



# SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

## Thank you!

I've been receiving some great feedback on these newsletters. Please let me know if there are subjects you're interested in hearing about!

## Things to Try...

Stand up tall, with your feet shoulder length apart, shoulders down, arms at your sides. Take a deep breath in through your nose and a quick, sharp breath out of your mouth (like you're breathing on your glasses to clean them but with more gusto!). Do this three times. This is a sensorimotor technique to help reduce intensifying anxious parts of you.

## About Shane

I'm a Registered Psychologist, husband, and father of three boys (6, 3, 1). I grew up in Calgary, and completed my undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Victoria. Ah, Victoria... a place I miss most this time of year. Did you know they have cherry blossoms right now?!

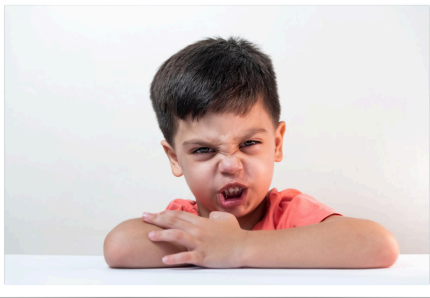


## Anxiety Part 1: I get nervous just talking about it...

Similar to depression, anxiety is a very commonly diagnosed concern many people present with at a visit to their doctor. Anxiety is also something that we all experience to varying degrees over the course of our lives and are impacted by a myriad of factors. One key factor tends to be all manner of transitions. This started very young for all of us and parents out there will tell you that their children have difficulty with moving from one task to another, one place to another, even one game to another.

While the impact of these transitions that trigger anxiety wax and wane as we grow and mature, they also change. Different transitions trigger the same kinds of responses. As an adult, starting a new job, a new relationship, a new role (parenthood or grandparenthood), moving to a new home or downsizing from a family one. Anxiety is found throughout all of these transitions.

When anxiety is triggered to a debilitating amount on some or all



## Tips for Dads & Moms

One of the best ideas I've heard coming out of parenting books and yes, even Instagram or TikTok videos by "Child Development Professionals" has got to be the importance of checking in with yourself before you address your children.

What these well-intentioned internet folks don't tell you is that checking on yourself before checking on your child is neurologically proven to be a worthwhile way to approach all kinds of parent-child interactions.

Something called "mirror neurons" are activated when we view and are viewed by our child. If we are calm, they more quickly return to being calm. If we are anxious, their arousal increases. If they are already anxious, angry, frustrated we are likely to engage with them at a similar intensity – the mirror neuron's equivalent of an interpersonal nuclear bomb.

Instead consider what part of you is about to enter into the interaction as well as what part of your child you observe. A part of you is frustrated and a part of your child is, too. Now interact from your calm SELF instead.

of these fronts, it's usually met with a trip to the doctor or an email to me, your friendly neighbourhood psychologist. Usually because what you've been doing to combat the triggers in our day-to-day lives stop working, are not as effective, or there's just too much anxiety to handle.

Anxiety triggers our sympathetic nervous system (SNS) which is designed to keep us safe — not from sabre tooth tigers anymore, but from what our brain perceives to be similar in terms of danger. However, while this response is normal to perceived danger, our natural state is at rest or within our parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). Rest, or calm is not something that needs to be taught, but rather something that is available once anxiety dissipates. So, the question is how can we move out of the SNS to the PNS? The answer is paradoxical to what might seem natural. We must move toward the feelings of anxiety, not away like so many of our acquired tools would suggest in terms of avoidance, distraction, or stubbornly ignoring it. Of course we can only move toward it if we have first acknowledged it's there and separated from it! By adjusting our language from "I'm anxious" to "a part of me is anxious" which does both the acknowledging and the separating, now approaching anxiety is possible as will be the reemergence of calm. Is there more? Yes! Part 2 next issue!



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