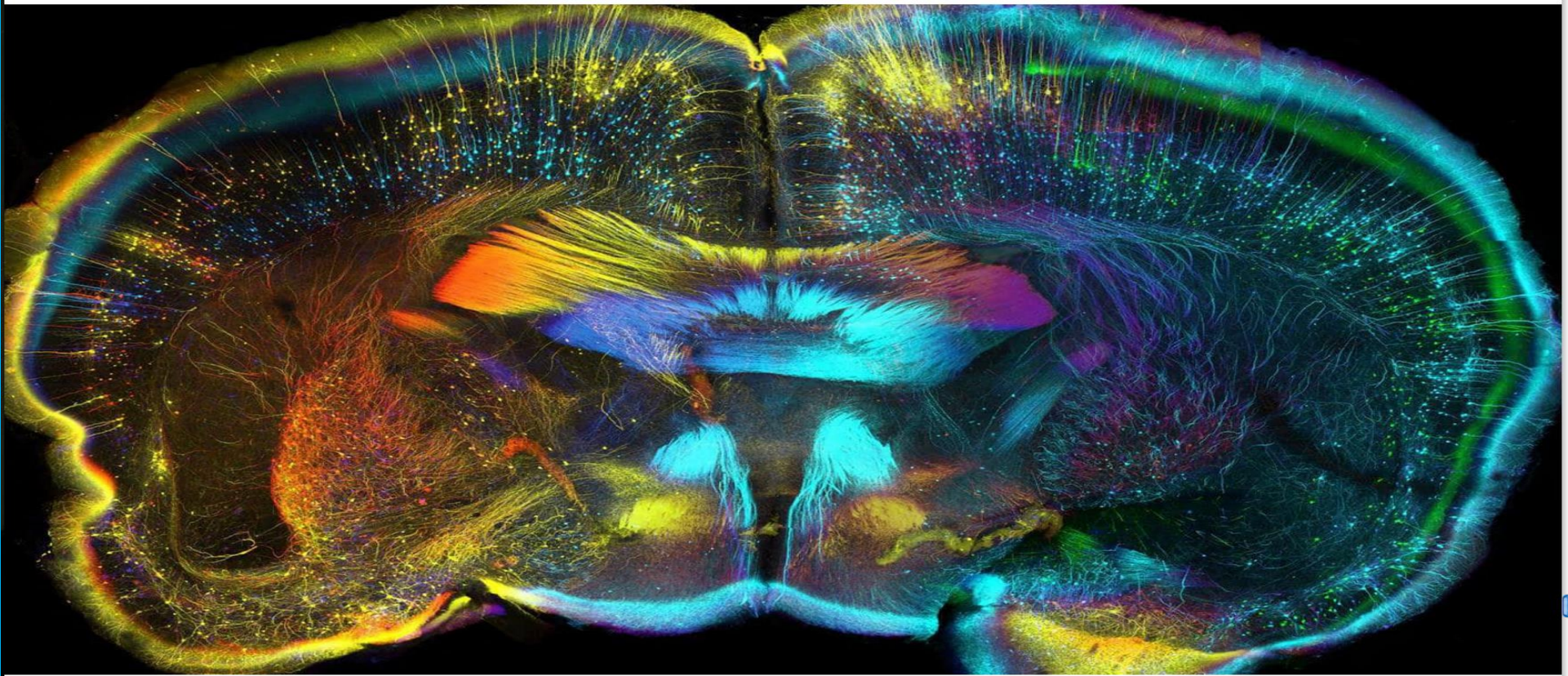


# Action Dignity

Mental Health and Coping During Covid-19

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Alberta  
**Children's**  
**HOSPITAL**   
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
CUMMING SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



**HOTCHKISS**  
**BRAIN INSTITUTE**

# Today's Webinar

- What is Fear and Anxiety?
- A few facts about Coronavirus – the Knowns and the Unknowns!
- Where exactly in our Brain does Fear and Anxiety strike and reside?
- How do Fear and Anxiety affect our socio-psychological and behavioral wellness?
- When do they become clinically problematic and what coping strategies we might invoke to mitigate long-term changes to our brain?



# Fear!

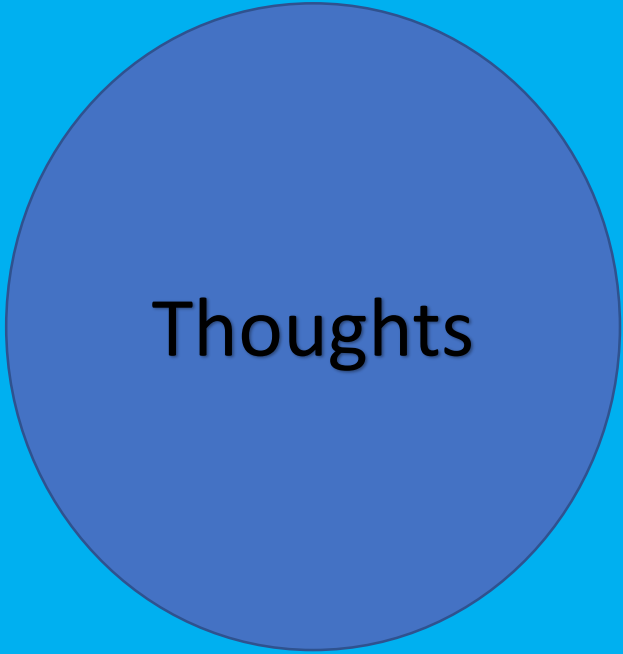
- Fear is the result of a threat or impending danger.
- The danger is real, definite, and immediate. There's a clear and present object of the fear.



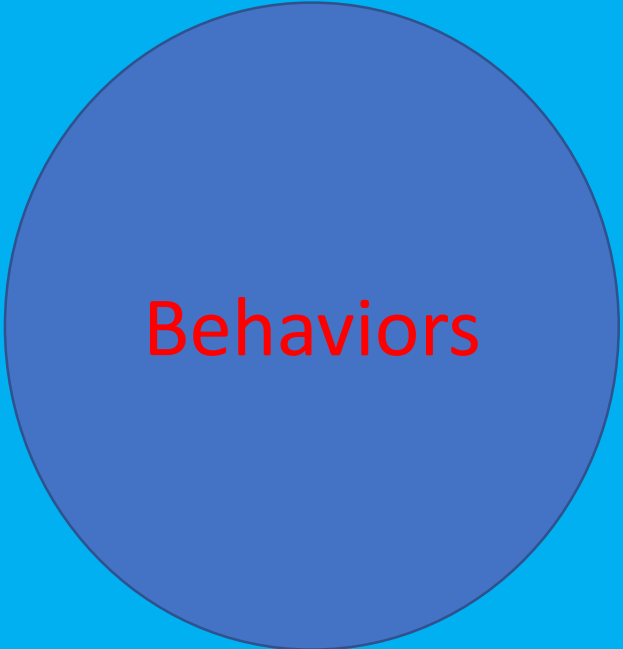
# Anxiety!



- Anxiety is the result of a perceived threat or danger. A diffuse, unpleasant, vague sense of apprehension.



**Anxiety**



# A Three-Part Model of Anxiety

## Three Channels of Anxiety

- **Thoughts:** Worries, Negative or biased thoughts, Poor Concentration
- **Feelings:** Physical Symptoms – Head/Stomach-aches, Sweating, heart racing
- **Behaviors** Avoidance, clinging, crying, anger, tantrum, etc.

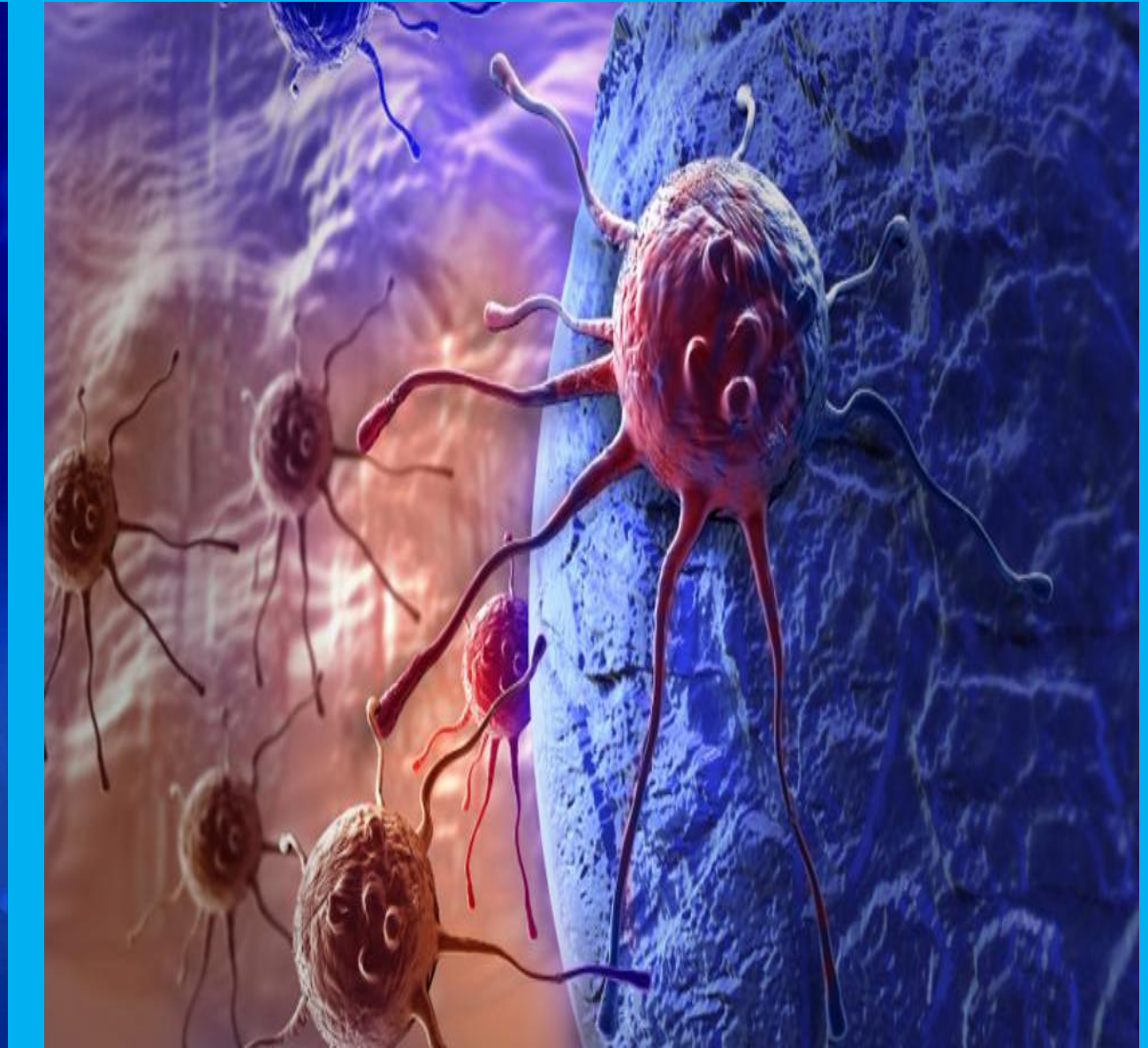
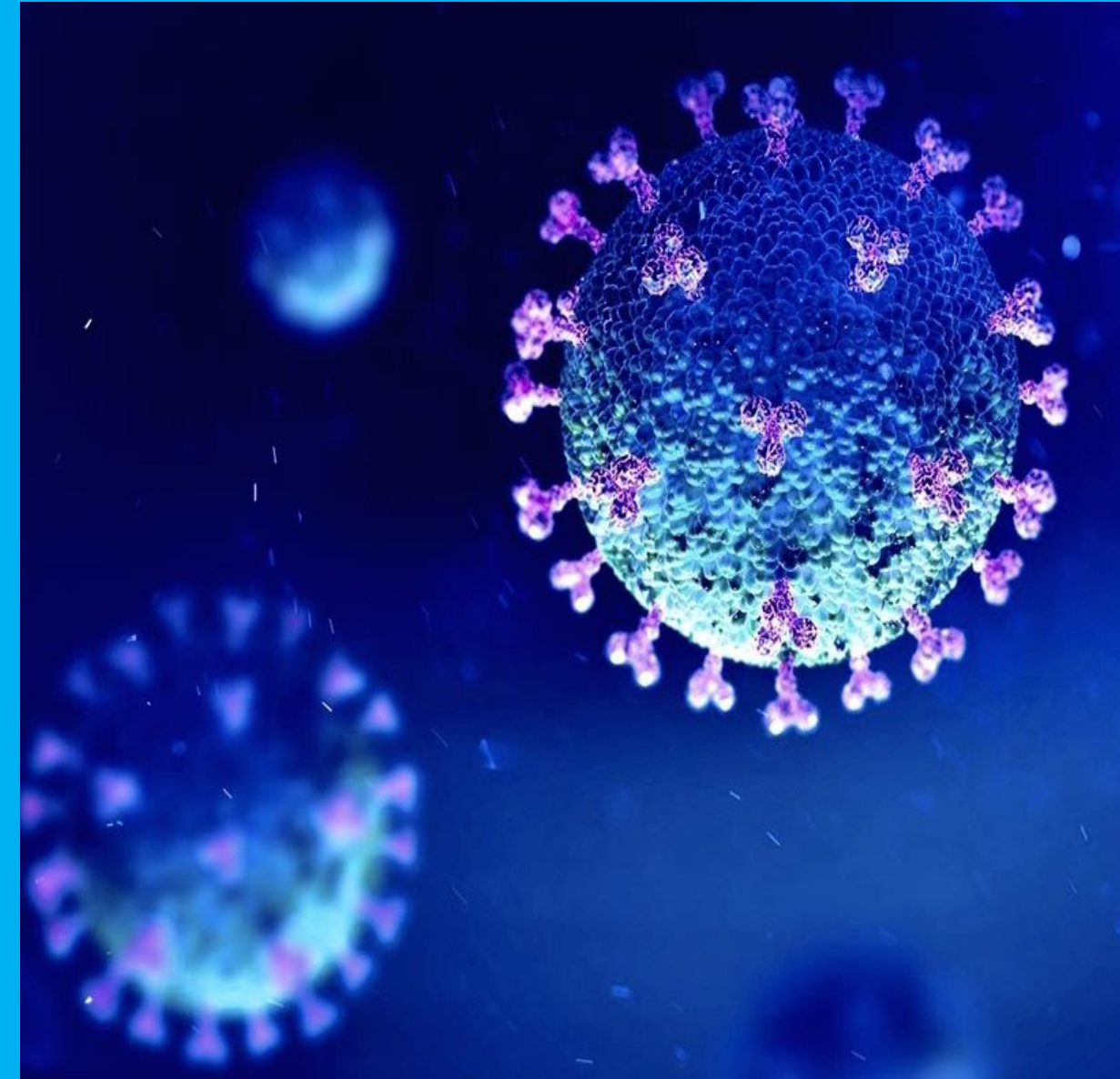
# Physical Symptoms of Anxiety

- **Headaches**

- Muscle pain and tension - Sleep disturbances
- Tightness felt throughout the body, especially in the head, neck, jaw, and face
- Chest pain - Ringing or pulsing in ears
- Excessive sweating - **Shaking** and trembling
- Cold chills or hot flushes - Accelerated heart rate
- Numbness or tingling
- **Depersonalization and derealization**
- Upset stomach or nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling like you're going insane
- Dizziness or feeling faint



# Where Does Coronavirus Fit into this?





**Coronavirus may harm the Lungs primarily - but the potential target is eventually the Brain**

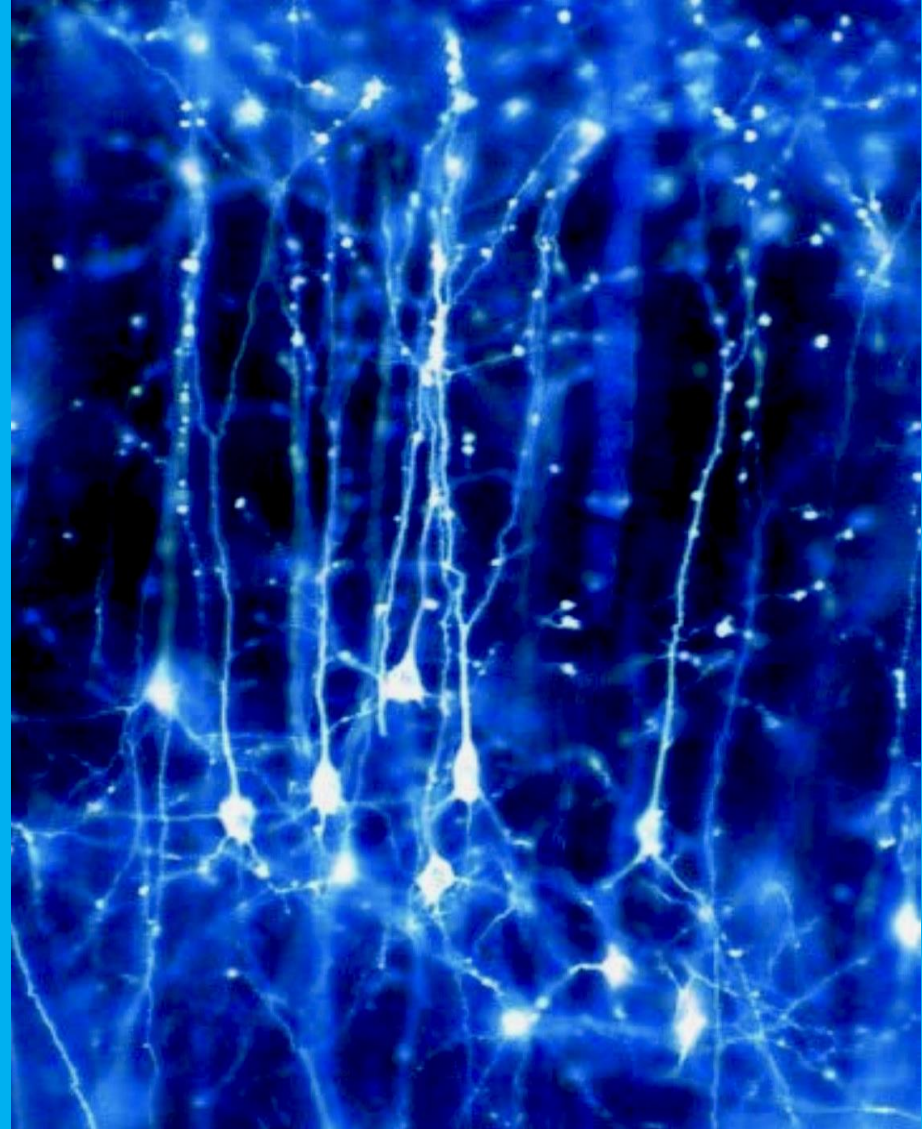
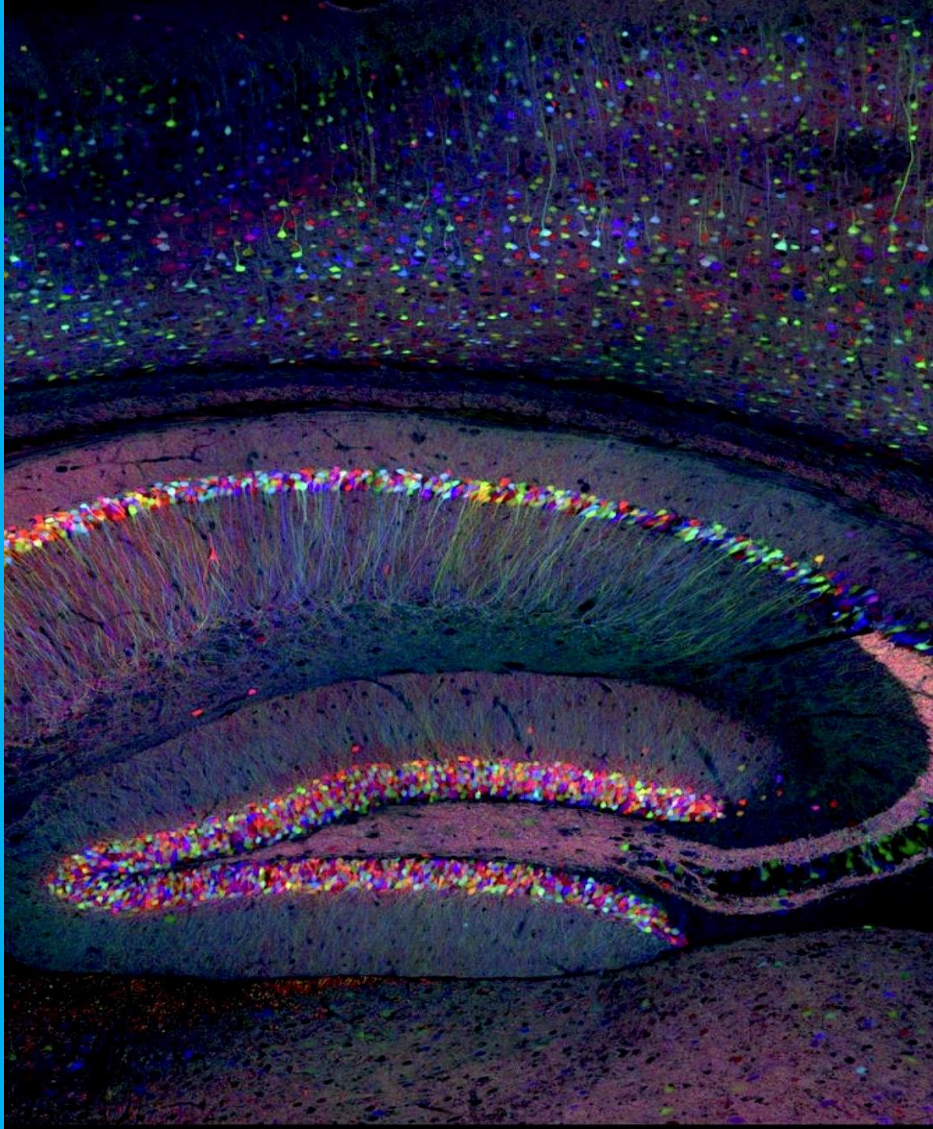


Moderate levels of Fear and Stress are good for us!



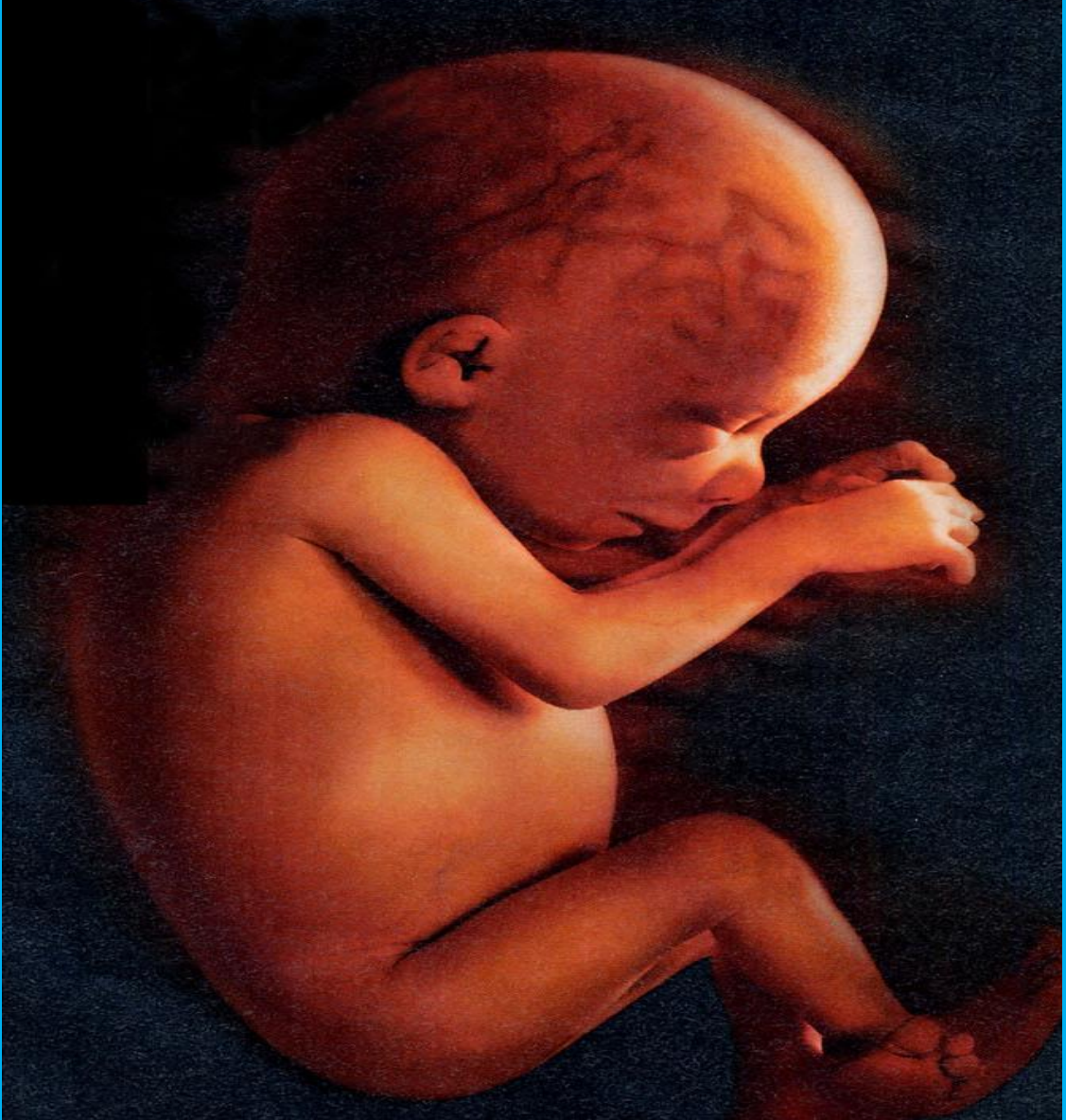
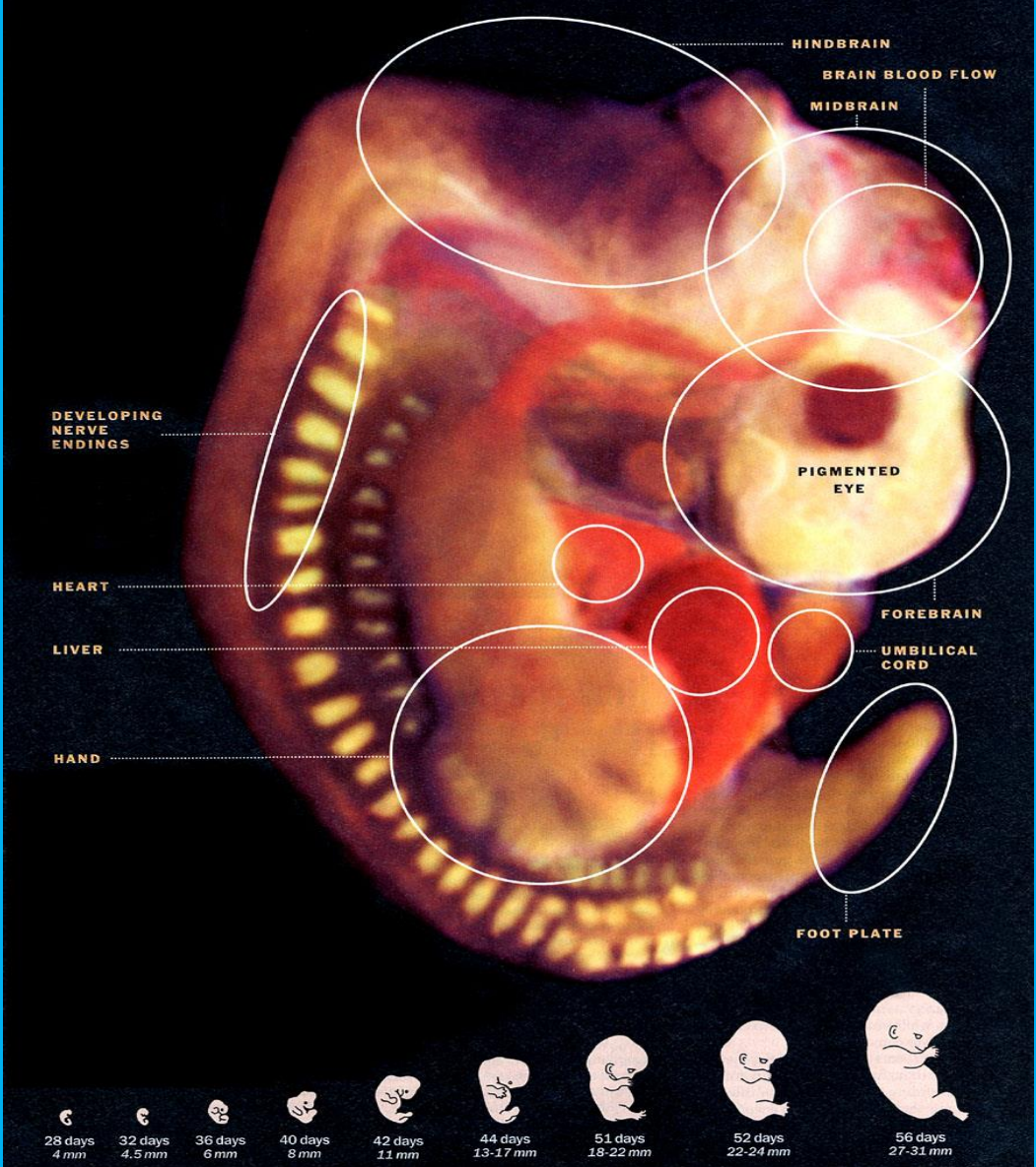


# All Brain Functions Depend on Neuronal circuits

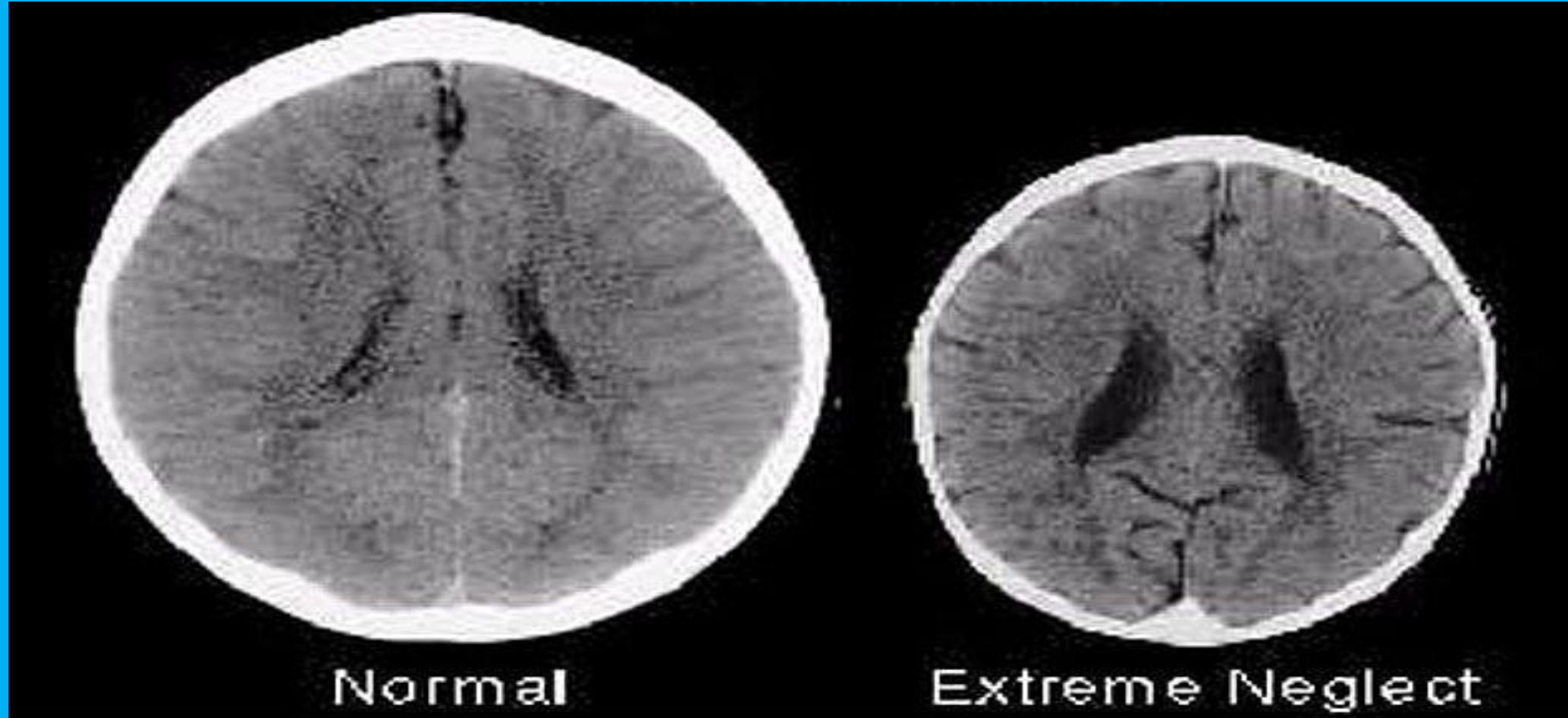




# Maternal Stress, Fear Anxiety Can all affect a Developing Baby



# What is the impact of Long-Term Stress and Distress on a Child's Brain?



Things can be reversed if caught early – with love and compassion - enrichment



# How to Distinguish between Normal, Mild and clinically Problematic Fear and Anxiety?

- Normal Developmental Fears:

- **Infancy:** Strangers, Loud Noises
- **Early Childhood:** Separation, Monsters
- **Middle Childhood:** Real-Life challenges, New Challenges
- **Adolescence:** Social Status, Social Group Performance



# Some Facts about Anxiety in Children

- **Mild fears are common in children and they decline with age.**
- **Overall, girls reports a greater number of fears than boys.**
- **The rates of Problematic Anxiety is similar in boys and girls until puberty, after which the rate of female cases doubles to that of males.**

# Some additional points to ponder about Anxiety

- The **manner** of Fear Expression, Stress and Sadness is proportional to the level of their cognitive and emotional development.
- Fear often **Changes** as children grow older: From more concrete (Monsters, afraid of being in dark, illness) to more abstract (will people like me? What about my Future etc.?)
- The **Focus** of Fear Changes over time – Specific Fears decrease over the course of childhood while Social Anxiety increases in Adolescents.

# Shorter-term Outbursts of Anxiety

- Cause relatively little interference in day to day functioning for the average child or adolescent
- Are Associated with defined and understood events (e.g., Thunder: New Environment or Situation, Oral Report Presentation; teasing etc.)
- Collective efforts and positive reinforcement given by parents, peers, teachers can make them fade/go away (desensitization).



# Normal Verses Problematic Anxiety

- **INTENSITY** of the Fear: Whether it is within expected limits or out of proportion to the actual threat?
- **FREQUENCY** does it correspond to the incidence, increases with time or remains fixed - notwithstanding counseling and reassurances?
- **APPROPRIATE** Does the response correspond to an **innocuous** situation?

# When Does Anxiety Become a Disorder?

- Avoidance
- Interference (Not facing Developmental Challenges)
- Distress
- Duration
- 12-20% Children suffer from Anxiety severe enough to interfere with their functioning

# Separation Anxiety Disorders

- Distress when separation is anticipated or occurs
- Worry about harm befalling others
- Worry that an untoward event will result in separation
- Refusal to go to school or elsewhere
- Fear or reluctance to be alone at home or in other settings
- Refusal to sleep away from attachments figure
- Nightmares
- Physical complaints at separation
  - **Three or more of these would need to be present for a clinical diagnosis.**



# Social Anxiety Disorders (Social Phobia)

- Marked and persistent fear of social situations – especially when exposed to unfamiliar people or possible evaluations; fear of embarrassment or humiliation.
- The situation that provokes anxiety
- The situation is avoided or endured with distress
- Interference in functioning
- Duration of at least 6 months.

# Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Excessive Anxiety and worry occurring for a month to 6 months – not just one but many activities or events
- The worry is difficult to control
- At least one physical symptom: Fatigue, Restlessness, difficulty Concentration, Irritability, Muscle tension, sleep disturbances

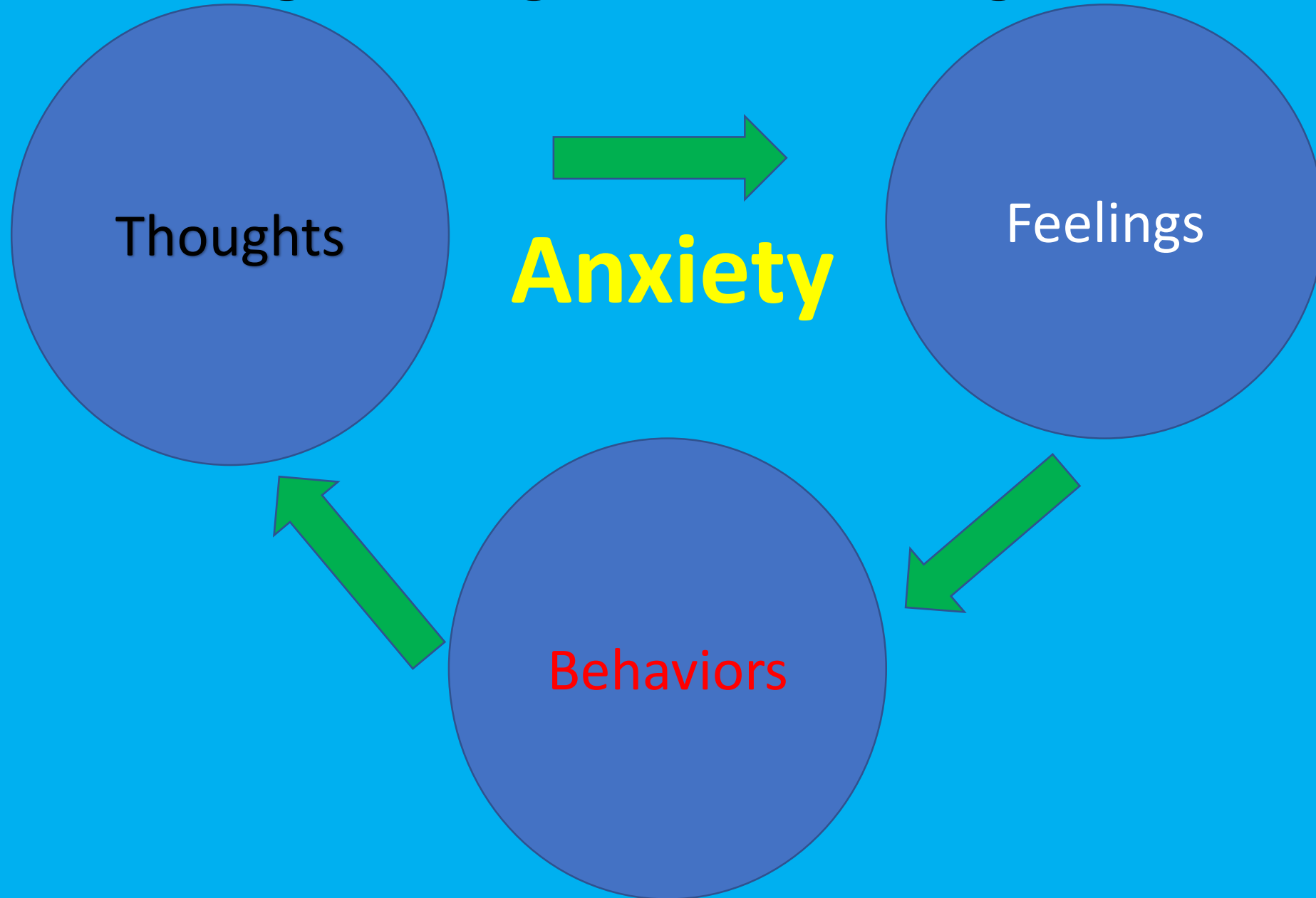
# The Alarming Signs?

- Extreme shyness
- Isolation
- Avoiding social situations
- Extreme Discomfort when the center of attention
- Avoid Schoolwork or fear of making a mistake.
- Anticipation of bad things to happen
- Excessive worry about failure and need reassurance
- Lack of Self-confidence (wiggly, jittery, shaky, high strung, tense, unable to relax etc.)

# Coping with Coronavirus- Related Fear and Anxiety



# Change Thoughts and Feelings First





We Live in the Best City in the Best Province of Canada!







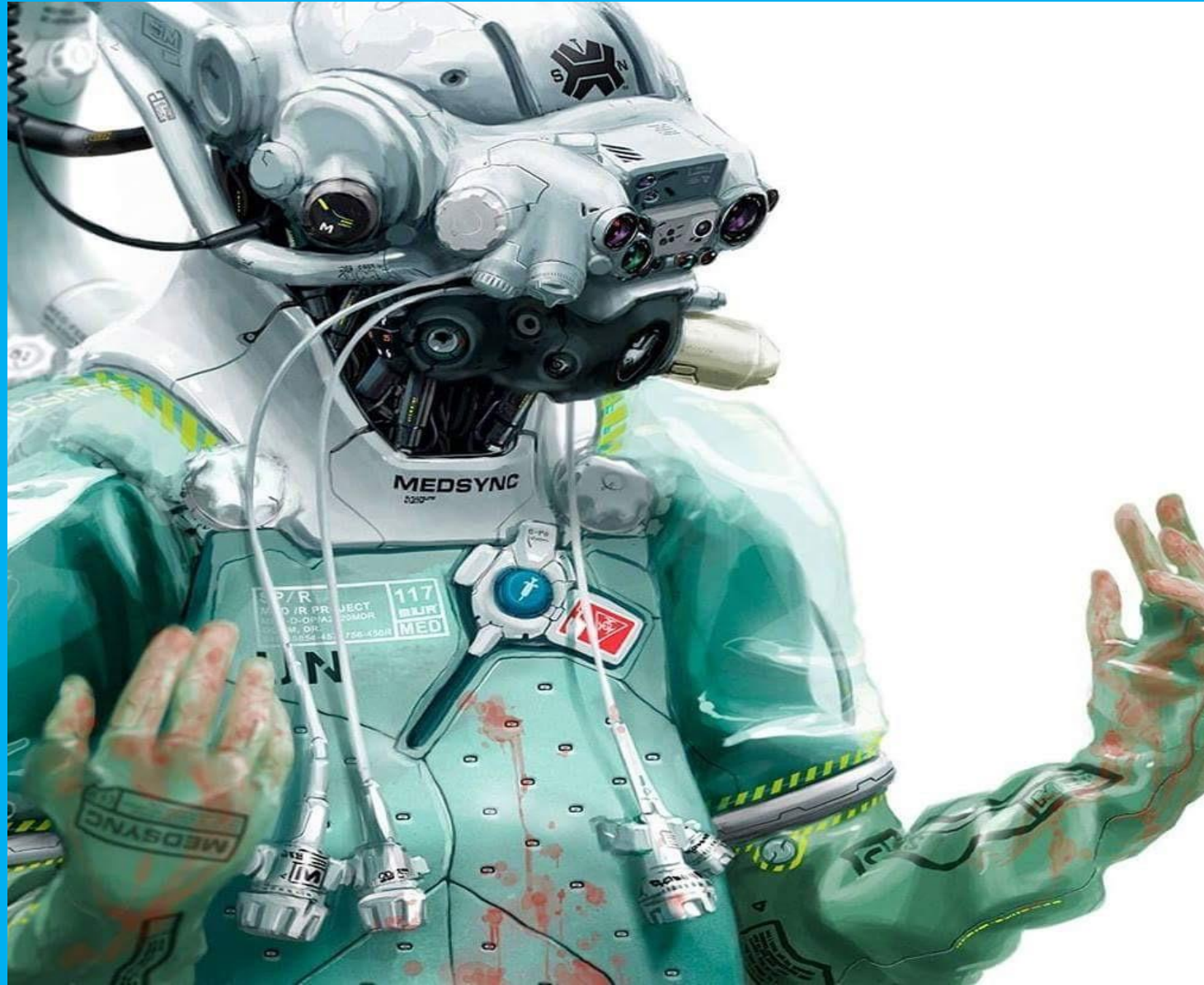
**Winter is almost over and the Spring is just around the corner!**



# Vaccines and other Potential Treatments are on their way!



We have outstanding Healthcare Professionals





# Stay informed—but don't obsessively check the news

- **Stick to trustworthy sources**
- **Limit how often you check for updates**
- **Step away from media if you start feeling overwhelmed.**
- **Ask someone reliable to share important updates**
- **Be careful what you share.**

# Be a Part of the Solution!

- Write down specific worries you have about how coronavirus may disrupt your life. If you start feeling overwhelmed, take a break.
- Make a list of all the possible solutions you can think of. Try not to get too hung up on “perfect” options. Include whatever comes to mind that could help you get by.
- Focus on concrete things you can problem solve or change, rather than circumstances beyond your control.
- After you’ve evaluated your options, draw up a plan of action. When you’re done, set it aside and resist the urge to go back to it until you need it or your circumstances significantly change.

# Stay and “Bee”-Connected

- **Make it a priority** to stay in touch with friends and family.
- **Video chatting** - if you're able. Face-to-face contact is like a jet-fuel for your mental health, reducing your risk of depression and helping ease stress and anxiety.
- **Social media can be a powerful tool—not** only for connecting with friends, family, and acquaintances—but for feeling connected in a greater sense to our communities, country, and the world. It reminds us we're not alone.
- **Don't let coronavirus dominate every conversation.** It's important to take breaks from stressful thoughts about the pandemic to simply enjoy each other's company—to laugh, share stories, and focus on other things going on in our lives. Take up new hobbies – Read Bible, Tora, Geeta, Quran, History books.

# How best to cope with Coronavirus Pandemic?

- **Be kind to yourself.**
- **Maintain a routine as best you can.**
- **Take time out for activities you enjoy.**
- **Get out in nature, if possible.**
- **Find ways to exercise.**
- **Avoid self-medicating (Alcohol, Power drinks Drugs)**
- **Take up Relaxation and Meditation (Laugh, Yawan)**



**We are Not Alone – helping others makes  
us feel good and connected!**

**Reach out to others in need.**

**Donate to food banks.**

**Be a calming influence. Be kind to others**