

Anxiety and Unmet Needs

ADHD ESSENTIALS PODCAST

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The Emotional Impact of COVID

Anxiety due to the continuing pandemic may look like, or present through:

- Displaced Frustration or Anger
- Numbing out
- Exhaustion
- Resistance or Oppositionality
- Poor Follow-Through
- Boredom or Apathy
- A Strong Need for Control

What Does Anxiety Feel Like?

- A nagging feeling at your stomach
- Shortness of Breath
- Rapid Heartbeat
- Dizziness

What is Anxiety?

- Your body's natural response to stress. Fear or apprehension about what's going to happen. (The first day of school, trying out for a play, or presenting in front of the class, etc...)
- A normal, often useful, emotion that causes increased alertness, fear, and physical signs, such as a rapid heart rate, and shallow breathing.

Anxiety Wants to be a Supervillain

Anxiety wants to rule the world. The more ground we give up, the stronger it will become.

It is a dictator! It will take over as much ground as it can.

Anxiety Wants You to be a Supervillain

We feel safer when we know what to expect.

When we “misbehave”, we know what’s going to happen.

Consistency eases anxiety

“Misbehavior” gets more consistent results.

Obvious responses are easier to process

“Misbehavior” gets more consistent results.

What Causes Anxiety?

Uncertainty (Emotional)

Pressure to Perform

Lack of Control (the kid or the adult)

Failure (and the fear of it!)

The Anxiety of Others

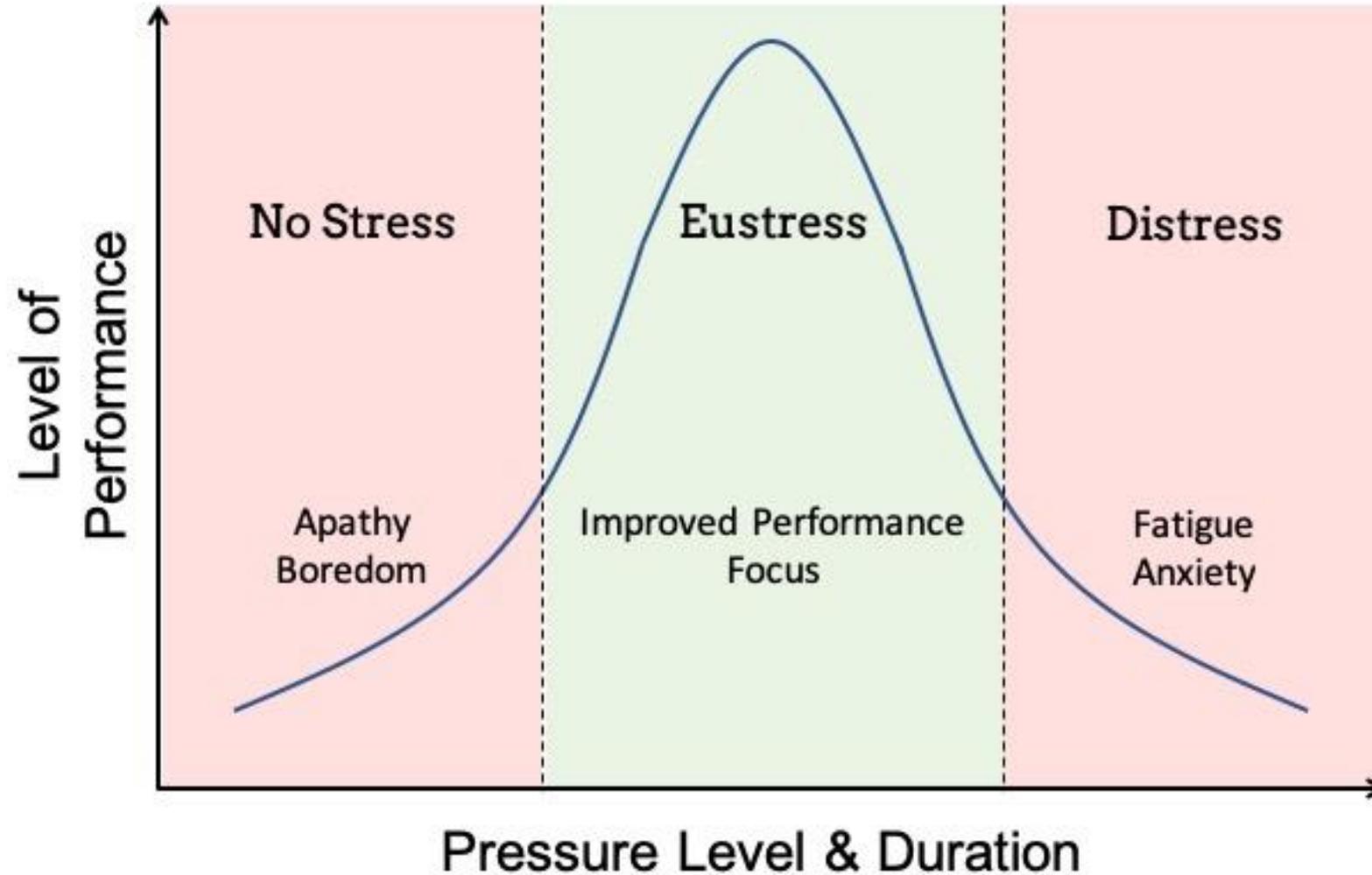
Uncomfortableness (Physical)

Soreness or Pain

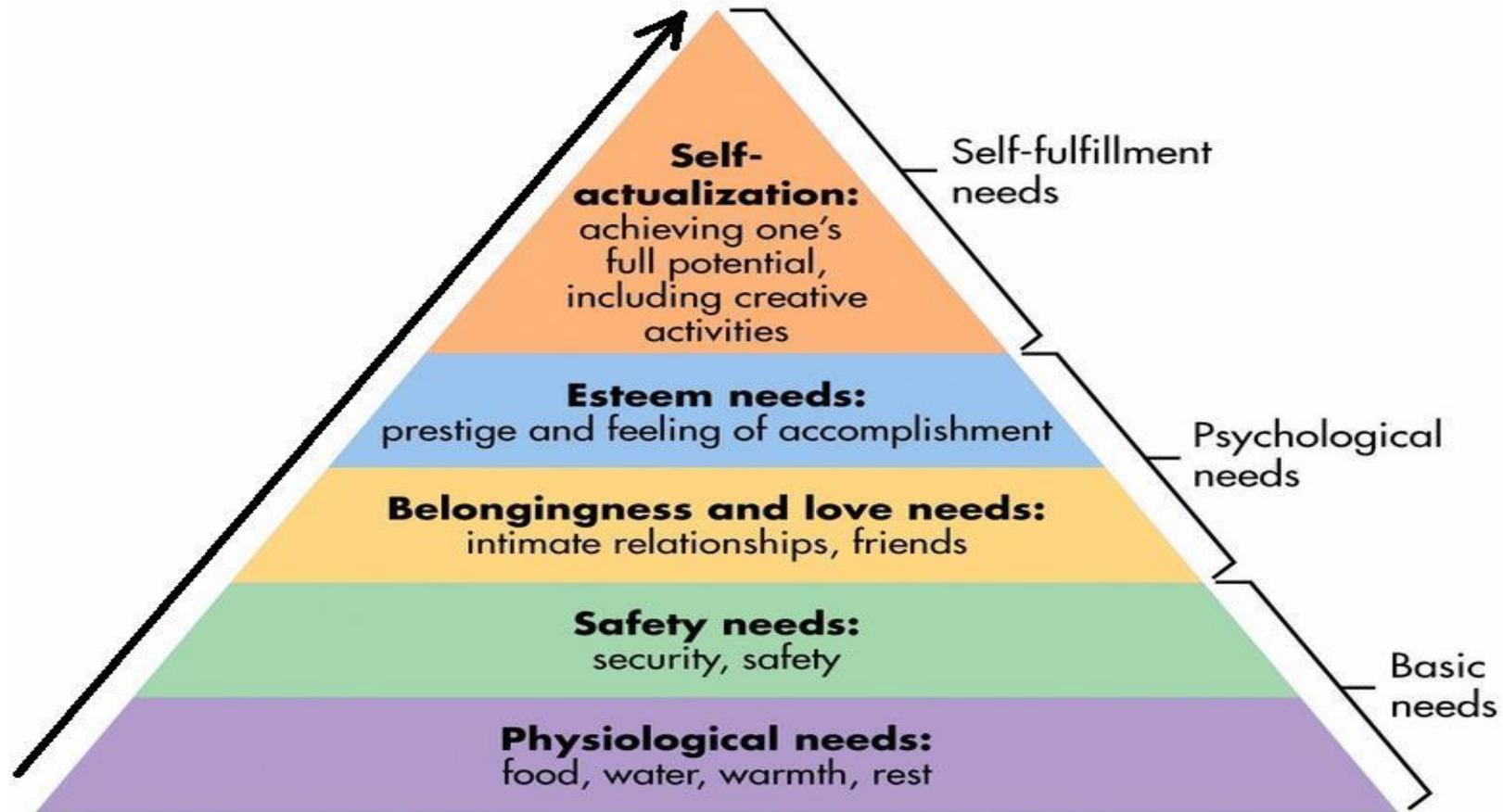
Allergies

Stimulant Use

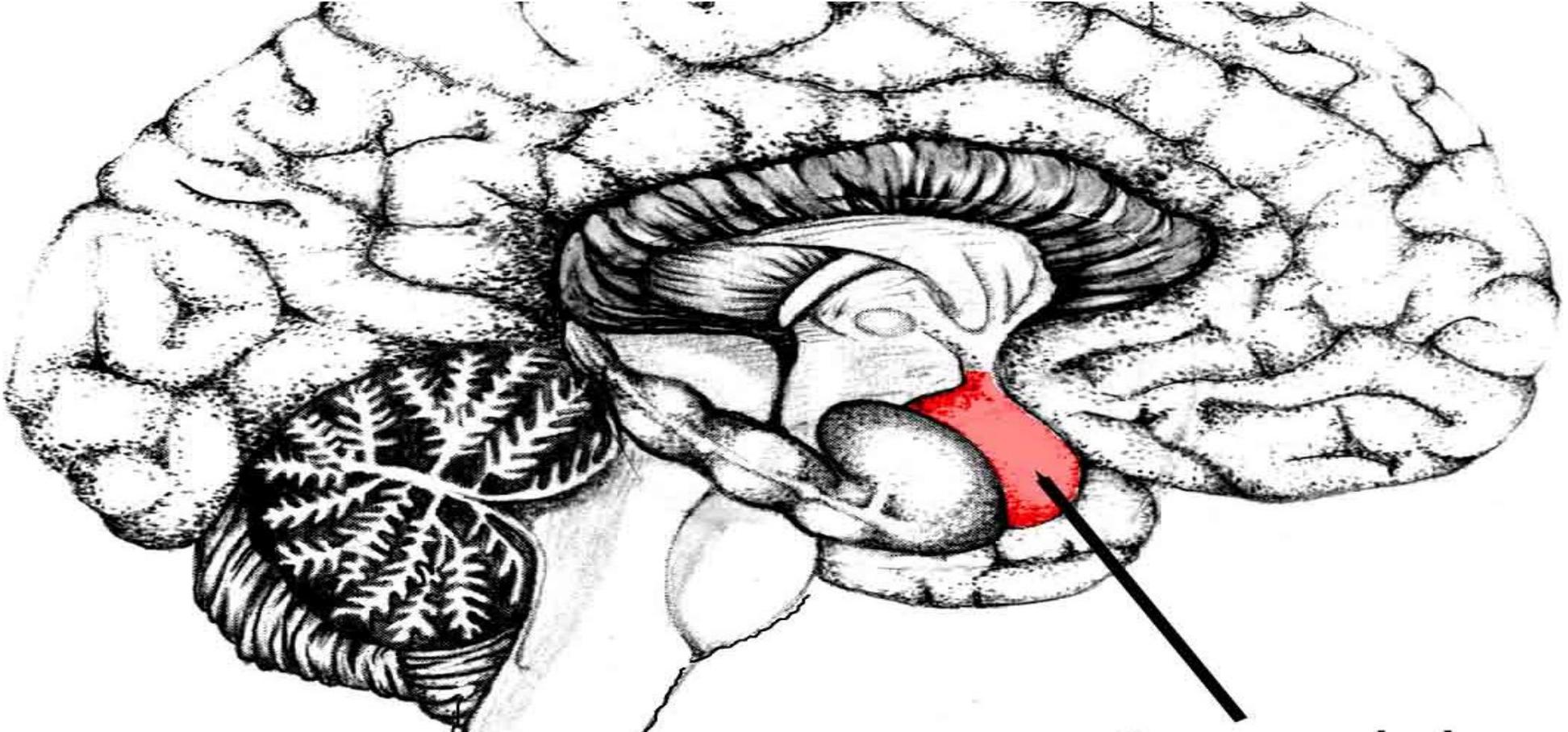
No Stress vs. Eustress vs. Distress



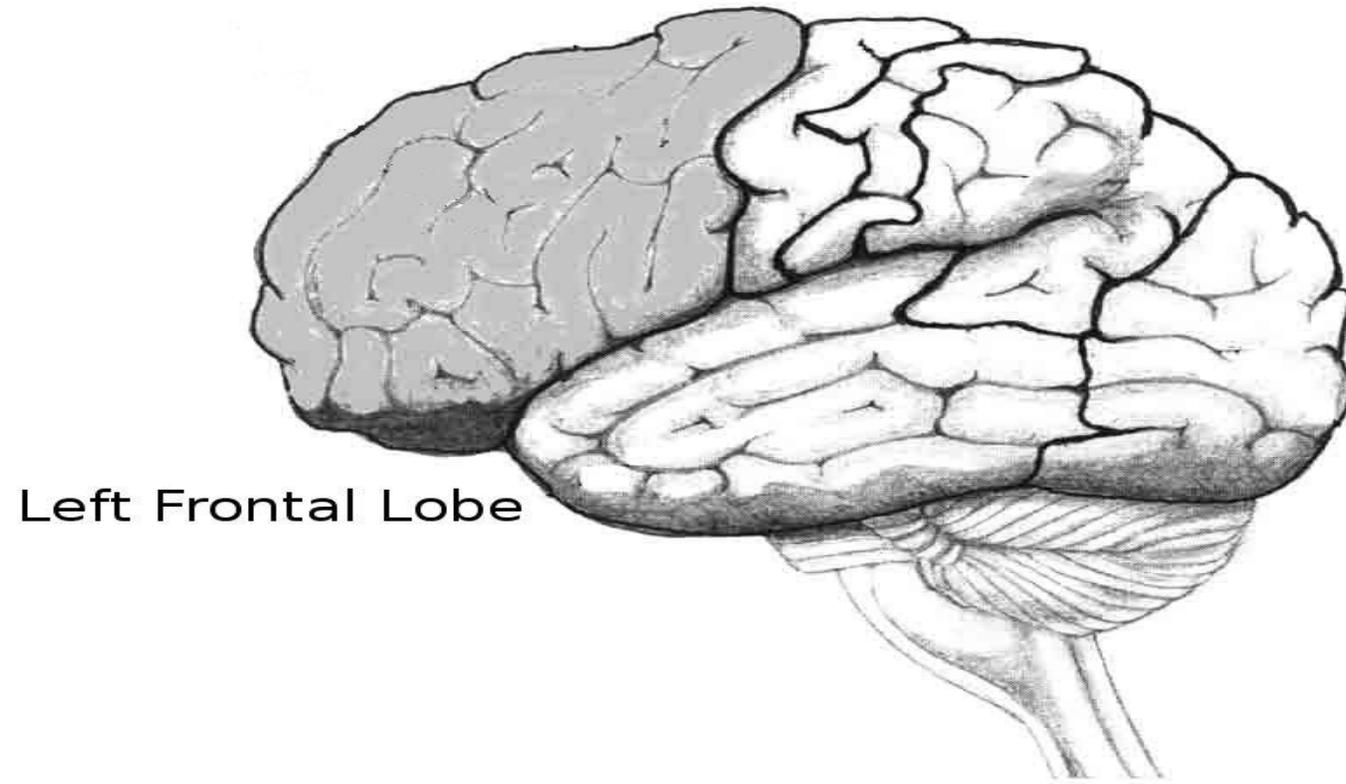
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



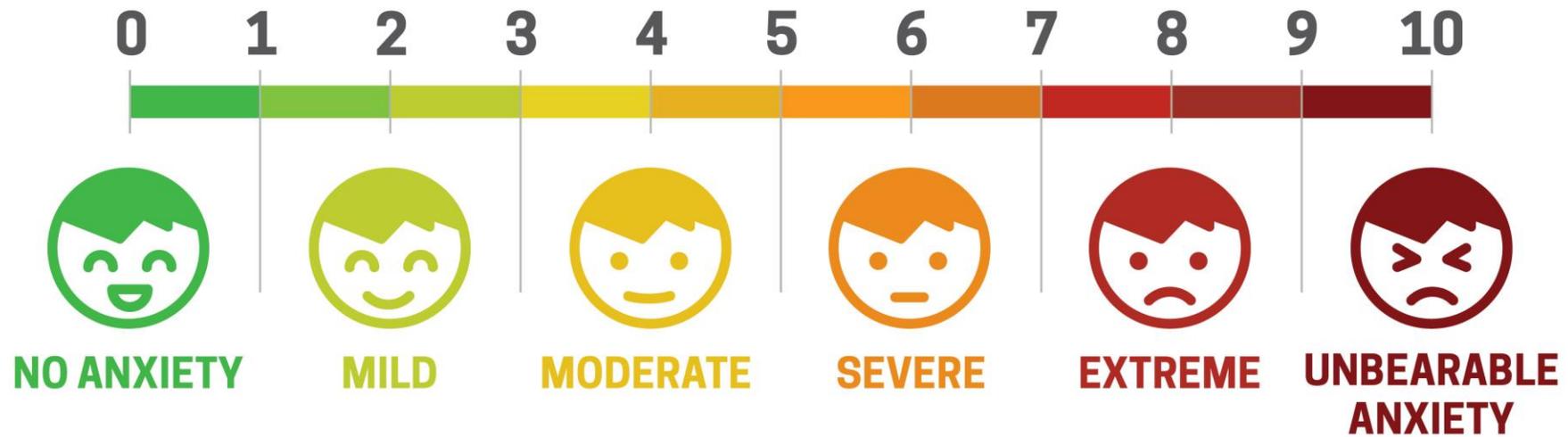
The Amygdala = Safety (Emotions)



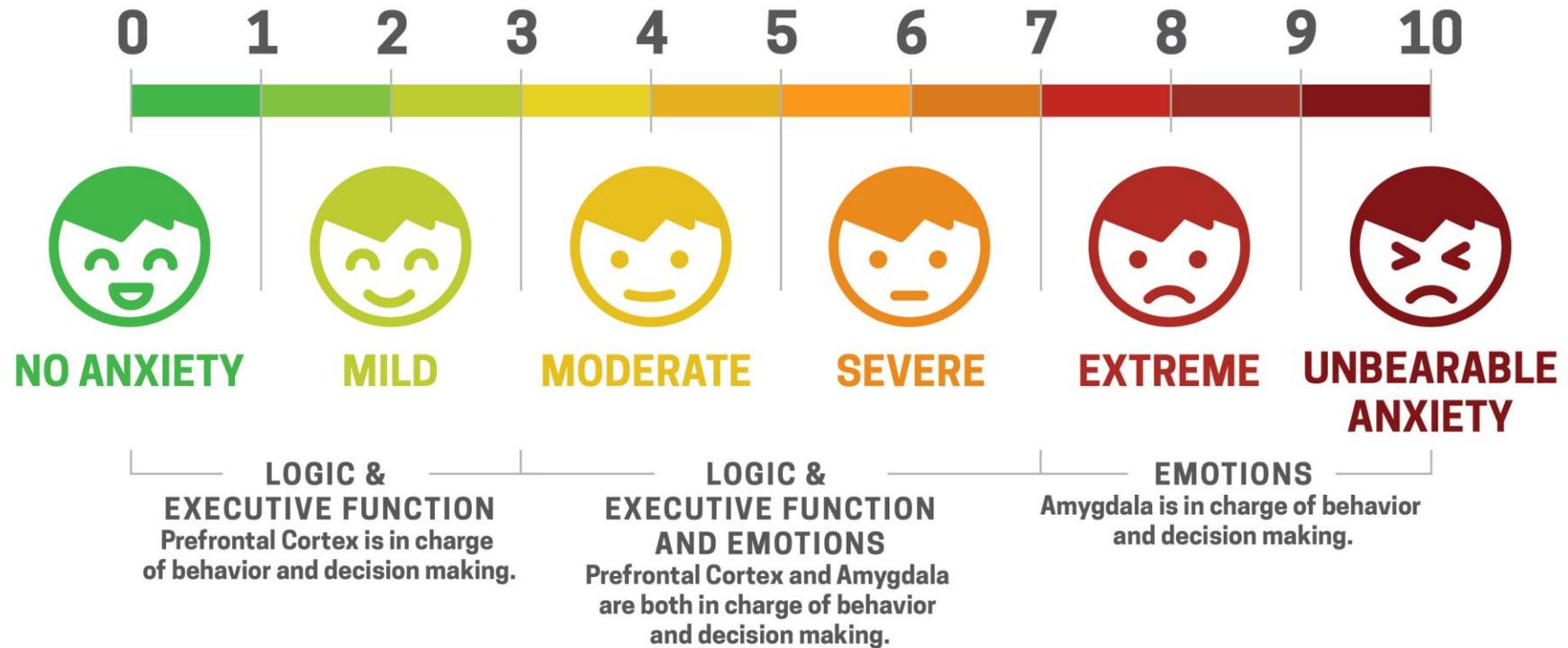
Frontal Lobe = Skills (Academics)



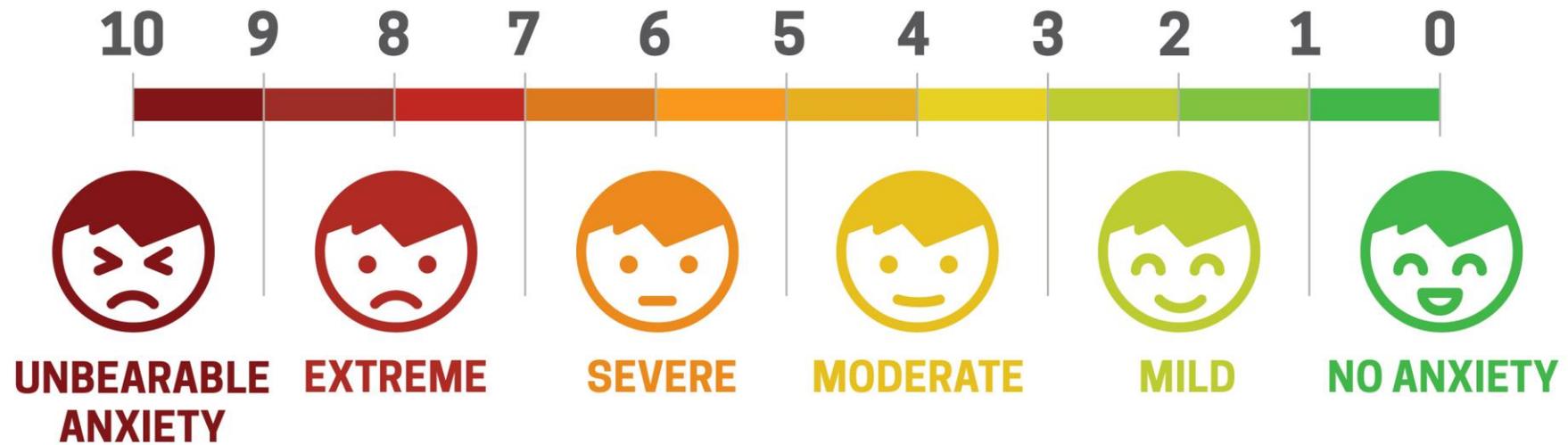
ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



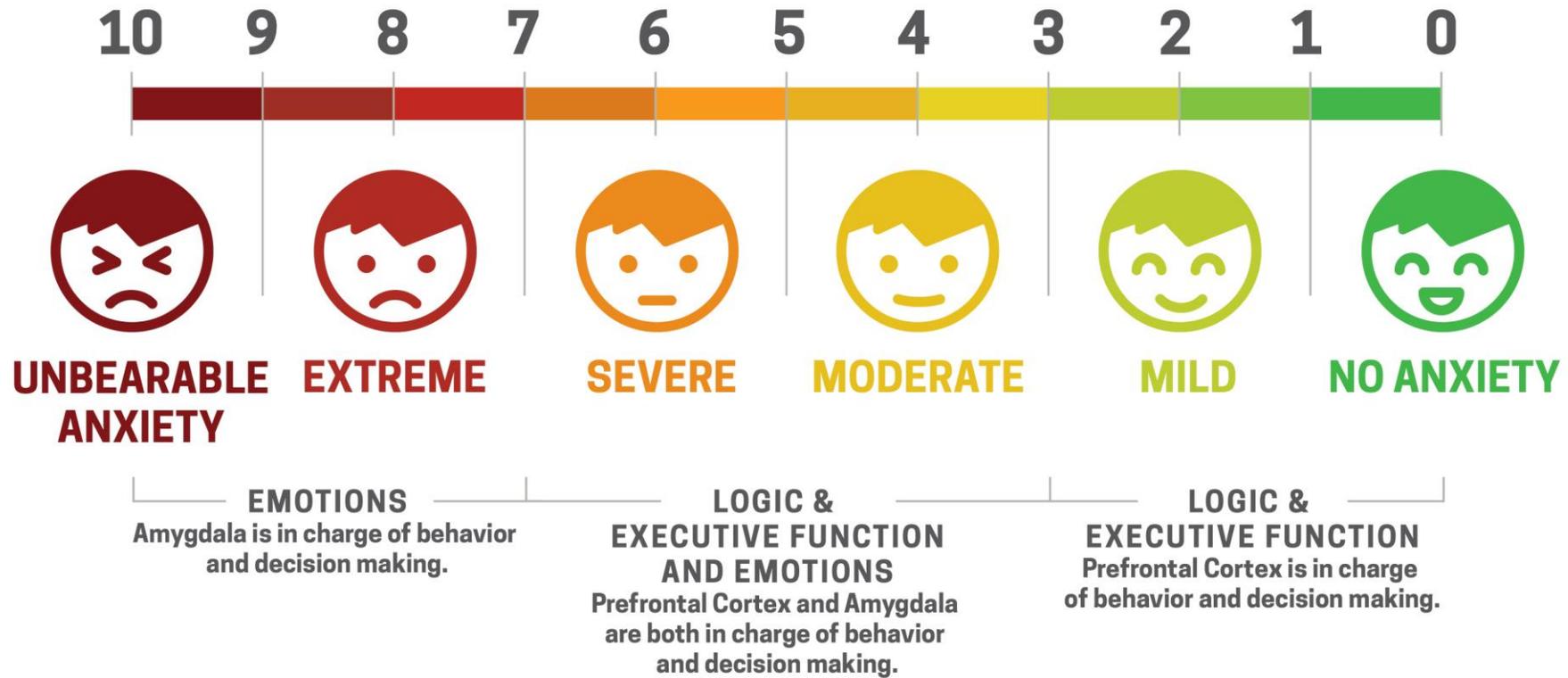
ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



DE-ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



DE-ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



FULL SPECTRUM OF ANXIETY



How Do We De-Escalate Manageable Anxiety?

- Take a break (Read, take a walk, meditate, etc...)
- Connect with others (Visit with family, call/text a friend, talk to a counselor, etc...)
- Exercise (Take a walk/run, play a sport, lift weights, etc...)
- Self-Talk (Try to reframe the situation, Cheer yourself on, Be a witness for the defense, Remember feelings aren't facts)

How Do We De-Escalate Manageable Anxiety?

- Do the hard thing (Accept your anxiety, Confront the thing that is making you anxious, build a skill, etc...)
- Comforts (Snuggle under a blanket, eat a favorite meal, hug a friend/family member/pet, etc...)
- Escapism (Watch TV, read a book listen to music, play a game, etc...)
- Anchors (Stuffed animals, a pet, a talisman, etc...)

How Do We De-Escalate Our Spiking Anxiety?

- Count backwards
- Deep breaths
- Anchor yourself
 - 3 things you can see
 - 2 things you can hear
- “What is the story I’m telling myself?”
- Name how you’re feeling.

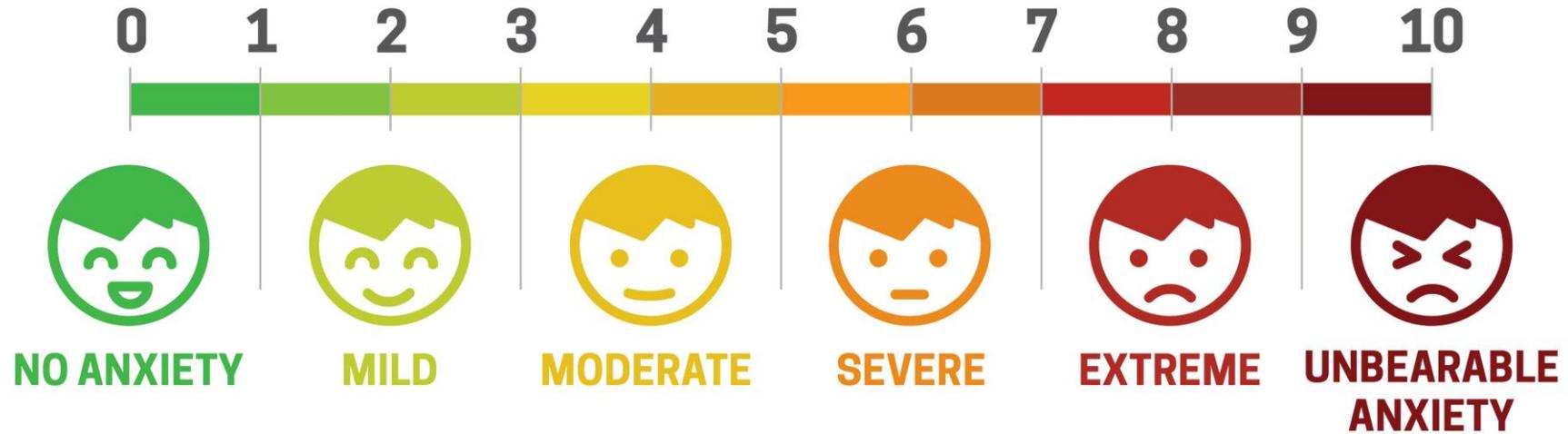
What are some Protective Factors that Help Manage Anxiety?

- Taking care of physical needs (Sleep, Diet, Exercise)
- Accepting your anxiety. Make friends with it.
- Confronting the thing that is making you anxious and do it anyway! (But this one is hard if the anxiety is uncontrolled.)
- Building a skillset. Something that can help you feel accomplished.
- Being involved in a community.
- Connecting with supportive friends and family.

How Do We Help Others Manage Their Anxiety?

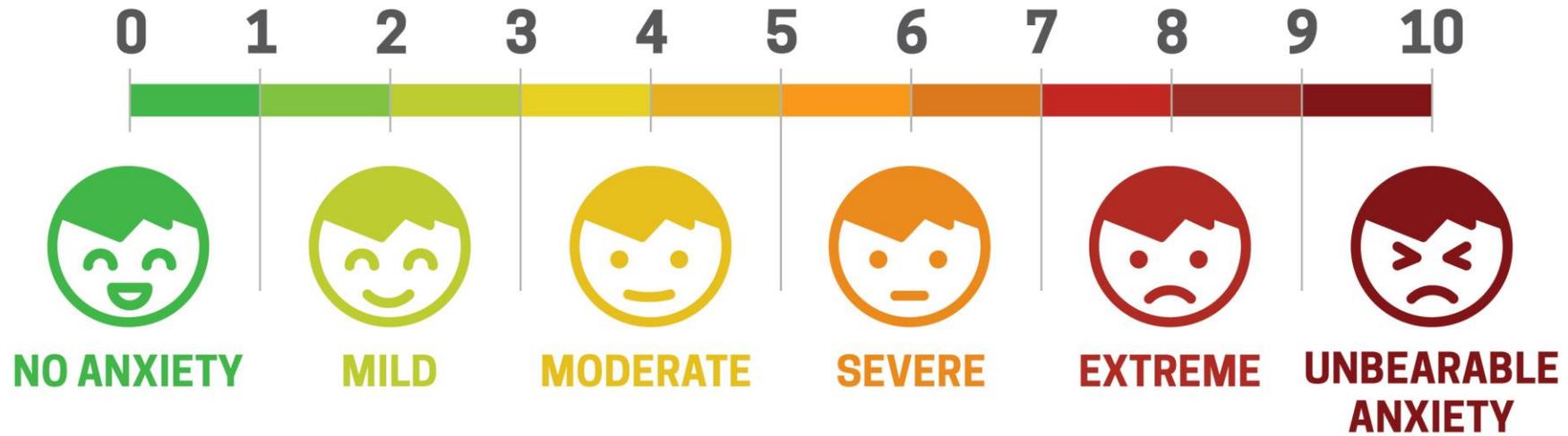
- Just sit with them in their anxiety (if they want you to)
- Allow them to use their own de-escalation strategies
- Use reflective listening
- Validate their emotions/experiences
- Forgive them for their mistakes
- Set clear & appropriate expectations
- Be as consistent as you can
- Let them take a break
- Support them in doing the hard thing
- Celebrate their accomplishments

ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



LOGICAL & EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES WORK
Structures & Systems, Healthy Boundaries, Environment Management, Clear Expectations, etc...
Naming Emotions, Reflective Listening, Grounding Techniques, etc...

ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



ONLY EMOTIONAL INTERVENTIONS WORK
Naming Emotions, Reflective Listening,
Grounding Techniques, etc...

ESCALATION OF ANXIETY

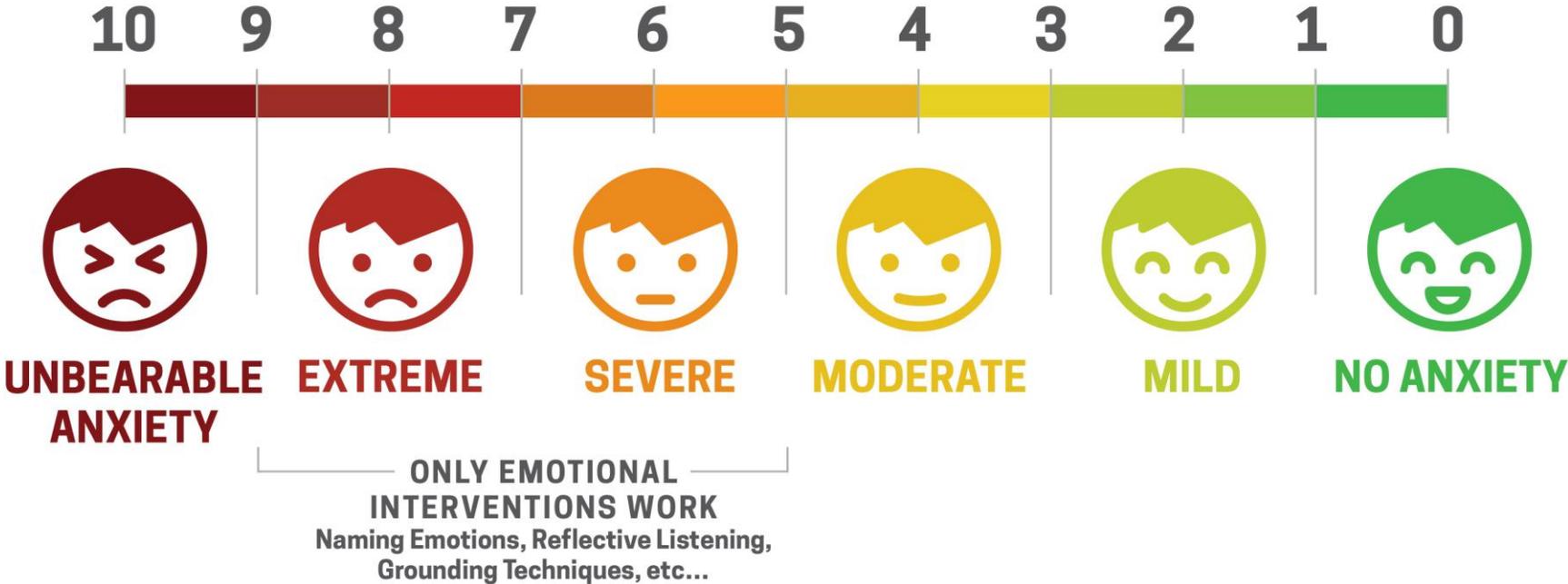


**UNBEARABLE
ANXIETY**

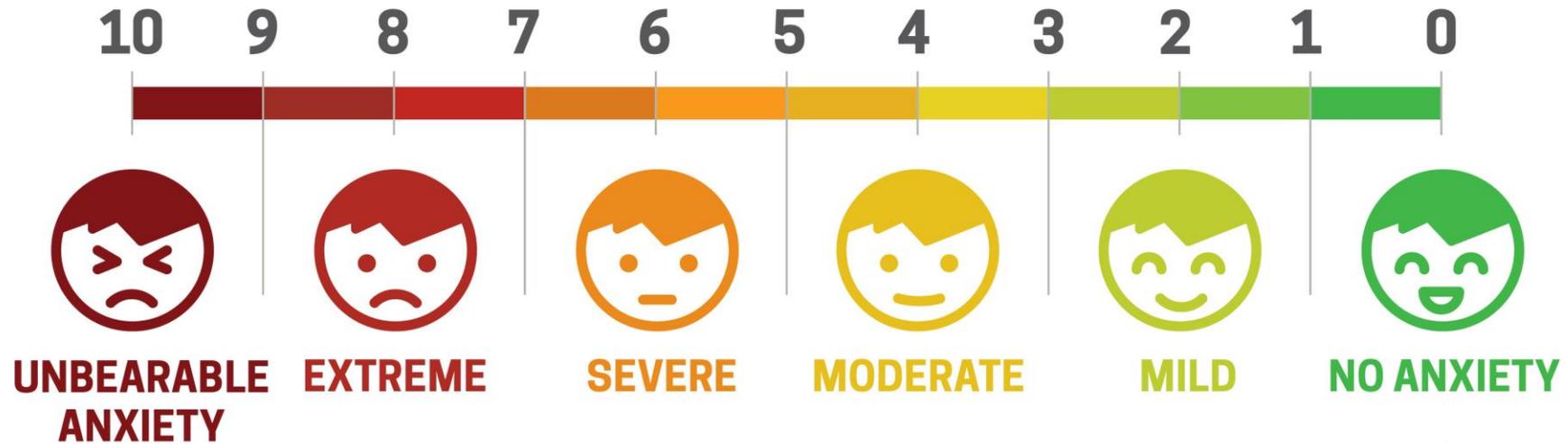
SAFETY NEEDED

Individual does not feel safe. Patience and compassion are necessary to help them regulate emotions and feel safe.

DE-ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



DE-ESCALATION OF ANXIETY



LOGICAL & EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES WORK
Structures & Systems, Healthy Boundaries, Environment Management, Clear Expectations, etc...
Naming Emotions, Reflective Listening, Grounding Techniques, etc...

FULL SPECTRUM OF ANXIETY



FULL SPECTRUM OF ANXIETY



Parting Thoughts:

- Kids do well when they can.
- Kids want to please the adults in their lives.
- When they aren't doing well, or aren't pleasing the adults in their lives, odds are that there is an unmet need hiding inside their struggles.
- That unmet need leads to anxiety, which only compounds the problem.
- As the adults in their lives, we can help break that cycle by leading with compassion, forgiveness, and understanding. (And then helping them get their needs met or adjusting our expectations.)

Questions?

