



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON COGNITIVE RESEARCH & DISORDERS

# ISCRD VIRTUAL SUMMIT



## DEMYSTIFYING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

### Presenters:

Sheila Desai, Ph.D., NCSP  
National Association of School Psychologists

John Hite, Psy.D., NCSP  
Developmental Partners



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# OUR GOALS

1. Describe the most common mental health conditions in children: anxiety and depression.
2. Talk about why these problems develop and how extended school closures impact mental health.
3. Review the most effective things that can be done to treat these problems.
4. Learn what you can you do in your roles to help identify and support these children.
5. Question and Answer - actively encouraged!

# COMMON PROBLEMS: ANXIETY

## Impacts

- 7 in 100 children diagnosed age 3 - 17 according to the CDC.
- What makes a disorder?

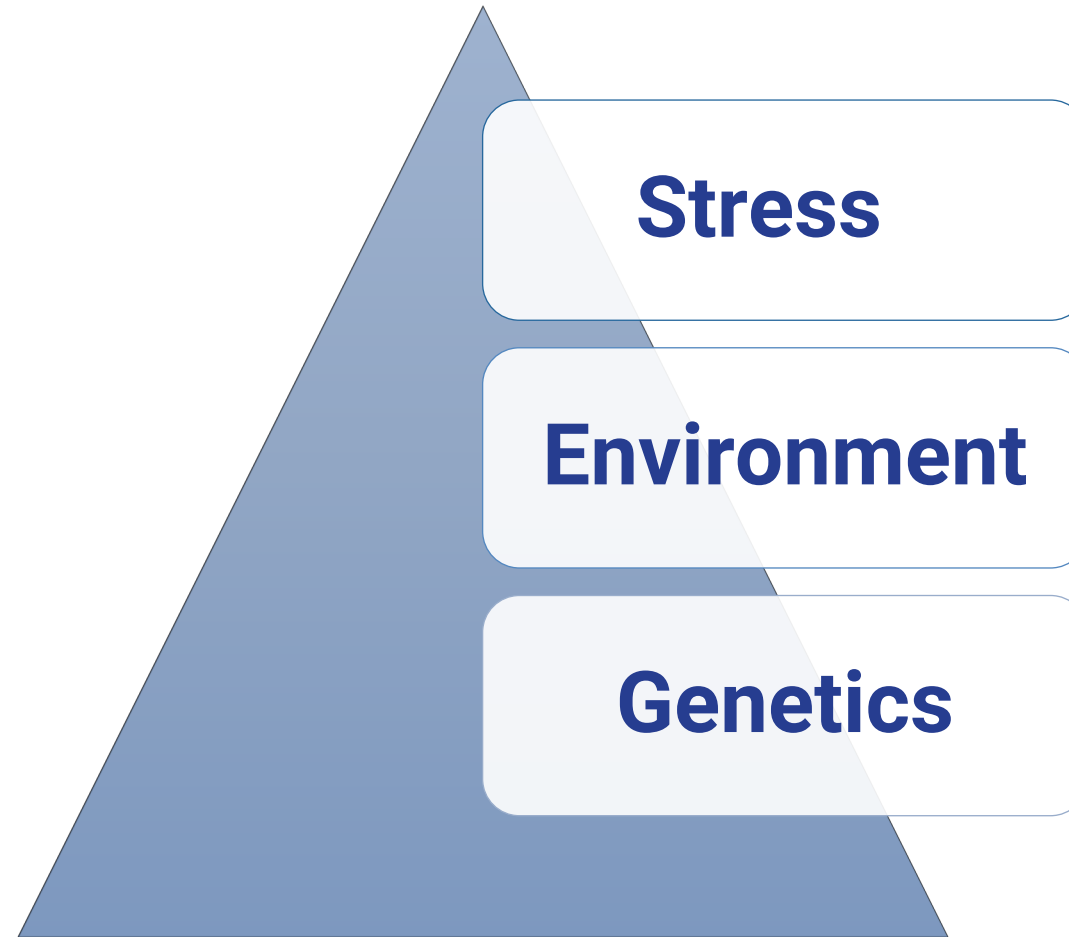
## Different terms

- Generalized Anxiety
- Separation Anxiety
- Selective Mutism
- Social Anxiety

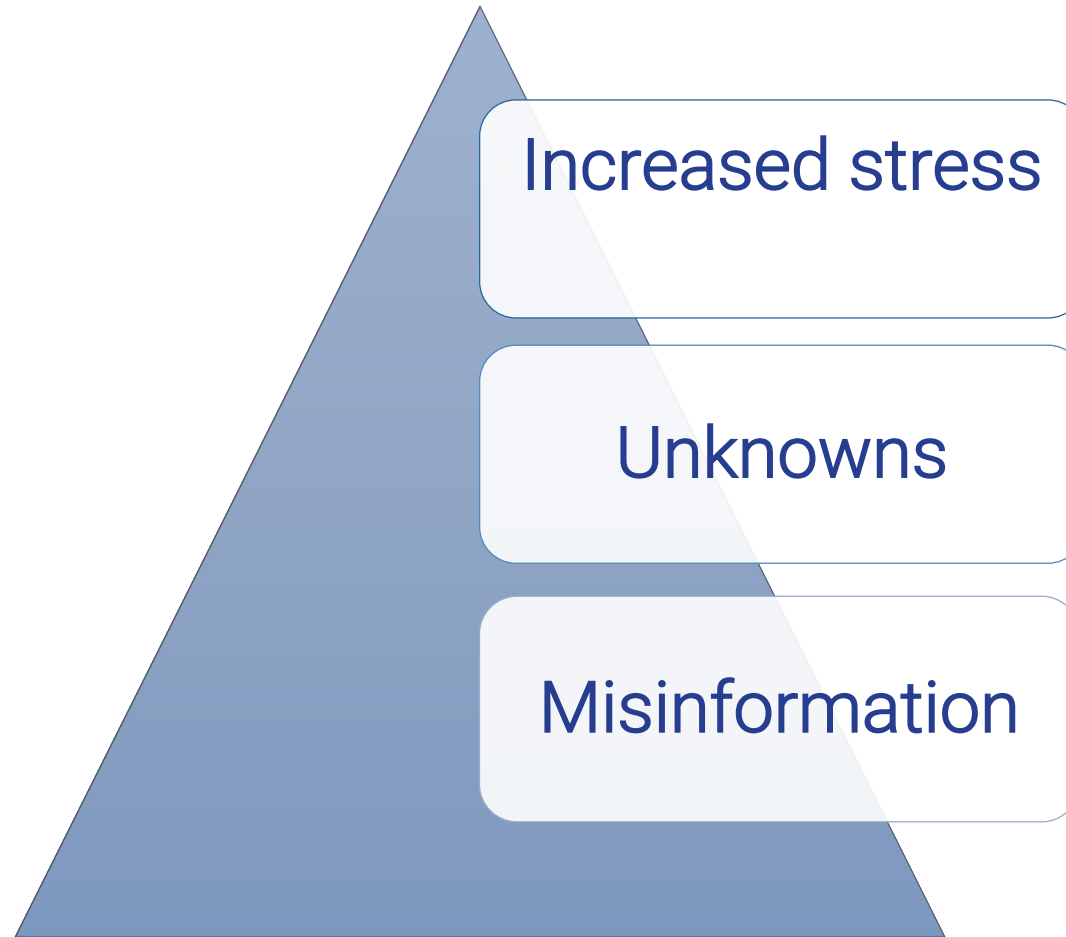
## Similar concerns

- Excessive worries or fears

# WHY ANXIETY DEVELOPS



# ANXIETY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



# SIGNS OF ANXIETY

## Thinking

- Problems staying focused
- Problems remembering things
- Issues solving problems

## Behavior

- Easily upset
- Avoidance
- Withdrawn
- Failing tasks
- Perfectionism
- Not speaking

## Physical

- Physically tense
- Lots of sweating
- Upset stomach
- Aches and pains
- Sleep problems

# ANXIETY: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Ask questions, for example: Do the worries happen all the time or only on the playground?
- Describe what you notice to families, for example: “It seems like Anush’s body is tense all the time, do you notice that at home?”
- Consult with the specialist in your setting, for example: school psychologist, social worker, counselor.

# ANXIETY: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Breaking things down into much smaller steps
- Help increase predictable routines and clear expectations
- Practice skills to help think flexibly and solve problems
- Don't punish worries and fears



# COMMON PROBLEMS: DEPRESSION

## Impacts

- 3 in 100 children diagnosed age 3 - 17 according to the CDC.
- What makes a disorder?

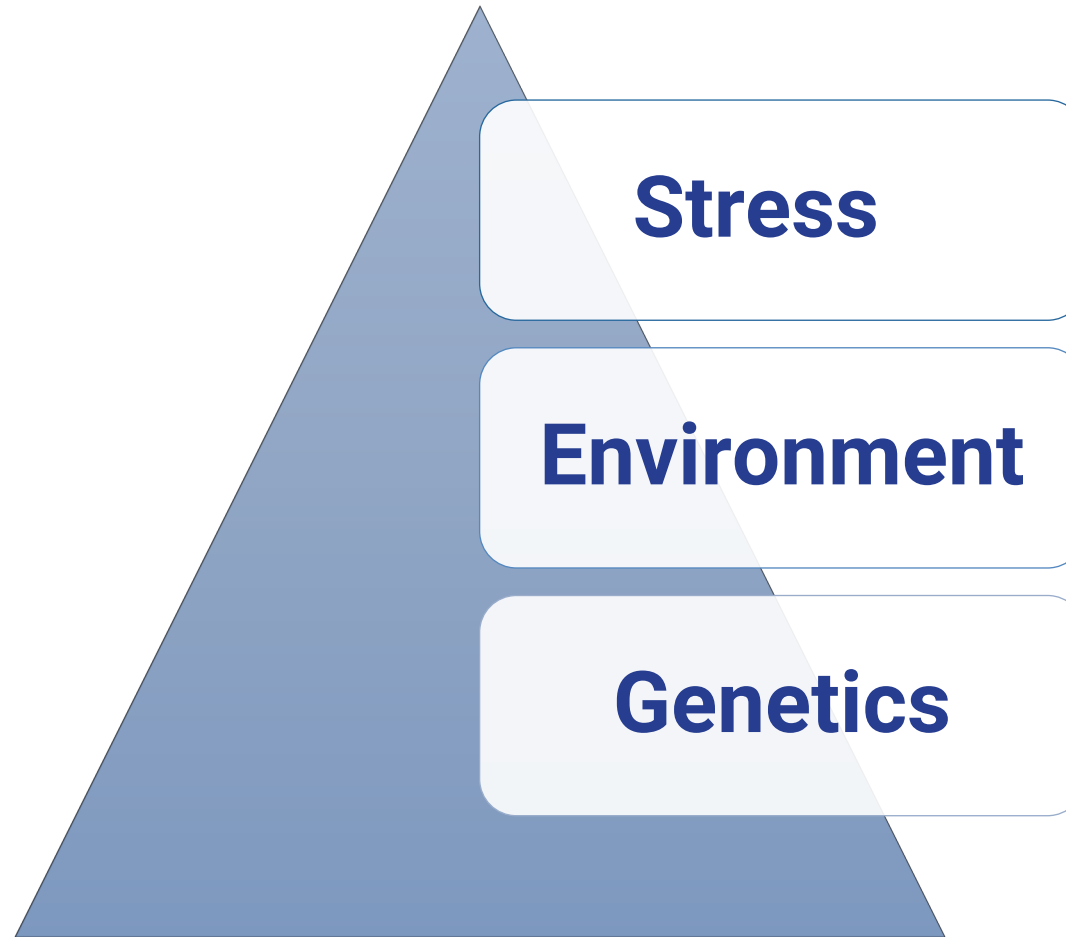
## Different Terms

- Mood dysregulation
- Major Depression
- Dysthymia

## Similar concerns

- Sadness
- Irritability
- Loss of energy
- Negative thoughts

# WHY DEPRESSION DEVELOPS



# DEPRESSION IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



# SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

## Thinking

- Feeling worthless
- Lots of guilt
- Death and suicide
- Trouble focusing

## Behavior

- Sad
- Easily upset
- Loss of interests
- Angry
- Withdrawn

## Physical

- Overtired
- Change in eating/weight
- Slow moving
- Sleep problems

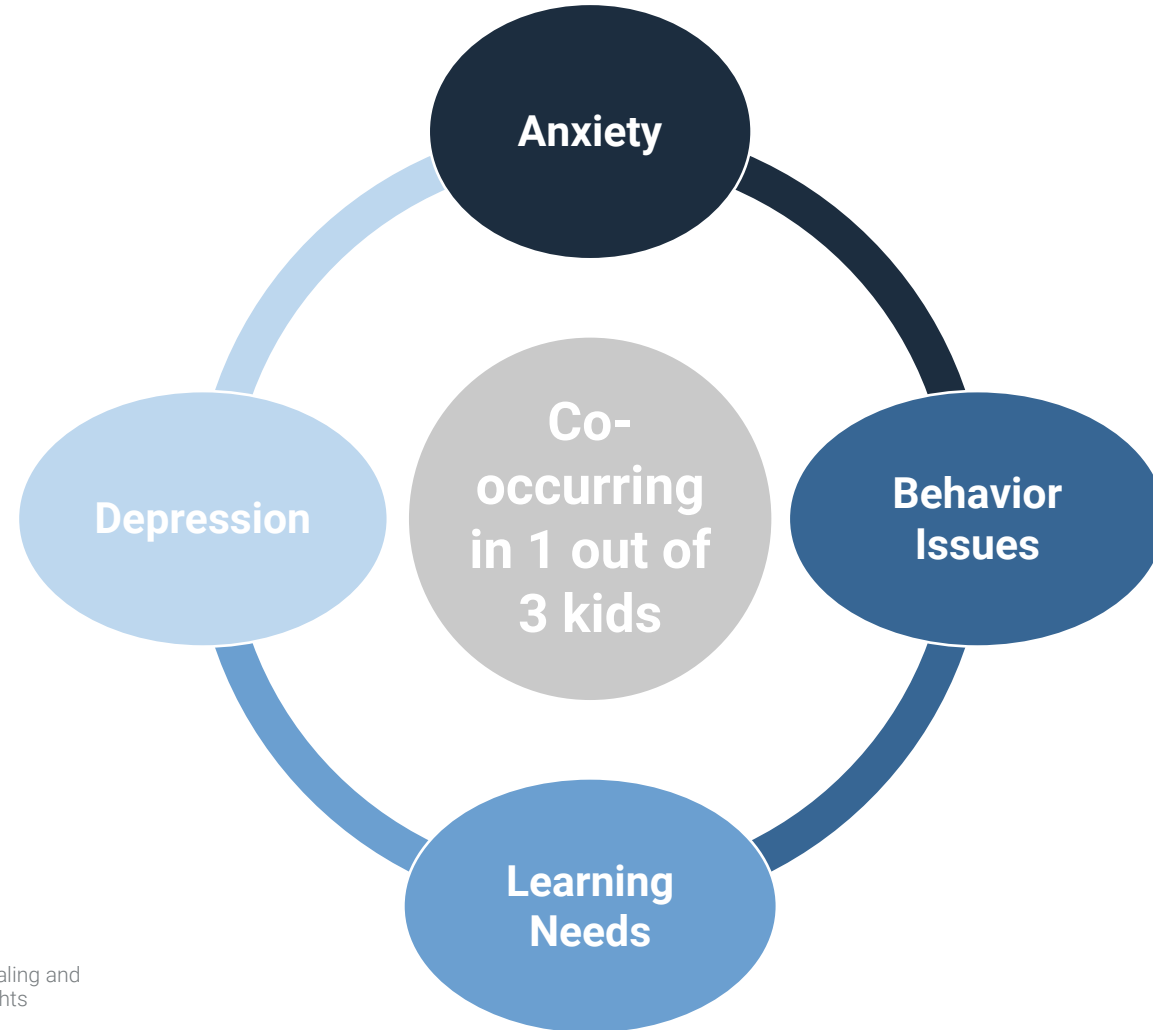
# DEPRESSION: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Ask questions, for example: Are you thinking about suicide?
- Describe what you notice to families, for example: “It seems like Trish’s not eating and really sleepy in the cafeteria, do you notice that at home?”
- Consult with the specialist in your setting, for example: school psychologist, social worker, counselor. This could be done to help get a child/family linked up with referral/supports in school and the community.

# DEPRESSION: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Check in and develop relationships with children.
- Encourage children to talk about feelings and problems.
- Pay close attention to bullying behavior and social problems.
- Collaborate with others in your setting to implement school-wide social-emotional supports.
- Work with colleagues to get a child/family linked up with referral/supports in school and the community.

# PROBLEMS DON'T OCCUR IN ISOLATION



# IS IT PROBLEM BEHAVIOR OR A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE?

- Almost impossible to answer without further investigation or consultation
- Detecting a difference virtually will be especially challenging



# DOs and DON'Ts

## DO:

- Focus on your relationships with students
- Ask open-ended questions with authenticity and without judgment
- Rely on mental health professionals

## DON'T:

- Try to provide mental health support
- Keep families out of the loop if you have concerns

# FREE EXPERT DEVELOPED RESOURCES

The **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)** has developed an extensive free library of best practices developed by experts in the field with easily accessible research-based, practical information for parents and educators.

Information available at: [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)



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## THANK YOU!

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