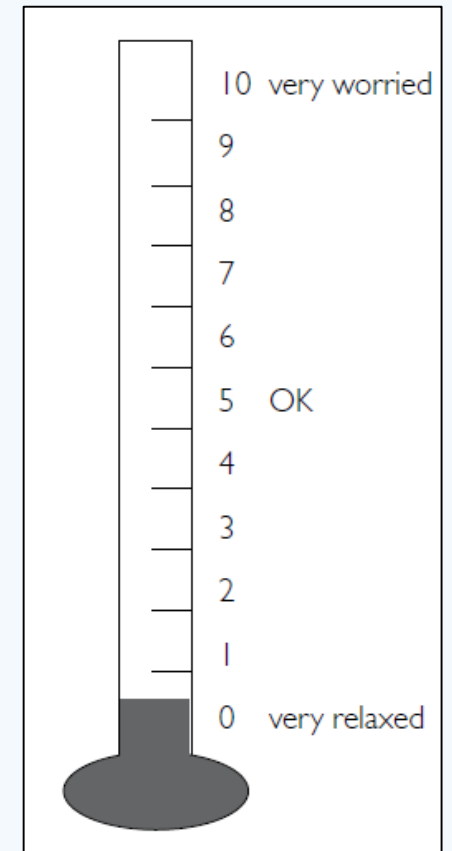
- Carers play the **biggest role** in helping young children manage anxiety



VALIDATION

Listen to and respect your child's feelings

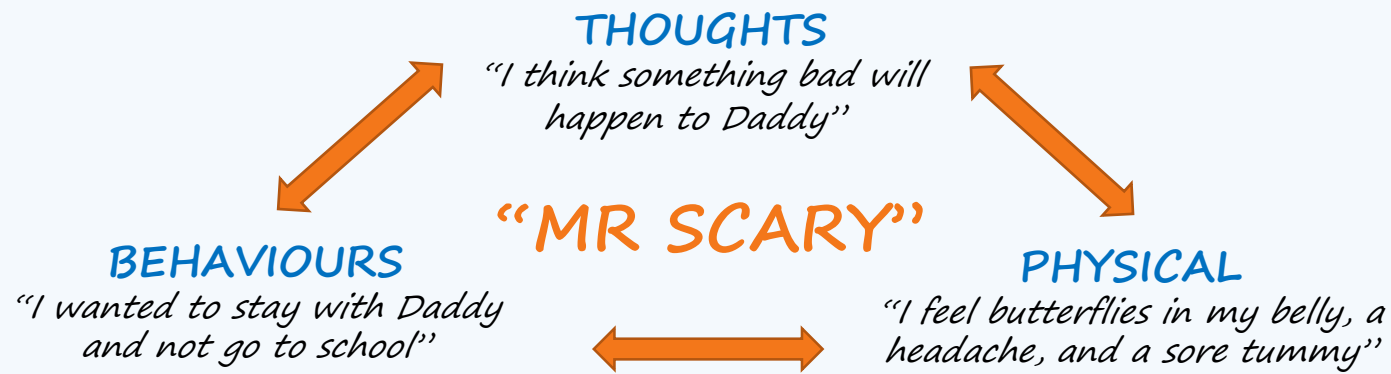
- **Validation** is the recognition and acceptance of someone's feelings, thoughts, and behaviours as understandable (not judging)
- Validation and **naming the emotion** can reduce distress
 - *E.g. "I can see you're feeling worried right now. That's OK, sometimes I feel worried as well."*
- Avoid saying "don't be anxious" or "don't worry"
- Allow them to express their feelings (e.g. draw/write)
 - *E.g. **Worry Thermometer** to rate how scary it is*



PSYCHOEDUCATION

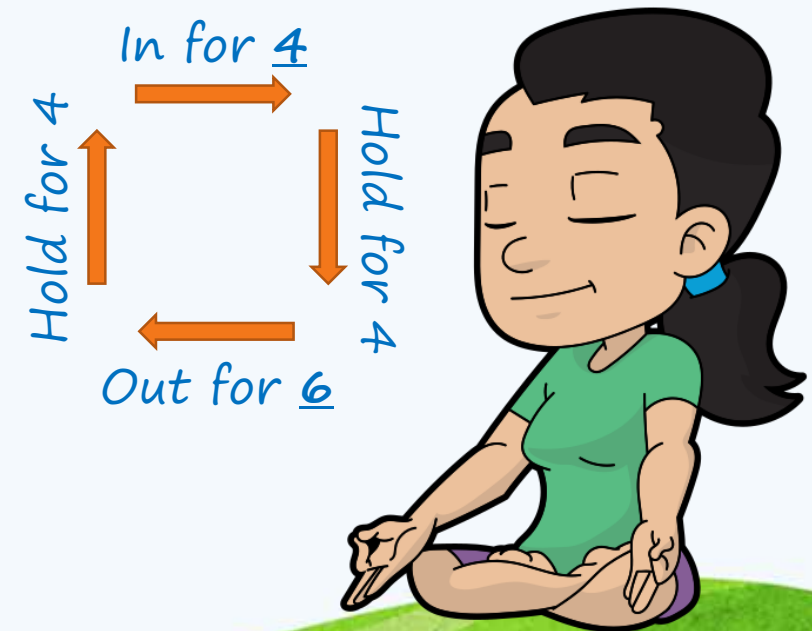
Teach your child about anxiety

- Teach them about anxiety (as you would any academic/life skill):
 - Use **simple language and visuals** (e.g. drawings, toys, picture books)
 - **Externalise the feeling** (e.g. “Warren the Worry Monster” or “Mr Scary”)
 - Teach how to identify the **links between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours** (draw/write it)



Strategies to help with managing their FEELINGS

- Help them reduce their emotional hyperarousal first with **relaxation strategies**:
 - Deep breathing (e.g. **Blow up the big balloon**)
 - **ReST**:
 - **R**elax muscles (tense and then release)
 - **S**low breathing
 - **T**hink of a relaxing place
- **Model** this and get them to **practise**!



Strategies to help with managing their THOUGHTS

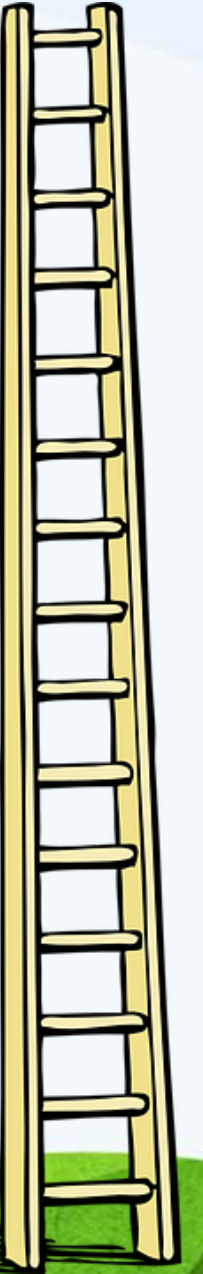
- Teach them **positive self-talk**
 - e.g. *"Go away Worry Monster! I am a brave girl and am in control, not you!"*
- **Unrealistic thoughts?**
 - Be a "thought detective" and look for evidence! Do we know the thought is true?
 - Brainstorm alternative thoughts
 - Unhelpful thought: Mummy is late because something bad happened to her
 - Helpful thought: Mummy is late because... work, traffic, dinner?
 - **What is more likely? What usually has happened in the past?**



Strategies to help with managing their BEHAVIOURS

- **Avoid avoidance!**
 - Helps to **collect evidence** that their thoughts are unrealistic
 - Helps them learn to manage if their thoughts are realistic
- **Gradual exposure** with “fear ladders” (repetition is crucial)
- **Worry Thermometer** to rate how scary it is before and after, to determine when to move up the ladder.
- **Celebrate** every achievement with appropriate rewards/praise!

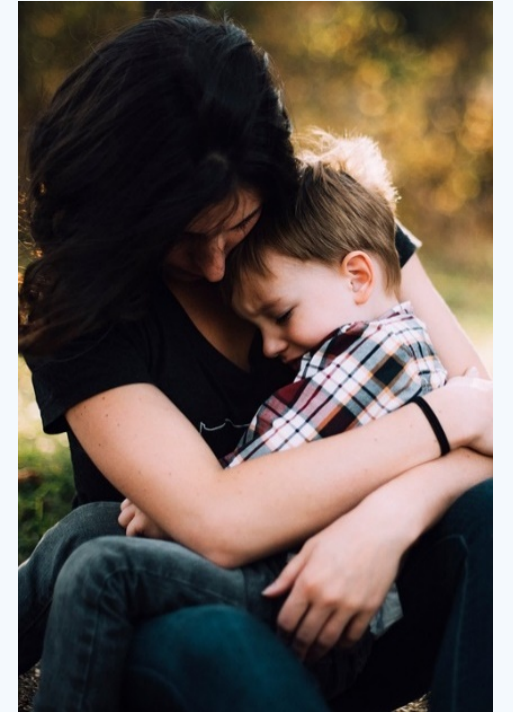
NB: Intervention goal isn't to remove all anxiety, as this may not happen



Tips for carers

MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

- Be **consistent** with consequences
 - If you say X will happen for a certain behaviour, ensure you do it
 - Between carers
- **Routines and structure**
 - Helps them understand what will happen and be better prepared
 - ...However, in cases of persistent and excessive anxiety, they'll need to eventually learn how to live with some uncertainty and flexibility
- **Praise** positive behaviour (e.g. bravery)



Tips for carers

MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Encourage independence**
 - **Coping cards** help to remember relaxation strategies, positive self-talk, & realistic facts to help challenge thoughts
 - Teach them to **problem solve** themselves, rather than relying on **excessive reassurance**
- **Health:** sleep, diet, exercise, & rule out medical illnesses
- **Model** appropriate behaviour



NB: It is OK to feel anxious yourself! This is different to engaging in anxious behaviour

SUMMARY

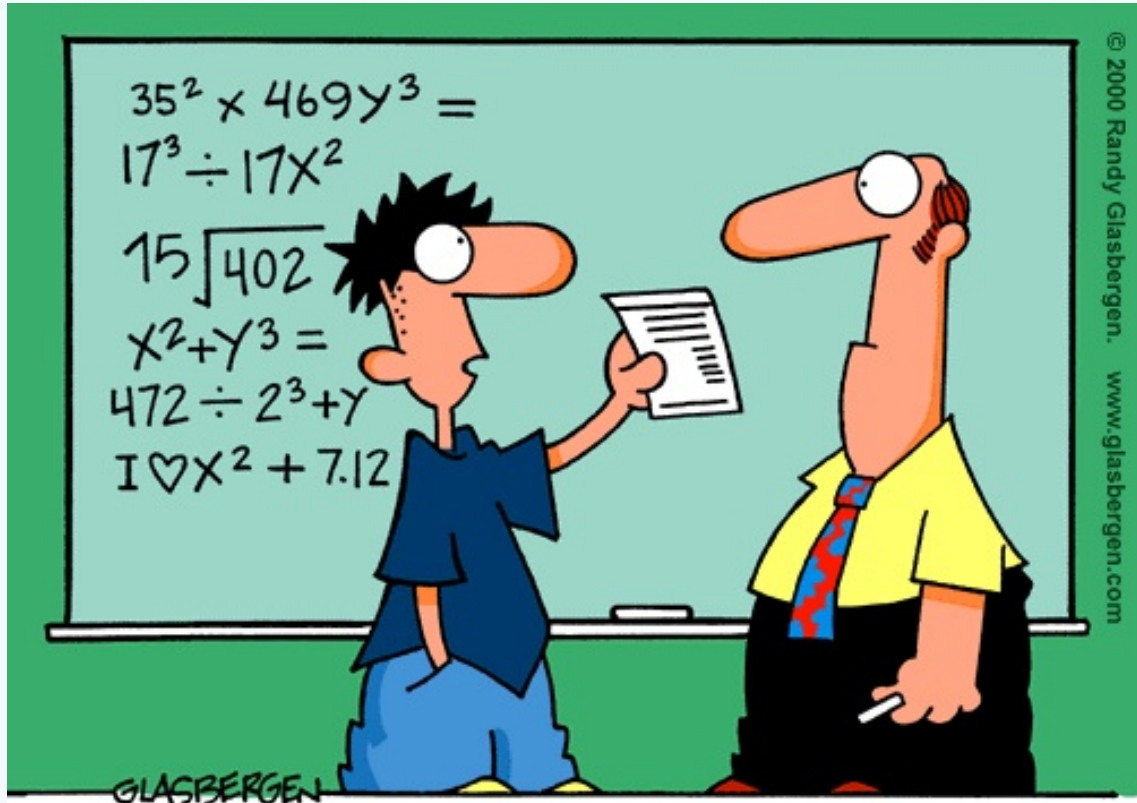
- Anxiety is a **normal bodily response**, but when it interferes with a child's life then seek help
- Connections between **thoughts, behaviours, feelings**
 - Interventions in one area will likely have a positive effect on the other areas
- **Avoidance** and **excessive reassurance** is a perpetuating factor for anxiety
- **Validate** your child's emotions first (then move to realistic thinking and problem solving)
- **Praise** and **reward** positive behaviour
- Be **consistent**, and **use structure** and **routine** to help manage anxiety
 - Communication between both carers, and school and home

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT/RESOURCES

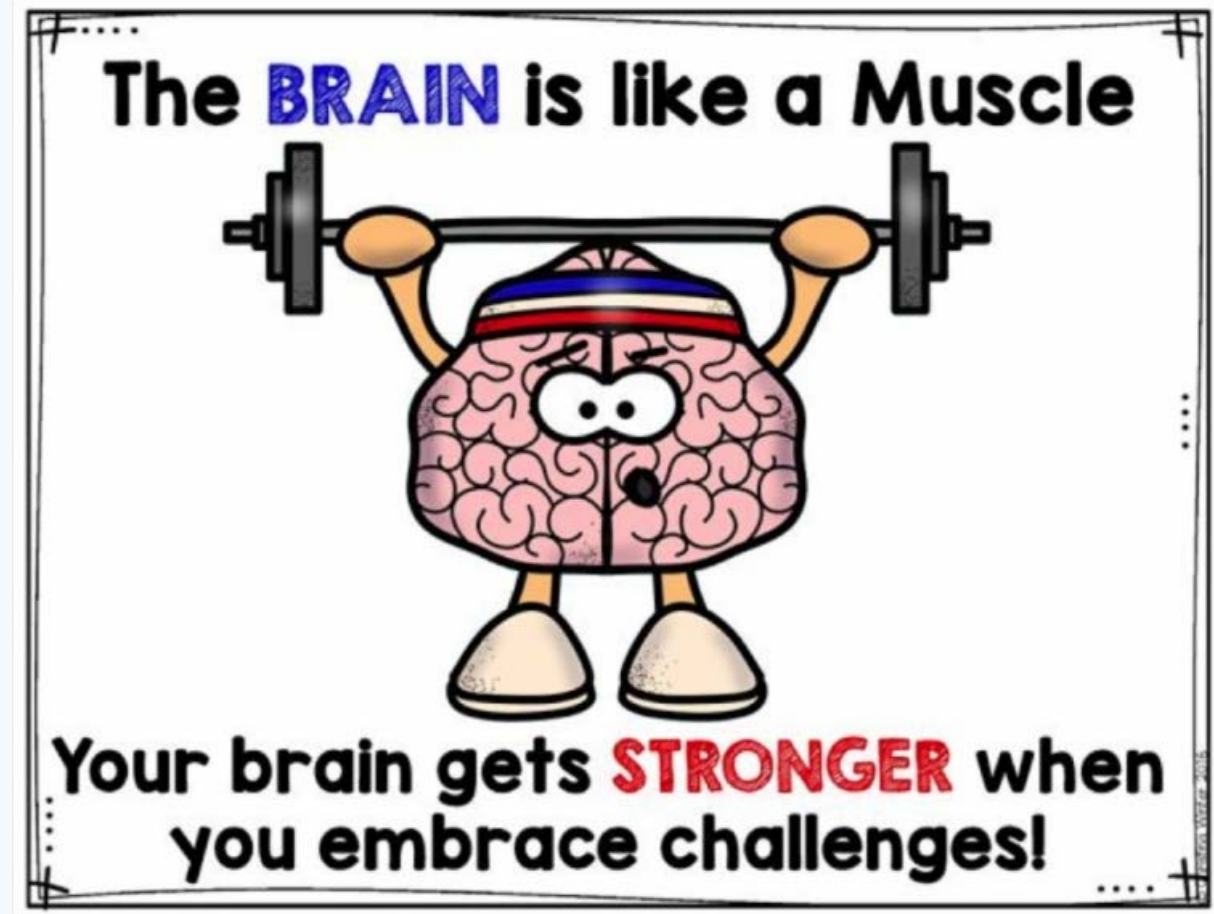


- Arrange a *meeting with the teacher*
- Speak to the *school counsellor/psychologist*
- *Visit your GP* for an assessment, and a referral to an *external psychologist*
- *Kids Matter* website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au
- *Raising children* – Australian parenting website: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Growth Mindset Strengthening the “Brain Muscle”

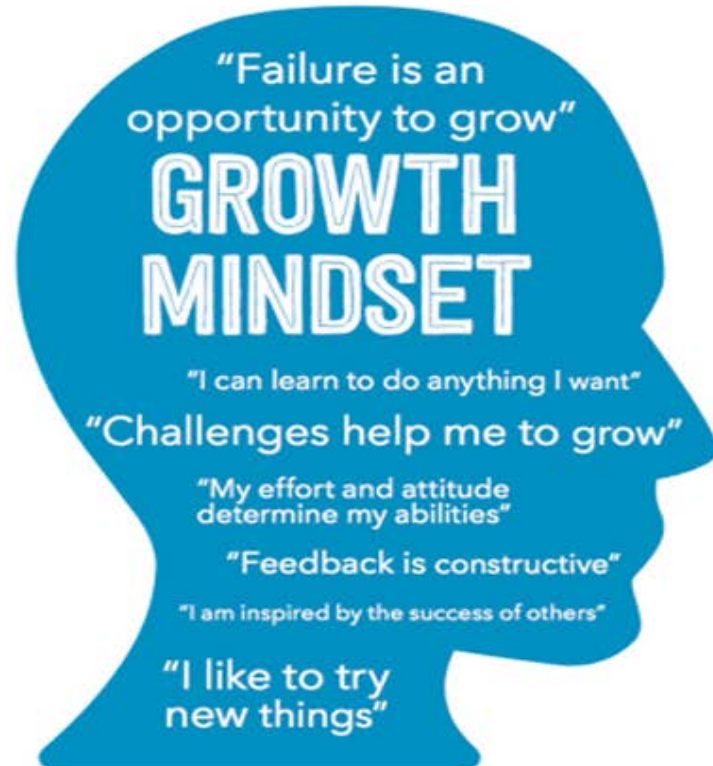


"I HAD MY DOCTOR DO A D.N.A. BLOOD ANALYSIS.
AS I SUSPECTED, I'M MISSING THE MATH GENE."

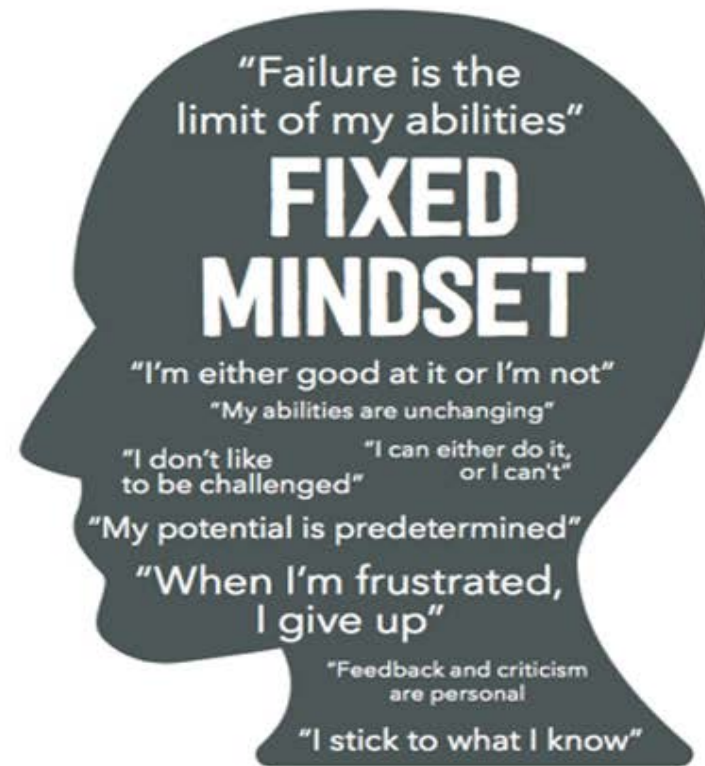


Building a Growth Mindset

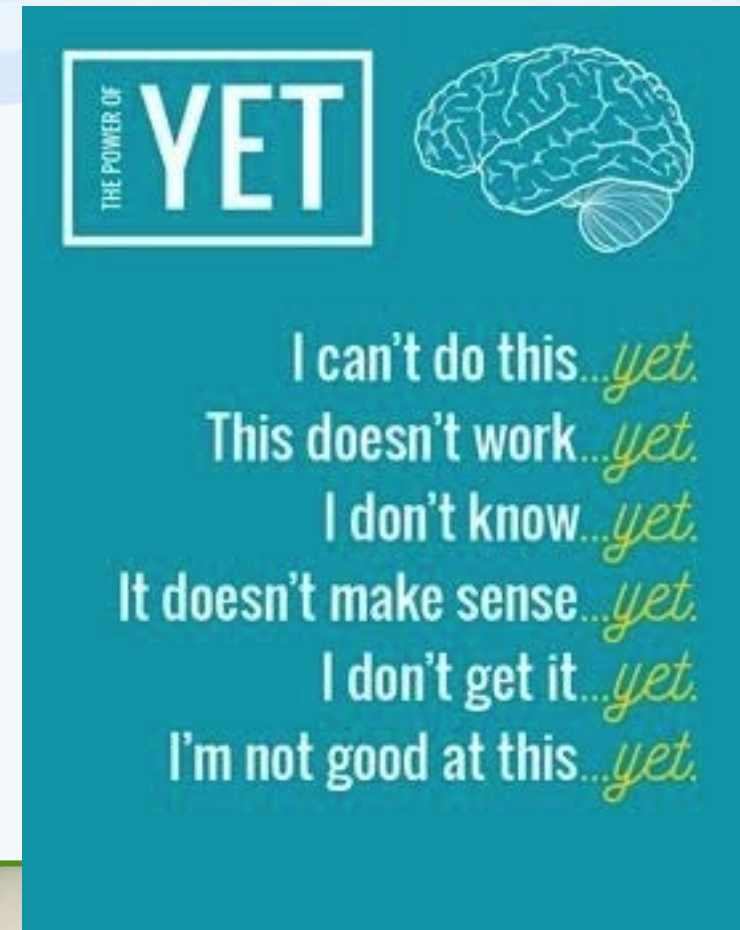
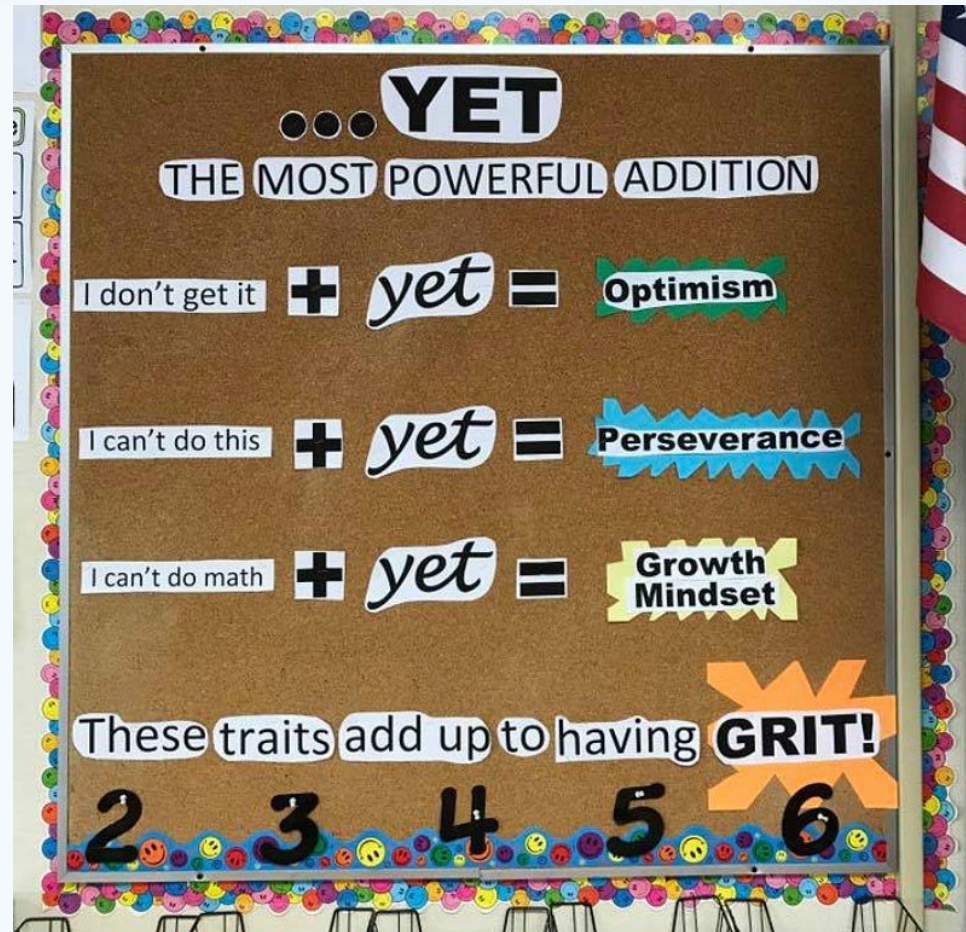
GROWTH MINDSET



FIXED MINDSET



The Power of 'yet'





Take 2

Match a “Growth Mindset” replacement statement to a “Fixed Mindset” statement on the list.

Reflect on how you have previously viewed learning.
What would you change? What would you keep the same?

10 Growth Mindset Statements



What can I say to myself?



INSTEAD OF:

TRY THINKING:

I'm not good at this.

I'm awesome at this.

I give up.

This is too hard.

I can't make this any better.

I just can't do Math.

I made a mistake.

She's so smart. I will never be that smart.

It's good enough.

Plan "A" didn't work.

1 What am I missing?

2 I'm on the right track.

3 I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.

4 This may take some time and effort.

5 I can always improve so I'll keep trying.

6 I'm going to train my brain in Math.

7 Mistakes help me to learn better.

8 I'm going to figure out how she does it.

9 Is it really my best work?

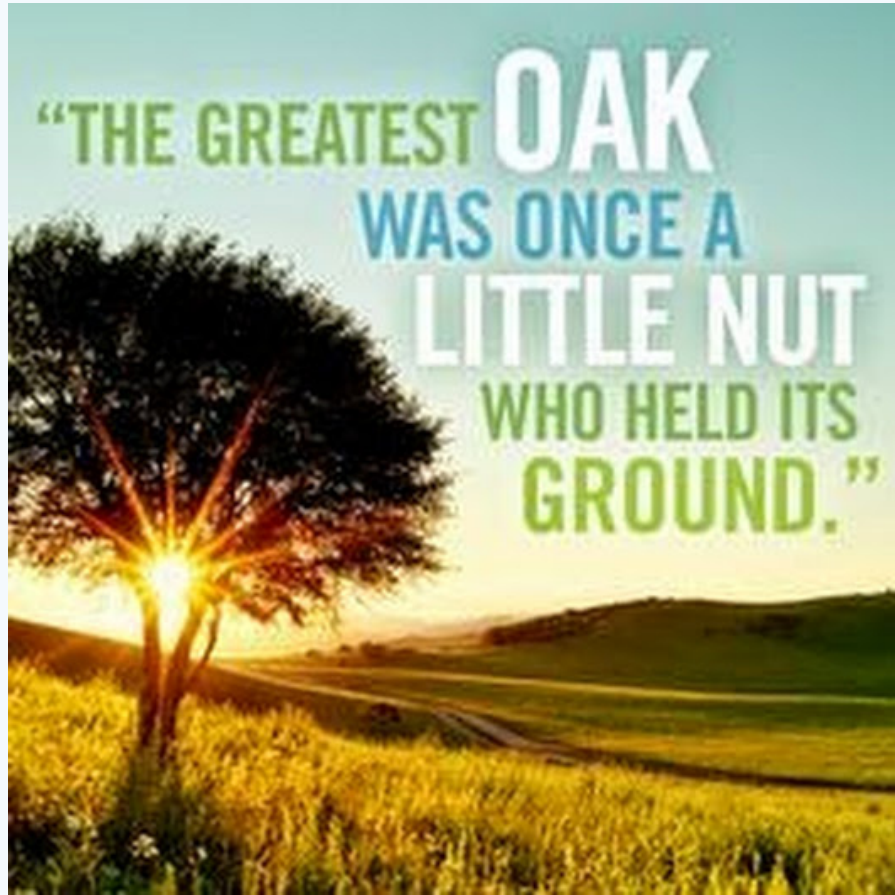
10 Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters!

Resilience – Stretching the “Emotion Muscle”



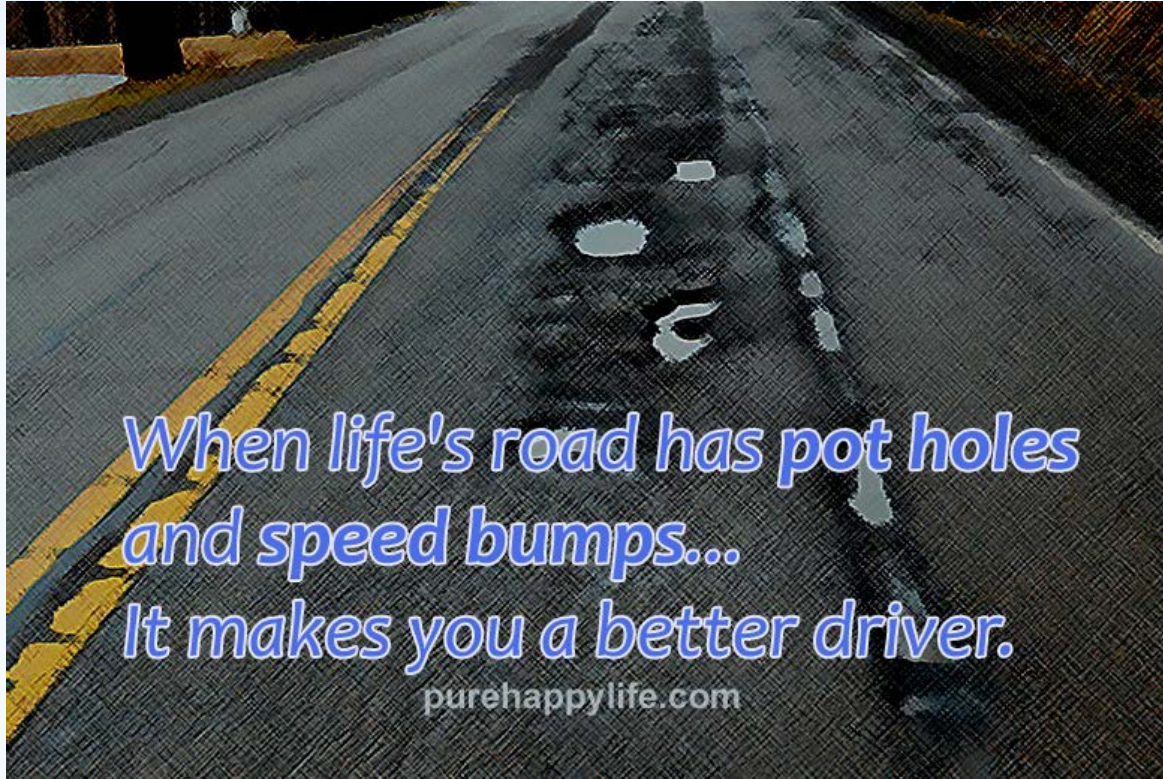
The rewards of resilience...

- The ability to learn from their experiences and grow
- Good relationships with others
- A capability to manage their own emotions and express empathy for others
- Good communication skills
- The ability to set realistic but rewarding goals and actively work towards them



Validate & encourage

"I can see this is really tough for you right now, but bad feelings don't last—this will pass. You can overcome this."

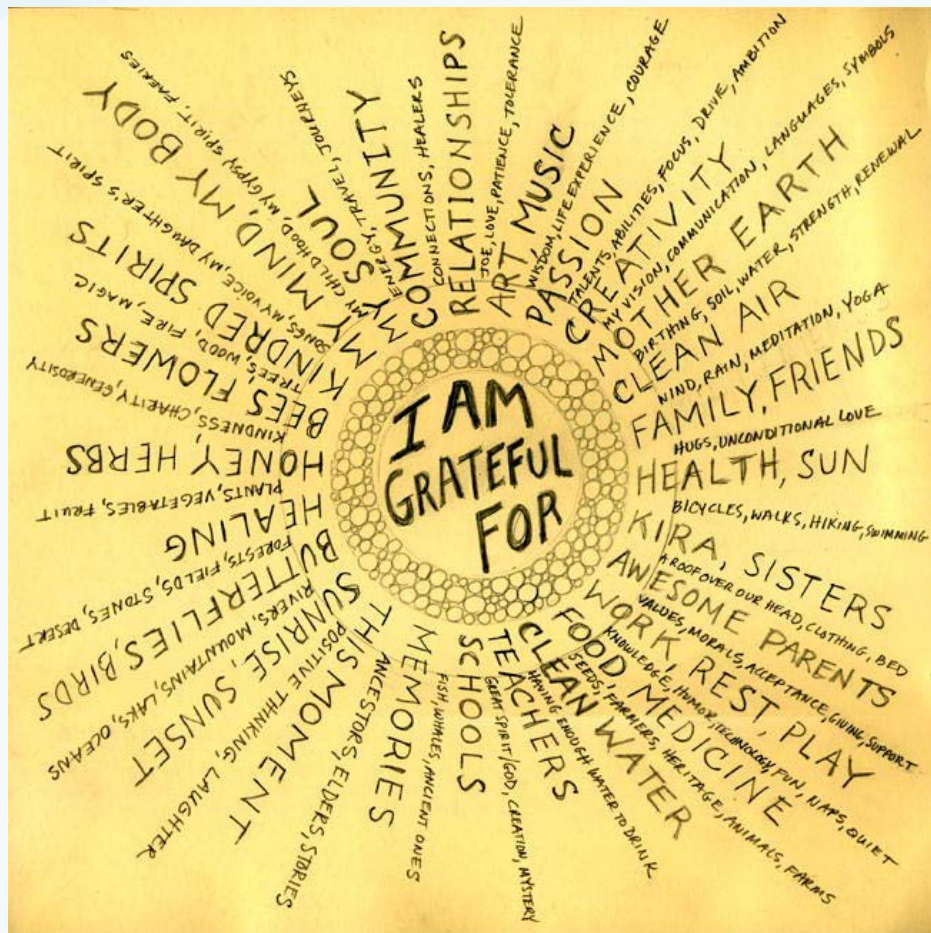


When life's road has pot holes
and speed bumps...
It makes you a better driver.

purehappyliife.com

Support & guide

“I can see you are really struggling with this problem. Let me help you to think about some things you can try to solve this.”



Refocus & reframe

“I know this feels really difficult/impossible, but let's try and look on the bright side/positives of what's happening”.

“What can we learn here?”

Becoming an Emotions Coach



Actions that challenge growth

- *Helpful phrases and important conversations*
- *Have high, yet reasonable expectations.*
- *Stretch. Push them to go further.*
- *Hold them accountable. Insist they take responsibility for their actions.*
- *Reflect on failures. Help them learn from mistakes and setbacks.*
- *Praise them when they work hard- regardless of outcome.*





Take 2

On the rubber bands provided, write a phrase or statement you think you could use to help stretch your child's resilience muscle next time they feel challenged.

Bullying- What it is and what its not



When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once.



When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once.



When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it repeatedly, even after being told to stop.

3 Ways To Act



Quiet Mouse



Cranky
Crocodile



Cool Kid

Source: DoE Presentation - Macquarie University - Centre For Emotional Health

How to build a “Cool Kid”

- Focus on building resilience
- Identify behaviours of true friends vs fake friends
- Teach cool kid skills
- Practice one skill at a time until confident.
- When confident, use two or more ideas together
- If at first you don't succeed.... Try the skill again and again.



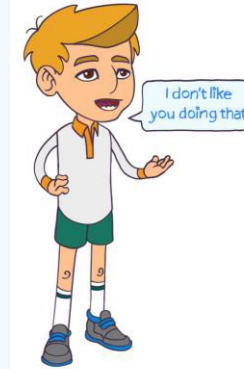
Skills to deal with a bully

Calmly
ignore
and
walk
away.



Fogging.

Yeah...
You might be
right...



Stand up
for
yourself.

Get an
audience...
Find your
friendly friends.



Tell
someone
and talk.



Source: DoE Presentation- Macquarie University- Centre For Emotional Health

4 Key Takeaways...

1. Resilience and Growth Mindset can be taught and learnt. With support children can strengthen and stretch these learning muscles.
2. Build connection – focus on dialogue, active listening & relationships with the time and space for important conversations.
3. Model desired behaviours – reframe the problem or challenge using the right language and teaching the skills for success.
4. Coaching approach – rather than rescuing/raising alarm.