



UNDERSTANDING YOUR

ANXIETY

FOR ELEMENTARY CHILDREN



Published by: American Mental Wellness Association © 2020
25 Spruce Road, Marysville PA 17053

Path Forward Foundation develops educational guides
for children on health and wellness topics
<http://pathforwardfoundation.org/>

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Edition 1.0







Wow, you did a great job. I don't know how you can do that.
I would be way too scared to talk in front of the entire class.



So would I. I think everyone
would laugh at me.



Lots of people don't like to stand in front of a crowd.
The idea of public speaking makes them nervous.



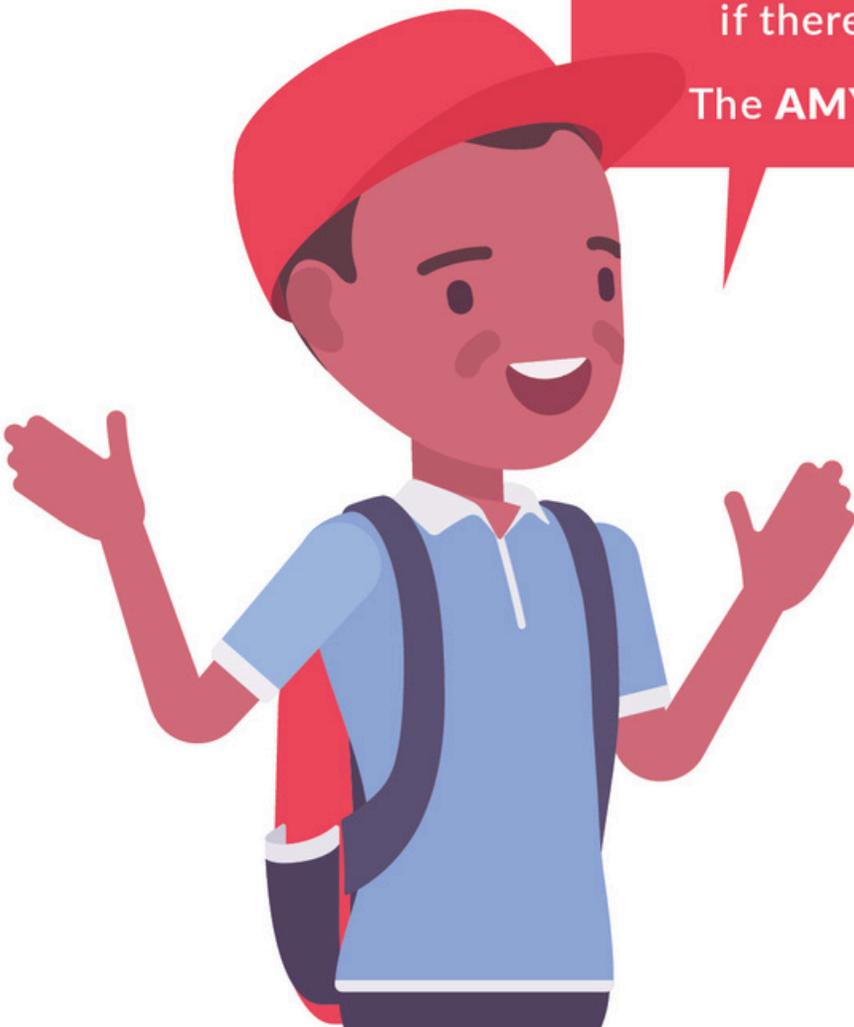
An illustration of a classroom scene. A female teacher with dark skin, wearing a grey blazer and a yellow top, stands on the left holding a tablet. She is addressing a group of diverse students. The students include a boy with glasses and a red shirt, a boy in a red cap and blue shirt, a girl in a pink shirt with a backpack, a girl in a yellow shirt and dark overalls, and a boy with red hair sitting in a wheelchair. A red speech bubble is positioned in the center, containing text about anxiety.

I get nervous too, and that's called **ANXIETY**. Anyone can struggle with **ANXIETY**.

It's nothing to be ashamed about.
See, there's this part of your brain
that makes you feel that way.

It's called the **AMYGDALA** and
it's actually protecting you.
It clicks into protection mode
when it thinks you're in danger.

It only wants to keep you safe,
but it doesn't always know
if there is real danger or not.
The **AMYGDALA** is very strong.



Is that what makes you feel
all weird and **ANXIOUS**?

I just have to think about standing
in front of the class and I start to
sweat. I feel sick to my stomach and
feel like running out of the room.



Yup, that's how our bodies are made. We have this **FIGHT OR FLIGHT** response.

Sometimes our amygdala tells us to stay and fight the danger...

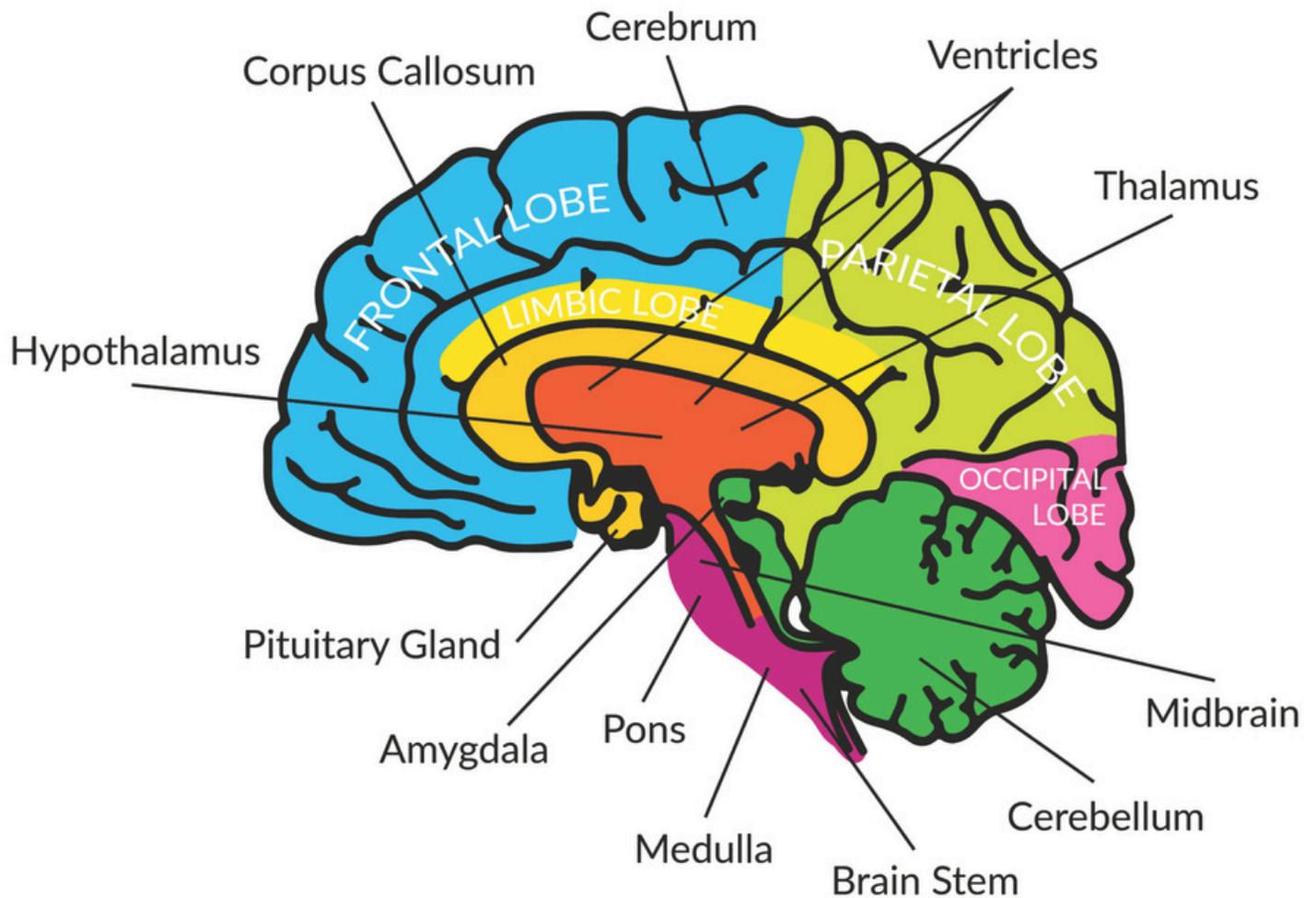


... while other times it tells us to run away from the danger.



Either way, we feel anxious because the **AMYGDALA** doesn't wait to see if the danger is real or not. It goes into action right away, which is both good and bad!





Cerebrum: Located in the frontal lobe, controls movement, speech, smell, taste, problem solving, concentration, behavior, personality and mood

Corpus Callosum: Connects the left side of the brain (logic, reasoning) to the right side of the brain (creativity, spontaneity) and allows for the flow of information

Hypothalamus: Controls our cravings (for example our appetite for food)

Pituitary Glands: Controls hormones (related to, for example, muscle growth, hair growth, puberty)

Pons: Relays sensory information to the cerebellum and controls deep sleep cycles.

Medulla: Sometimes called the Brain Stem. Controls involuntary functions like breathing, consciousness, reflexes

Ventricles: Delivers cerebrospinal fluid to the rest of the brain (think of it like delivering the fuel to allow all the parts to do their job)

Thalamus: Control special reasoning, depth perception, alertness and sleep

Midbrain: Allows the brain to process visual and auditory information, helps to maintain consciousness

Cerebellum: Controls balance, learning, emotional regulation

Parietal Lobe: Controls sensations, language, body awareness, attention span

Occipital Lobe: Controls vision, perception

Amygdala: Controls our “fight or flight” response, alerts the brain to danger

Your **AMYGDALA** is good when there is a real danger. It gives you the strength and energy through adrenaline to defend yourself or run away fast. That's **FIGHT OR FLIGHT** kicking in.

How can you decide which to do?



You have to learn to calm your **AMYGDALA** down to make a good decision. You have to keep calm to determine if there is real danger or if it just **ANXIETY**.



How do you do that?



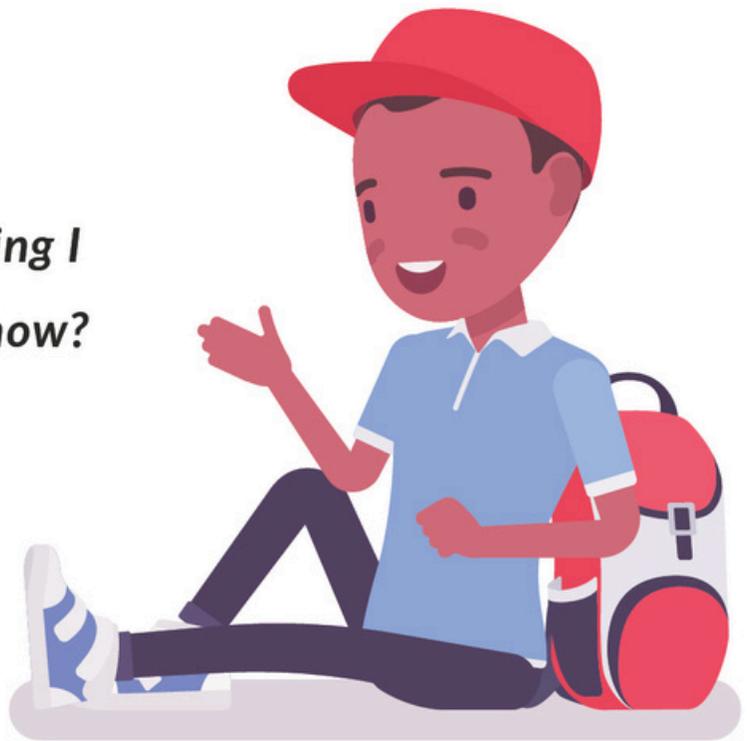
There's a lot of ways to do that, and people do it all different ways. If you're already in the middle of feeling **ANXIOUS**, one idea is to focus on the present moment.

Ask yourself ...

What is one thing I can see right now?

What is one thing I can hear right now?

What is one thing I can smell right now?



If your senses tell you that there is a real danger, you need to run away. If your senses tell you that you are actually safe from any outside danger but are simply feeling **ANXIOUS** on the inside, then you can use some coping skills to help calm your **AMYGDALA**.



You can play an instrument,
play a calming game, or exercise.



Having a hobby
is always good
for our brains.



You have to eat healthy, too,
and always get plenty of sleep.
And most important, you should
have a friend to talk to, like me!

Or like me!





So, it seems like your **AMYGDALA** is protecting you but sometimes makes you worry over nothing. Now I understand what **ANXIETY** is!



Health and Wellness

V L V E Y U J F K V S X M S S E R T S Q L B A E
G A N L V O H E W F S F O R B D E B T F R E E L
B I H A Q Y G L I L A U T C E L L E T N I J D B
J C Q I G E C A W S S E N L L E W Q F Z L Q R A
J O O I G H S O G S E I T I V I T C A A C N M I
W S E P V F Y I P N V I O C C U P A T I O N A L
K N N R U Q Q D C O I Y P A R E H T M D B B Z E
E O Z E M X W C R R E M G S P G T G I G F O O R
Q S B S Y H V Y S A E Q M S J Y R N Z C O L W K
C M I C G O G Q C G T X T I J D N I S S E A D K
G O K R K H L W P U G E E F W N D P N P S N O L
O K I I B A E M K D A Z D E M S J O R I T O H A
A I N P Y F P H Y S I C A L I L A C R R M I G S
L N G T Y T I L I B I S N O P S E R V I L T I A
S G S I S K E N W M X W X K R E T G O T W O V H
T I P O P B Z P A H E F J S V I E G L U K M E X
V C Y N F N H S Y N Z N I W O E M C U A N E B L
E H A S M K A J Z H C G T L W H U U N L I H A O
C C R W Y V O T G S N I K A E X L U T A N V C R
Z L P E I H R U K B O K A P L Q S C E W L K K T
F K Y N L B A J H I F W A L K I N G E I Y A Z V
X V G O N L Q I C H U R C H G F W U R O F K B D
F S D N Z A L C G H F E A T I N G H E A L T H Y
H D H K I O Q K E O N M A X T N Z S H Y E O B H

stress	coping	activities	intellectual
physical	reliable	occupational	mental
spiritual	balance	give back	yoga
swimming	hydrate	biking	debt free
eating healthy	no smoking	emotional	volunteer
financial	savings	laugh	therapy
walking	exercise	hygiene	goals
church	wellness	pray	
prescriptions	social	responsibility	

What are you doing? I didn't know you liked to draw. Rare that you aren't on your phone or the computer.



Maybe I should start drawing, I have anxiety too.
Work makes me ANXIOUS. Maybe you can help me
learn to deal better with my ANXIETY! It is important
to talk about our anxiety. ANXIETY is very common,
and no one needs to struggle with it alone.

I got the idea in school, it
helps me with my ANXIETY.



[Preschool/Elementary Card]

A Healthier Mind is a Happier Life!

Mental health problems are medical conditions and need to be addressed early by licensed medical professionals. See a doctor right away if you see any of these signs:

- Excessive fears, worries, or crying
- Extreme hyperactivity
- Sudden, hard to explain changes in behavior or mood
- Trouble sleeping
- Persistent nightmares
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Extreme disobedience or aggression
- Several temper tantrums daily
- Persistent difficulty separating from parent
- Seeing or hearing things that are not there
- Destructive Behavior
- Constantly threatening to run away
- Withdrawal from friends or family



Learn more at www.AmericanMentalWellness.org ©

Anxiety Pledge

I, _____, understand that
everyone feels anxious sometimes.

I understand that all of my feelings are okay.

I promise to be a good friend and listen
to my friends about their feelings.

I understand that mental health is an
important part of overall physical health.

I promise to tell a parent, teacher, or other
trusted adult if my anxiety is keeping me
from doing the things I normally do
or would like to do.

I promise to tell a parent, teacher, or other
trusted adult if one of my friends is struggling
with anxiety, but has a hard time asking for help.





The American Mental Wellness Association certifies this first booklet to be semantically correct. Mental health conditions are physical health conditions.

Become a champion for mental wellness. Visit the American Mental Wellness Association website at www.americanmentalwellnessassociation.com for information and resources.