



Approaching Anxiety

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Key messages!

- Yes, anxiety disorders are common among children and adults with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome.
- Yes, anxiety disorders can be treated
- Yes, parents can make a real difference
- Anxiety has an impact on the whole family
- No, it is never too late to start working on anxiety

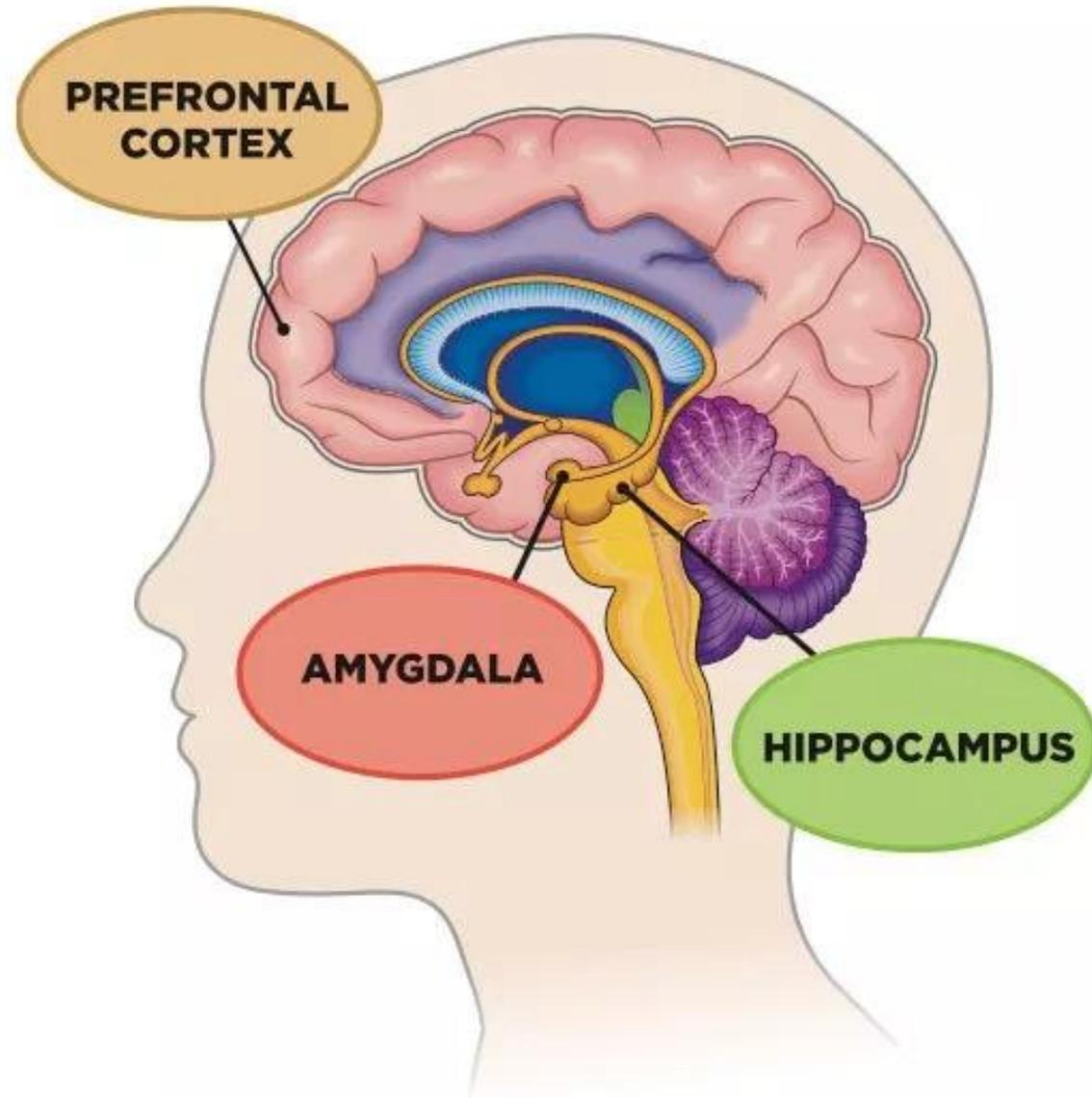


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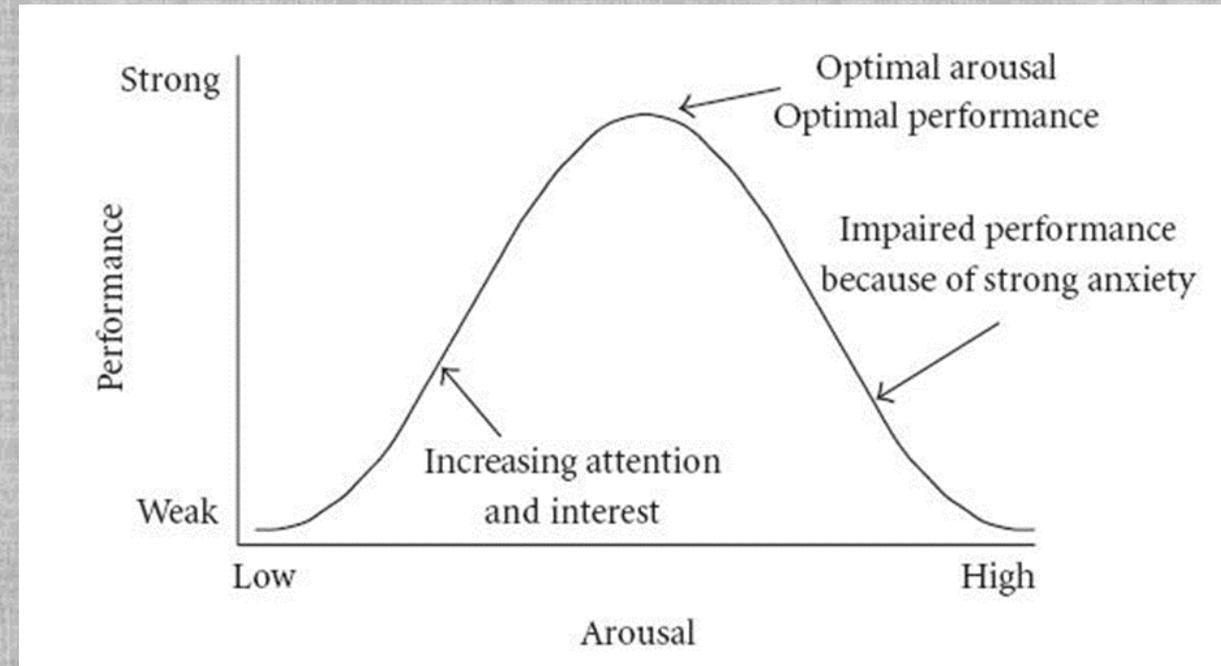


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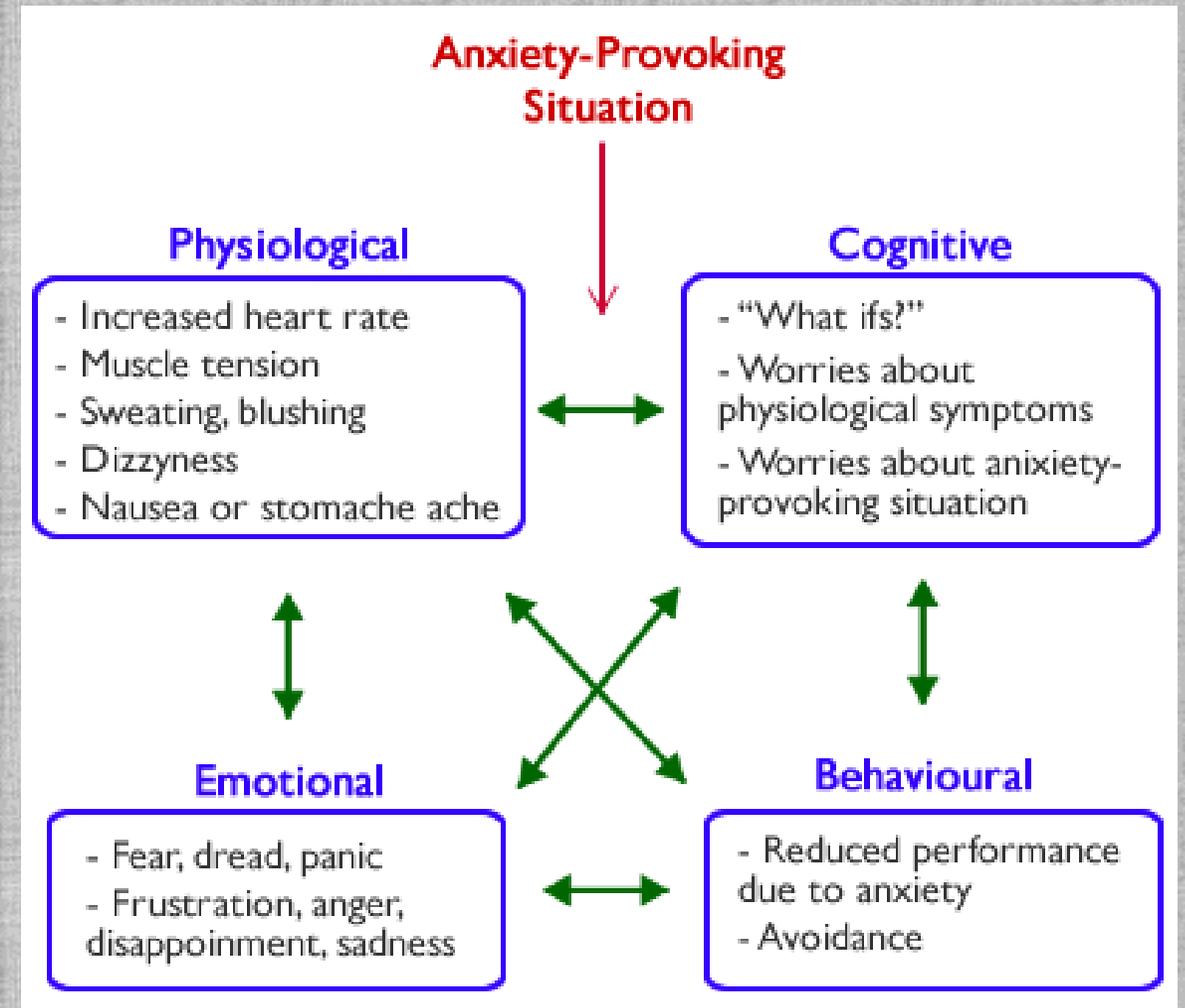


- Fear
 - the emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat
- Anxiety
 - anticipation of future threat.
 - strong feelings of worry, nervousness, trepidation and fear
 - Natural feelings, necessary for survival.



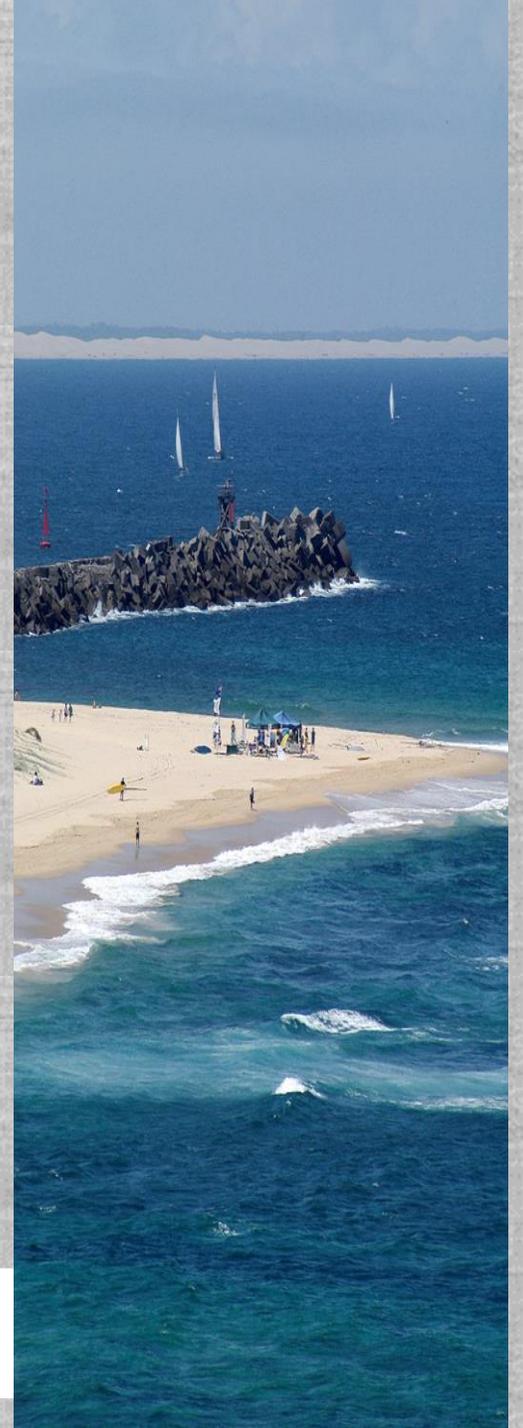
Some symptoms of anxiety

- “What if” questions
- Avoidance
- Excessive need for reassurance
- Excessive physical complaints
- Sleep disturbances
- Difficulties with concentration, attention
- Perfectionism
- Easily distressed
- Lying
- Aggression/anger control issues



How do you know if it is ok?

- How old is the person?
- Frequency of behaviour
 - Every day? Several times per day?
- What is the person worried about?
- Intensity
 - Tears and tantrums for 'small' things?
- Avoidance
 - What is the person doing to avoid the event or thing?
- Can you reason with the person?
- How is daily life impacted?



Psychiatric Disorders From Childhood to Adulthood in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome: Results From the International Consortium on Brain and Behavior in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome

Maude Schneider, M.Sc., Martin Debbané, Ph.D., Anne S. Bassett, M.D., F.R.C.P.C., Eva W.C. Chow, M.D., F.R.C.P.C., Wai Lun Alan Fung, M.D., Sc.D., Marianne B.M. van den Bree, Ph.D., Michael Owen, M.D., Ph.D., Kieran C. Murphy, M.D., Ph.D., Maria Niarchou, Ph.D.,

- In the general population
 - ~ 7% of children and 14% of adults live with anxiety disorders
- In 22q11.2 deletion syndrome
 - 30% (57% among women)
 - Relatively stable over time
 - More common among children and adolescents
 - Higher anxiety is associated with poorer adaptive functioning
 - Can be associated with aggression and anger control issues



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What can make anxiety worse?

- Avoidance
 - Consequences of avoidance – low competence
- Cognitive biases
 - Catastrophizing - predicting the worst
- Negative experiences
- Parental behaviours
 - Overprotection
 - Insensitivity
 - Not acknowledging negative emotions
- Focus on worries
 - 'Are you sure you are ok?

What can make it better?

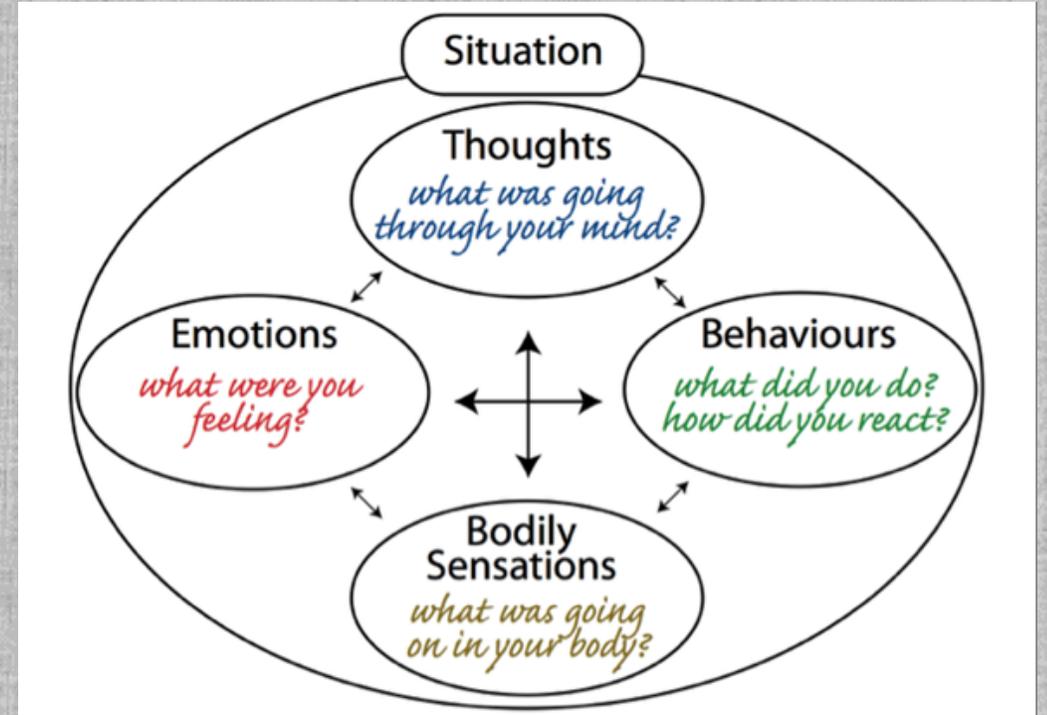
- For children with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome anxiety is not a choice!
- However, anxiety can be reduced.

- Teach approach not avoidance
- Encourage competence
- Improve confidence
- Success



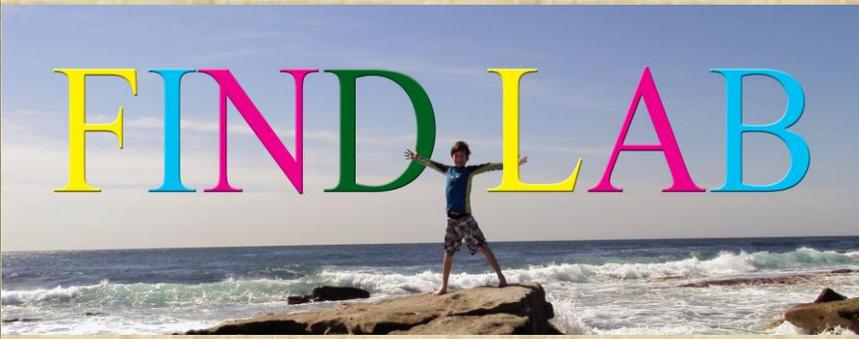
How?

- Confirm emotions, provide ideas, ignore
- Gradual goals with proportional rewards (deliberate plan)
- Model behaviours and thoughts– “I was worried today... it was difficult but I...”
- Change roles– “can you help me...”
- Role-play to reduce uncertainty



- Externalise worries and fears
- Encourage competence, gradually
- Allow and encourage mistakes
- How far can 'push/encourage' my child?
- Planned worry time – talk, discuss, write down - put in a box
- Be assertive





If you want to participate in online research on 22q11.2 deletion or learn more about what we do.

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