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PowerPoint Slides for  
On-Demand Webinar

# Anxiety

Practical Intervention Strategies

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WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE IS TRAUMA-INFORMED.

# WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

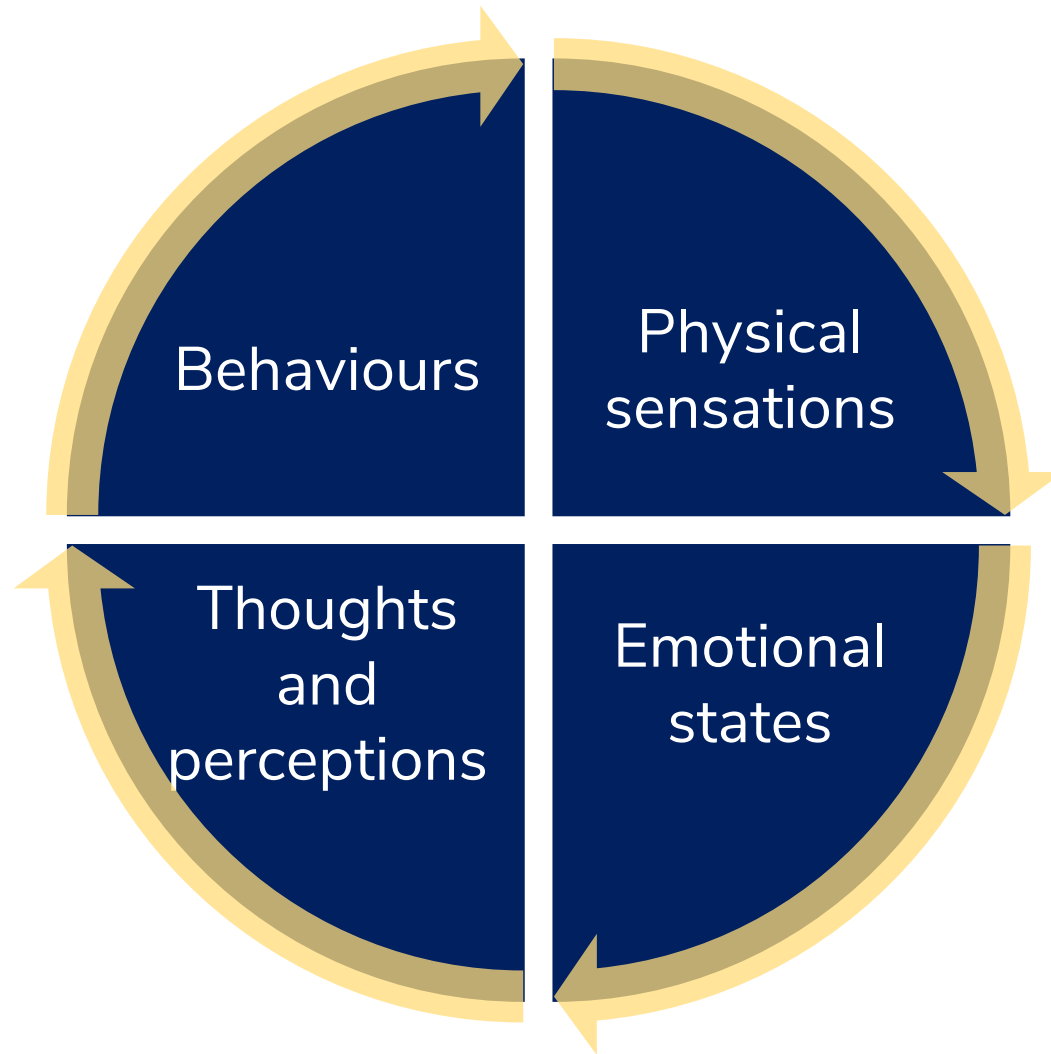
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- Describe the natural role of anxiety
- Identify how anxiety involves the mind, body, and relationships
- List a variety of skills for managing anxiety

# ANXIETY = A SIGNAL

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When has anxiety helped you recognize you needed to pay attention?



Tension...Apprehension...Worry...Fear...Dread...Panic

# ANXIETY AND ITS NATURAL PURPOSE

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Helps us...

- sense,
- evaluate,
- anticipate, and
- respond...

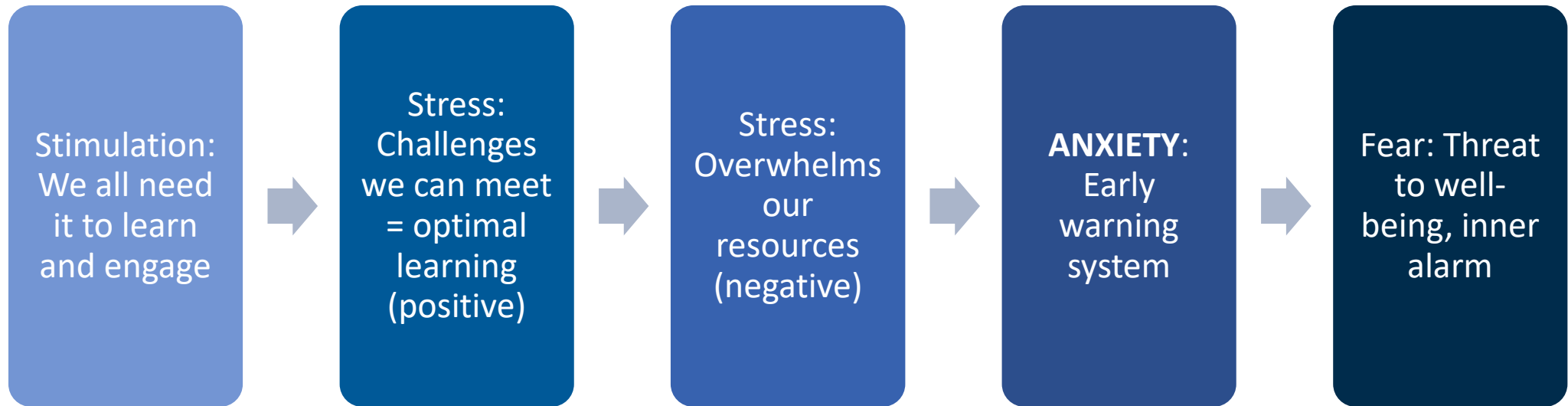
...to cues of threat or danger in our *internal* or *external* environment.

These signals are part of our survival instincts.

# CONTEXT IS KEY!

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DOES IT MATCH THE SITUATION OR NOT?



# ANXIETY AND THE PANDEMIC

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- **Many People are/were stressed**
  - We pick it up from each other
- **We are built for connection**
  - Disorienting to stay apart
- **Threat of the unknown**

# EFFECTIVE SUPPORT

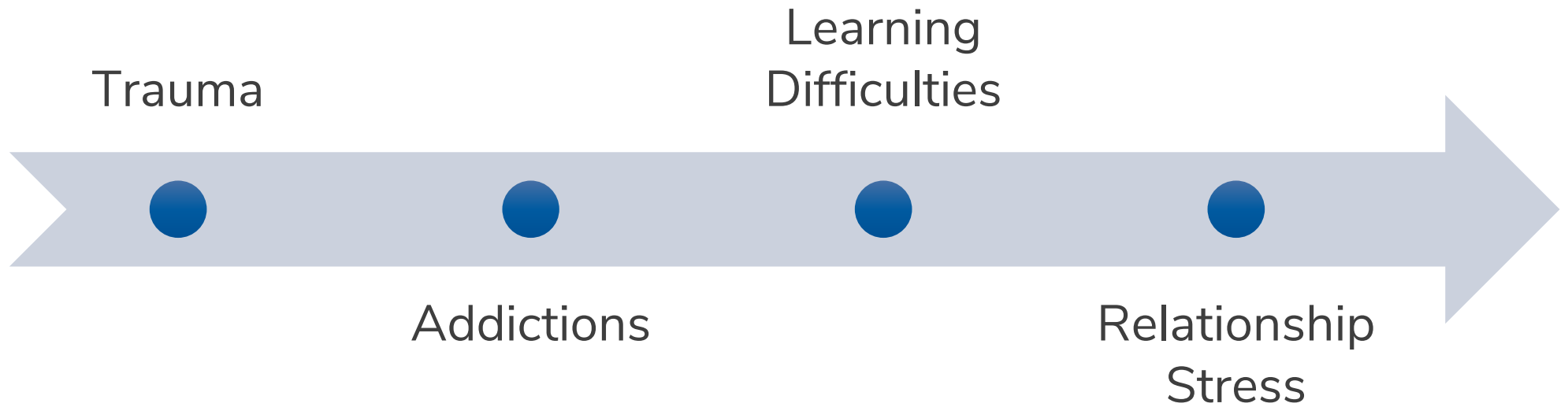
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- **Awareness & understanding**
  - Reduces anxiety about the anxiety
- **Skills & tools to manage anxiety**
  - Turn the volume down or off
- **Support to change the patterns of anxiety**
  - Engage in life with less fear



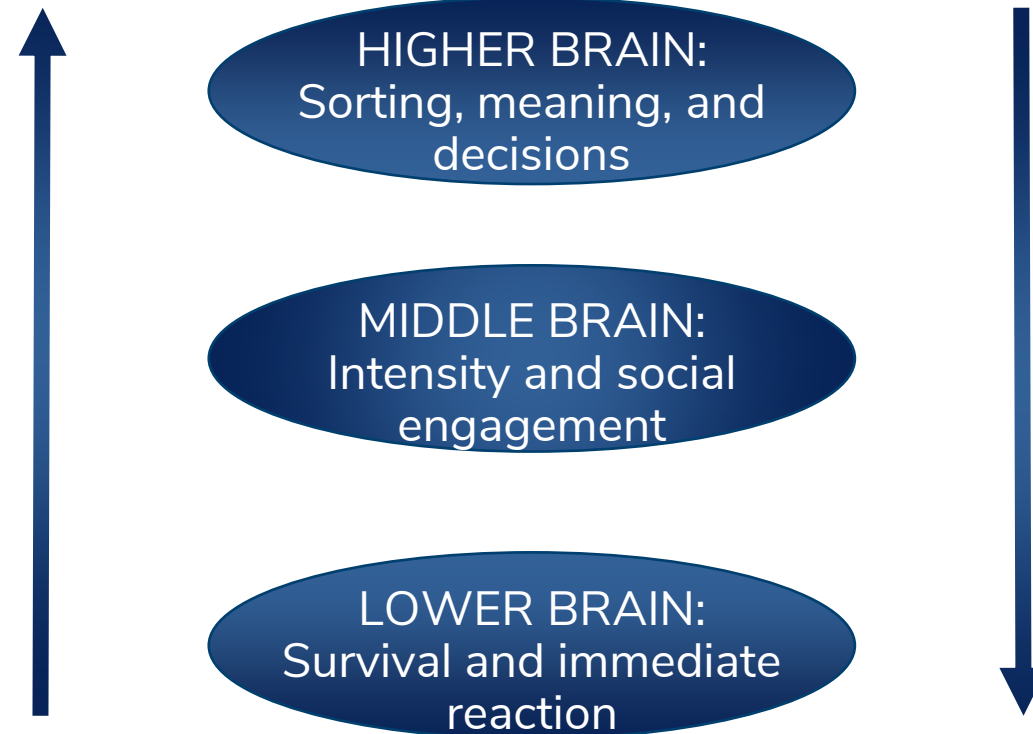
# ANXIETY'S FRIENDS

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# HOW OUR BRAIN FUNCTIONS WITH ANXIETY

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Information flows  
in both directions

# BALANCE OF NERVOUS SYSTEM

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Sympathetic: *Fight or flight*

Parasympathetic: *Rest & Digest*

# OVERVIEW OF WORKING WITH ANXIETY

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When Anxiety becomes “dis-ordered” and needs more attention:

- Anxiety itself is causing distress over an extended period of time (behaviours, thoughts, feelings)
- Pattern is escalating
- Pattern doesn't fit the situation or developmental norms

# BUILDING SKILLS

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- Focus on the body
- Focus on the mind and body connection
- Focus on the thinking mind
- Focus on social skills

# FOCUS ON THE BODY

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- Nutrition – Setting the tone
- Activity – Regulated energizing rhythms, sensations
- Rest – Calming rhythms, sleep

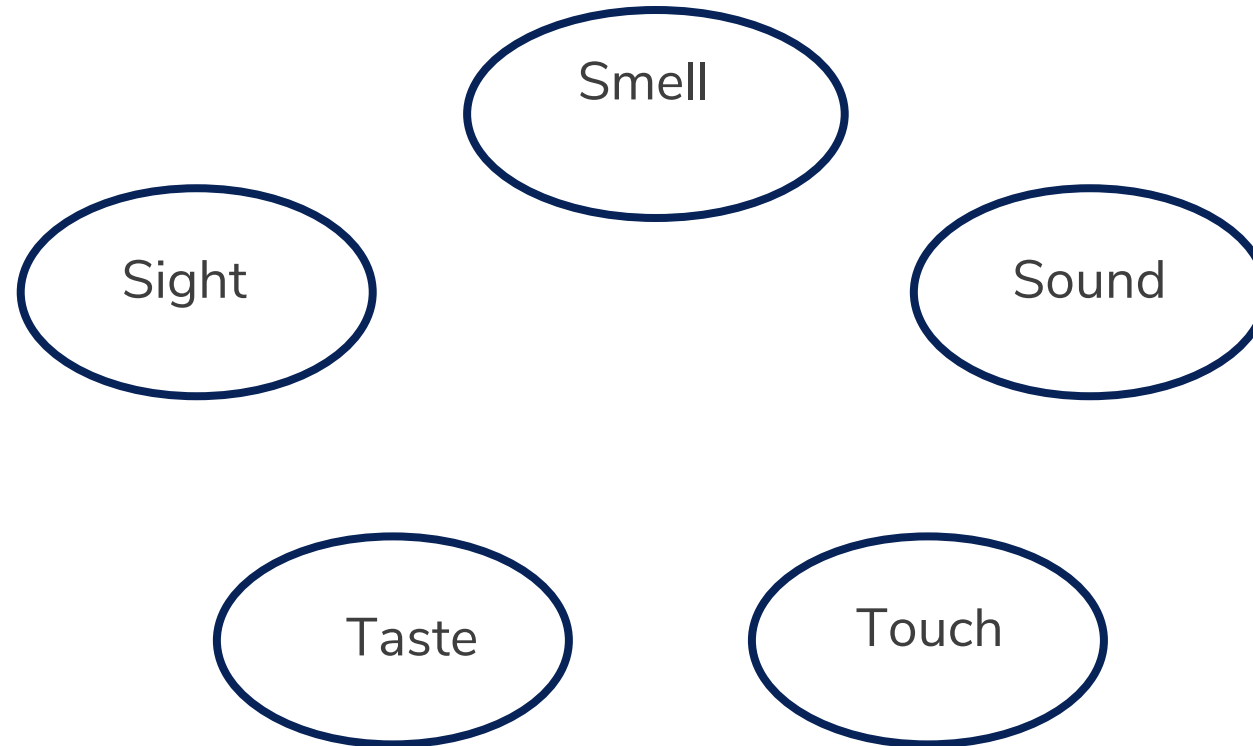
*Creating the best conditions for emotion regulation*

# THE LANGUAGE OF SENSATION

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(MIND–BODY CONNECTION)

What is happening right now?



# RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

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Brainstem activity orients body toward **defense**

Chronic bracing and tensing deepen the sensation of threat

Intentionally shifting body state interrupts this patterned defensive response



# RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

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- Tensing and muscle releasing exercises
- Dynamic stretching
- Rhythmic movement and music particularly helpful
- Practice being still

Each person needs to find the kind of stimulation that best regulates *them*.

# RHYTHM OF BREATH

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## Breathing exercises

- *Noticing the breath*
- *Slowing the breath*
- *Lengthening and deepening*
- *Belly breathing*

Noticing shifts in the rest of the body when breath rhythms change.

# MIND–BODY CONNECTION

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## BUILDING MOTIVATION TO CHANGE

- Examine costs and benefits of **avoidance**
- **Invite** to experiment
- **Practice** taking small, manageable steps

# FOCUS ON THE THINKING MIND

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- Getting to Know Anxiety
- Developing observer ability
- Specific skills
- Reality checking
- Redirecting onto productive use of thinking mind

# GETTING TO KNOW ANXIETY

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- If Anxiety were a being or thing, how would you describe it?
- When is it bigger? Smaller?
- Does Anxiety have friends? Who or what are they?
- If Anxiety were trying to send you a message, what do you think it would be?
- What does Anxiety want for you?
- How do you wish you were in your relationship with Anxiety?

# DEVELOPING OBSERVER ABILITY

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- What are qualities you notice when you are in your “observer”?
- What feelings do you attach to this experience?
- What thoughts, beliefs, or “mind-talk” is happening?
- What is happening in your behaviour?
- What is happening in your body?

# THOUGHT STOPPING

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Interrupt the rigid and constraining patterns:

- *Say or visualize “stop”*
- *Use a physical distraction to **pause** – breathe, stretch, move*
- *Brain shift*
- *Practice interrupting the pattern at different points*
- *Lots of practice and repetition to create new patterns*

**Remember, we don't have to believe everything we think!**

# REALITY CHECKING

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<p><b>Situation:</b> <i>What is happening?</i></p>	
<p><b>Thoughts / Beliefs:</b> <b>Scale your worry:</b></p>	
<p><b>Check the evidence:</b> <i>What tells you this worry or thought may be true? What tells you that it might not be?</i></p>	
<p><b>Realistic View:</b> <i>what is a balanced way to look at it?</i> <b>Scale your worry:</b></p>	



# FOCUS ON SOCIAL SKILLS

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- **Community** = Getting Connection
  - Examine positive and healthy relationships
  - Practice taking in support
  
- **Compassion** = Giving Connection
  - The power of giving back
  - Sense of purpose

# IDEAS FOR SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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Ways to start and maintain conversations:

- Practice saying “no” when needed
- Learning to make efficient decisions
- Assertive communication
- Conflict management

**\*Identify the skill, write down the steps  
and practice/role-play**

# GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

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- Remember, anxiety has a natural purpose.
- Remember, the anxious body and brain can change.
- Work on your own anxious patterns.
- Help plan manageable steps.
- Repetition and persistence are key!



Check out  
our website for  
additional  
resources!

### Our Free Resources

**Free On-Demand Workshop**  
ANXIETY - PRACTICAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

A thumbnail image for a workshop showing a man sitting on the floor with a laptop, holding a white mug. The background is a solid green color.

**Free Webinar**  
ATTACHMENT - STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING CONNECTIONS  
TRAINER: Sheri Coburn, MSW, RSW

A thumbnail image for a webinar featuring the CTRI logo, a small portrait of a woman, and the text "Attachment and Families: Strategies for Engaging & Helping".

**Free Handouts**  
TOOLS YOU CAN USE NOW

A collage of various handout worksheets including "Healthy Habit Log", "Recognizing Anxiety Worksheet", "Cyber-Stalking/Cyber-Bullying Safety Tips", and "Suicide Warning Signs".

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- Free Resources

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