

Overview of Anxiety Disorders



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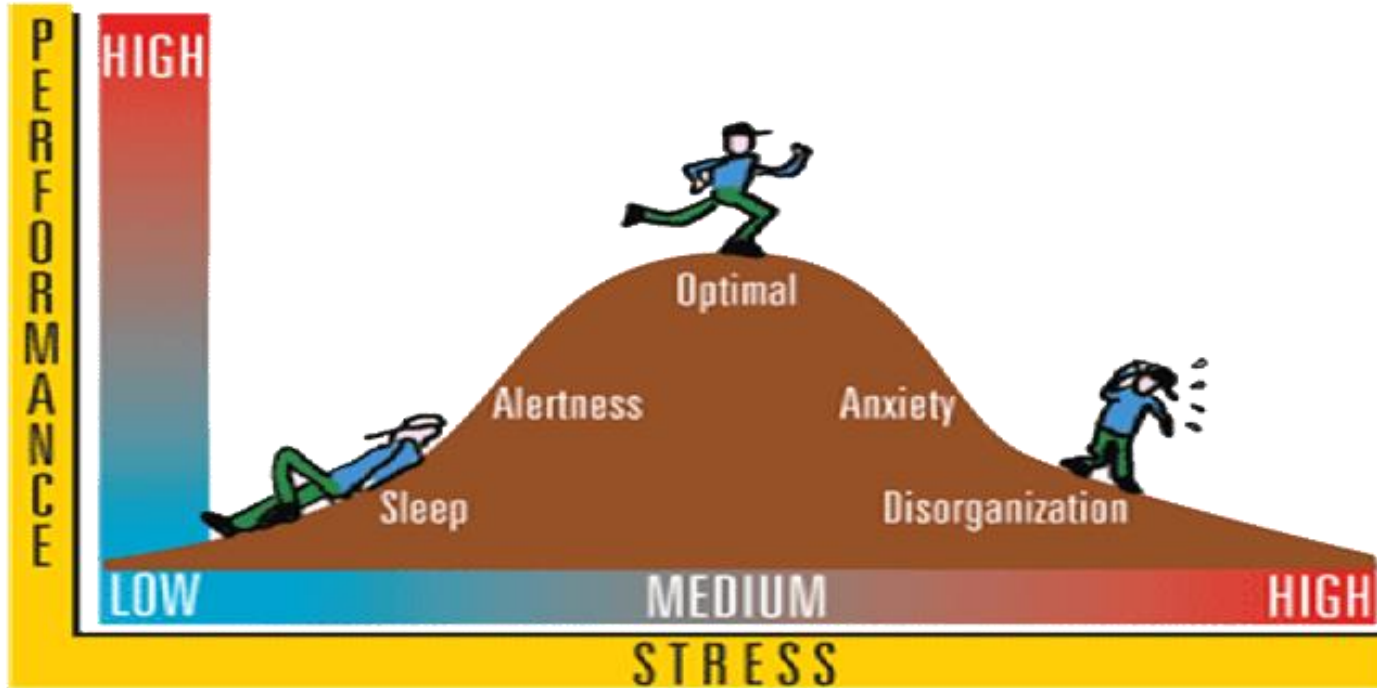
What is Anxiety?



Stress Response: Fight, Flight or Freeze



Yerkes-Dodson Curve



False Alarm

- Alarms = Helpful
- False Alarms = Unhelpful



Emotional Response



Physiological Symptoms

- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Fatigue
- Sweaty palms
- Difficulty breathing



Cognitive Responses

Racing thoughts

Negative thoughts of future

Inaccurate interpretation of threat

Thoughts of being judged

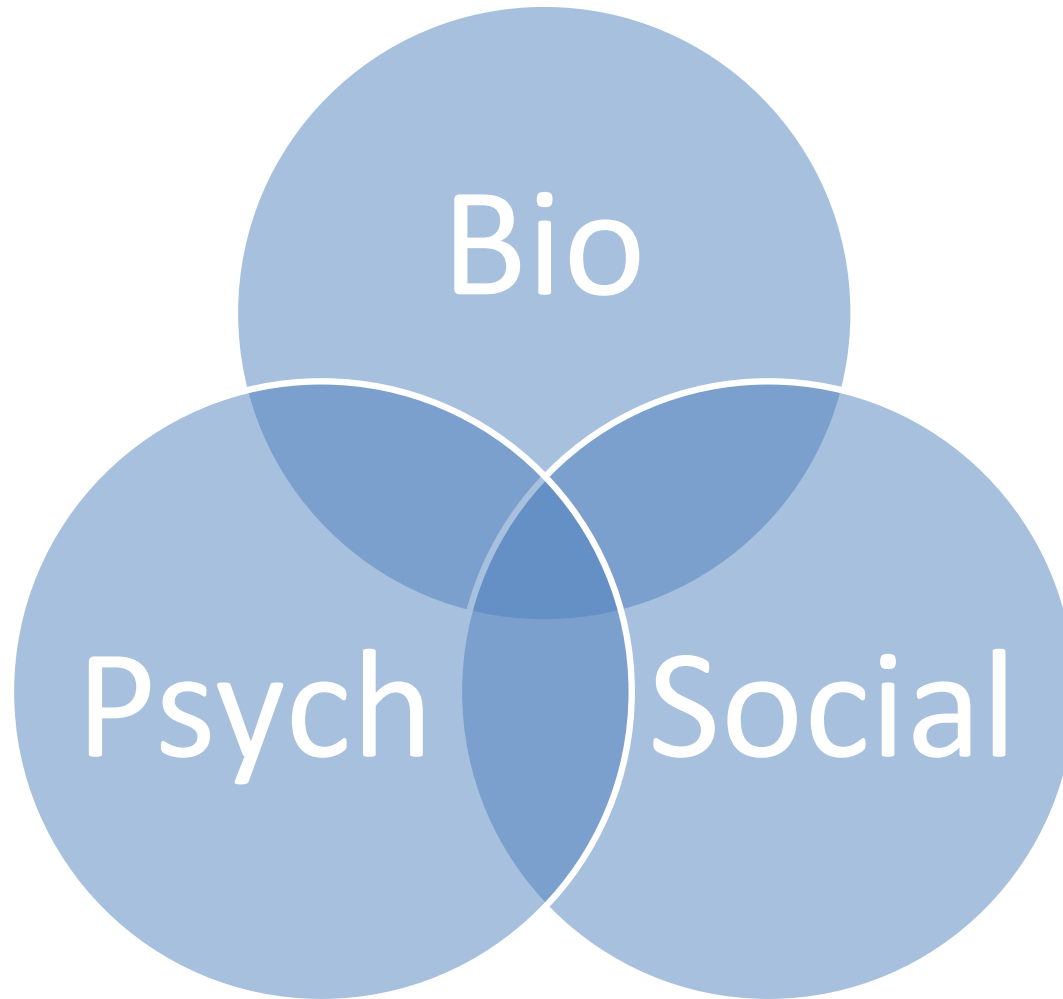
What We See

- Avoidance
- Restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Mind “goes blank”
- Excessive questioning
- Difficulty sleeping
- Perfectionism
- Emotional dysregulation
 - Tantrums
 - Irritability
 - Crying

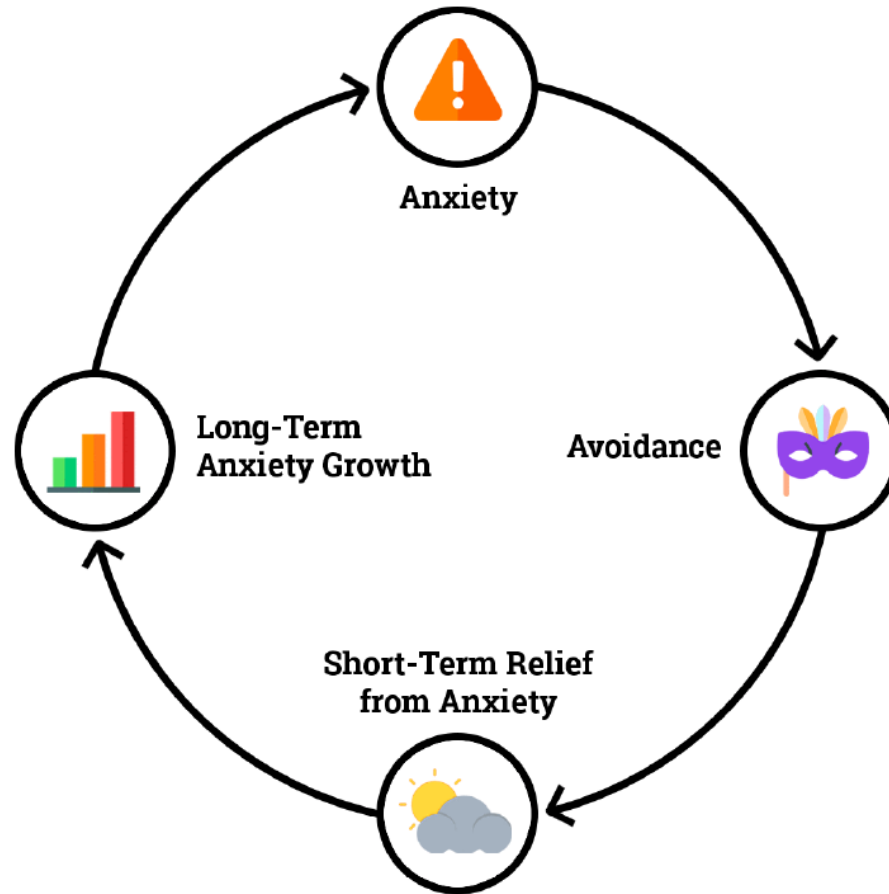




What causes anxiety?



Cycle of Anxiety



What is the Cycle of Anxiety?

Safety Behaviors

- Avoidance
- Excessive checking
- Seeking reassurance
- Over-preparing

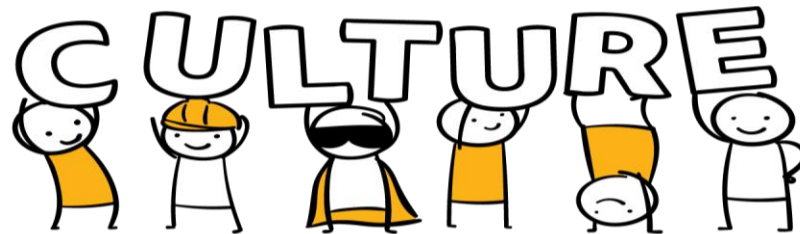


Other Perpetuating Factors

- Caregiver accommodations
 - Allowing to opt out of social activities
 - Speaking on behalf of child
 - Allowing to sleep in Caregiver's bed
 - Excessive reassurance
- Environmental accommodations
 - Online schooling
 - Quarantine
 - Chaotic home

Cultural Considerations

- Parenting styles (accommodations) and modeling/behaviors
- Views on mental health and need for treatment
- Impact of racism, violence, or discrimination
- Caregiver's mental health status
- Access to mental health resources or family's trust in providers



Therapy Treatment

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

- Challenging thought distortions
- Decreasing avoidant behaviors
- Increasing use of coping skills

- **Exposure Response Prevention**

- Exposure to stressful stimuli
- Resisting urge to engage in safety behaviors
- Gradual decrease of anxious response



What School Staff Can Do

- Create structure and routine
- Build a relationship with the student
- Normalize the emotions
- Practice coping skills
- Give breaks (with limits) when needed
- Collaborate with teachers, parents, and counselor (if available) to determine appropriate accommodations (i.e. extra time on tests)
- Provide resources to families
 - [On Our Sleeves](#)



