

**HELLO!**

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# CHILDREN WITH LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO:

- Have difficulty regulating emotions
- Have 'behaviour problems'
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have increased anxiety
- Have reduced ability to show empathy
- Lower frustration tolerance
- Social difficulties

# WHY?

Common factors in mental health issues:

- Low self-esteem
- Ruminative negative thinking
- Social-isolation

# UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE COMMUNICATING...

- Behaviour is communication
- But only if we understand the behaviour

# ANXIETY/FEAR/ANGER/FRUSTRATION

- Closely linked emotions
- Perceived threat to our safety – physical or emotional
- Elements of the unknown
- Can be triggered by everyday experiences
- Thought patterns contribute

**THE CHILD'S PERCEPTION IS  
THE KEY FACTOR. NOT YOURS.**

# INGRAINED RESPONSE TO ANXIETY/FEAR/ANGER/FRUSTRATION

- Autonomic nervous system – control system that regulates bodily functions
- Sympathetic response – prepares body for something happening, kicks in when feeling stress and anxiety
- Parasympathetic response – regulates bodily functions, allows body to relax

# SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE

- Developed over millions of years
- Designed to make us physically stronger and more alert
- Released cortisol and adrenaline
- Triggered if threat is physical or emotional



# SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE

## Adrenaline & Cortisol

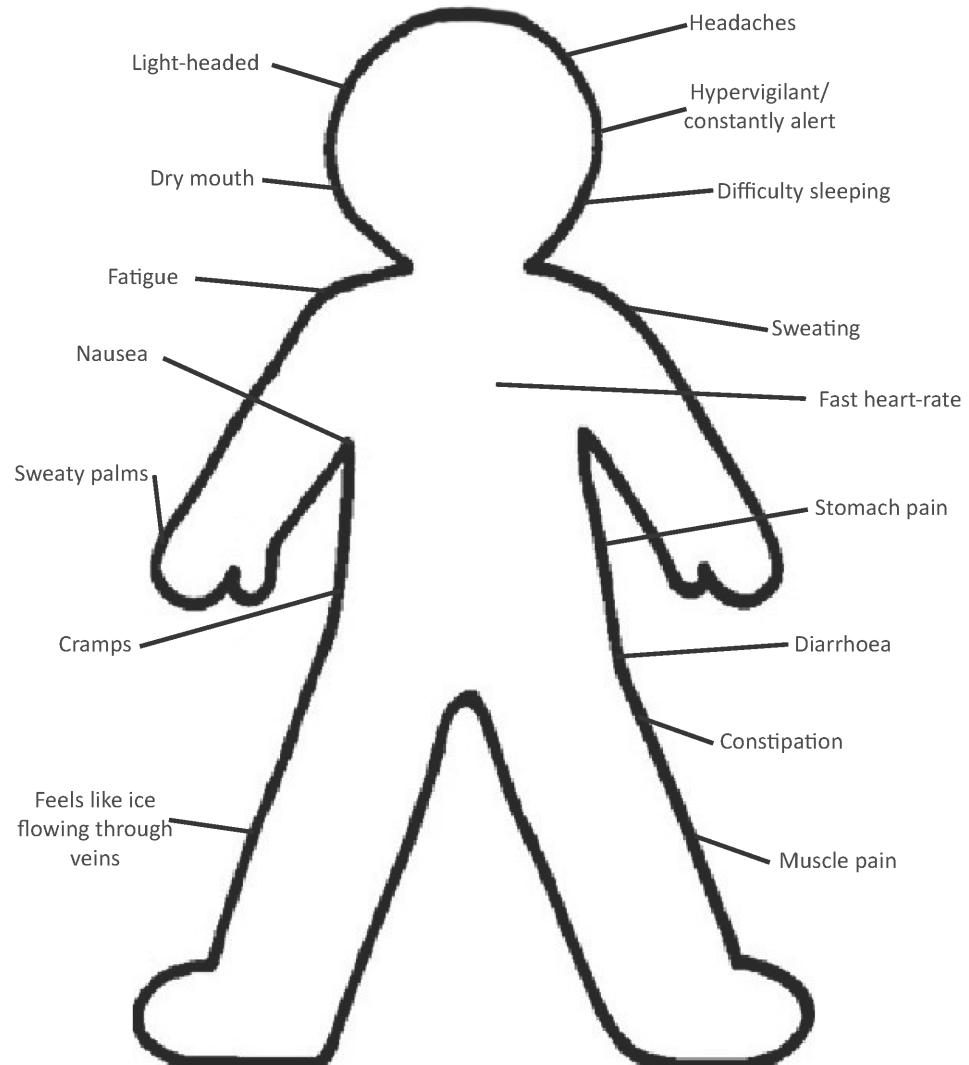
- Triggers fight/flight/freeze/flop/friend
- Regulates blood pressure and increases blood sugar which helps us be more alert
- Dilates blood passages to send more oxygen to muscles
- Reduces ability to feel pain
- Diverts energy from other bodily functions when doing this

# SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE

## Adrenaline & Cortisol

- Reduces saliva production
- High glucose levels
- Increases hunger
- Suppresses immune system
- Shuts down digestion

# PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS



# REFLEX ACTIONS

Fight	Flight	Freeze	Friend	Fawn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confrontational</li><li>• Aggressive</li><li>• Shouting</li><li>• Competitive</li><li>• Controlling</li><li>• Explosive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Running away</li><li>• Avoidance</li><li>• Mute(selective)</li><li>• Procrastinating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ignoring</li><li>• Pretending haven't heard</li><li>• Self-medication (numbing)</li><li>• Not making decisions</li><li>• Daydreaming</li><li>• Procrastinating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laughing</li><li>• Making inappropriate jokes</li><li>• Negotiating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People pleasing</li><li>• Excessively complimenting</li><li>• Always saying yes</li><li>• Always saying sorry</li><li>• Codependent</li><li>• Unable to set boundaries</li><li>• Perfectionism</li></ul>

# SAFETY BEHAVIOURS

- Used in an attempt to feel in control
- Belief it will prevent fears coming true
- Only a temporary relief
- It doesn't work so more safety behaviour can be added
- Safety behaviours/routines become more complex

# SAFETY BEHAVIOURS

- Avoiding situations/behaviours/escaping
- Relying on other people
- Compulsive behaviours
- Seeking reassurance
- Distraction
- Suppression/masking

# NEURODIVERGENT BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ANXIETY/FEAR

- Routines and rituals – soothing and calming but can become compulsions
- Routines become more elaborate and prolonged
- Repetitive questions
- Stimming
- Special interest/computer games – thought blocker

# NEURODIVERGENT BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ANXIETY/FEAR

- Controlling of experiences – avoidance, threats, emotional blackmail, wanting to be in charge
- Becoming emotionally overwhelmed aka 'meltdown'
- 'Meltdowns' can be a form of cleansing



# HOW TO HELP

- Look at behaviours differently
- Don't presume what they feel
- Give time
- Provide with tools for expression
- Model naming and describing your emotions
- Model regulating your emotions

# TOOLS FOR EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

- PECS
- Emoticons
- Body pictures
- Sign language
- Art and crafts
- Blob Tree

# MOST IMPORTANTLY

- Listen/hear
- Acknowledge
- Validate
- Don't fix/cheer up

# PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Reduces arousal after anxiety/anger/stress/frustration
- 75% of the PNS is our vagus nerve
- Stimulating your vagus nerve improves your vagal tone
- The better your vagal tone the better your mental and physical health

# STIMULATING YOUR VAGUS NERVE

- Acupuncture
- Music therapy
- HRV Biofeedback
- Aerobic exercise
- Omega 3 fatty acids
- Yoga
- Massages
- Hypnosis
- Compassion
- Social interactions
- Meditation
- Taichi
- Laughter
- Hydrotherapy
- Cold
- Prayer/singing/chanting
- Stretching
- Vitamin B12
- Mediterranean diet
- Soy oil
- Polyphenols - berries, herbs and spices, cocoa powder, nuts, flaxseeds, vegetables, olives, coffee and tea
- Tens
- Sugar
- Tears

[www.samanthagarner.co.uk](http://www.samanthagarner.co.uk)

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- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy based resources and training for staff to use with students supporting a range of behavioural and mental health issues.
- Pastoral Handbooks, SEN Handbook, Intervention Programmes.