

How do we manage our own  
anxiety

# anxiety

- Cognitive
  - Baby story
- Physiologic
  - Power of break , of exercise
- Behavioral– avoid avoidance

# Rosmarin scientific american

- We cannot tolerate situations that are uncontrollable and uncertain. Indeed, we cannot control nor predict what will happen next with COVID-19. In reality, self-quarantine and social distancing can slow, but not stop, viral contagion.
- Ironically, once we accept the reality that our sense of certainty and control is an illusion—once we understand and appreciate our inherent vulnerability—we emerge with the inner strength to face crises with greater equanimity.

# Clarity of feelings\*

- Identifying and understanding one's emotions clearly and in a manner that interprets negative emotions as beneficial for achieving goals has been associated with better anxiety management
- Clarity helps by
  - Helping the depressed and anxious individual determine which emotion regulation strategies are called for in this situation
  - E.g. : labeling an anxious feeling and understanding that the anxiety is due to an upcoming exam can help the student decide to work harder and actively prepare for the challenge

\*Strack, J. Must we suffer to succeed? When anxiety boosts motivation and performance. *Journal of Individual Difference* (2017) 38(2)13-124.

# THE POWER OF NAMING THE MONSTER: LABELING ONE'S EMOTIONS AND ANXIETY

- Affect labeling - simply verbally labeling the emotional content of a frightening situation, even if one is not trying to change one's emotional response, has been associated with reduced anxiety levels at both the neurological and experiential level.
- Affect labeling, is associated with decreases in amygdala activity, and with correlated reductions in self-reported distress
- The common and distinct neural bases of affect labeling and reappraisal in healthy adults  
[Lisa J. Burklund](#)<sup>1</sup>,  
[Front Psychol.](#) 2014; 5: 221.  
Published online 2014 Mar 24. doi: [10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00221](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00221)  
PMCID: PMC3970015  
PMID: [24715880](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24715880/)  
\*

- children

# CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN

- Suddenly almost everybody around me is nervous
- Children (like adults) do best with structure and routine—
- We are wired for connection with other- especially children- isolation from friends is difficult and confusing
- Unable to see grandparents
- Feeling stuck in apartment and inability to go to the building's playroom

# TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

- PROCESS NOT EVENT BUT SIGNIFY IMPORTANCE BY FORMAL DISCUSSION: Hold family discussion in comfortable place with no distractions, cell phones and other distractions off
- Separate discussion with younger children begin by asking them what they know— remember to be understood, first understand
- Minimize exposure to media— research after 9/11 found that heavy media exposure was a PTSD risk factor for children
- Encourage questions:
  - Validate feelings
  - Consider use of art, writing, and music
  - Explain that not every respiratory disease is COVID-19
  - Check back with children when situation changes



# Children (continued)

- Promote continued virtual contact with educators, extended family, and friends
- Focus on hope and temporary nature (understanding child time)
- Consistent schedules including bedtime, meals and exercise
- Required helpfulness— power of chesed for kids
- Boredom. Loneliness, anxiety and even panic are normal reactions to an abnormal situation

- Resilience in the face of quarantine

TAL BEN SHAHAR RESILIENCE  
COVID

# AFFECT

- ALLOW SELF TO EXPERIENCE FULL RANGE OF EMOTIONS
- STRESS, ANGER, LOVE LET IT FLOW THROUGH YOU
- ALL EMOTIONS FLOW THROUGH ONE PIPELINE IF I BLOCK ONE I AM NOT ALLOWING JOY AND LOVE ROOM
- **GOLDA MEIR THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW HOW TO WEEP WITH WHOLE HEART DON'T KNOW HOW TO LAUGH EITHER**
  - NAME THE MONSTER– BROCAS AREA TALK ABOUT FEELINGS
- PENNEBAKER WRITING JOURNALING- FOR FIVE OR 15 MINUTES ALLOW TEARS: BEETHOVEN STORY
- IF WE WANT TO FULFILL HAPPINESS WE NEED TO ALLOW UNHAPPINES

# GRATITUDE

- THOSE WHO KEEP GRATITUDE JOURNAL ARE HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER
- COUNTING BLESSINGS
- SHAAREI TZEDEK HOSPITAL STORY
- YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR EVEN IN TOUGH TIMES MIGHT BE GREAT MEAL, OR SMILE, SHARE GRATITUDE WITH OTHERS, SEE BEYOND SITUATION
- BARBARA FREDRICKSON BROADEN AND BUILD WE LOOK OUTWARDS AND BUILD PAINFUL EMOTIONS WE NARROW AND CONSTRICT BY EXPRESSING GRATITUDE WE START UPWARD SPIRAL
- APPRECIATE HAS TWO MEANINGS THANKS AND GR
- WHEN YOU APPRECIATE THE GOOD THE GOOD APPRECIATES
- TO APPRECIATE ALL THOSE AROUND US DOING THEIR BEST

# BEHAVIOR

- **1. EXERCISE**– LEAST LIKELY TO EXERCISE DURING EXAMS THESE ARE TIMES MOST IMPORTANT SO MANY ONLINE PROGRAMS
- RESEARCH SHOWS **EXERCISE AS EFFECTIVE AS MOST POWERFUL MEDS** FOR DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY RELEASES EPINEPHRINE DOPAMINE BAVIAK SHOWS THIS NOW THAT WE ORDER ONLINE WE NEED TO EXERCISE
- **NOT EXERCISING IS LIKE TAKING A DEPRESSANT**
- **2. RELATIONSHIPS**
- CONNECTION AND PAIN RELIEF– FINDING OF DR DUKE AT EMORY SENSE OF CONNECTION-
- DATE TREES
- NUMBER ONE PREDICTOR OF HAPPINESS QUALITY TIME WITH PEOPLE WE CARE ABOUT AND WHO CARE ABOUT US
- ALSO NUMBER ONE PREDICTOR OF PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
- PUT TIME ASIDE AS DAILY RITUAL TO CONNECT
- FRANCIS BACON BRITISH PHILOSOPHER:
- “FRIENDSHIP DOUBLES JOYS AND CUTS GRIEF IN HALF “

# COGNITION

- **DISTRACTION:**
  - USUALLY VIEWED AS NEGATIVE, NOT ALWAYS NEGATIVE UPSIDE IS IN TODAY'S WORLD WE ARE BOMBARDED WITH NEWS PICTURE THAT EVERYTHING IS TERRIBLE NOTHING IS GOOD OR BAD
  - WATCHING COMEDY OR MUSIC OR POEM FIND HEALTHY DISTRACTIONS MEANS WHAT WE ARE DOING IS GETTING MORE REALISTIC VIEW OF REALITY MEDIA IS MAGNIFYING GLASS DISTRACT TO GET MORE REALISTIC VIEW BY BROADENING PERSPECTIVES
- **FIND BENEFITS**
  - **BENEFIT FINDING OPPOSITE OF FAULT FINDING**
    - ASK SELF WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO SITUATION I APPRECIATE LIFE MORE THAN I DID BEFORE, POINT IS NOT THAT THINGS ARE FOR THE BEST WE HAVE A CHOICE CAN CHOOSE TO MAKE THE BEST WE DIDN'T ASK TO BE QUARANTINED WE CAN CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THE ABC'S PERMISSION TO BE HUMAN WHETHER PLEASURABLE OR PAINFUL, GRATITUDE ALONE OR TOGETHER, MOVER EXECCISE , INVEST IN RELATIONSHIP, DITRACT AND FIND BENEFITS
  - THOREAU SAID THE FAULT FINDER WILL FIND FAULT EVEN IN PARADISE

# Financial Stress: Families and Children





# Financial Crisis as a Teachable Moment: Affluenza: Three Hypothesized Causes

- Never enough to be just average
- Parental unavailability
- Lack of required helpfulness



# Solutions: The Five C's

Conflict

Communication

Control

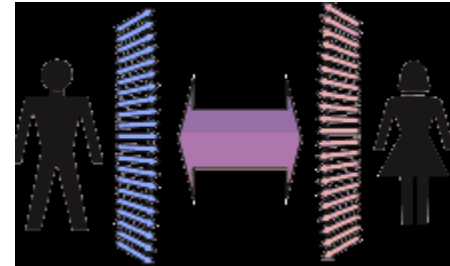
Coping

Connection

# The Five C's:

## Conflict

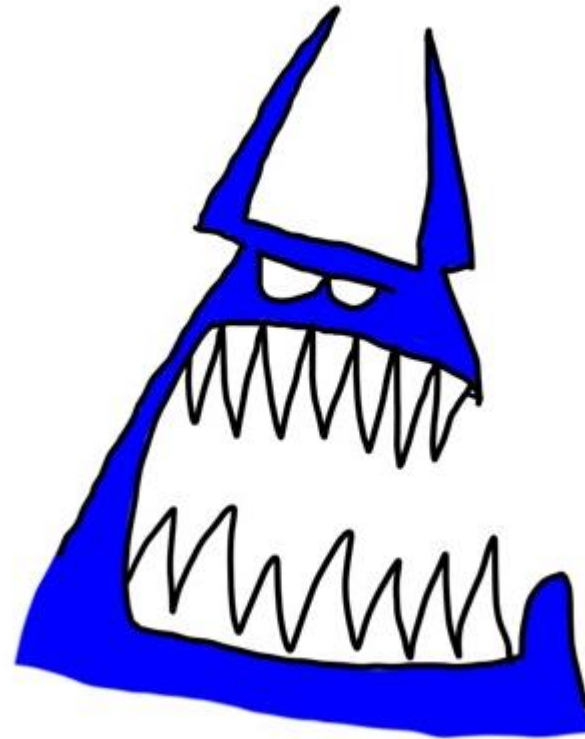
- Conflict- exposure to parental conflict is more damaging than the actual financial distress
  - Iowa studies
  - Research on children exposed to domestic conflict and behavioral and health outcomes
  - Relative deprivation—
    - Peace corp example



- “You don’t have to think alike- you have to think together”

# Communication: Name the Monster

- Communication-
  - lighting up Broca's area – survivor of the world trade center collapse and analogy to the seder
  - Yom Kippur war study
  - To name the monster is to conquer it



# Control: From Passive to Active

- Control
  - LA school sniper study
    - Children of equal proximity – resilience in child who took earthquake preparation course
  - Rabbi Hirsch on the choice of eagles as a metaphor
  - Studies on required helpfulness—three island studies



# Coping

- Coping
  - Five coping rooms
  - Building up a toolbox of coping mechanisms
    - SPARCS approach to coping



# Connection

- Connection-
  - Mentor
    - Mentoring literature on outcomes tied to length of relationship and adequacy of mentor training
- Support from:
  - Parents
  - Siblings
  - Adults outside of family
  - Partnerships with school , synagogue





# Helping Children in Difficult Financial Times

- Beware of indirect exposure
  - Monitor conversations
  - Remember children don't have same perspective adults do so they may have exaggerated fears because of what they overhear –
    - Child who heard his father was “fired”

# Pay Attention to Temperament

- Anxious, depressed children and children with prior loss are at greatest risk
- Literature on media exposure in those populations
- Difference between information seekers and distracters

# Longitudinal Research: Correlates of Resilience

- Putting family first is protective
  - When parents are overwhelmed and become angry, irritable or withdrawn, and consequently offer children low levels of support academic, behavioral, and social problems ensue
- Parental connection to synagogue, civic organizations and schools was protective
- High expressed emotion most corrosive
  - E.g. high levels of irritability, yelling and fighting between parents is more damaging than actual financial privation

# Resilience for Parents

- Marital support
- Effective problem solving skills
- Sense of mastery

# Required Helpfulness

- Resilience literature on helping others without overburdening as core ingredient in tough financial times
- Suomi study on financial risk

# DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

- PRESCHOOL CHILDREN TEND TO RESPOND TO TRAUMATIC EVENTS BY MANIFESTING GLOBAL, DISORGANIZED REACTIONS, TRAUMA SPECIFIC FEARS, REGRESSION, CLINGINESS OR IRRITABILITY
- LEVEL OF PRESCHOOLER'S DYSFUNCTION IS HIGHLY CORRELATED WITH LEVEL OF PARENTAL DISTRESS

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:  
PRESCHOOLERS

- Most have difficulty understanding the reason for parental fighting which may be viewed as their fault, or punishment
  - Concrete thinking can increase chance of confusion
    - E.g. can misunderstand words such as being “fired”

## Adolescent Developmental Issues: Example of Impact of High Level Marital Conflict

- Increased sense of self and autonomy from family
- Financial stress can compromise need for autonomy by feeling need to be home more to support parents, babysit younger siblings. lessening opportunities for sleep away camp, opportunity to attend non-commuter college etc



## Adolescent Developmental Issues (continued)

- Increased peer group influence and desire for acceptance
  - May be more embarrassed by changed financial circumstances
  - May try to escape stress at home by increasing time away from home
  - May turn to drugs to avoid dealing with family issues

## Adolescent Developmental Issues (continued): Example of Impact of High Level Marital Conflict

- Formal operations and search for meaning in adolescence
- May lead to heightened search for meaning, reconsideration of career choices etc

# The Poor Man Has Only Himself

## Maharal Gevuras Hashem 51

- כי המצה נקרא לחם עוני הפך מצה עשירה, שכאשר יש בה שמן ודבש נקראת עשירה כי הדבר הזה מעשיר הלחם, וזה כי העני שאין לו אלא עצמו ואין לו ממון רק עצמו וגופו, והמצה גם כן כאשר אין בה רק עצם העיסה שעצמות העיסה הוא המים והקמח וזהו עצמות עיסה ובזה הוי לחם עוני,

# A Slave to Our Possessions

- קשיא כי העניות בעצמו הוראה על הגאולה שאין ענין הגאולה רק שיוצא ואין לו שום צירוף אל זולתו, לא כמו העבד שאינו עומד בעצמו ויש לו צירוף אל זולתו הוא האדון, לכך הדבר שיש בו עשירות אינו עומד בעצמו רק יש לו צירוף אל קנינו ואין בזה גאולה, אבל הדבר שיש בו עניות ואין לו קנין רק עומד בעצמו שייך בו גאולה

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