

Introduction to Child Anxiety Workshop

*Session 2: How child anxiety may
develop and factors that keep it going*

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achieving
for children



Things to remember!

- ◆ Although it may be helpful to understand what caused anxiety in your child, it is actually not essential for treating it.
- ◆ There is no one single factor that is likely to have caused a child's anxiety, typically a number of factors play a role.
- ◆ The most important thing to remember is that no one is specifically to blame for causing a child to have anxiety.



**Genes/
temperament**

**Life
events**

**Coping
experiences**

**Childhood anxiety
pre-disposing factors**

**Learning from
other people's
reaction**

**Learning
by
example**



Maintenance of child anxiety

- ◆ It is much more important to consider what is maintaining a child's anxiety rather than what caused it.

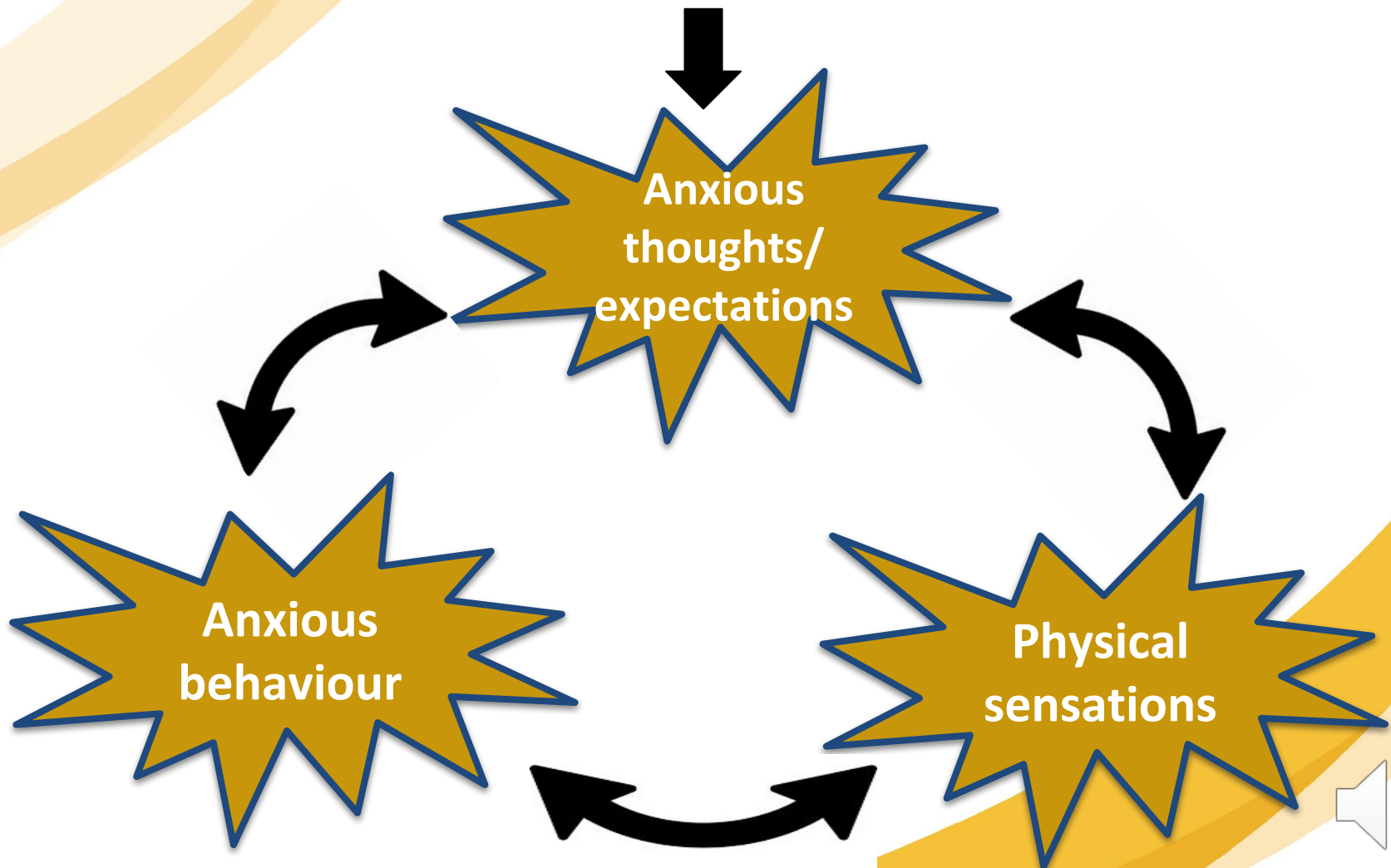


- ◆ What is helping to keep the anxiety going? What is the 'mud' for your child's anxiety?



Anxiety cycle

Perceived anxious situation (trigger)



So what else keeps this cycle going?

- ◆ Children's thoughts and behaviours are also influenced by other people around them.
- ◆ Remember: most of our fears are learned.
- ◆ As parents, we are designed to protect our children- it's our job!
- ◆ We will step in to protect them at all costs, however this means that sometimes this can inadvertently keep the anxiety going.



Things that tend to keep anxiety going

- ◆ Therefore the maintenance of anxiety can be split into:

THINGS THAT CHILDREN DO TO LOOK AFTER/ PROTECT THEMSELVES

Anxious thinking:

- notice/ remember things that fit in with their worries.
- Overestimate danger
- Underestimate coping

Misinterpret physical symptoms of anxiety:

- 'Something bad is happening'
- 'Something is wrong with me'
- 'I can't bear this feeling.'

Anxious behaviour:

- Avoidance
- Safety behaviours
- Seeking reassurance from others

THINGS THAT OTHER PEOPLE DO TO TRY AND LOOK AFTER/ PROTECT CHILDREN

- Demonstrate anxious behaviour.
- React to the child in an anxious way.
- Become very involved and protective- maybe too much?
- Reassure them - maybe too much?
- Don't encourage them to try/ do things.



So how can we help?

- ◆ We can help a child be less anxious by trying to change some of the things which may be contributing to the unhelpful anxiety cycle.
- ◆ Parents are well placed to support these changes and you have an important and positive role to play.
- ◆ We will be going through strategies to manage anxiety and increase confidence in your child in the session next week.

