



Parenting Children with Depression & Anxiety

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WITH THANKS TO KARA CATTANI, PHD, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST (COPRESENTER ON
THIS TOPIC AT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2019)

What you can expect today

- ▶ Teaching children how to communicate about emotions
- ▶ Recognizing the difference between emotional reactions and depression or anxiety
- ▶ Some specific ideas about how to help your child who may be struggling with depression or anxiety
- ▶ Finding hope through the Savior

it's okay
not to be
Okay

“ Let our hearts be stretched out in compassion toward others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. ”

DIETER F. UCHTDORF

This applies to our children AND to us as parents!



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Kids these days (iGen)..... <growing up 1995+>

- ▶ Learning problems
- ▶ Health challenges
- ▶ Fears....the dark, safety, animals
- ▶ Fitting in with friends...shyness, belonging
- ▶ bullying
- ▶ Pressure to excel (sports, school, etc) + Self Worth often gauged by success
 - ▶ Perfectionism
- ▶ Social media pressure
 - ▶ 24/7 can compare to others
 - ▶ Lower in person interactions
 - ▶ FOMO & FOBLO
- ▶ Higher rates of depression and anxiety (national survey on drug use and health)
- ▶ Increase in reports of self injury & suicide (center for disease control & prevention)

Life is hard! We all need to be able to talk about emotions

- ▶ An important place to start is helping kids recognize and communicate about emotions.
- ▶ Find an age-appropriate way to speak to your kids about their emotions



How Are You Feeling Today?



HAPPY



AFRAID



SAD



FRUSTRATED



ANGRY



ASHAMED



EMBARRASSED



JEALOUS



DISTRACTED



HOPELESS



SMUG



DISGUSTED



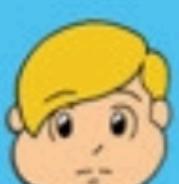
CONFUSED



SURPRISED



GUILTY



EMPTY



CONFIDENT



NERVOUS



ENRAGED



EXHAUSTED



LONELY



DEPRESSED



ECSTATIC



HOPEFUL



WORRIED



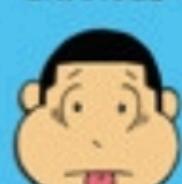
CAUTIOUS



PROUD



SHOCKED

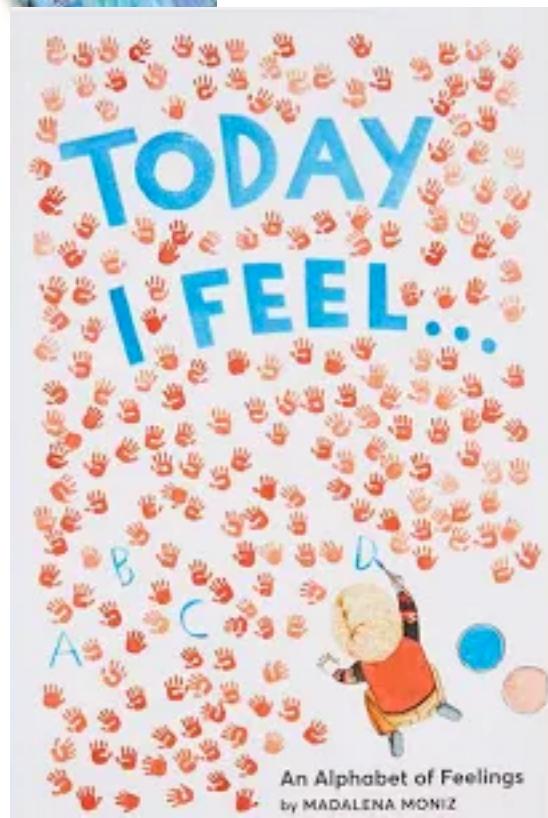
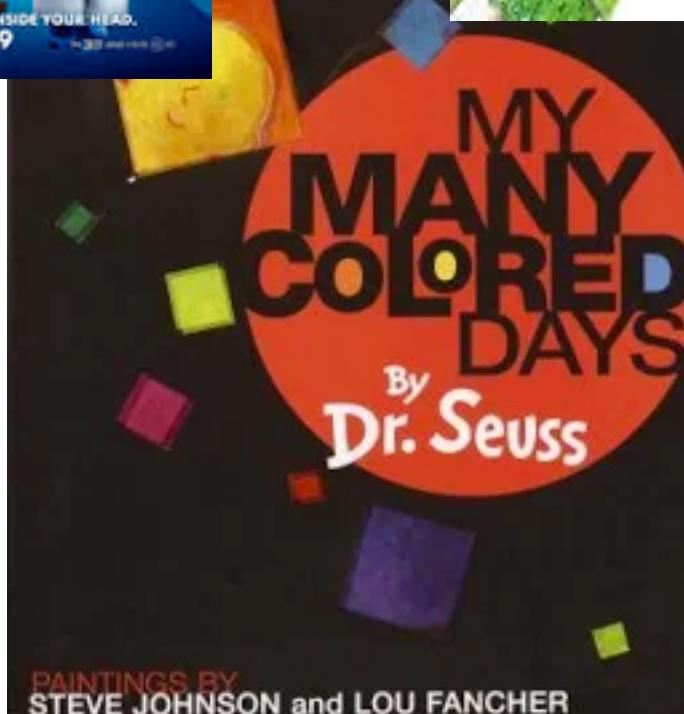
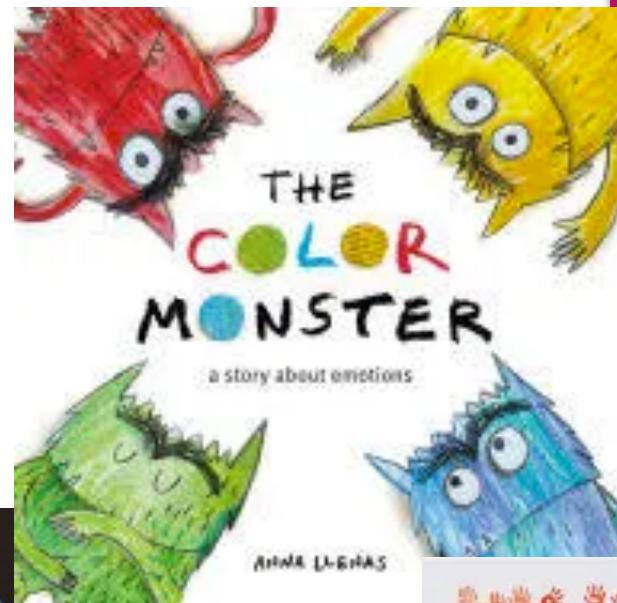
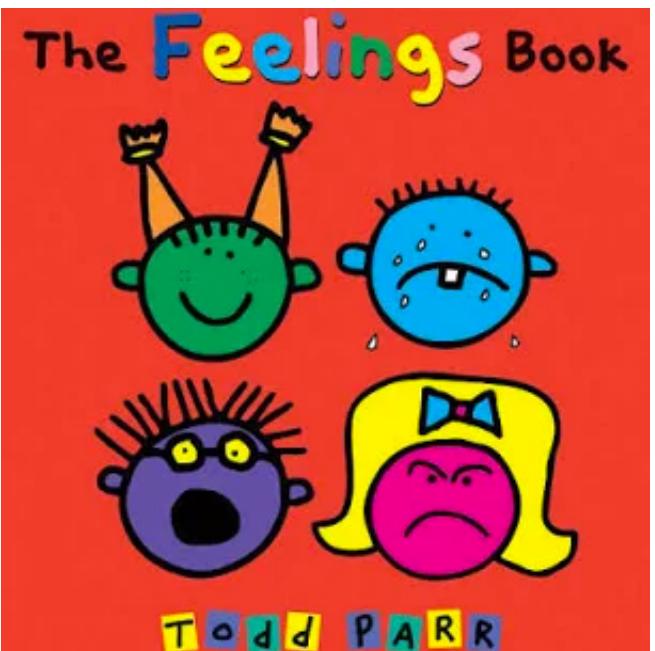


OVERWHELMED



SHY

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Ask feelings-oriented questions

- ▶ How are you feeling?
- ▶ What's going on for you?
- ▶ Can you describe what that feels like?

Communicating about emotions

- ▶ In order to have honest communication about emotions, it's vital to communicate through words and actions that ALL emotions are ok and that there aren't "good" emotions and "bad" emotions

Inadvertent communication that emotions are bad or wrong

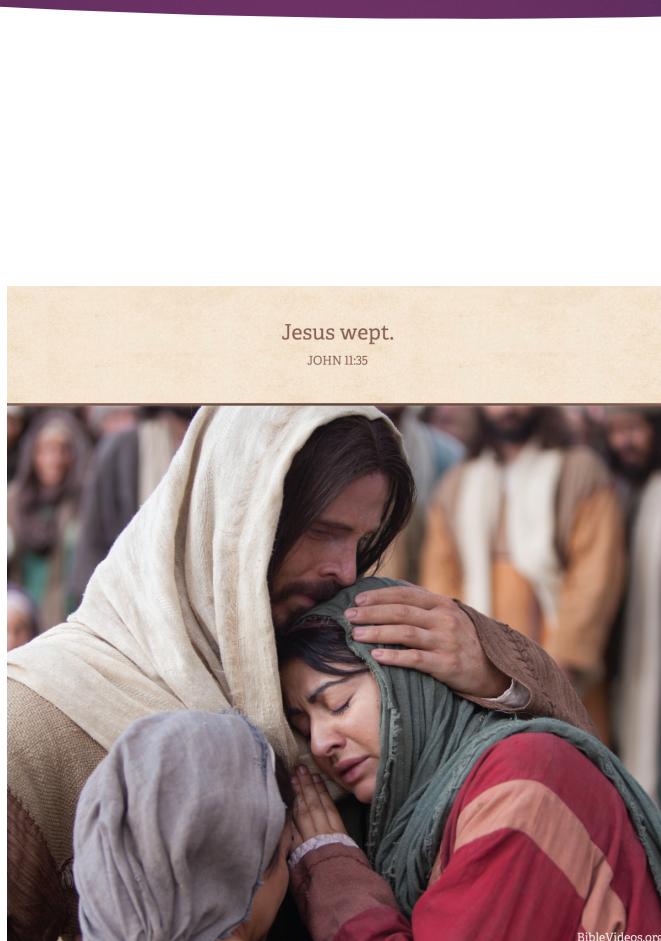
- ▶ Instead of “you’re ok” try “I’m right here”
- ▶ Instead of “calm down” try “help me understand what’s going on for you”
- ▶ Instead of “everything’s going to be fine” try “tell me more about that”

Emotions in the scriptures



And when she saw him, she was *troubled* at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, *Fear not, Mary...*"

Luke 1:29-30



And now when Moroni saw that the city of Nephiahah was lost he was *exceedingly sorrowful*, and began to *doubt*...[and] was *angry* with the government. Alma 59:11-13

Painting of Captain Moroni by Walter Rane

Recognizing Depression & Anxiety

► Depression

- ▶ Depressed or irritable mood
- ▶ Withdrawn/loss of interest in usual activities
- ▶ Fatigue, loss of energy
- ▶ Changes in appetite
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping (too much, too little)
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Feeling worthless, unloveable
- ▶ Thoughts of death/suicide

► Anxiety

- ▶ Excessive anxiety for more days than not over a 6 month period
- ▶ Difficulty controlling the worry
- ▶ Impaired functioning
- ▶ Any of the following
 - ▶ Restlessness
 - ▶ Being easily fatigued
 - ▶ Difficulty concentrating
 - ▶ Irritability
 - ▶ Muscle tension
 - ▶ Sleep disturbance

Differentiating a mood disorder from the blues or day to day angst.....

- ▶ An actual diagnosed disorder is generally more intense and difficult to manage than normal feeling of sadness or worry
- ▶ A good rule of thumb is to ask to what extent the struggles you see are impacting the child?
 - ▶ Are these symptoms present most of the day & most days?
 - ▶ Has it been 2+ weeks?
 - ▶ Are there marked changes in relationships (e.g. peers, parents)
 - ▶ Is there significant difficulty or change in functioning at school?
- ▶ When to seek professional help

Seeking Professional Help

- ▶ You can find a lot of resources on the internet and in books and articles that may or may not be helpful

*How To Help Children with
ANXIETY &
DEPRESSION*
@THEMOMKIND



How to help your
Little Kid
cope with
Big Emotions



**10 PARENTING
STRATEGIES
FOR RAISING A CHILD WITH
ANXIETY THAT WORK**
YOU TIME COACHING



Is Your Child Just Sad?
Or Feeling Depressed?
**HOW TO TELL
AND WHAT TO DO**



**HOW TO
PREPARE
YOUR
CHILDREN**

TO OVERCOME
a world
full of
DEPRESSION
wordfromthebird.blog



5 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS
TO DO WHEN YOUR
CHILD HAS ANXIETY



Seeking Professional Help

- ▶ Find a therapist who specializes in working with that age group and/or diagnosis
- ▶ You may also want to seek psychiatric or medical support to consider medications
- ▶ It is also highly recommended that you seek support for yourselves as parents and possibly for your family. **Depression and anxiety impact whole families**

How to help

- ▶ Validation
- ▶ Emotional Regulation
- ▶ Self-Compassion
- ▶ Address external pressures



Validation

- ▶ If you have created an environment where emotions are ok, this is really natural



Validation

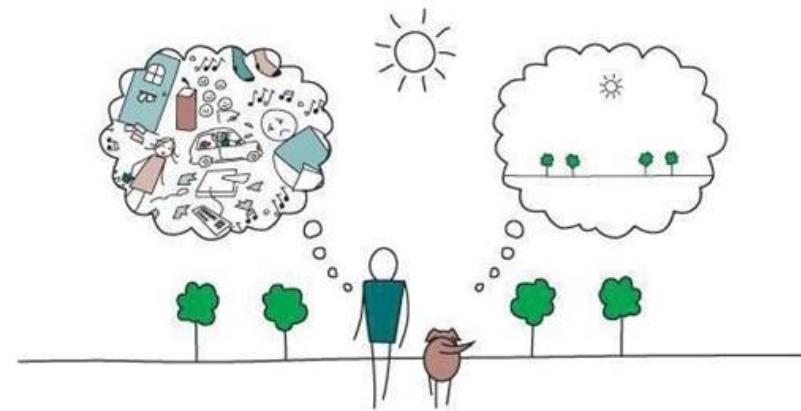
- ▶ DO
 - ▶ Remove the stigma of shame around difficult emotions
 - ▶ Acknowledge beliefs they may have about mental illness, from popular culture and from church culture
 - ▶ Communicate the truth that they are loved, and worthy no matter what they are experiencing
 - ▶ Just name and acknowledge the emotions or experience before doing anything (like trying to fix it)
 - ▶ Show unconditional love
 - ▶ Find ways to connect
 - ▶ Ask what they need from you

Validation

- ▶ DON'T
 - ▶ Jump right to fixing
 - ▶ Judge the emotion or reaction
 - ▶ Tell them that if they pray hard enough, it will go away
 - ▶ Assume you have all the answers

Emotion Regulation

- ▶ Self Awareness: Name it to Tame it, What we Feel we Heal
 - ▶ Need an ability to recognize our own emotions. Noticing changes in our thoughts and body that are signs of our emotions
 - ▶ Noticing we are in a threat mode
- ▶ Self Manage : our ability to manage our emotions so we can make helpful decisions/choices



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Self Regulation – developing strategies to help with emotional and behavior regulation

- ▶ What it is:
 - ▶ Taking a pause between a feeling and an action
 - ▶ Recognizing a higher goal or value and keeping our actions consistent with the value
 - ▶ blowing out your sister's birthday candles
- ▶ How to develop?
 - ▶ Use naturally occurring situations to teach self regulation – waiting to open holiday presents
 - ▶ Acknowledge the challenge of regulation (eating dessert first)
 - ▶ Have your child make a choice and a plan – going through thought processes to make choices/decision making skills, mastery over life
 - ▶ E.g. chores or homework before play, mapping out the calendar
 - ▶ Play games – rules, taking turns, paying attention, shifting attention, inhibiting impulses
 - ▶ Let go of control – allow to savor a moment (maybe DO eat dessert first)

Helping our children like themselves

- ▶ Liking who you are is a key component of resilience. When we like ourselves, we are better able to notice our own needs, to pay attention to and choose activities and relationships that create a sense of meaning and purpose.
- ▶ Instead of Self Criticism, encourage Self Compassion
 - ▶ The research is clear that self compassion is linked to motivation, better physical health, personal accountability, coping and resilience

Resilience



Address external pressures

- ▶ As you support your child in developing resilience, practicing emotional regulation, and learning to love him or herself, you can prayerfully and with support from professionals help them to remove external pressures.
- ▶ It's important not to just remove all expectations because this communicates that they are unable to do anything and can confirm some self-doubt



Set boundaries and help them set
boundaries for themselves



SnapChat

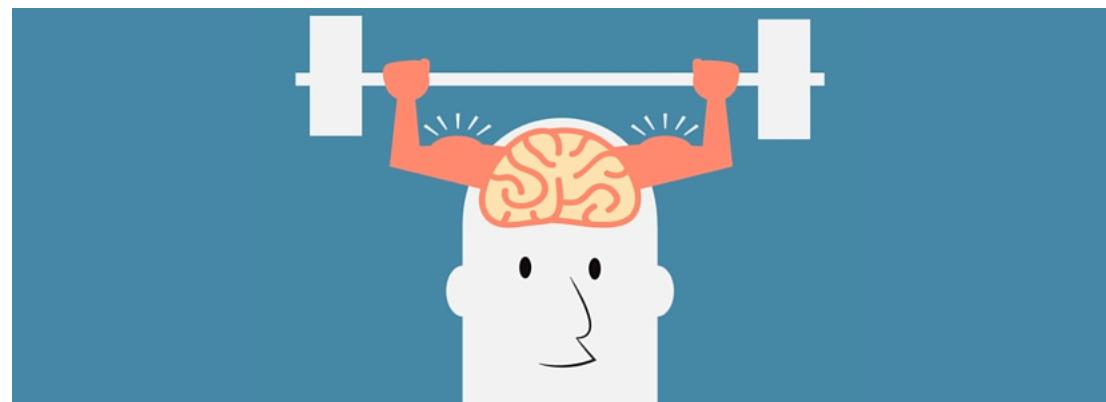


Instagram

facebook®

Other Helps

- ▶ Taking care of our bodies <mind body connection>
 - ▶ Physical activity...regular physical activity is not just good for physiology, it reduces stress and improves mood symptoms
 - ▶ Nutrition (encourage healthy eating habits)
 - ▶ Good sleep hygiene (the CDC recommends at least 10 hours of sleep for school aged kids)



How does faith help

- ▶ We can have faith in the healing power of grace rather than “faith” that everything will work out
- ▶ We can have faith in the love of Heavenly parents and a Savior that can provide comfort in dark times
 - ▶ What was radical about the Savior is that he met people where they were, who the person was came first
 - ▶ Served the Samaritan
 - ▶ Did not condemn the woman taken in adultery

*I do not at all
understand the mystery
of grace -
only that it meets us
where we are but does
not leave us where it
found us.*

- Anne Lamott





I thought faith
would say “I’ll take
away the pain and
discomfort. But
what it ended up
saying was “I’ll sit
with you in it.”

-Brené Brown

If ye have not charity, ye are nothing"

Moroni 7:46

Anyone recognize this?



Christ is the ultimate example of charity and compassion.

The love of Christ will never fail us.

- ▶ Love is powerful
- ▶ Love is not passive or controlling
- ▶ We lift each other through love