

MINUTES

Harford County SECAC

March 6, 2025

In Attendance

Jeanne Erdley, Suzanne Oshinsky, Colleen Sasdelli, Angela Sonnemann, Megan Fitzgerald, Kim Heeter, Carie Sadowski, Lorien Covelly, Nene Jitsuriya, Emma Cole, Shilpa Narayan, Allyson Hyde, Eunice Anige, Shana Kolego, Meredith Groff, Marcie Goldheim, Jessica Huba, Jin C, Sheila Sevidal, Pauline Timmons

Welcome and Information Share

- I. Welcome from the SECAC Board and Introductions. Announcement made that Kara Stone has resigned as Secretary/Treasurer. Due to elections being held soon, the remaining Board members agreed to not seek replacement.
- II. SECAC Proposed changes to the Bylaws during the February 13, 2025 meeting. The changes are to hold SECAC Board elections in May from June, nominations for a board position to start at the April SECAC meeting, and added Section 4 which states “The transfer of Board Officers shall take place on the last day of the Committee Year.” Please see the graphic below for the specific changes.
- III. SECAC Voted on these proposed changes by Robert’s Rule. Motion = Megan Fitzgerald. Angela Sonneman, The Arc = Second. There were no comments or objections.
- IV. SECAC Board Elections: All Board positions are Open for elections. Be involved.
- V. Next meeting on April 3, 2025 - Rethinking ADHD - What Works, What Doesn’t and Why by Frank Kros, MSW, JD

Director of Special Education – Colleen Sasdelli

- 1) Budget approved by BOE. The budget has moved to the County Executive. Indications look positive for his support of this budget. Hopeful for the full funding of the BOE approved budget by the County Executive.
- 2) We continue to watch what is happening at the federal level for impact to funding and programming. Will share as we learn more.
- 3) An invitation is being extended to be involved in the following: HCPS is part of our oversight with MSDE with the Department of Special Education to watch for disproportionality.
 - a) We are monitored in several different areas for disproportionate identification through the IEP eligibility process.
 - b) We are monitored for placement and looking at students in more restrictive placements and are monitored for disproportionality there.
 - c) Disproportionality for Suspensions.

HCPS is disproportionate for the amount of the suspensions of African American students with disabilities.

The Department of Special Education collaborates with the Department of Student Services on a Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervention Plan. This is a preventive plan to target specific strategies to address disproportionality across the system. Preparing for the development of the next CCEIS plan, we are looking to gather input to the root cause analysis that would help drive the strategies that we put in place and the things that we do to target and address this need.

We are looking for parents and community members who might be willing to participate in ~~about a half-hour~~ Zoom call and answer a ~~couple of~~ questions related to this topic to help us to complete some of the process for root cause analysis. If interested, please email Colleen Sasdelli.

Presentation – Recognizing, Addressing and Supporting Anxiety in Students with Disabilities

Emma Cole, PhD, ABPP, NCSP A pediatric neuropsychologist and school psychologist with a co-appointment in Kennedy ~~Krieger's~~ Institute's (KKI) Center for Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment and School Programs (KKS).

Sheila Sevidal, LCSW-C A Social Work Manager at one of the KKI schools and has been providing therapeutic services for over 24 years at KKS, working in private practice and community organizations ~~prior~~.

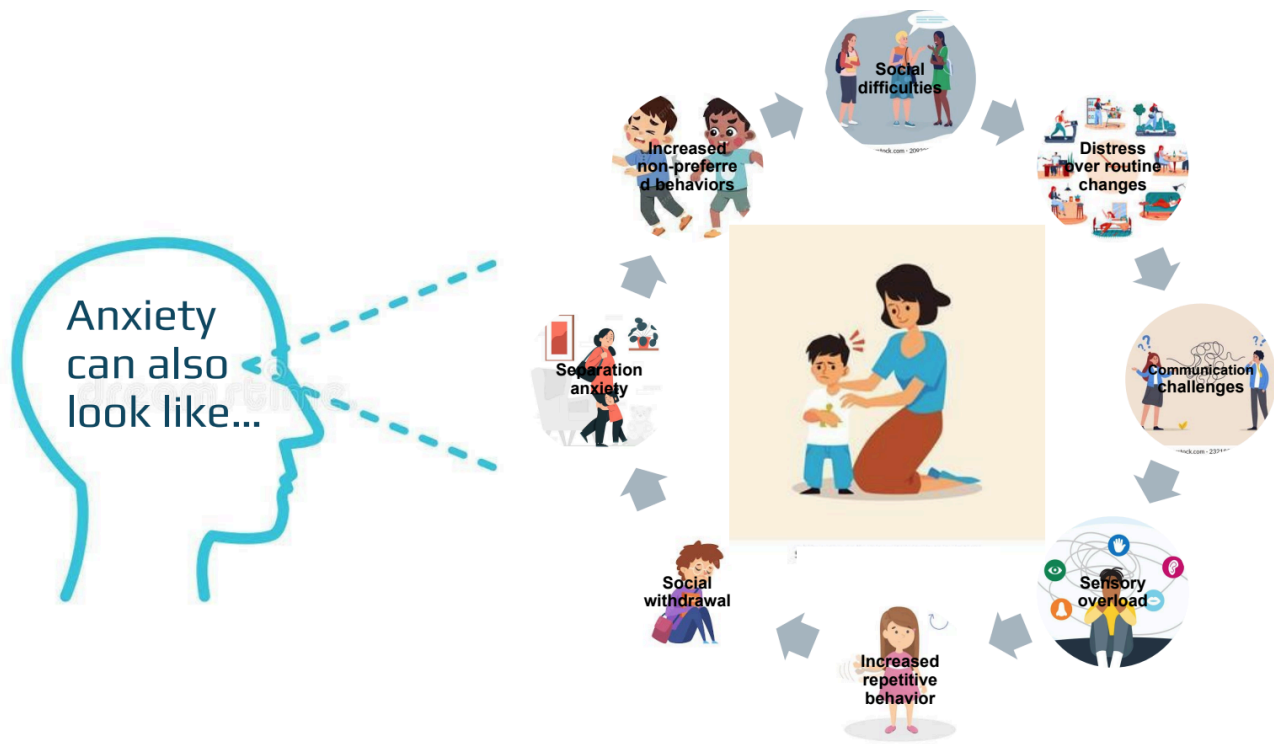
Presentation Outline

- What is anxiety?

Anxiety is when we have a more long term or chronic worry that may or may not be beneficial for us. A little bit of anxiety can be good but when that worry becomes chronic and too big for whatever is happening, that is when we need to look at it and figure out how to manage.

- Signs/Symptoms





- When is it a problem?

It's a problem when the intensity of the anxiety a child experiences is really disproportionate to the trigger. This can happen to us all here and there but if it becomes a pattern where the intensity of the anxiety is so unmanageable and the child tries to cope with this in maladaptive ways the child might start the fight, flight or freeze and avoid those situations. This can ~~cause adverse effects on~~ their social relationships with family, friends and school and impact their academic performance. If a child experiences this for over a month then this is when we would say something is wrong.

- What's your name?

Anxiety has lots of names from a clinical perspective.



- Parents can help

Make habits.

Create a visual schedule.

Talk in neutral contexts then build in the more uncomfortable conversations.

Ask open-ended questions that begin with How, Why or What.

Sharing as an adult your own experiences to your child. What you went through and how you handled it. Sharing as an adult that you can handle situations without being outwards upset. All feelings are OK. It's what you do with them. Embed them in your family.

Be a good role model. I do, you watch. You do, I watch. We do together.

What is the Window of Tolerance:

Who can see your viewing activity? X

Hyper-arousal

high energy
panic
self-destructive behaviour
irritability
easily scared or startled
angry outbursts
difficulty concentrating

Present
Calm
Engaged
Alert
Thinking clearly

Hypo-arousal

shut down
depressed
numb to emotions
passive
withdrawn

Window of Tolerance

It's the range of emotions that we can experience while continuing to process and integrate information without acting out or shutting down

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Speed

Anxiety is a part of us. There are things we can do to ground ourselves and to tolerate these feelings. Helpful to teach these strategies .

PowerPoint Slide Show - Recognizing, Addressing, and Supporting Anxiety 2.27.25 - PowerPoint

Be active	Find your calm	Get creative	Connect with others	Shift your mindset
Put on music and dance	Take some deep breaths	Color, draw or paint	Cuddle or play with your pet	Think of something positive
Build with Legos or blocks	Listen to music or sing a song	Play with Play-Doh or sand	Read a book with someone	Focus on one thing you're grateful for
Do 10 jumping jacks	Close your eyes and count to 10 or backward from 100	Play an instrument	Play a game with a friend or family member	Identify your top three strengths
Run in place for 20 seconds	Take a quiet break or rest	Make up a song	Work with someone on a puzzle	Think about something you're looking forward to
Bounce a ball or play catch	Have a drink of cold water	Write about your thoughts or feelings	Write someone a letter	Focus on the present moment
Go for a walk, run or hike	Blow bubbles	Create a dance	Share your feelings with someone you trust	Think about something that makes you laugh

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Speed

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

• When to help?

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When to intervene?

Ready state to learn

Anxiety, non-disruptive non-compliance

Active non-compliance, disruptive, unsafe but not imminent danger

Unsafe and imminent danger, harming self, others, or unsafe destruction

Beginning recovery, some compliance, some restoration

Recovery, ready for compliance check and return to baseline

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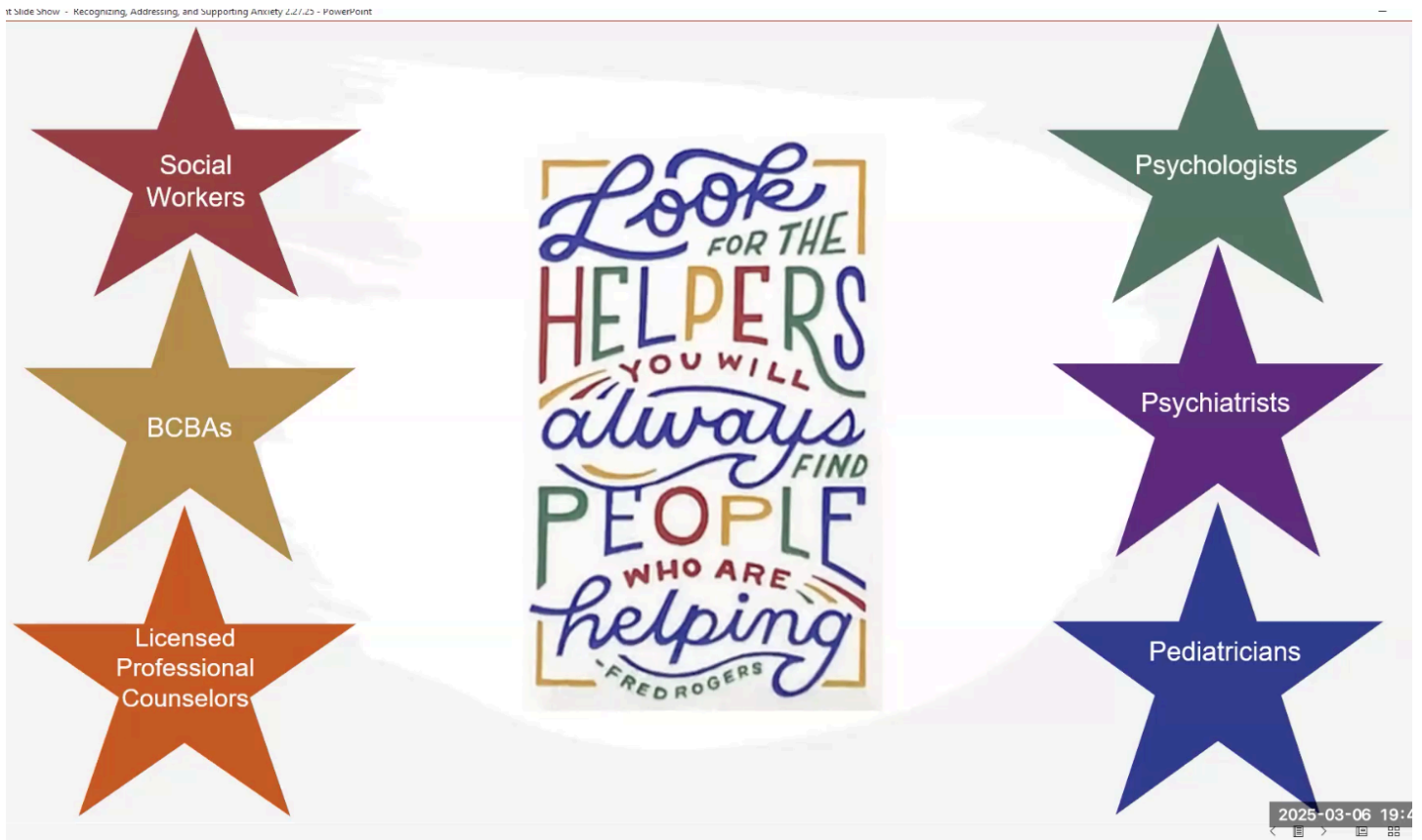
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- Professional help

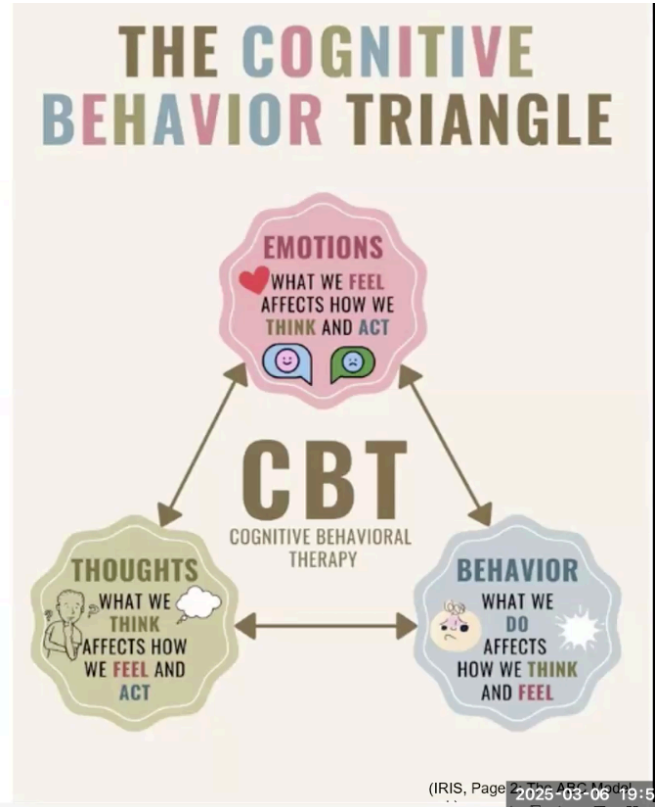
Reach out to the student's school. They are first line at seeing your child daily. Ask about language and visuals they use to keep it consistent across home and school.

Reach out for professional help if problem behaviors and avoidance is impacting your child's functioning.

- Types of therapy

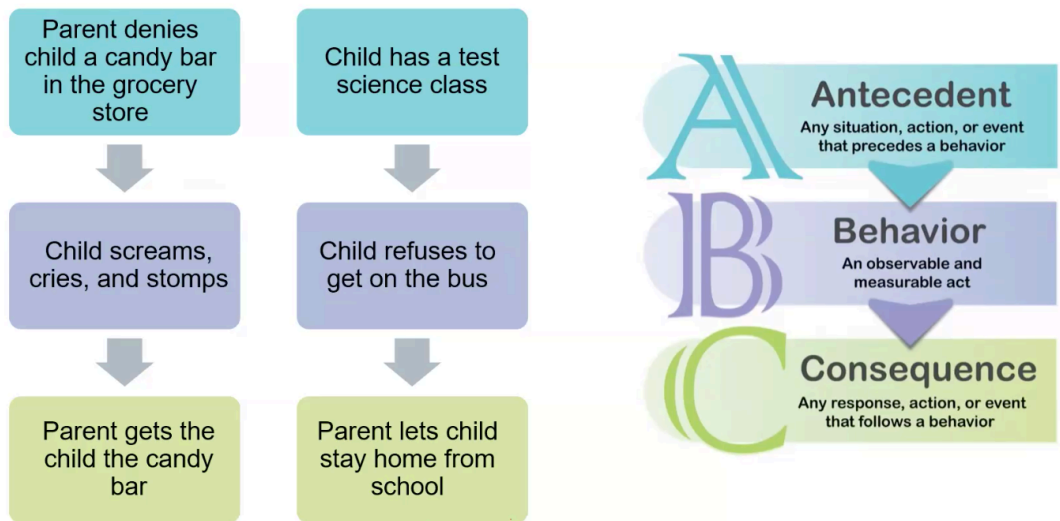


The Cognitive Behavior Triangle is the inter-relationship between how we feel, what we do, and what we think. If we change any part of the triangle, it can change all of it. If a child changes one of the triangles, parents can intervene to help the child modify their thoughts, behavior, choices and actions. In doing this, the child will increase his/her window of tolerance for the anxiety which will allow him/her to feel the feelings and do it anyway.



The ABC's of Behavior: Antecedents, Behavior and Consequences (ABA Therapy)

It's really helpful to recognize these patterns because then we can intervene in these patterns and promote more adaptive behavior. Conversely, we could inadvertently reinforce a maladaptive response. So, we really want to pull things apart. If a maladaptive behavior works, the child gets what he/she wants. In order to break that pattern, there are different points of intervention like before you go into a store, setting the tone for expectations and then weather the storm (meltdown) to change the pattern and not give in; the consequence will ultimately change the whole pattern.

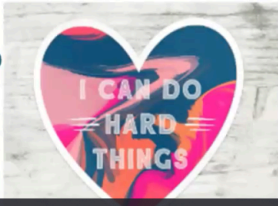


Cognitive Behavior Therapy

PowerPoint Slide Show - Recognizing, Addressing, and Supporting Anxiety 2.27.25 - PowerPoint

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

- ❖ Direct instruction about anxiety
- ❖ Mapping how their body experiences anxiety
- ❖ Relaxation strategies/mindfulness
- ❖ Recognizing unhelpful thoughts as just thoughts – you don't have to react to them
- ❖ Exposure to situations that cause anxiety to learn new association with that situation



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Different types of Therapy:

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<p>ART THERAPY Using the creative process to improve physical, mental, & emotional well-being. Develop interpersonal skills, reduce stress, increase self-esteem & achieve insight.</p> 	<p>DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY Movement, dance & body language to promote the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the child.</p> 
<p>MUSIC THERAPY Receptive music listening, lyric discussion, music and imagery & performance designed to reduce stress, improve social interaction, & develop coping skills.</p> 	<p>PLAY THERAPY Through toys and use of imagination, learn to communicate, express feelings, develop problem-solving skills, & gain understanding of experiences.</p> 

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SPACE Therapy = Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions is a parent-based treatment program for children who do not want to go to therapy.



General Parent Resources:

- <https://parentguidance.org/> Is an online resource offering parent coaching, on-demand courses, and “Ask a therapist” for Harford County Parents.

Parent Support Groups:

- *Anxiety/Mental Health:*
 - Family Support Group, held virtually by the National Association of Mental Illness (410-435-2600; info@namibaltimore.org; <https://namibaltimore.org/what-we-do/support-groups/>).
- *Autism:*
 - Parents Together: Support for Raising Autistic People held virtually by Starobin Counseling in Olney (301-417-5979; caron@starobincounseling.com; <https://starobincounseling.com/services>).
 - Parent/Caregiver Discussion Group held virtually by the Autism Society of Baltimore-Chesapeake (<https://www.baltimoreautismsociety.org/calendar-of-events/meetings-groups/>).
 - We Got This: Autism Support Group for Parents & Caregivers held virtually by the Maryland Coalition of Families (JBRUCE@MDCOALITION.ORG; https://www.mdcoalition.org/support_group/we-got-this-virtual-autism-support-group/).
- *ADHD:*
 - CHADD’s Northwest Baltimore Parent Support Group. Held virtually (<https://www.chadd-mc.org/greater-baltimore>).
 - Midday Mindset Support Group for those living with ADHD, supporting someone with ADHD or exploring a possible diagnosis. Held virtually by the Maryland Coalition of Families (gshutt@mdcoalition.org; https://www.mdcoalition.org/support_group/midday-mindset-virtual-support-group/).
- *Developmental Disabilities:*
 - Neurodivergence Convergence Chat and Chew Support Group for parents and caregivers of youth with developmental disabilities

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and mental health challenges. Held virtually by the Maryland Coalition of Families (cbranch@mdcoalition.org; https://www.mdcoalition.org/support_group/neurodivergence-convergence-chat-and-chew-support-group/).

- o The ARC of Baltimore (<https://www.thearcbaltimore.org/programs/family-services/family-support/>):
 - Dad's Group for fathers and male caregivers who have children with disabilities
 - Mom to Mom for mothers and female caregivers of children with disabilities
- **Behavioral Challenges:**
 - o The Glue to the Family Puzzle Support Group for parents and caregivers of youth with behavioral and mental health challenges. Held virtually by the Maryland Coalition of Families (aadams@mdcoalition.org; https://www.mdcoalition.org/support_group/the-glue-to-the-family-puzzle-virtual-support-group/).
 - o Empowering Parents & Caregivers of Challenging Kids for parents and caregivers of children with behavioral health challenges. Held virtually by the Maryland Coalition of Families (kwilson@mdcoalition.org; https://www.mdcoalition.org/support_group/empowering-parents-caregivers-of-challenging-kids/).

Further Reading:

- **Anxiety Resources for Children:**
 - o **For Parents:**
 - *It's So Much Work to be Your Friend* by Richard Lavoie reviews how anxiety/mood disorders make social interactions difficult for some children.
 - *Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook for Kids: Help for Children to Cope with Stress, Anxiety, and Transitions* by Lawrence Shapiro, Ph.D. and Robin Sprague, LCPC.
 - o **For Teachers:**
 - *Teachers Guide to Anxiety in the Classroom* (<https://childmind.org/guide/a-teachers-guide-to-anxiety-in-the-classroom>).
 - *Your Anxious Child: How Parents and Teachers Can Relieve Anxiety in Children* by John S. Dacey and Lisa B. Fiore.
 - o **For Kids:**
 - *Moody Cow Meditates* by Kerry Lee Maclean.
 - *Once I Was Very Very Scared* Paperback by Chandra Ghosh

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- *What to Do When Mistakes Make You Quake: A Kid's Guide to Accepting Imperfection (What-to-Do Guides for Kids)* by Claire Freeland and Jacqueline Toner.
- **Dawn Heubner, PhD:**
 - *What to do When You What to Do When You Worry Too Much*
 - *Outsmarting Worry: An Older Kid's Guide to Managing Anxiety*
 - *What to Do When You Dread Your Bed: A Kids' Guide to Overcoming Problems with Sleep*

- **Anxiety Resources for Adolescents:**
 - o *The Anxiety Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Deal with Anxiety and Worry* by Lisa M. Schab LCSW
 - o *Anxiety Relief for Teens: Essential CBT Skills and Mindfulness Practices to Overcome Anxiety and Stress* by Regine Galanti PhD
 - o *The Grit Guide for Teens* by Dr. Caren Baruch Feldman
- **Grief Resources for Children:**
 - o **General:**
 - *Dead Bird* by Margaret Brown Wise (4-7 years)
 - *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst (3-7 years)
 - *When Dinosaurs Die* by Laurie Brown (4-7 years)
 - *I miss you: A first look at death* by Pat Thomas (3-7 years)
 - *No Matter What* by Debi Giori (1-5 years)
 - *Grief on the Playground* by Shanice McLeish (3-12 years)
 - *The Memory Tree* by Britta Teckentrup (baby - 5 years)
 - *Sesame Street Workshop: Helping Kids Grieve* (<https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/helping-kids-grieve/>)
 - o **Parent:**
 - *Everett Anderson's Goodbye* by Lucille Clifton (5-8 years)
 - *When Grey Came to Stay* by Amber Kuipers
 - *Something Lost Something Found* by Natalia Paruzel-Gibson (4-8 years)
 - o **Grandparent:**
 - *The Heart and the Bottle* by Oliver Jeffers (3-6 years)
 - *Grandad's Island* by Benji Davies (4-8 years)
 - *A Stopwatch from Grampa* by Loretta Garbutt (4-7 years)
 - o **Friend:**
 - *Ida, Always* by Caron Levis and Charles Santoso (4-8 years)
 - *The Goodbye Book* by Todd Parr (2-4 years)

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- *Grief Resources for Adolescents:*
 - General:
 - Grief: Insights and tips for teenagers by Joe Jansen
 - Family:
 - Dancing at the pity party : a dead mom graphic memoir by Tyler Feder
 - How to make friends with the dark by Kathleen Glasgow
 - Clap when you land by Elizabeth Acevedo
 - How it feels to float by Helena Fox
 - Turtle under ice by Juleah Del Rosario
 - Everything all at once by Katrina Leno
 - Gun violence:
 - The hate u give by Angie Thomas
 - Long way down by Jason Reynolds
 - The lucky ones by Liz Lawson
 - Friend:
 - Don't ask if I'm okay by Jessica Kara
 - Tears of a tiger by Sharon M Draper
 - Suicide:
 - The astonishing color of after by Emily X R Pan

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Q & A

No questions.

Additional resource about the presentation topic:



Make Talking/Conversation a Habit:

- Connect with your child outside of conversations. For example,
 - Read to them or with them
 - Work on a project or goal together
 - Play with them
- Schedule one-on-one time with your child so they have your full attention
- Welcome questions
- Find time. Depending on your child:
 - Set a weekly “date” or time to talk.
 - Be flexible when conversations are initiated spontaneously.
 - Some children may like talking with less direct eye contact, such as during walks or car rides.
 - Choosing a time/place with fewer distractions and when your child feels calm may lead to more in-depth conversations.
- Build trust:
 - Avoid blame (e.g., Why didn’t you tell me sooner).
 - Avoid dismissing feelings/experiences (e.g., There’s no reason to feel that way).
 - Show that you’re listening. For example, “I heard you say XXX, is that right?”
 - Thank/praise them for sharing

Be a Model for Your Child:

- Talk about your feelings. For example, “I’m really sad because I burnt the cake.”
- Verbalize coping skills. For example, “I’m really frustrated that this line is so long. Maybe I’ll close my eyes and take 10 deep breaths to calm down.”
- Demonstrate problem-solving. For example, “I was just invited to have coffee with Mike’s mother tomorrow, but I already said I would help in your classroom. I wonder what I can do? I know; I’ll call Mike’s mother and ask if we can get together a different day.”

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Ask Questions:

- Ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are those that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" and require someone to provide a detailed, thoughtful answer in their own words, usually starting with words like "how," "what," "why," or "describe." For example:
 - What was the best thing that happened at school today? (What was the worst thing that happened at school today?)
 - Tell me something that made you laugh today.
 - Whom would you like to sit by in class? (Whom would you not want to sit by in class? Why?)
 - Where is the coolest place at the school?
 - Tell me a weird word that you heard today (or something weird that someone said).
 - If I called your teacher tonight, what would she tell me about you?
 - How did you help somebody today?
 - How did somebody help you today?
 - Tell me one thing that you learned today.
 - When were you the happiest today?
 - Modify if needed. For example:
 - Use visuals such as feelings thermometers, emotion charts, and gestures (e.g., thumbs-up/down") to help children indicate and/or identify their feelings.
 - Provide options or choices. For example, "Who did you play with today? Was it [list a few of your child's favorite classmates]?"
 - Provide beginning stems/scaffolding; "I felt sad today because..."
- Play "Highs and Lows." Each person can share their high points of the day and low points.

Visuals/Worksheets:

- Free set of coping skill ideas and visuals provided by PESI online from Janine Holloran's *Coping Skills for Kids Workbook* published in 2018
[https://urldefense.com/v3/https://cdn.pesi.com/pdf/publishing/workbook/PUB085420.pdf_!!CR-rLYS5ufxg2No!YotAcZMPtODgBkseY4pDefMLcxKlghf3CJVEpE1inVbWFrFKmNdZgyS6hMYQ3el44R1flyejBJkTsVNPuPzQmEXW\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://cdn.pesi.com/pdf/publishing/workbook/PUB085420.pdf_!!CR-rLYS5ufxg2No!YotAcZMPtODgBkseY4pDefMLcxKlghf3CJVEpE1inVbWFrFKmNdZgyS6hMYQ3el44R1flyejBJkTsVNPuPzQmEXW$)
- Zones of Regulation website: <https://zonesofregulation.com/resources/>



SECAC Bylaws Election update 206/25 - DRAFT

Article VI Meetings

- Section 1: The Committee Year shall run concurrently with the Local School System's (LSS) fiscal year cycle from September through June.
- Section 2: Meetings are held monthly, except in July and August; December, January, and June. Meetings shall be held at the school site.
- Section 3: The number of meetings shall be determined by the Board of Directors.
- Section 4: Subcommittees shall be established by the Board of Directors.
- Section 5: SECAC meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order newly revised.

Article VII Elections

- Section 1: Nominations for officers will be accepted from the May meeting through the ballot casting at the June meeting.
- Section 2: Election of officers shall take place at the regular June meeting. All elections are decided by majority rule by members present using a written ballot. When necessary, run-off elections shall be held among the nominees receiving the two highest numbers of votes. When only one candidate is nominated for an office, election may be by verbal vote.
- Section 3: Any person in attendance at the meeting where an election is being held may vote for officers.

Section 1: Nominations for officers will be accepted from the April meeting through the ballot casting at the May meeting.

Section 2: Elections of officers shall take place at the regular May meeting. (this is the only change.)

NEW:

Section 4: The transfer of Board Officers shall take place on the last day of the Committee Year.

These changes were proposed at the the 2/13/25 SECAC Meeting.