

*just  
for  
now*

# VIRTUAL USE OF THE OAKLANDER MODEL IN A TIME OF CRISIS

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# GLOBAL PANDEMIC

COVID-19 now spread worldwide

Collective stress for all children and families

# MOVE THERAPEUTIC GOALS TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Put aside long-term goals for short-term crisis management

Keep in mind presenting problem

- Presenting problem could dictate how they manage in a crisis

# ISSUES AFFECTING REACTION IN A CRISIS

Anxiety – prone to worry excessively to the exclusion of anything else

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder – already stringent sanitary practices become even more extreme

Depression – shutting down, withdrawing, anger

Denial – “this is an overreaction,” “I feel fine,” “I’m washing my hands, so I won’t get this virus, or spread it”

Anger – this isn’t fair, I hate this

(to name only a few)

# ADDRESSING CHILDREN'S FEELINGS

Normalize and validate their any and all reactions

- Everyone is stressed!

# WAYS OF HANDLING REACTIONS - ANXIETY

## Validate the worry

- Everyone's anxious about a Pandemic!

## Schedule a daily "worry session"

- Parent(s) set the timer and allow the child to worry about anything and everything
  - Just listen - No interrupting, no arguments about the content
  - When the timer goes off, move onto the next item on the schedule
  - When worries come up at other times, parent offers to take a note of it to make sure they can talk about it during the scheduled "worry session."

# OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS

Validate the need to feel clean and be hygienic

Review with the child the CDC guidelines, the supplies in your home and follow the recommended practices.

When the child feels the need to do “more,” reassure, remind the measures that were taken and go to the next activity on the schedule.

Follow the same guidelines for Anxiety

# DEPRESSION

Prioritize the treatment for improved well-being, just for this crisis

- Postpone treatment for deeper issues

Schedule a worry session, include feelings of sadness and hopelessness as topics

Schedule a gripe session – allowing and encouraging expressions of anger

Follow a schedule

- Everyone in the house get up and dress in every day clothing



# DENIAL

Denial is a form of resistance and an important coping mechanism in response to stress and trauma.

Respect this need in children and follow the necessary guidelines for health and safety without over explaining.

# ANGER

Anger and aggressive energy are important and valid emotions for children to experience and express at any time and especially during a time of trauma.

As with all reactions – children are trying to get their needs met in processing the stress they're experiencing.

Validate the anger

- "I am sure you're angry at this COVID-19! Or me, or..."

Schedule an uninterrupted gripe session

Make an anger list – punch a pillow, rip a magazine, go into another room and yell, etc.

# SET PRIORITIES

Make a plan to get through the crisis

- Logistics

Help the family be as harmonious as possible and set aside their differences for this time.

- Divorce
- Other grief and trauma unrelated to their crisis
- Learning struggles, etc.

# USE POLARITIES

## Fear drawings

- Have the child/family draw:
  - A fear from their past as a child, or younger child
  - A fear from one year ago
  - A fear from the past month

## Happiness drawings

- Have the child/family draw:
  - A happy memory from their past as a child, or younger child
  - A happy memory from one year ago
  - A happy memory from the past month

# FUN

Expanding the Happiness to fun

Violet made an Anger List and recommended Gripe Sessions for anger

Make Fun lists for activities you can do at home:

- Bake cookies
- Play board games
- Go through photo albums
- Make silly videos

# LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES

In times that are so difficult for children, adults want to ease the pain they're feeling.

- Children feel safer with appropriate limits and boundaries

## Make a schedule

- Include the things that are important to children's development:

- Healthy foods
- Exercise
- Hygiene
- Learning

- Purposeful activities
- Household chores
- Family time

- Social time – on screens for now
- And FUN

# CASE STUDY WITH “MARY”

Ten-year-old Mary’s strategies for weathering this crisis had become a bit obsessive, according to her and her mom:

- Over-focus on handwashing
- Worrying about unclean door handles
- Forbidding others to touch her objects or playthings

# SESSION FACETIME FORMAT

Conducted by FaceTime

Mother present and sibling for part of the session

Mother and Mary emailed copies of pictures and images



# PROJECTIVE EXERCISES

Connect to other times she felt similar emotions

Experience polarities, of positive feelings, even in during a stressful time

Strengthen her sense of self by expressing her emotions and making choices

WORRY  
DRAWING #1 –  
EARLY  
CHILDHOOD



# WORRY DRAWING #2



# WORRY DRAWING #3



# MARY'S RANKING OF STRONGEST TO MILDEST FEELINGS

1. Heart Surgery drawing
2. Corona Virus (COVID-19) drawing
3. People aren't nice to me drawing

# HAPPINESS DRAWING #1

Getting her dog Bubba



# HAPPINESS DRAWING #2

Learning how to solve the  
Rubik's Cube



# HAPPINESS DRAWING #3

Playing the role of Yentl in the  
show Fiddler on the Roof





# SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Together with her mom, we created a schedule that included:

- Purposeful activities that included cleaning out and donating her toys
- Exercising
- Fun learning activities in addition to her on-line school

# MARY'S RANKING OF STRONGEST TO MILDEST FEELINGS

1. Getting Bubba drawing
2. Playing the role of Yentl
3. Solving the Rubik's Cube

MARY'S  
PURPOSEFUL  
ACTIVITY -  
DONATING HER  
TOYS TO  
CHILDREN

Dear people in need,  
I am a 10 year old living  
in La. I wanted to share  
with you some games and  
toys that you and your  
family can play with.  
I hope you like it.  
Sincerely [redacted]  
PS Hope you find a  
safe and quiet place  
to be.  
PPS I hope you don't  
get coronavirus.  
Sincerely [redacted]

# MARY – EXERCISING!



# MARY LEARNING



# WORRY LIST

- Coronavirus
- Online School
- Not doing my Show
- My running and dance classes being canceled

# FUN LIST

- Coloring inside small lines
- Watching TV
- Reading
- Playing with dog
- beating my mom at board games
- building games
- Playing games

# SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

## Safe Place Drawing

### Body awareness

- Identify and express verbally and in drawings where in her body she notices worry and happiness

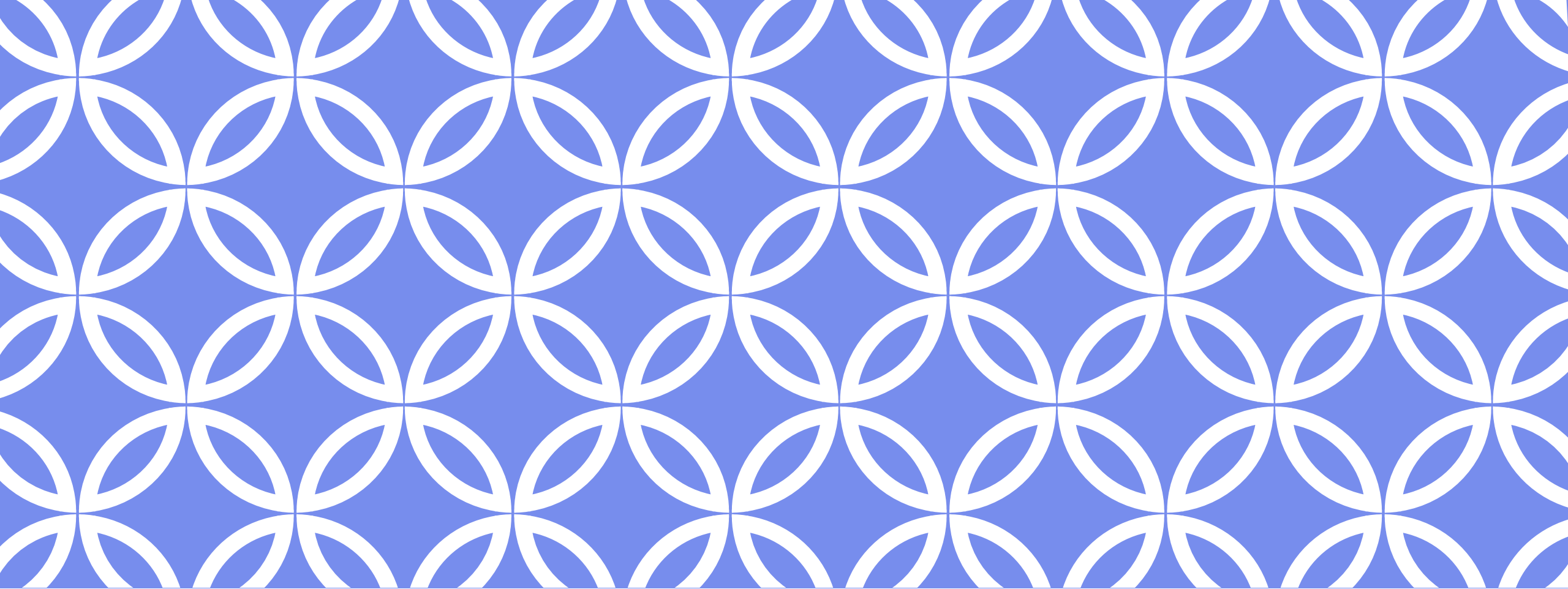
### Teach relaxation exercises

- Visualizing pleasant imagery
- Relaxing her mind and body

### Make a collage

- Pick a theme if desired
- Choose images from magazines to cut out, arrange and glue on a large sheet of paper or poster board.
- Encourage the child to describe the collage to you, and to see it as his or her individual creation of meaning.





**THANK YOU**

Questions?

# IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS...

Email [karenfried@kandmcenter.com](mailto:karenfried@kandmcenter.com) to receive details on future Sunday Supervision/Consultation sessions

9:30-11:30 am PT

No charge for these sessions during this time