

Anxiety in the Classroom

Luke Hanley
Principal
Arndell School

Acknowledgment of Country

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community
I pay respect to elders, past, present and emerging and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people here today.



Introduction: Learning Objectives

...aka managing my anxiety about what we're not going to cover

- What is anxiety
- How anxiety presents
 - Anxiety diagnoses
 - Biological and psychological symptoms
- Anxiety in the classroom
- Tips and tricks in managing anxiety in schools



Anxiety – what is it?

Anxiety is a **biological function** to keep you safe – to move you quickly into a fight, flight or freeze response



Anxiety is ..



when these anxious feelings don't subside.



When they're ongoing and exist without any particular reason or cause.



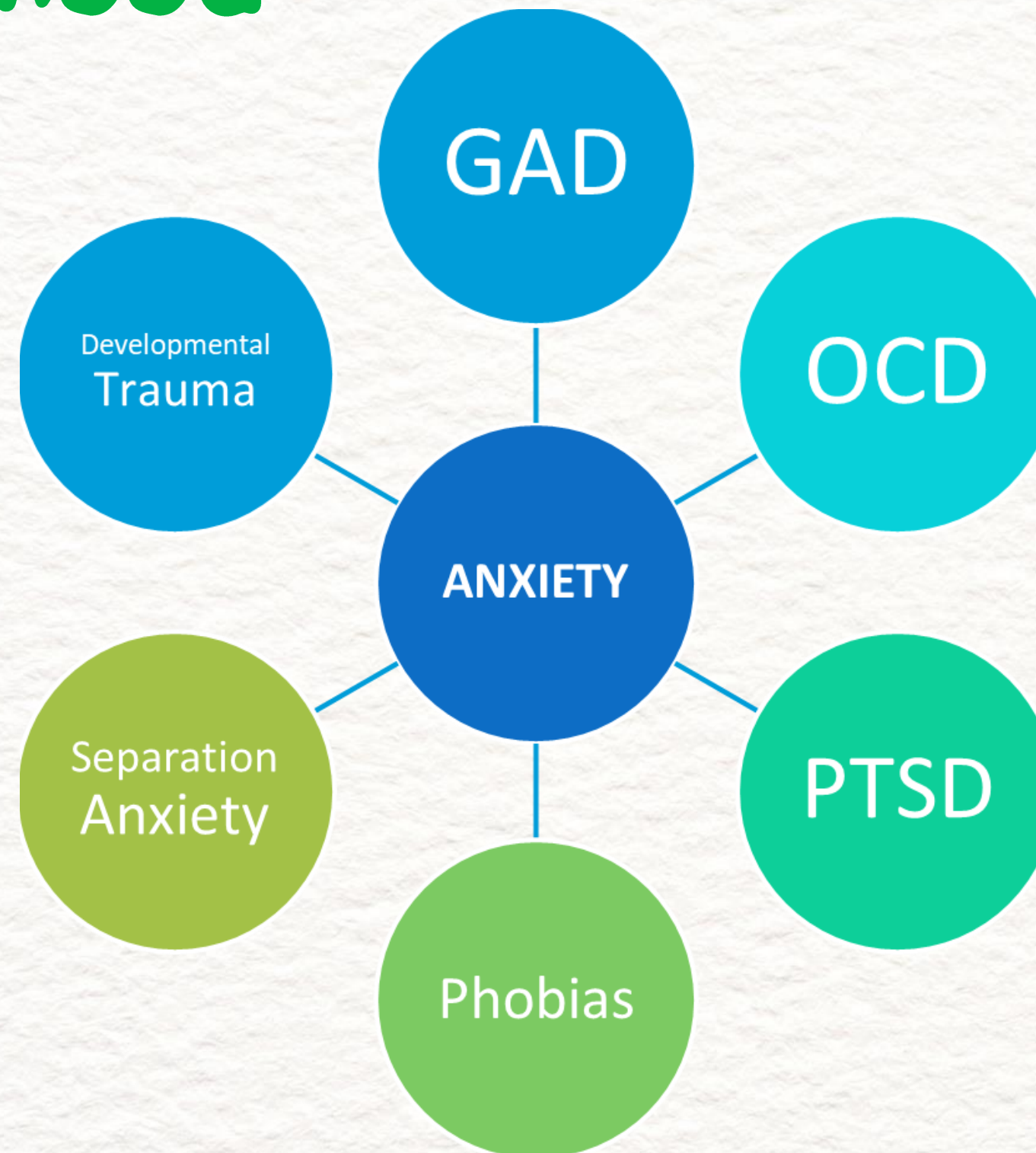
feelings can't be easily controlled



GET TO KNOW ANXIETY



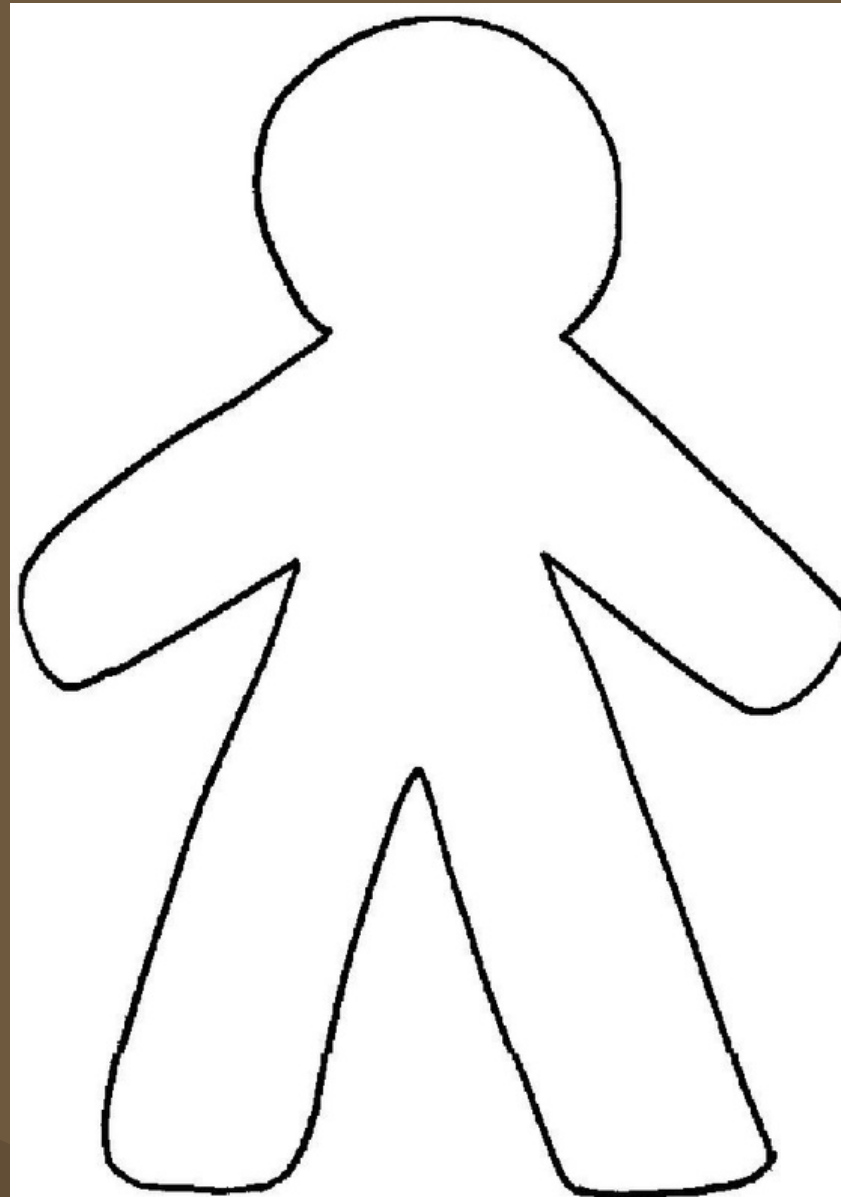
Anxiety disorders of childhood



Symptoms of Anxiety



Symptoms of Anxiety



Anxiety

What do we see?

Thoughts

Behaviours

Feelings



shutterstock.com · 2039128397

Fight, flight, freeze responses in Kids



Fight



Flight



Freeze

Fight, flight, freeze responses in Kids

What does is look anxiety look like in class?

Disruptive behaviour

calling out
not staying in seat, constant
questioning, needing everything
checked/clarified/re-
explained....

Hiding

I need to go to the
bathroom/get a drink...'
wandering in the classroom
climbing

Comfort seeking

shadowing
hugging
inappropriate proximity

Fight, flight, freeze responses in Kids

What does is look anxiety look like in class?

Trying to manipulate sensory input

- **Decrease** - hands over ears, humming/ singing, tapping, telling others to "shut up"...
- **Increase** - wobbling, swing on chair, big noises...

Avoidance and escaping

Runners
Absconders
Smoke-bomber

Emotionality

Crying theatrically
Out-of-proportion reactions...

Anxiety – Effects in the classroom



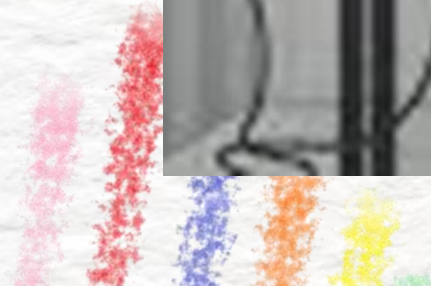
THINKING

- Attention
- Concentration
- Memory problems
- Hypervigilance
- Thinking rigidity
- Problems problem solving
- Academic performance

BEHAVIOUR

- Shyness
- Withdrawal
- Frequently asking questions
- Rapid speech
- Restlessness and fidgety
- Aggression
- Impulsiveness

Strategies to stop the anxiety monster at school



Welcoming and Predictability

Routine, Routine, Routine



Sensory aids



Understanding emotions and anxiety

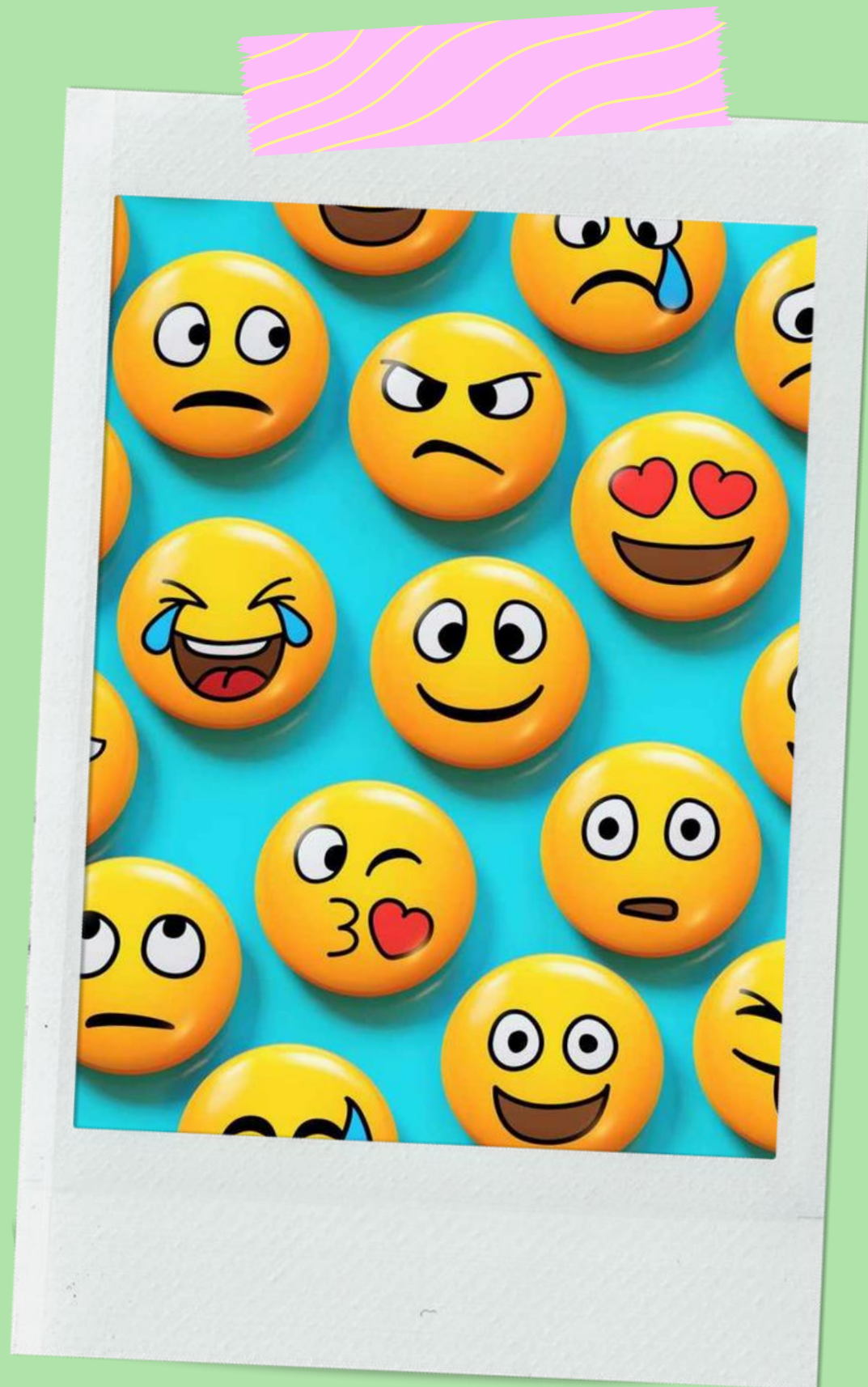
The Fearmometer

- 
1. Easy!
 2. Still Quite Easy.
 3. Just a Little Uneasy.
 4. Starting to Bothersome.
 5. Not too Good.
 6. Getting Tough.
 7. Pretty Tough.
 8. Really Tough.
 9. Can't Handle It.
 10. Out of Control!

Aureen P. Wagner Ph.D. Copyright 2002, 2003



Understanding emotions



List of Emotions

Amazed	Foolish	Overwhelmed
Angry	Frustrated	Peaceful
Annoyed	Furious	Proud
Anxious	Grieving	Relieved
Ashamed	Happy	Resentful
Bitter	Hopeful	Sad
Bored	Hurt	Satisfied
Comfortable	Inadequate	Scared
Confused	Insecure	Self-conscious
Content	Inspired	Shocked
Depressed	Irritated	Silly
Determined	Jealous	Stupid
Disdain	Joy	Suspicious
Disgusted	Lonely	Tense
Eager	Lost	Terrified
Embarrassed	Loving	Trapped
Energetic	Miserable	Uncomfortable
Envious	Motivated	Worried
Excited	Nervous	Worthless



Debrief



There are always going to be bumps in the road. It is important that there is some form of debrief to help the child learn from what has happened as well as not feeling like they are a failure

Debrief

How I Feel

I feel: _____

Happy	Mad	Sad	Glad
Worried	Excited	Bored	Scared
Annoyed	Upset	Sick	Nervous

I feel this way because:



This is what I did about it:



Something else I could have done is:



Ask for help	Take deep breaths	Walk away
Do something else	Tell an adult	Talk to a friend

Plan, Plan, Plan

- Staff review of plans and procedures
- It is important that measures are both achievable and not too arduous for those involved, as well as achieving the overall goal of reducing anxiety.
- Debrief prompts to build future problem-solving strategies

program
provides
monitoring
IEP
team
accountability
education
consultation
well
responsibility
cyc
teach
specialis
participa
involves
assists
align
group
continuity
developed
one
inside
various
counselor
guardian
documented
evaluating
individualiz
dependin
Developm
assist
parent
community
assist
parent
team

Want to know more?



- Beyond blue - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au>
- Anxiety BC - www.anxietybc.com
- St Luke's Innovative Resources - <http://innovativeresources.org>
- Raising Children Network - http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/anxiety_and_fears.html
- Kids Matter <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/mental-health-difficulties/anxiety/anxiety-how-anxiety->





Thank You!



Luke Hanley

Principal, Arndell School

luke.hanley@det.nsw.edu.au

