



Building Resilience & Resourcefulness in Children & Young People

A Workshop for Parents and Carers



Achieving Our Aim/Vision

- ✓ Formation of a working partnership between Blue Education & Training, Southridge First School & Langley First School (and you as parents/carers)
- ✓ Every adult around a child has a basic knowledge & understanding about children's mental health, and how to promote it!
- ✓ When you know better, you do better!
- ✓ How do we hope to achieve this?
 - ✓ The provision of whole school awareness and skills-based training for all school staff (now available as an e-learning package)
 - ✓ Training in evidence based psychological interventions for school staff (10-20%)
 - ✓ Curriculum development work to help children build resilience and resourcefulness (understanding mental health/emotions, teaching children about helpful lifestyle habits , skills for problem solving, understanding and managing the physical symptoms of anxiety & supporting children to develop the skills required for being brave and facing challenges)
- ✓ Teaching and training for parents and carers to align what is happening at school with what happens at home (consistency of approach achieves results)
- ✓ Parents & carers are the most powerful therapeutic influence on children's lives

The Concepts of Resilience & Resourcefulness

- ✓ Resilience is the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma
- ✓ Resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation or 'bouncing back' in the face of adversity
- ✓ Research suggests that the following personal qualities, resources and skills can support the development of resilience
 - ✓ Personal Qualities/Abilities: Positivity, optimism, high self-esteem, emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility & compassion
 - ✓ Skills: Emotional literacy (an ability to identify and label emotional states), problem solving skills, skills for responding to unhelpful negative thoughts, skills for being brave and responding to anxiety & relaxation skills
- ✓ Children and young people develop these abilities and skills by interacting with the world and observing others
- ✓ Some children are just inherently very resilient!
- ✓ Can we/should we be explicitly teaching children these skills?

Developing Resilience & Resourcefulness: The Spiral Curriculum Approach

Revisited Key Stage 1-4



Teaching children how to identify and respond to unhelpful anxious thoughts

Introducing emotions. Normalising anxiety and fear. Identifying and Labelling Emotions



Supporting children to develop effective problem-solving skills



Supporting children to develop the skills required for being brave and facing challenges

Teaching children about the fight, flight and freeze response. Developing relaxation skills

Teaching children about helpful lifestyle habits

Parenting Strategy: Supporting children to develop the skills required for being brave and facing challenges



What's wrong with a bit of avoidance?

Avoidance is central to the development and maintenance of emotional difficulties- it inhibits new learning!

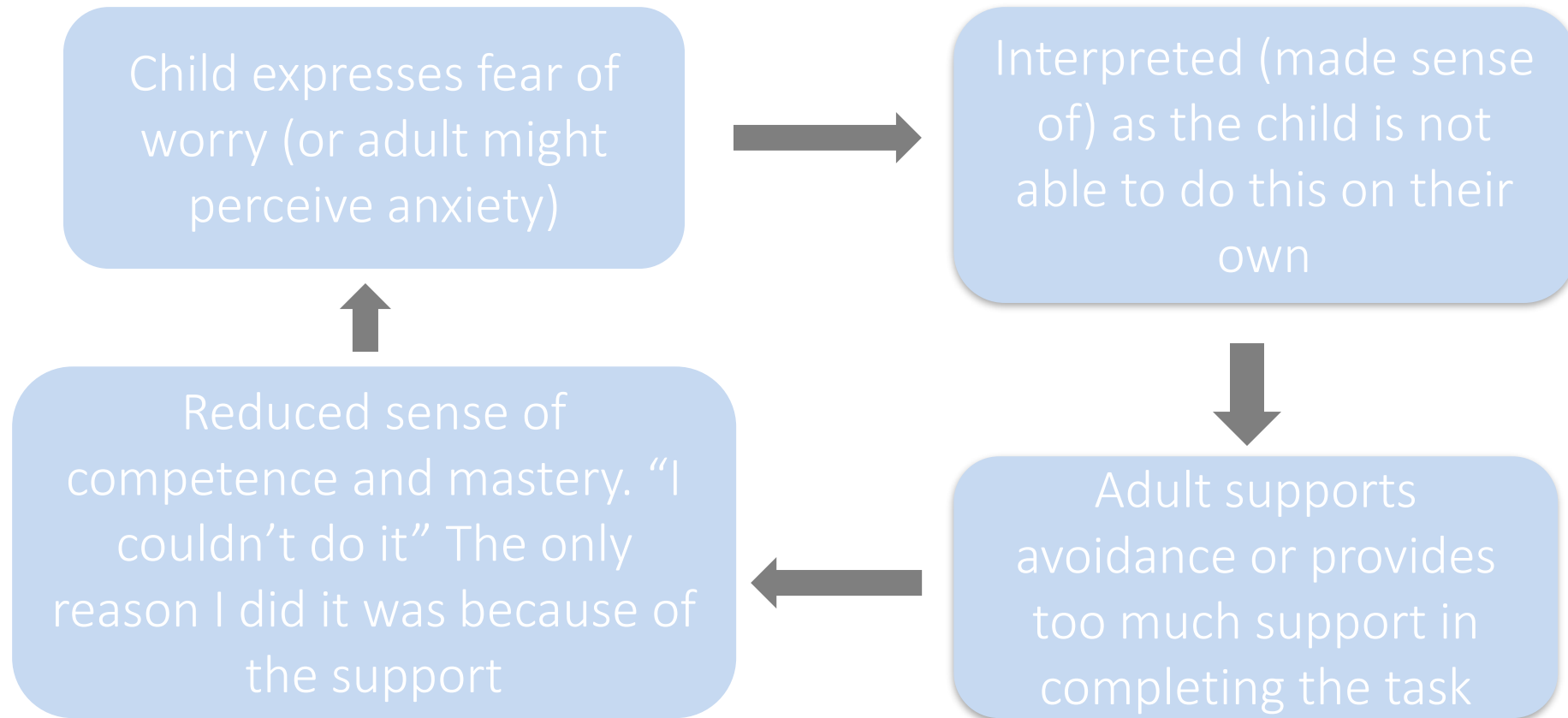
As parents and carers, we are programmed to keep our children safe- this makes it difficult for us to distinguish between danger and discomfort!

Categorising Avoidance Behaviours

- ✓ Avoidance behaviours are things that children do, or don't do, to reduce their uncomfortable feelings
- ✓ Avoidance behaviours are also designed to prevent or minimise the chances of our fears coming true
- ✓ There are three 3 types of avoidance behaviours
 - Complete avoidance
 - Escape
 - Partial avoidance (safety behaviours)

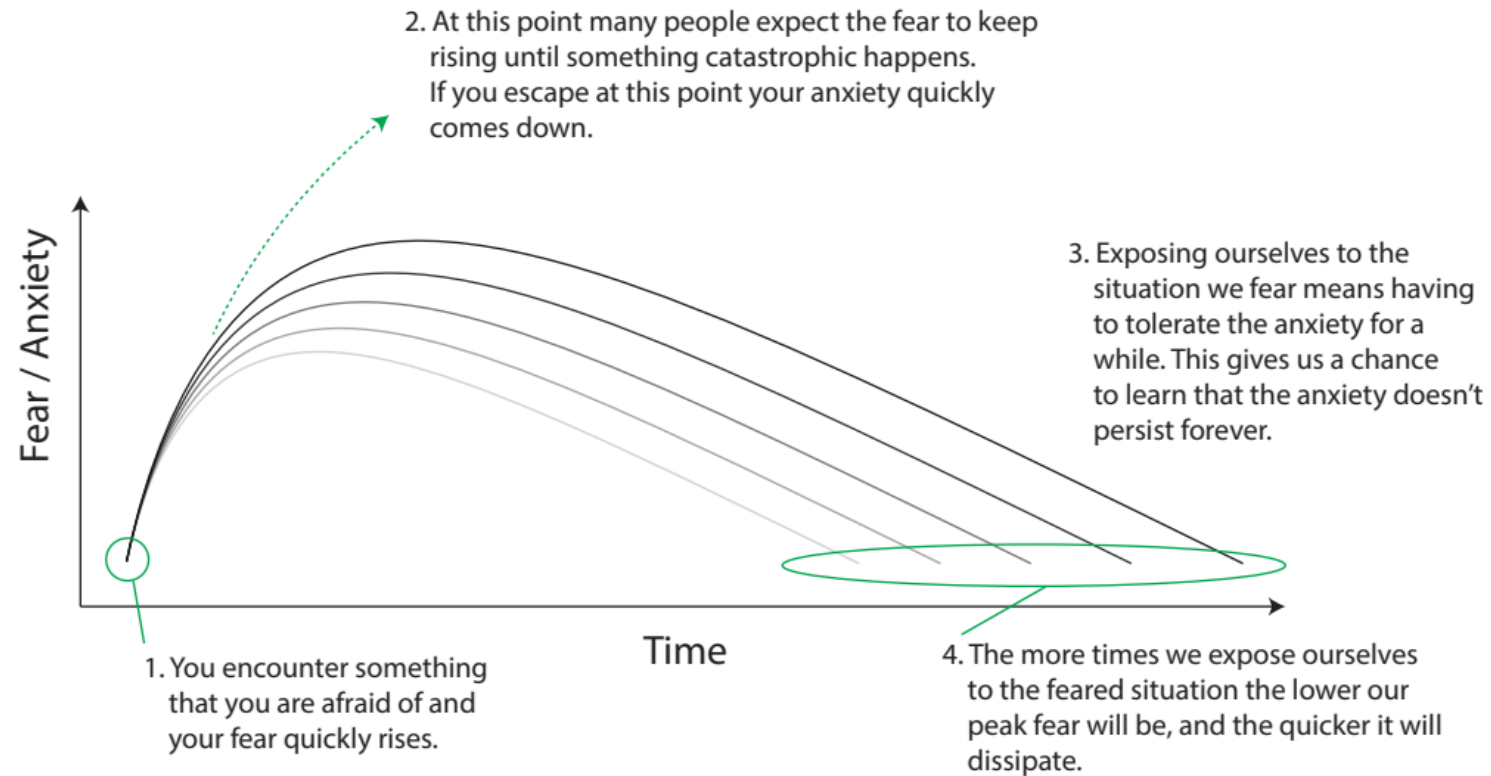
Good drivers don't learn to drive on straight roads. Children need some adversity to build resilience! As parents and carers, we need to encourage independence in everyday life

Adult over involvement reduces opportunities to learn and to build self-belief/ mastery



What happens when children face their fears?

Habituation



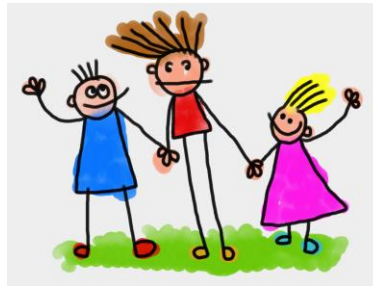
Discomfort, not danger!

Exposure Therapy: Theoretical Model

Worry/fear of harm coming to family
Separation Anxiety

1. Overestimation of threat. "The world is so dangerous"
2. Underestimation of personal resources. "We are an anxious family, and we don't cope well"

Behavioural and Cognitive Avoidance



Safety Seeking Behaviours

Exposure Treatment

1. Exposure to corrective information whilst anxious
2. Provides evidence which is incompatible with fears
3. Relearning/Safety learning
4. In vivo or imaginal

Facing Your Fears

To overcome our fears it can help to build our confidence gradually. You can think of it as being like climbing the steps of a ladder.

Start by writing down the fear that you are facing. Then for each step of the ladder write down one thing you can do to face that fear head-on. Make sure to reward yourself for each step you take.

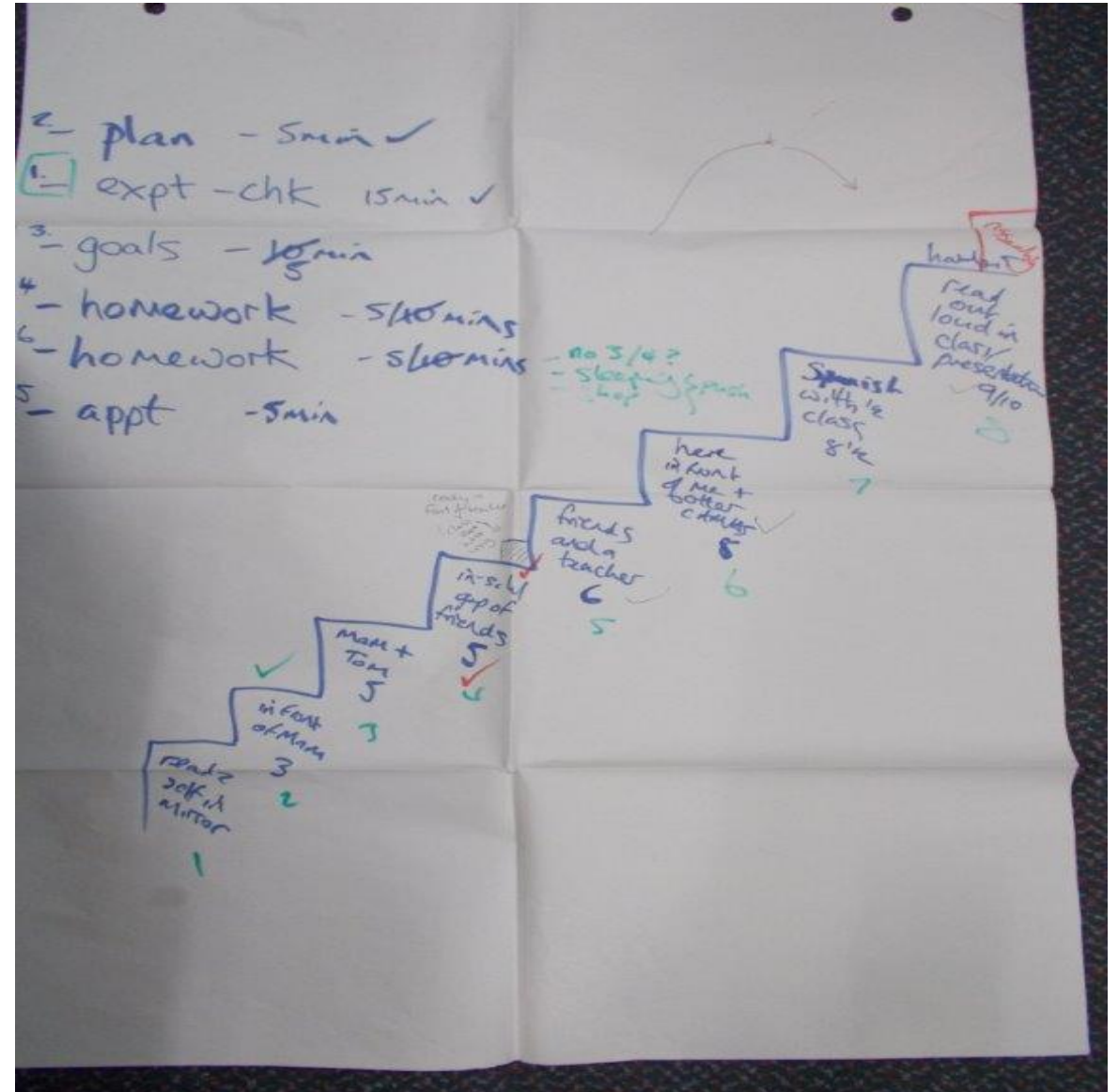
The fear I am facing is: _____



Most difficult



Least difficult



Helpful Parent & Carer Behaviours

- ✓ Parent & Carer Skills that are key to helping your child face their fears
 - ✓ Assessment- Is this danger or discomfort?
 - ✓ Parental modelling (demonstrating & modelling bravery)
 - ✓ Positive Reinforcement (verbal praise, occasional touch)
 - ✓ Psycho education (information about anxiety or stimuli)
 - ✓ Cognitive challenges (that thought.... What do you think now?)
- ✓ To work exposure therapy needs to be designed around the following conditions
 - ✓ Graded- Building gradually
 - ✓ Prolonged (until anxiety levels habituate by 50% from highest point)
 - ✓ Repeated (several times weekly, until the task no longer makes your child feel anxious)
 - ✓ Without distraction (no safety behaviours or avoidance)

Supporting children to develop effective problem-solving skills

- ✓ Children often become too reliant on reassurance from parents and carers
- ✓ Can I do this? Will it be, okay? What will I do if...?
- ✓ Ideally, we need children to develop the skills to think more independently and consider alternative perspectives rather than relying on reassurance
- ✓ In Parent Led Cognitive Behavioural Therapy we help parents to reduce reassurance giving & to promote flexible thinking/problem solving in their children
- ✓ Alternative support strategies can include:
 - ✓ Reducing reassurance giving & helping to promote flexible thinking
 - ✓ Helping anxious children to think more independently and consider alternative possibilities rather than giving reassurance (using problem solving skills)
 - ✓ Supporting children to face their fears (using exposure therapy)
 - ✓ Helping to build distress tolerance

Understanding the nature of reassurance seeking behaviour

- ✓ Reassurance seeking is driven by a need for children to have information. It is a normal process and has two functions:
 - ✓ To gather information to help us to feel better (reduce distress)
 - ✓ To reduce an individual's perceived sense of threat
- ✓ It becomes problematic when children use reassurance seeking to seek a sense of certainty (children are often described as being intolerant of uncertainty)
- ✓ It is an addictive process and becomes problematic when it becomes excessive (ERS)
- ✓ It differs from seeking support! Support is about interpersonal behaviour that is intended to get (or give someone) encouragement, confidence or assistance to cope with feelings of distress
- ✓ Reassurance is often sought from non-credible sources! It loses credibility over time


Supporting children to develop effective problem-solving skills

- ✓ Creating a culture of family and independent problem solving is key to building resilience and resourcefulness
- ✓ Modelling problem solving skills is paramount!
- ✓ Problem solving is structured, effective and time limited way of addressing problems
- ✓ Our role as parents/carers is to facilitate the process and to encourage self-discovery (empowerment)
- ✓ We usually experience two types of problems
 - ✓ Real problems that exist (use problem solving)
 - ✓ Problems that don't exist yet (don't use problem solving) Why not?

Problem Solving

What problem is bothering you?




Think of 3 (or more) possible solutions to your problem. 

What are the advantages of this solution?



What are the disadvantages of this solution?

Which is the best solution?

What do you need to do to make this happen? 

1.



2.



3.



Characteristics of an enabling family culture

Promoting independence in everyday life (embracing new situations and uncertainty)

- ✓ Promoting independence to build sense of accomplishment and skills
- ✓ Reinforcing 'brave have a go behaviour' (Effort not achievement)
- ✓ Creating a growth mindset within children. *Failure and adversity as an opportunity to learn*
- ✓ Supporting children to develop helpful strategies that help children face their fears

Life is like a camera

Just focus on what's important



capture the good times
develop from ~~THE~~ negatives
~~AND~~ if things don't turn out
— TAKE ANOTHER SHOT



Thank you for your time this evening!

Please do let us know what you thought about this evening's session and any ideas about possible areas of focus for future sessions.

Possible areas of focus include:

Teaching children about the fight, flight and freeze response. Developing relaxation skills

Teaching children how to identify and respond to unhelpful anxious thoughts