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20 Strategies to Help Students with Mental Health Needs

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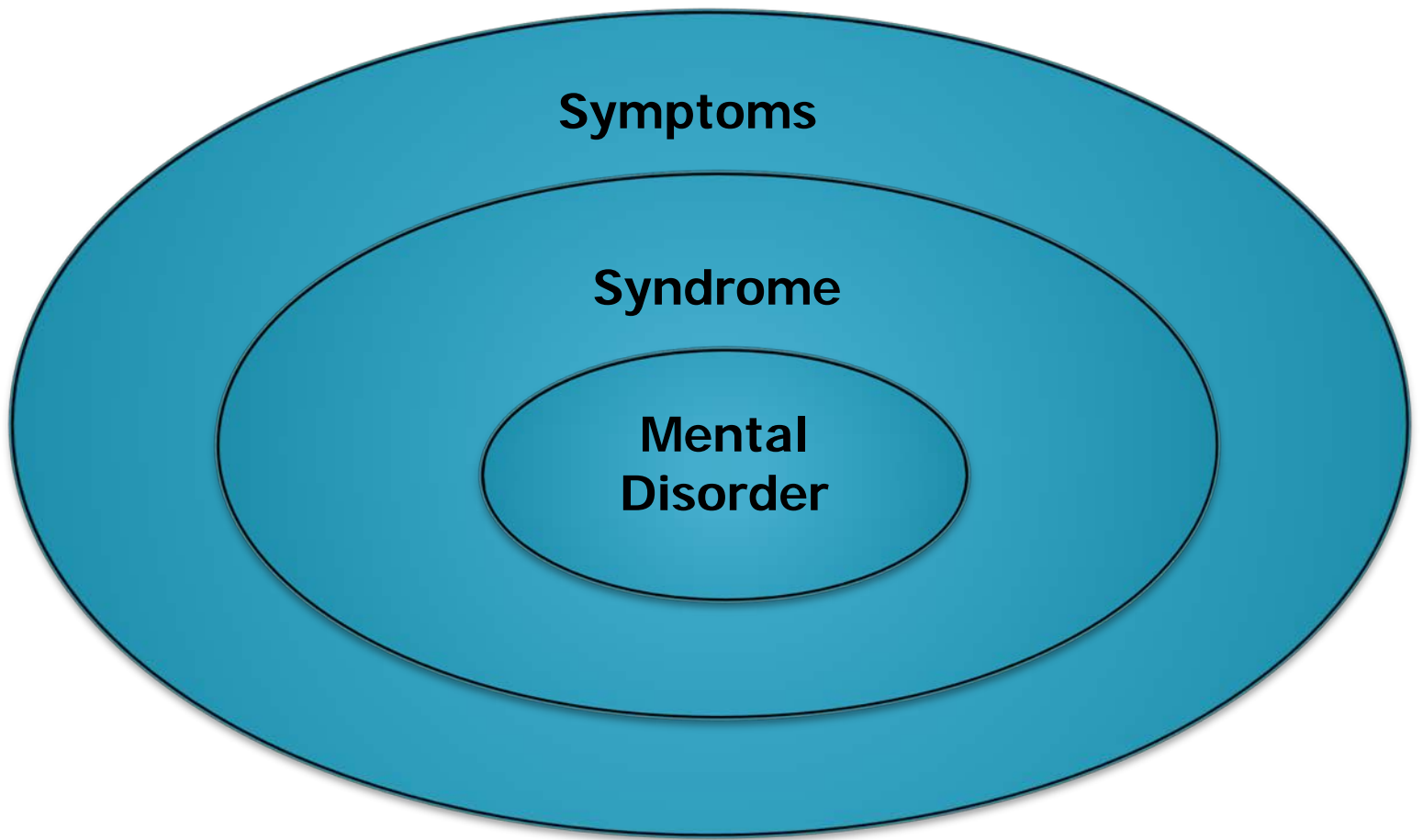
20 Strategies to Assist Students with Mental Health Needs

*MSCA Annual Conference
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A word about interventions....

- Personal relationships are critical
- Do something different
- Take a problem-solving approach
- Get student & teacher buy-in



The mental health issues we'll be talking about:

Mood Disorders

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Disruptive Behavior Disorders

Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder

Anxiety Disorders



Mood disorders

Overview

- Core symptom: disruption of mood and affect
- Negative thinking patterns and social withdrawal are common
- Includes major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, bipolar disorder, and adjustment disorder with depressed mood



Mood disorders

Strategy #1 for younger students

Teach that perspectives can changed

Mood disorders

Strategy #1 for younger students

Example: I can see clearly chart

EVENT	CLOUDY GLASSES	CLEAR GLASSES
Sitting alone at lunch	"No one likes me"	"Who can I sit with today?"



Mood disorders

Strategy #2 for younger students

Create a network of support

Mood disorders

Create a network of support





Mood disorders

Strategy #1 for older students

Increase engagement in pleasant events

Mood disorders

Increase engagement in pleasant events

Example: Generate and assign 5 pleasant events





Mood disorders

Strategy #2 for older students

Help students find a personal strength symbol

Mood disorders

Find a personal strength symbol





Autism spectrum disorders

Overview

- Two essential features:
 - 1) significant impairment in social interaction
 - 2) restricted & stereotypical pattern of behavior
- Tendency to think in very concrete and literal fashion
- Often involves difficulty adjusting to change and to new situations



Autism spectrum disorders

Strategy #1 for younger students

Use concrete hands-on examples to teach social skills

Autism spectrum disorders

Using concrete, hands-on examples to teach social skills

Example: Using hula hoops to teach personal space



Autism spectrum disorders

Using concrete, hands-on examples to teach social skills

Example: Using puppets to teach personal space





Autism spectrum disorders

Strategy #2 for younger students

Use social stories

(See: www.thegraycenter.org)

Autism spectrum disorders

Use social stories

Problem issue: Student does not understand personal space

Social story:

I have an area around my body that is called my "personal space." This space is like an invisible bubble. Sometimes my personal space is large. When it is large, my personal space goes out to my fingertips. When my personal space is large, other people stay outside of it. When my personal space is large, I do not touch other people, and they do not touch me. This helps all of us to feel comfortable.

Sometimes my personal space is small. When my personal space is small, it is about the same size as my body. When my personal space is small, I might give my mom a hug, and she might hug me.



Autism spectrum disorders

Strategy #1 for older students

Make the school experience clear and predictable

Autism spectrum disorders

Make the school experience clear and predictable

Example: Review exactly what to expect on a field trip





Autism spectrum disorders

Strategy #2 for older students

Provide organizational assistance

Autism spectrum disorders

Provide organizational assistance

Example: Help students organize their lockers





Disruptive behavior disorders

Overview

- Core feature is disruptive behaviors ranging from irritating to aggressive or antisocial
- Comorbidity with other mental health problems is high
- Specific diagnoses in this category:
 - Conduct disorder (CD)
 - Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)
 - Intermittent Explosive disorder
 - Adjustment disorder with disturbance of conduct



Disruptive behavior disorders

Strategy #1 for younger students

*Accept anger and hostility as a real
aspect of the student's life*

Hanna, Hanna, & Keys (1999)

Disruptive behavior disorders

Accept anger





Disruptive behavior disorders

Strategy #2 for younger students

Gaze with adoring eyes

(Martha Straus)



Disruptive behavior disorders

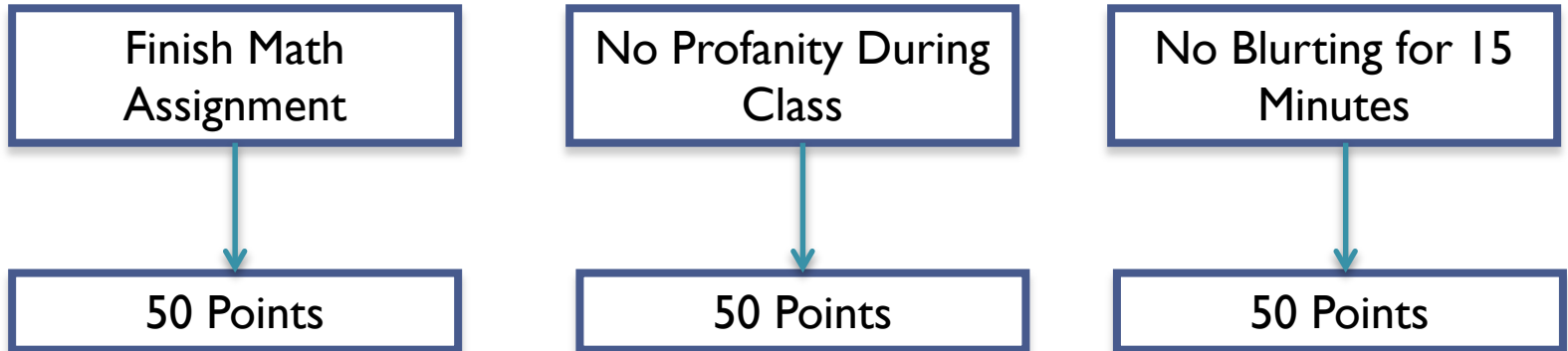
Strategy #1 for older students

Make it pay to behave

Disruptive behavior disorders

Make it pay to behave

Example: Create a menu of rewards for points earned for behavior, work completion, etc.



150 Points=15 minutes on YouTube; Use iPod; Piece of gum
300 Points=Challenge teacher to a game; 5 extra credit points; Candy
1000 Points=30 minutes shooting hoops; Use notes on test
5000 Points=Class does activity you like; McDonald's lunch



Disruptive behavior disorders

Strategy #2 for older students

Address dysfunctional thinking

Disruptive behavior disorders

Address dysfunctional thinking

Example: Long-term consequences

“What will people think of you if you keep stealing?” & “Would your employer put up with stealing?”

Example: Conversations about moral/social norms

“Why does our society have laws?” & “What if everyone did whatever they felt like?”

Example: Foster empathy

*“Remember that time you were the victim? What was that like?”
& “Watch this video and tell me how PERSON A probably felt.”*



ADHD

Overview

- ADHD is a neurologically-based developmental disorder
- Core feature: impairment in rule-governed behavior & inhibiting impulsive responses
- Symptoms may not be evident in highly structured, high-interest, high stimulation, or novel situations
- Symptoms tend to worsen in situations that are unstructured, unsupervised, boring, or that require sustained attention



ADHD

Strategy #1 for younger students

Secret signal



ADHD

Secret signal

Example: Teacher taps whiteboard marker three times when student is off-task

Example: Teacher clears throat when student is on-task and paying attention



ADHD

Strategy #2 for younger students

Behavior charts

ADHD

Behavior charts

Sample Classroom Behavior Chart

Student's name _____ Date _____

Behavior	Class Period			
	<i>Math (first half)</i>	<i>Math (second half)</i>	<i>Reading (first half)</i>	<i>Reading (second half)</i>
Raise hand before speaking				
Talk nicely to other students				
Pay attention to teacher				
Complete assigned work				



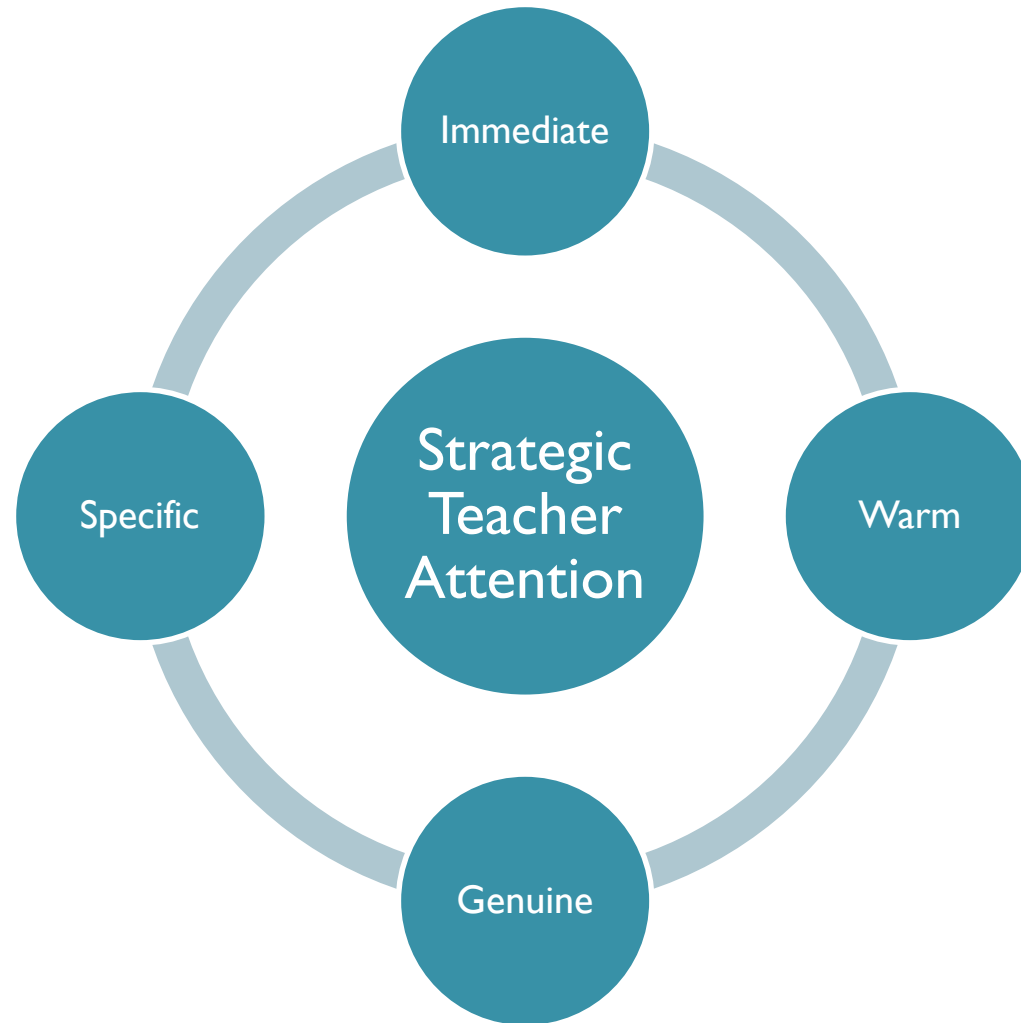
ADHD

Strategy #1 for older students

Strategic teacher attention

ADHD

Strategic teacher attention



ADHD

Strategic teacher attention

Example:

“Thanks for getting started right away, Jason; I really like the way you got our all your materials and got right to work!”



ADHD

Strategy #2 for older students

Provide organizational assistance

ADHD

Provide organizational assistance

Example: Set-up a system for assignment notebook/planner checks





Anxiety disorders

Overview

- A family of disorders
- Affects 10%-20% of youth
- Core feature: excessive and often debilitating anxiety
- Associated symptoms: restlessness, fatigue, concentration difficulties, irritability, worry, proneness to excessive self-criticism
- The worry is key (not the target of the worry)



Anxiety disorders

The family of anxiety disorders

- Social Phobia
- Acute Stress Disorder
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Adjustment Disorder with Anxiety
- Specific Phobia
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder NOS



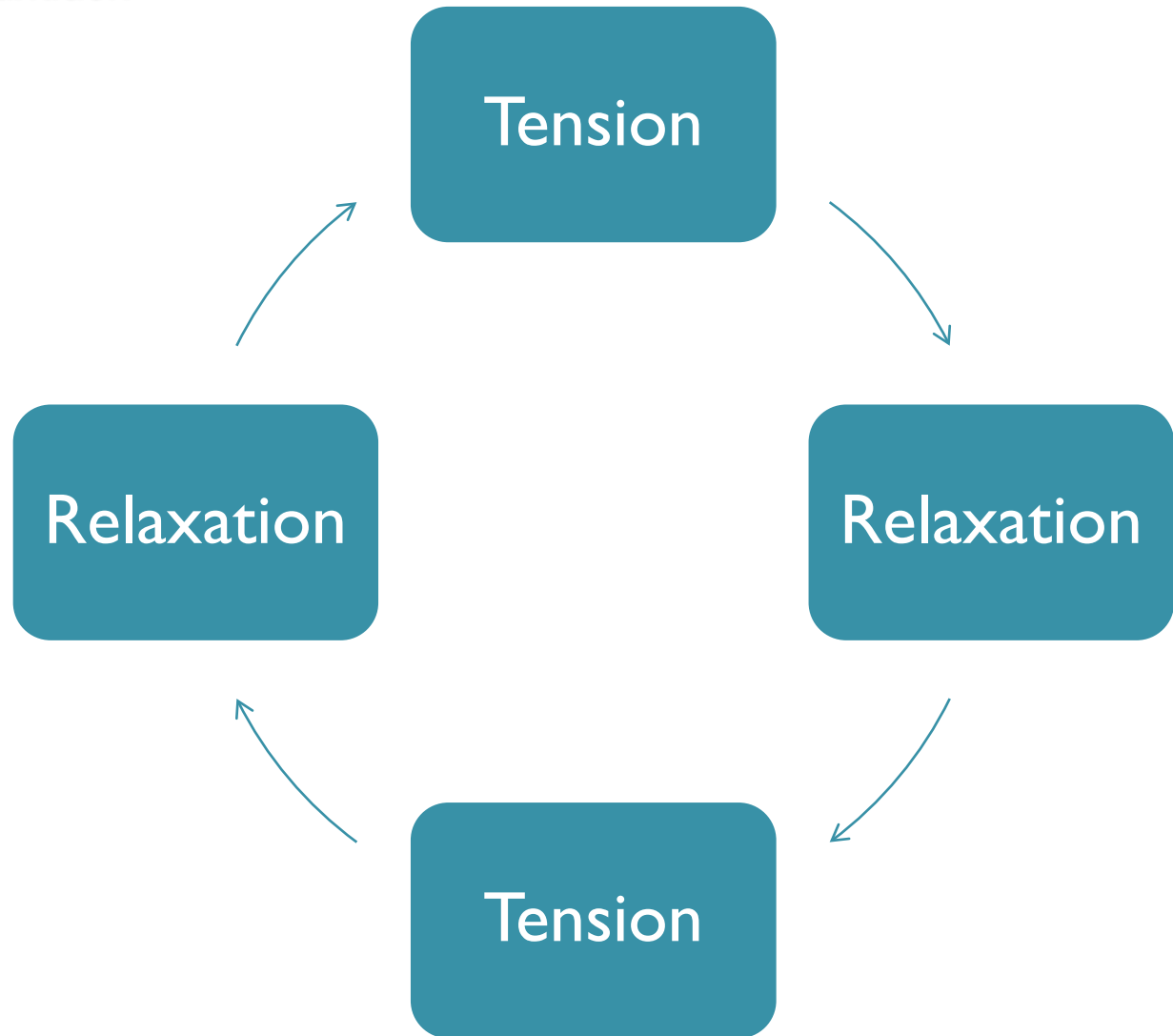
Anxiety disorders

Strategy #1 for younger students

Teach relaxation

Anxiety disorders

Teach relaxation





Anxiety disorders

Teach relaxation

Examples:

Hands & Arms (Squeezing a lemon)

Shoulder & Neck (Turtle in a shell)

Jaw (Giant hard candy)



Anxiety disorders

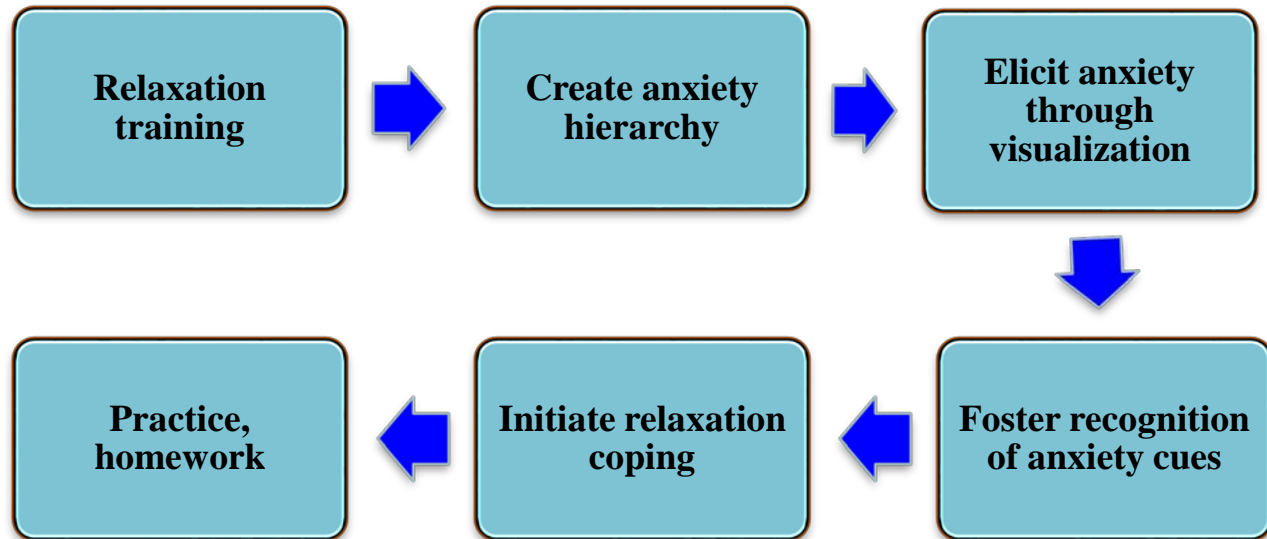
Strategy #2 for younger students

For specific fears, try gentle exposure

Anxiety disorders

Gentle exposure

Example: Systematic desensitization





Anxiety disorders

Strategy #1 for older students

Work on cognitions

Anxiety disorders

Work on cognitions

Example: Keep a thought record

SITUATION	AUTO THOUGHT	EVIDENCE	RATIONAL THOUGHT	EVIDENCE

Could add: Emotion, rating scale, type of cognitive distortion, outcome, etc.



Anxiety disorders

Strategy #2 for older students

Develop coping strategies

Anxiety disorders

Develop coping strategies



It's Going to be fine!!

- Basic Relaxation
- Self-Talk



But...just in case it's not

- Coping Strategy



Anxiety disorders

Develop coping strategies

Examples:

FEAR: “What if my mouth goes dry & I can ’t talk?”

STRATEGY: Ask teacher if student can have a bottle of water nearby

FEAR: “What if I forget everything I was going to say?”

STRATEGY: Ask teacher if student can prepare/read from detailed notes



Thank you....

Thank you for attending this session!

Feel free to send us comments or questions:

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