

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH IN EARLY CHILDHO O D

(AGES 0-8)

Director

Alena Farrugia

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

02 83241354

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LEARNING CLINIC

Topies to be Discussed

Social & Emotional Health

Managing Anxiety

The Importance of Early Intervention

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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EMOTIONS AT BIRTH

Disgust, distress, happiness & interest

SOCIAL SMILE

2-3 months

LAUGHTER

4 months

NEW EMOTIONS AT 2.56 MONTHS

Anger, fear, sadness & surprise Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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BABIES S



STRANGER ANXIETY

Starts 6-8 months, peaks at 12-15 months

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Starts at 6-8 months

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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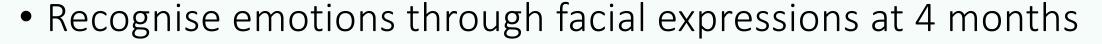
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9 Months

- Gauges their parents' feelings about particular behaviours
- Wants to make their parents laugh and repeats sounds or movements that elicit laughter
- Seeks comfort when in distress
- Shows distress when being corrected
- Displays affection with hugging, kissing and smiling
- Shows empathy when other people are upset
- Gains new fears and insecurities





- 1986, University of Miami Medical School 4 month olds are distressed by 'maternal still-face'
- 2018 University of Geneva babies can make connections between emotions in voices and faces
- Exposure to anger in parental conflict increases heart rates and stress hormone responses, as early as 6 months
- 'Directive' parenting style leads to limited behaviours in activity, expression and play, as early as 6 months Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia 02 83241354

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Emotional regulation strategies:

- Self-soothing with sucking
- Reliance on caregivers for supportive "scaffolding" during stressful circumstances

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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TODDE ERS

- Becoming more self-aware:
- Wants to do things independently
- May become embarrassed if people are watching
- Will-power increasing
- Getting frustrated if they don't get their way
- Begin to experience jealousy and envy more strongly
- Can experience guilt

Alena Farrugia

<u>Director</u>

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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TODDIERS

Fram 18 to 24 months, toddlers:

- Continue to have mood swings and tantrums
- Show aggressive behaviours such as hitting and biting 4
- Say 'no' a lot to assert their independence
- Prefer not to share but sometimes will
- Develop new fears
- Have a security blanket or toy

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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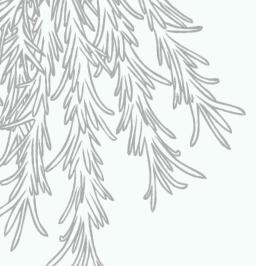
Babies & Toddlers

Remember, development is individual, however, we use the following intervention criteria:

- No smile at 6 months
- No 'mirroring' at 9 months
- No babbling, pointing, reaching or waving at 12 months
- No words at all by 16 months
- No meaningful two-word phrases at 2 years







- Very young children can suffer mental illness
- Diagnosed later, harming development
- Mental health problems created by 'reacting to the meaning of others' intentions and emotions'

Can be caused by:

- Trauma
- Day-to-day interaction with caregivers
- Meaning-making/schemas.

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN BABIES AND

TODDLERS

ACHMEN1

Quality of attachment affects current and future emotional and social development.

Four types of attachment:

- Three organised
 - Secure (65%)
 - Insecure-avoidant (20%)
 - Insecure-resistant (10-15%)
- Disorganised (10-15%)
- •The 'Strange Situation' test

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Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Important social and emotional milestones in age 2-3 are:

- Becoming aware of their gender identity
- Becoming more assertive and saying 'no' to demands and instruction
- Evaluating their behaviours as good or bad
- Beginning to express their emotions with words
- Enjoying group activities like dancing, singing and playing
- Mimicking social situations with imaginative play and dress up
- Becoming fearful about the dark, monsters, ghosts etc

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

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2-3 YEARS



Causes for concern

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- Were abused as children
- Have mental health issues
- Have alcohol or drug problems
- Domestic abuse
- Are violent or abusive during conflict
- Are teenagers
- Lack support
- Had a traumatic birth experience

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Austra

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Causes for concern

- Has problems sleeping
- Has problems feeding
- Overreacts to the environment e.g. highly emotional
- Is very passive and does not react to stimuli in the environment

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Austra

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Important social and emotional milestones in age 3-5 are:

- Shares toys
- Plays with other children and takes turns
- Always wants to win in games but will follow simple rules
- May have particular 'special' friends they show more attachment with
- Plays imaginary games
- Independence, bossiness and defiance are normal
- Starts to cooperate more with parents etc

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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- Comparing themselves and their performance with their peers
- Communicating with a broad range of people without the caregiver's assistance
- Starting to care about how their peers perceive them
- Feeling comfortable spending time without caregivers

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Causes for concern

It could be a cause for concern if, at the age of 4, a child is:

- Not able to play or share with other children
- Completely dependent on caregivers and has a lot of difficulty separating from them
- Fearful of things to the point of interfering with daily activities
- Fearful of trying to try new things

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Austra

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- 'Concrete Operational Stage'
- Rational, logical thinking

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

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Causes for concern

It could be a cause for concern if, at the age of 7 -8 a child is:

- Unable to grasp rules
- Having uncontrollable outbursts
- Excessive worrying or phobias that affect everyday life
- Frequent crying and being clingy

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Austra

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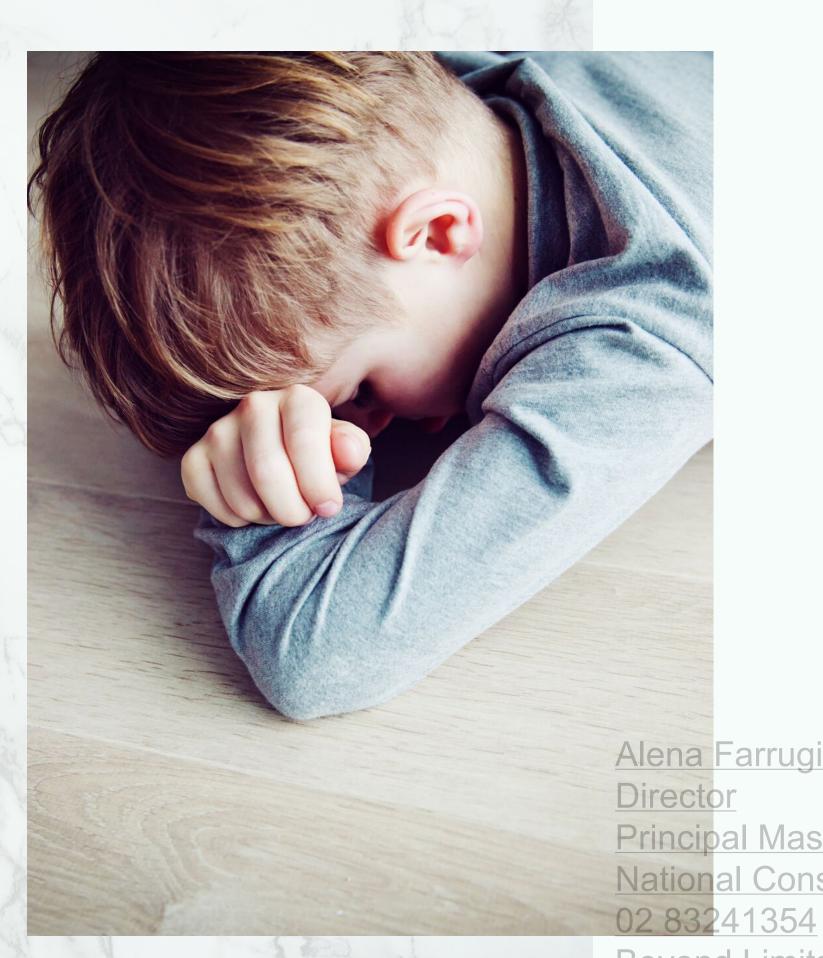


EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL ISSUES AS A SYMPTO M

Emotional and social issues are often a symptom.

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ADHD or ADD
- Abuse
- Neglect
- Trauma
- Illness or injury
- Chronic health problems
- Prenatal exposure to alcohol or Adrugs arrugia
- Brain damage
- Malnourishment or hunger
- Sleep Patterns





MANAGING ANXIETY

AGES 0-8

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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0-12 months

For optimal emotional development in infants:

- Responsive caregiving
- 'Play songs'
- Keep caregivers emotionally healthy
- Keep conflict to a minimum

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

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Toddlers

Managing fear

- Situation selection and modification
- Distraction
- Naming emotions

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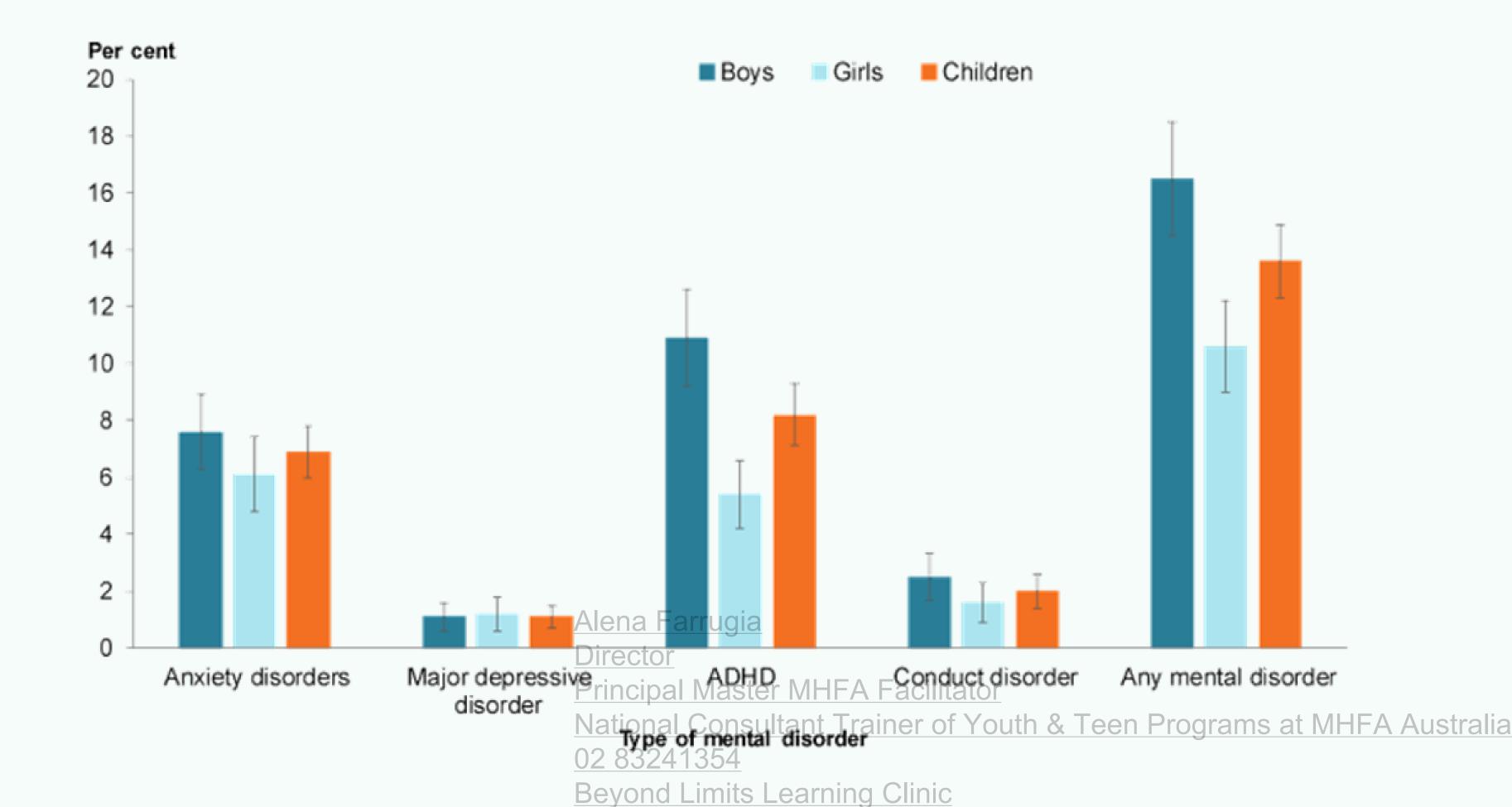
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Signs of anxiety in an education setting

- Constantly seeking reassurance
- Avoiding certain situations they feel worried about
- Avoid trying new things or taking risks
- Trying to get other people to do things for them
- Complain of physical pains, especially headaches and tummy aches
- Getting upset or having angry outbursts
- Worrying about a lot of things that may seem minor to others
- Clings to adults or older children rather than being around peers

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Older Children

Types of anxiety:

- Phobia
- Social anxiety disorder
- Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

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Evidence-Based Interventions



Interoception training



CBT



The FRIENDS
Program



The Nurtured Heart

Approach

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Interoception Training

Benefits;

- Ability to use both logic and emotions to respond to the environment
- Reducing overload, meltdowns, anxiety, shutdown and depression
- Children understanding their own bodies and emotions
- Giving social skills meaning, not just a set of rules to follow
- Giving children a sense of belonging
- Reducing behavioural challenges

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator
National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australi
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Interoception models

- Class-wide
- Site-wide
- Site-wide with specific intensive groups
- Site-wide with interoception room



Director
Principal Master MHFA Facilitator
National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia
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Interoception activities

- Lasts for 2-4 minutes
- For at least 30 seconds, one part of the body is focused on
- The activity focuses on creating a change in an aspect of the body e.g. muscular system, temperature, breathing, pulse, touch
- The activity is repeated identify and discuss
- This helps children to tune in with their bodies and identify physiological changes that signal mood changes.

Alena Farrugia Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at M 02 83241354

www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/ready-to-learn-interoception-kit.pdf

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Psycho-social intervention that challenges and changes underlying beliefs that cause anxiety
- The Brave Program
- Scientifically verified 75% of children free of their primary anxiety diagnosis within 6 months

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- Program content includes:
- How to identify anxiety and stress
- Developing relaxation skills
- Replacing negative thinking with positive, ugia useful thinking
- Problem-solving skills



The FRIENDS Program

- In-person CBT
- Endorsed by the WHO
- Reduces anxiety symptoms
- Increases resilience, self-esteem, self-confidence and social-emotional skills



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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator
National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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FunFRIENDS

- Making eye contact and smiling when communicating
- Using a 'brave and confident' voice
- Recognising and talking about feelings in themselves and others
- Self-awareness of bodily cues
- Relaxation techniques
- Approaching groups of peers and making friends
- Identifying negative thoughts and turning them into positive ones

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia
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Nurtured Heart Approach

- ADHD
- Relationship-focused methodology
- The 3 Stands
- Absolutely No
- Absolutely Yes
- Absolutely Clear
- Inner Wealth



Alena Farrugia Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Yout 02 83241354

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Nurtured Heart Approach

Training

Children's Success Foundation

Alena Farrugia
Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Yout

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TECHNIQUES

- Mindfulness exercises
- Basic CBT reframing
- Implementing lifestyle habits

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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CAMP KID POWER GAMES

- University of Michigan, evidence-based
- Familiar games, with a twist
- During anxious reaction, a camp counsellor intervenes

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Mindfulness Exercises

- Evidence-based programs
- Techniques implemented independently by teachers
- Interoception
- Belly Buddies (Flook et al 2015)
- Spidey Senses
- The Glitter Mindfulness Jar

Mindfulness Exercises

- Techniques implemented independently by teachers
- Safari
- Focused breathing
- Mindfulness games
- Apps and videos
- Mindfulness for Children:
- Meditations for Kids
- Smiling Minds App

Principal Master MISTALF Quitetr Place

Alena Farrugia

Director

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia 02 83241354

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National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia
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Director



Basic CBT Reframing

4 step process;

- Name the worry
- Ask what the worry means
- Break down the worry and fact-check
- Turn it into a positive thought

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia 02 83241354

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Implementing lisestyle habits

- Work alongside parents
- Sleep
- Diet and hydration
- Exercise
- School routine
- -More relaxation periods
- -Hydration Alena Farrugia

DirExercise

rincipal Master MHFA Facilitator -Reduce stress and pressure ational Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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THE
IMPORTANCE
OF EARLY
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Importance of Early Intervention

Osofsky and Lieberman

- Children from birth to age 5 suffer disproportionately high rates of maltreatment
- Maltreatment has long-term consequences for their mental and physical health
- First year of life is the most dangerous for children, with continued high risk up to the age of 4
- 1 in 5 children in poverty has a diagnosable mental health disorder
- Mental health treatment for children under the age of 3 is very Australia difficult to access 41354

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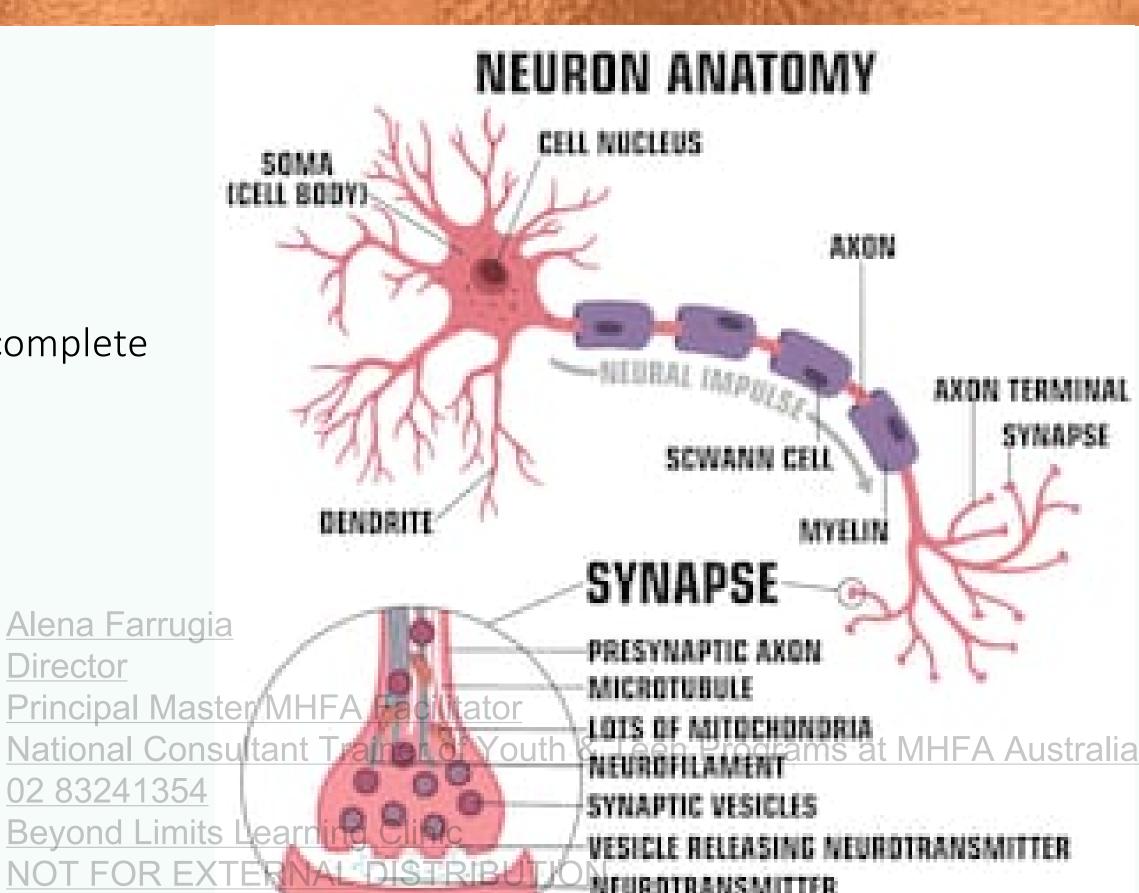
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Importance of Early Intervention

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Brain Development

- Age 3 80% of brain development complete
- Age 5 90% complete





Importance af Early Intervention

- Attachment
- -Affects us throughout life
- -Early intervention with parents
- Cannot change parenting style but can help an insecurely attached child:
- -Regulate their emotions
- Be more self-aware
- Manage their anxietyFarrugia

<u>Director</u>

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Benefits of educational based services intervention

- Child may never be referred for treatment outside the EBS
- EBS are already the main point-of-entry into the mental health service system for children
- Children already attend EBS, which eliminates barriers to accessing care, such as transportation or financial difficulties in the family
- EBS interventions reduce stigma
- There are many real-life scenarios in EBS that can help children confront their anxiety in the real world rather than a clinical setting

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MFA Australia
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Exercises



Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

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Exercise 1: Recognising Anxiety

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MH

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Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of You

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia 02 83241354

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Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

02 83241354

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Exercise 2: Planning

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MH

02 83241354

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Exercise 2: Practice

Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHR

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Alena Farrugia

Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHR

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Director

Principal Master MHFA Facilitator

National Consultant Trainer of Youth & Teen Programs at MHFA Australia

02 83241354

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