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GENERAL HOSPITAL

PSYCHIATRY ACADEMY

Anxiety Across the Lifespan

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Disclosures

“Neither I nor my spouse/partner has a relevant financial relationship with a commercial interest to disclose.”



Epidemiology

- Prevalence rate for anxiety disorders children and adolescents is 13%
- Anxiety disorders are the most common psychiatric disorders in children and anxiety disorders frequently have their beginnings in childhood or adolescence
- There is a pattern of anxiety disorders in how they occur across the lifespan



Developmental Progression of Fears

- Preschool: Imaginary, Objects/ Situations
- Grade School: Health/ Harm, Scrutiny/ Competence
- Adolescence: Social Adequacy and Performance

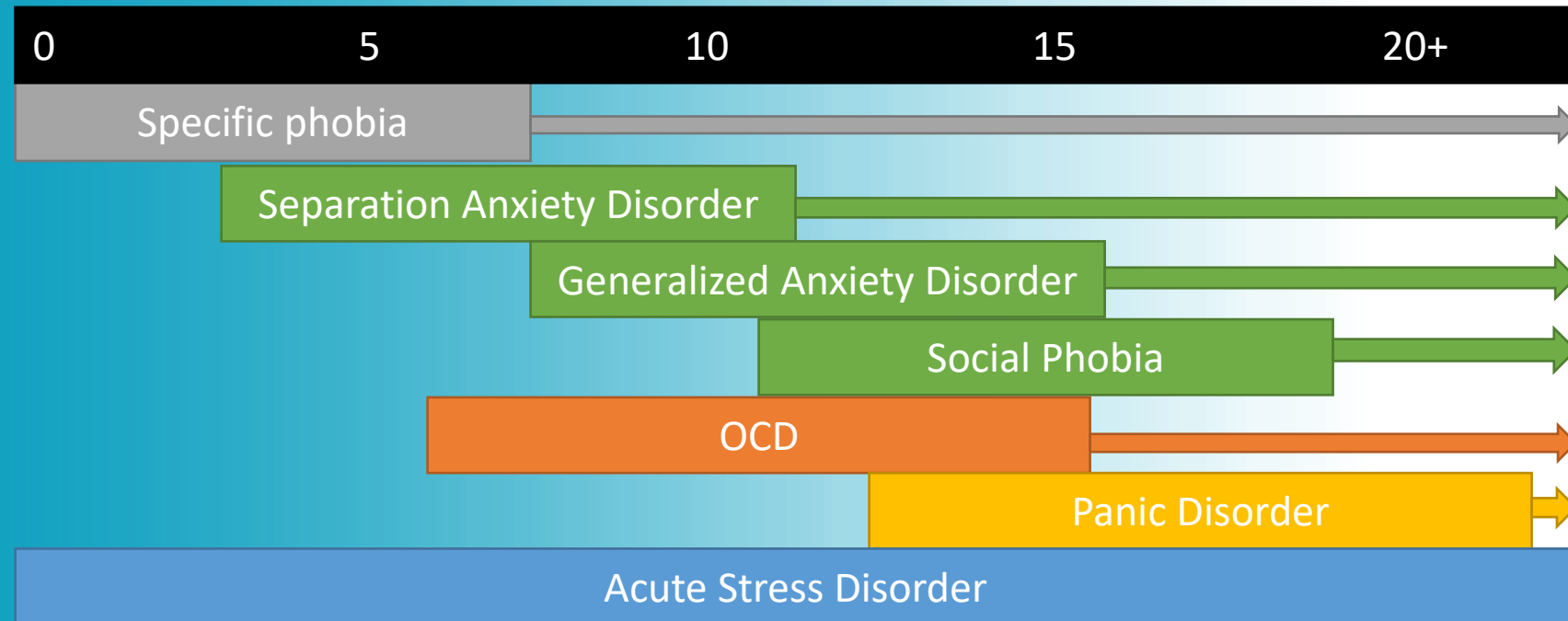


Developmental Progression of Fears

- Preschool: Specific Phobia, Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Grade School: Generalized Anxiety Disorder, OCD
- Adolescence: Social Phobia, Panic Disorder



Anxiety Disorders Across the Lifespan





Specific Phobia

- Animals, insects etc.
- Environmental - thunder, water, heights
- Blood, injection or other suspected painful event
- Situational - tunnels, bridges, elevators
- 70% have another anxiety disorder



Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Excessive concern regarding separation from home or from attachment figures
 - Bad things happening to parent and or child
 - Cannot be alone
 - Avoidance Difficulty falling asleep or sleeping with loved ones
 - Physical aches and pains
 - Accommodation by adults
 - Impairment or distress.



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Excessive worry and apprehensiveness

Restless, keyed-up or on edge.

Fatigued at end of school day

Concentration problems “choking on tests”

Sleep problems (falling asleep)

Tense and irritable

Unable to control the worry

Impairment or distress



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Prominent obsessions or compulsions

Dirt, germs, or other contamination

Ordering and arranging

Checking

Repetitive acts

Impairing or time consuming



Assessment: Repetitive Thoughts & Behaviors

- Obsessions
- Ruminations
- Delusions
- Perseverative thoughts
- Cravings
- Over-valued ideas
- Flash-backs
- Compulsions
- Tics
- Stereotypies
- Perseverative behaviors
- Addictive behaviors
- Habits



Social Phobia

- Fear of social or performance situations
 - Specific
 - Generalized



Panic Disorder

- Attacks of anxiety (Physical Symptoms)
 - Heart rate, pounding heart, palpitations
 - Hyperventilation, shortness of breath
 - Choking sensation
 - Chest discomfort or pain
 - Abdominal pain
 - Some psychological symptoms
- Worry about the next one
- Avoidance behavior related to the attacks
- Agoraphobia



Acute Stress Disorder/ Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

- True stressful event – life threatening
- Re-experiencing the event
- Avoidance and numbing
- Increased arousal
- Acute Stress Disorder: Time limited
- PTSD: Enduring symptoms:
 - Pre-existing mental disorder
 - Proximity
 - Post-traumatic environment



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Physical Symptoms – Provoked and Spontaneous

- Anxious children listen to their bodies
- Headache
- Stomachache – stomach and bowel problems
- Sick in the morning and can't fall asleep in the evening
- Frequent urge to urinate or defecate
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain - tachycardia
- Sensitive gag reflex - fear of choking or vomiting
- Difficulty swallowing solid foods – growth inhibition?
- Dizziness, lightheaded
- Tension and tiredness – exhausted and irritable after a school day
- Derealization and depersonalization
- Avoidance to prevent above physical symptoms



Other Symptoms

- Physical complaints – headaches, stomach aches, dramatic presentations of pain.
- Problems with falling asleep and middle of the night awakening, repeated visits to parents room
- Eating problems – over and under
- Avoidance of outside and interpersonal activities – school, parties, camp, sleepovers, safe strangers
- Excessive need for reassurance – new situations, bedtime, school, storms, bad things happening
- Inattention and poor performance at school
- Explosive outbursts
- Not necessarily pervasive – some areas of function remain



Course of Anxiety

- Onset in childhood
- “Prepubertal affective illness”
- Adolescence
 - Intense symptoms “burn out”
 - Generalized anxiety
 - Poor adaptation and coping – easily flooded and overwhelmed (pre-borderline)
 - Some morph to depression
- Young adulthood
- Middle and older adulthood



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Questions?

- Please submit your questions in the Chat window



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