

Keep Calm and Conjure On!

Supports for youth anxiety

Session at “The Magical World of SPIN” conference
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Introductions!

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Agenda



01 Check In & Survey

03 Local Data

05 Resources

02 What is Anxiety

04 Tools/Strategies

06 Q & A





**“Anything is possible if
you’ve got enough
nerve.”**

**—Ginny Weasley
Harry Potter and the
Order of the Phoenix**

01 Check In





Check In



how are you doing today,
in dog scale?





02 What is Anxiety

Anxiety in Youth

Anxiety has been deemed a public health crisis

Leading mental health concerns in youth



(Ghandour, 2019; Merikangas, 2010)



What is Anxiety?

“An emotion characterized by feeling of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes (i.e., increased blood pressure).”

A normal part of everyday life.




● The Anxiety Spectrum

Although a normal experience, anxiety can become problematic.

Low levels of stress support:

- Awareness
- Vigor
- Increased motivation and productivity

High levels of anxiety can lead to:

- Limited concentration
 - Decreased cognitive functioning
 - Low productivity and motivation
- 

The Anxiety Spectrum

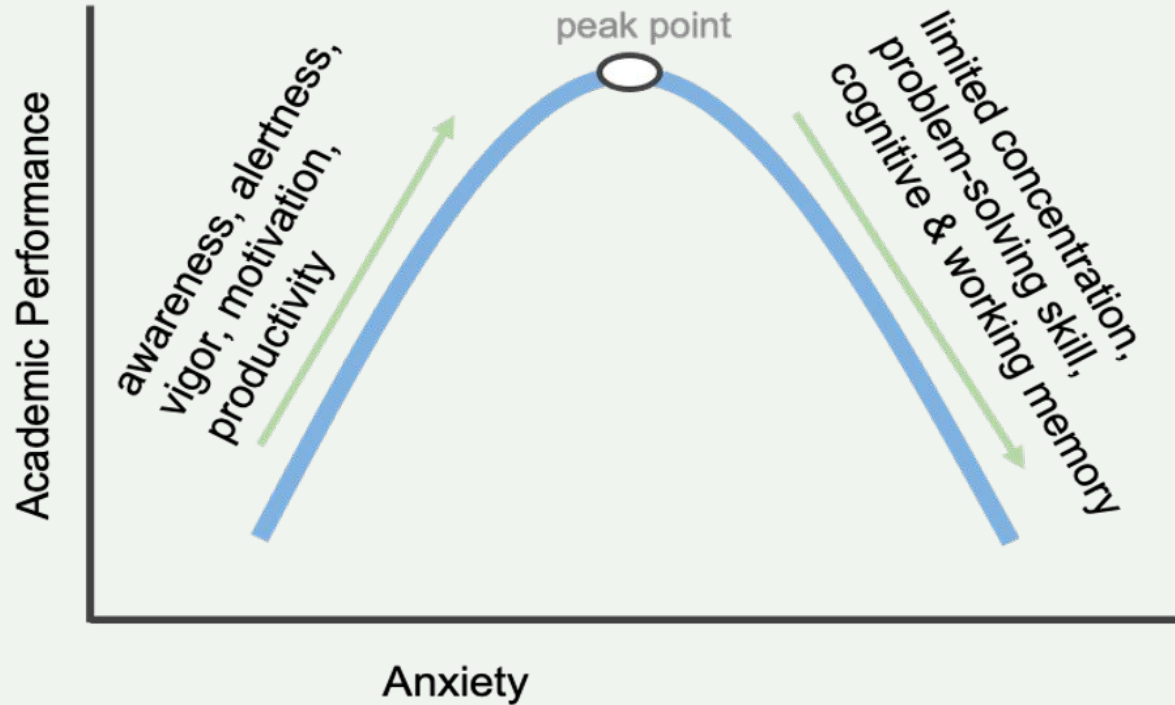


Image by Chatzoglou, 2022

Keeley & Correia, 2008; Sarid et al., 2004; Westman & Eden, 1996

Anxiety Prevalence

- High prevalence in children and adolescents
- Clinically anxiety symptoms among children aged 3-17:



7.1% pre-pandemic

The diagram consists of two orange rounded rectangular boxes connected by a large orange arrow pointing from left to right. The left box contains the text '7.1% pre-pandemic' and the right box contains the text '20.5% during pandemic'.

20.5%
during
pandemic

Different types of anxiety:

Agoraphobia

Generalized
Anxiety

Specific
Phobias

Social
Anxiety

Separation
Anxiety

Post-Traumatic
Stress

Panic







Academic Anxiety

Situation-specific anxiety:
cognitive, physiological &
behavioral responses related
to educational settings

I'm specifically discussing
subclinical levels

academic difficulties on
a particular learning
subject
(math, reading, science
or foreign language
anxiety)

negative consequences
of failing evaluative
activities
(test anxiety)



Anxiety and Learning Difficulties

Students who have learning difficulties historically have statistically higher levels of anxiety than their peers.

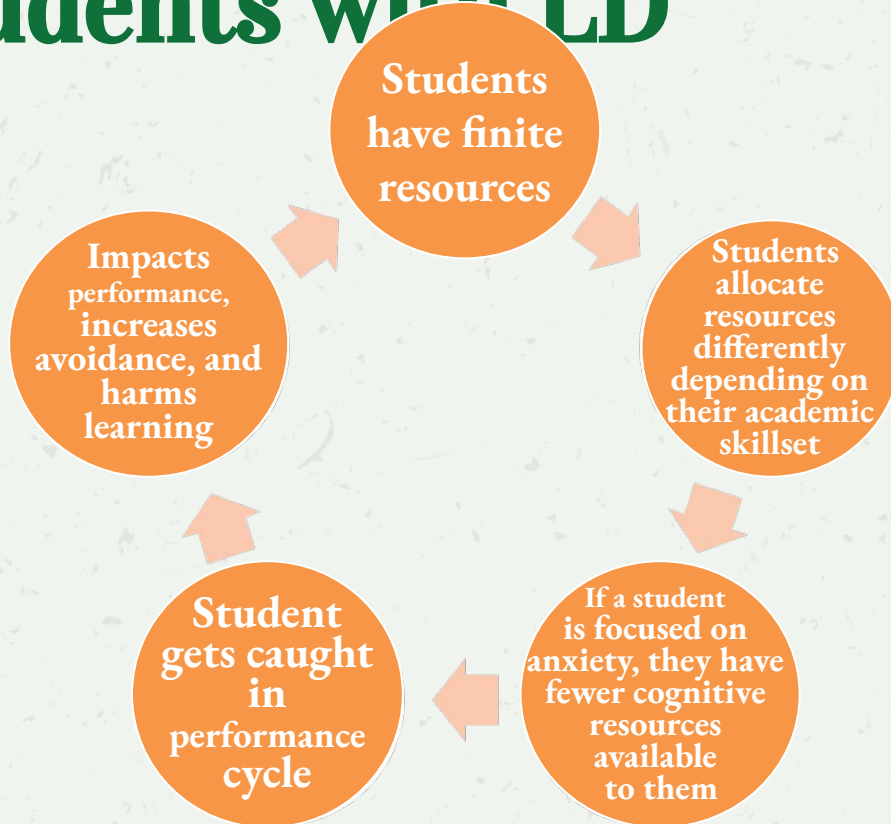
In a meta analytic study, students with **learning disabilities** had higher levels of anxiety than **peers** (Nelson & Harwood, 2010)

Students with **math learning difficulties** have been found to have higher levels of anxiety in mathematics than their peers (Passolunghi, 2011)

Poor readers historically have higher levels of **anxiety than peers** (Carroll & Iles, 2006; Francis et al., 2019; Livingston et al., 2008; Macdonald et al., 2019; Paget & Reynolds, 1984; Ramirez et al., 2019; Willcutt & Pennington, 2000)

Importance of Addressing Anxiety for Students with LD

- Cyclical



(Carey et al., 2016; Everson et al., 1994; Eysenck et al., 2007; Eysenck et al., 2007; Northern, 2010; Peng et al., 2016; Perfetti's Verbal Efficiency Theory, 2007)



Warning Signs

Behavioral Signs



- Avoidance (social, school, etc.)
- “Freezing”
- Separation issues
- Perfectionism
- Physical complaints
- Seeking reassurance about worries
- Difficulty with routines/transitions
- Restlessness, fidgeting, not sitting still
- Tantrums/meltdowns/aggressive outbursts
- Not turning in homework
- Difficulty making/keeping friends
- Repetitive behaviors/questions





Warning Signs

Emotional Signs

- Excessive worry or fear about many things
- Irritability, anger, or frequent moodiness
- Feeling “on edge,” tense, or wound up
- Intense self-consciousness or fear of embarrassment
- Low self-esteem or frequent self-criticism
- Difficulty concentrating due to worry
- Feeling overwhelmed





Warning Signs

Physical Signs



- Trouble falling/staying asleep
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent stomachaches or nausea
- Frequent headaches
- Chronic fatigue or low energy
- Muscle tension or aches
- Trembling or shaking



- Sweating
- Racing heart/palpitations
- Shortness of breath or feeling unable to breathe
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Changes in appetite
- Frequent need to use the restroom
- Fear of gagging, choking, or vomiting

03 Local Data



Prevalence & Context

32%

Nationally



In those 13-18, with
higher rates in
females (38%) to males
(26%)

35%

YRBS



Hawaii High Schoolers
reported experiencing
depression (highly
co-occurring with anxiety)
46% females | 24% males

23%

KIDS COUNT



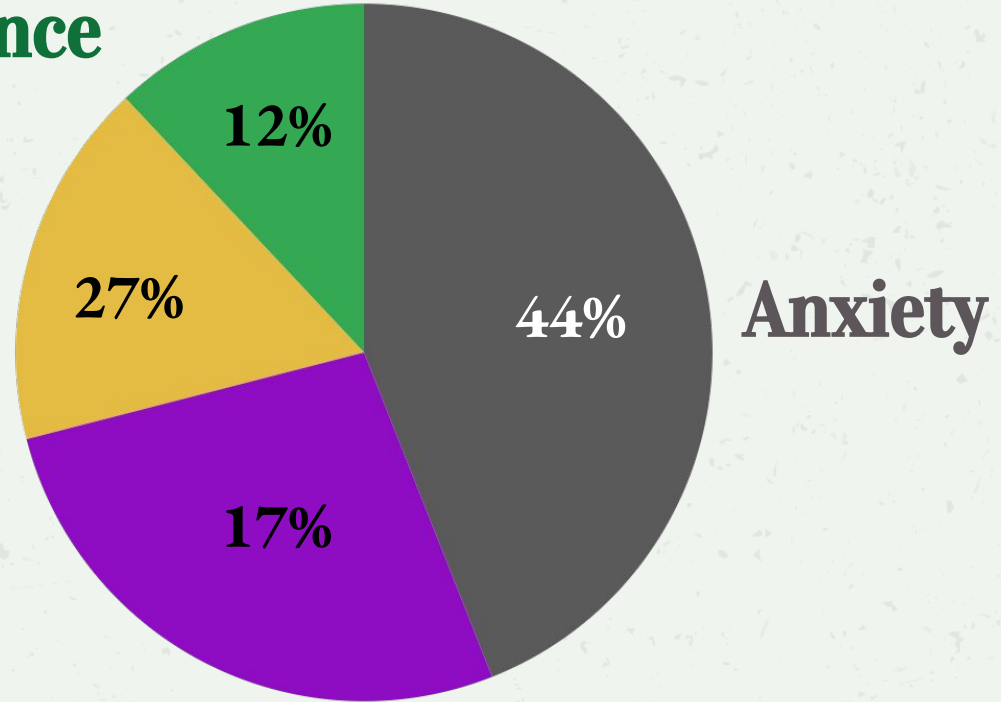
Increase in Hawaii youth
anxiety/depression
between 2016-2020

HIDOE L ōkahi Data

Avoidance

Positive
Thinking


Depressed Mood



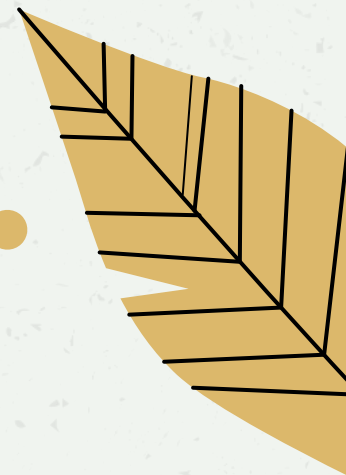
*Percents are based on the relative frequency of the targets to each other not the total of targets addressed in HIDOE



04 Tools & Strategies



**So...how do we prevent or
break the cycle (especially
for our keiki who have
academic difficulties)?**



Breaking the Cycle

- Know the signs of anxiety (which we addressed earlier)
- Normalize, validate anxiety
- Know how to work through moments
- Consider that anxiety may be impacting learning.
- Build resilience in children
- Model self-regulation
- Reduce anxiety as a family





Normalize

Why?

Normalizing symptoms can help people understand that what they are experiencing is natural and this can help to be both comforting and also ameliorative

What does this sound like?

“If you need a break, you can take 3 minutes in the calm down corner.”

(start the timer)

“This happens to me too. Want to take a deep breath with me?”

Validate

A dark grey leaf with black veins, pointing towards the top right corner of the slide.

Why?

- Builds connection
- Creates a foundation for positive relationships

What does this sound like?

“Yes. I know this is hard right now.”

“I believe you.”

“Thank you for telling me.”

Work through it, together

Why?

The student knows they are not alone and that they have an adult who cares about them.

What does this sound like?

“I’m here to help you get through this. I know you can do this.”

“Here are some choices for how we can work through this together. Is there one that sounds good to you?”

“Are you ready for some suggestions for how to get through this?”



Anxiety may be impacting homework/learning

Characteristics of anxiety may negatively impact and/or obstruct learning for students with learning disabilities


- Difficulties concentrating
- Distraction
- Worry

How do we work through moments together?●

- Self-regulation strategies be supportive
- 
- 




Self-Regulation Strategies

- Break down large assignments/ tasks
 - Teach keiki to use an assignment calendar
 - Use a timer (small tasks followed by a break)
 - Success fosters success- help children SEE IT
- 



How to help my child self-regulate/ find calm?

- Body relaxation
 - Breathing
 - Guided Imagery
 - Self Talk
- 

Example of body relaxation and breathing

Find a comfortable seat. Raise your shoulders slowly up towards your ears and hold for 5 seconds, then drop your shoulders slowly down and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat this for 3 times."





Guided Imagery Relaxation

Steps:

1. **Teachers identify what makes students feel relaxed, Select scenarios that are calming**

“Picture a place that makes you feel relaxed”

2. **Apply relaxation techniques, such as guiding students to find a comfortable seats**

“Make sure you are in a comfortable seat. Plant your feet on the floor”



Self Talk

Encouraging children to identify the negative thoughts and replace them with positives helps them to focus on positive side of things and promote their coping skills

“Red thoughts are things in your mind, like, ‘I wonder if I did my history homework,’ or ‘do you think we’ll have a pop quiz?’”

Step back and watch your mind, replace any red thought with green thoughts:

“I can do it!”, “I can try my best!”, “It’s okay to be nervous and I can deal with this”, “It’s going to be alright.”

(Erford, 2016)



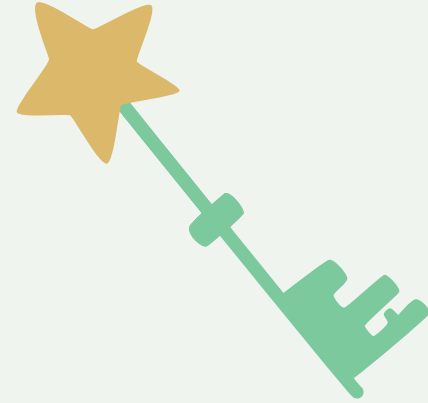
Reduce anxiety as a family ...

**REMEMBER
TO PUT ON
YOUR OWN
OXYGEN
MASK
BEFORE
ASSISTING
OTHERS**



**We are constantly co-regulating
emotions**

-Marc Brackett, PhD



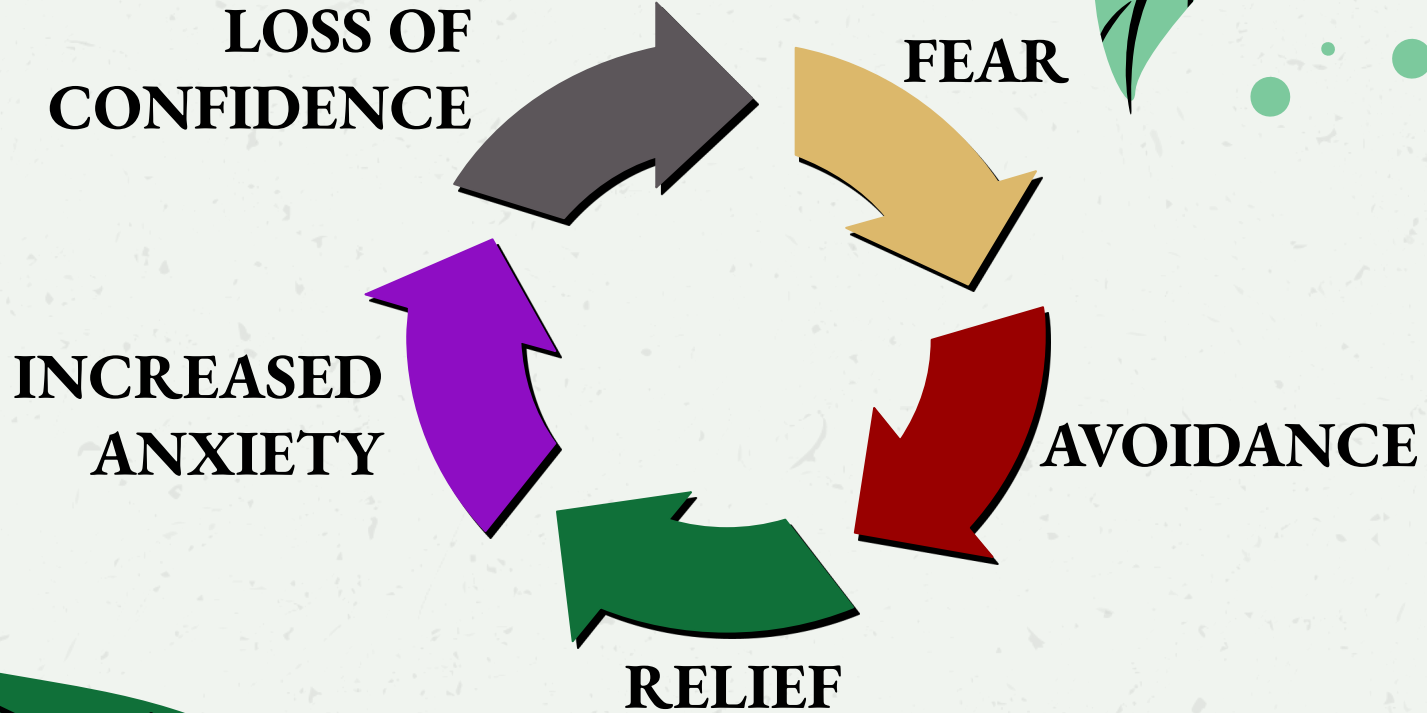
Affect is contagious.

**The goal is not to NEVER experience
difficult emotions, the idea is to utilize
tools to regulate and manage them.
(Model and build resilience)**

Explicitly Model Self Regulation

- Children may not have the tools to self-regulate themselves when they experience high levels of stress at school (e.g., college students are still learning skills)
- This means that there may not only be benefits of a parents own regulation but also explicitly modeling and describing what you are doing to self regulate yourself, may provide useful information to students

Cycle of Anxiety



Tools & Strategies



**Learning
about Anxiety**



Relaxation



**Cognitive
Restructuring**



**Problem
Solving**



Practicing



**Social Skill
Building**

Practical Strategies



Aim for Management, not Elimination

Stay Calm Yourself

Don't Accommodate Avoidance

Listen Attentively

Validate Feelings, Not Fears

Use Open-Ended Questions

Express Realistic Confidence

Watch Your Cues



Practical Strategies



Maintain Routines

Praise Effort and Bravery

**Plan for Transitions &
Stressors**

Avoid Punishment

Problem-Solve Together

**Maintain Appropriate
Expectations**

Use Distraction



05

Resources



We can help and support ... But when is it time to seek support for myself or my child?

According to the national institute of mental health, Seek professional help if you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more, such as:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Difficulty getting out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Inability to complete usual tasks and activities
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness

Finding a Provider



- Talk to Pediatrician
- Contact Health Insurance Provider
- Reach out to SSC, School Counselor, or BHS
- Check out online therapist directories
- Check out Help Your Keiki site
- Reach out to MHAH or NAMI Hawaii



Immediate Crisis Supports

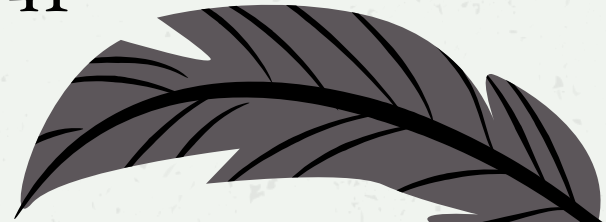
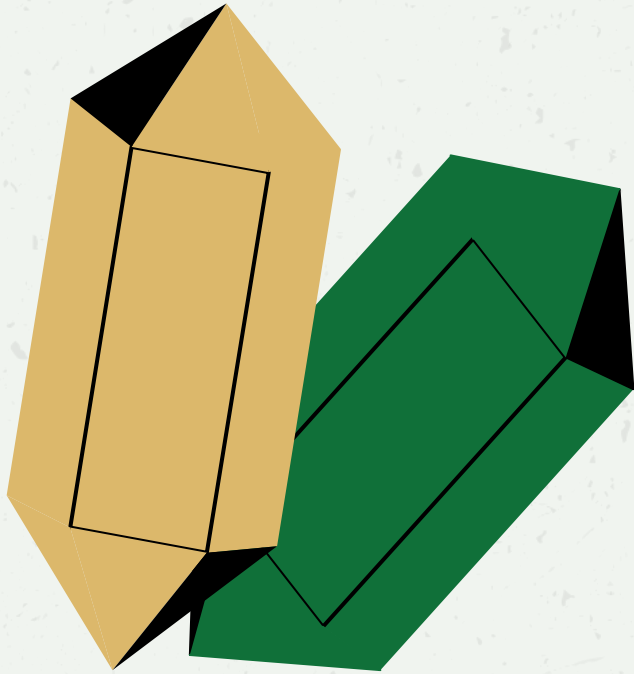
(available 24/7)

Hawaii CARES
Text or Call 988
or 808-832-3100

**Disaster Distress
Helpline**
1-800-985-5990

Crisis Text Line
Text ALOHA or
HOME to 741741

**The Trevor
Project**
1-866-488-7386



Community Resources



TeenLink Hawaii

www.teenlinkhawaii.org

CAMHD

health.hawaii.gov/camhd

MHAH

mentalhealthhawaii.org

NAMI

namihawaii.org

The Parent Line

theparentline.org

Help Your Keiki

HelpYourKeiki.com

HIDOE Resources



School Counselor/BHS



heretohelphidoec.com/families



Hawaii Keiki Hotline



ParentGuidance.org



ParentGuidance.org

Resources



**Parent
Coaching**
2X/Month and
Unlimited
Messaging



Live Sessions
Monthly with a
variety of topics



Ask a Therapist

Video responses
to difficult
questions about
youth wellbeing





06

Q & A



Mahalo!

A large, stylized leaf graphic in a dark purple color with black outlines, positioned in the top-left corner of the slide.

Thanks!

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A decorative graphic in the bottom-left corner featuring a yellow leaf with black outlines and several small yellow circles of varying sizes floating above it.

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