



The Hinda Institute presents...

LIVING WITH ANXIETY

SESSION 1

Wednesday, November 12, 2025
with Dr. Stephanie Kutzen,
and Matt Schwartz



WELCOME!

The intention of this seminar is to manage anxiety with fulfillment. This means not letting anxiety shrink our lives, but rather learning to thrive alongside it.

-Stephanie



SEMINAR LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- To understand evolutionary, psychological, psychosocial, environment, social, individual **ROOTS** of anxiety.
- To explore the **TRIGGERS** in thought objects, memories, experiences that activate anxiety.
- To provide practical, evidence-based **SKILLS** for managing daily anxiety.
- To learn to live well and a more **FULFILLING LIFE** managing anxiety,



QUOTE:

"Anxiety is My Cardio."



EXAMINING THE ROOTS OF ANXIETY

A. Evolutionary & Adaptive: Protection from Danger

- Primitive survival mechanisms → fight or flight
- Modern life - same dynamic misfired, activating fear in social interactions.
- Potential for leading to chronic distress state
- Humans hard wired with “defense cascade” that automatically activates defensive behavior.



EXAMINING THE ROOTS OF ANXIETY

B. Psychological/Neurological ROOTS - Built in Factors Predispose to Anxiety

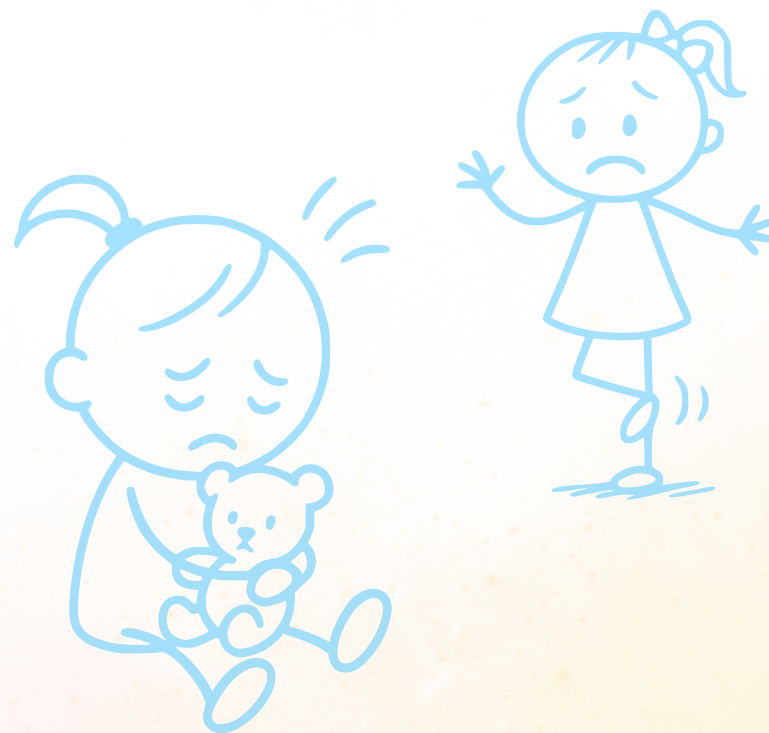
- **Genetics:** inherited more reactive central nervous system.
- **Brain chemistry:** imbalanced in neurotransmitters, serotonin, dopamine, higher anxiety response.
- **Overactive amygdala:** trigger "alarm system."
- **Hormone health:** thyroid, adrenal, chronic illness, stimulants, lack of sleep worsens anxiety



EXAMINING THE ROOTS OF ANXIETY

C. Psychological ROOTS - What We Think, Perceive, Cope Influences Anxiety

- Early Childhood Experiences → neglect, abuse, caregiver addiction, mental disorders teach brain to stay alert, watch for danger.
- **Core Beliefs** - "I'm not safe, I'm not good enough" feed ongoing anxiety.
- **Personality Traits** - high sensitivity, conscientiousness, over-thinking increases tension.
- **Cognitive Distortions** - negative thinking, catastrophizing, limited problem solving amplifies fear



QUOTE:



“Anxiety can turn harmless things into imagined disaster.”



EXAMINING THE ROOTS OF ANXIETY

D. Creation of Personal Meanings - Existentialism

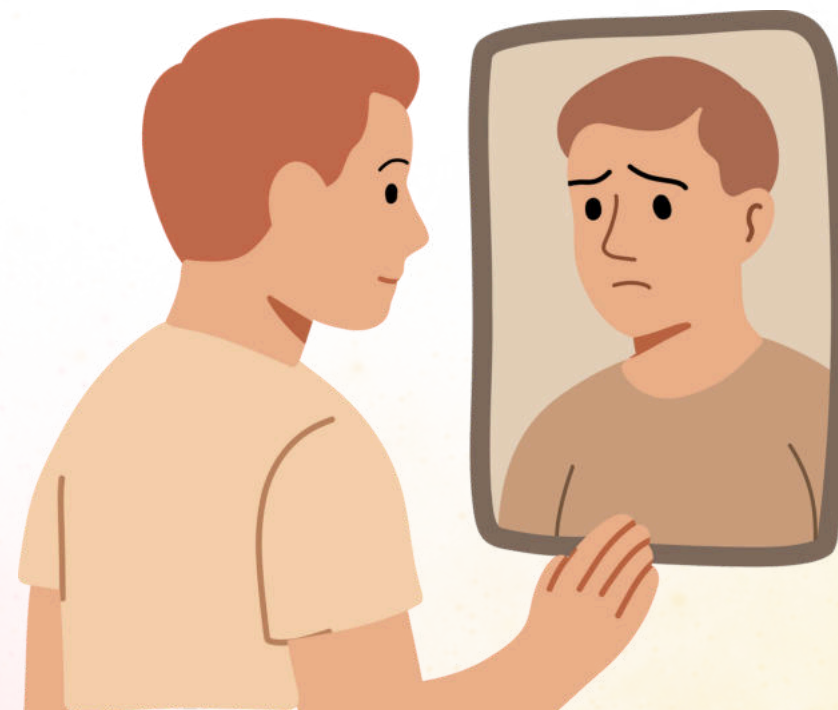
- Fearful of losing control grows uncertainty about the future.
- Unprocessed emotions - sadness, grief, shame, guilt & anger resurface as anxiety.
- Anxiety may signal deep conflict about direction, identity, purpose of life.



EXAMINING THE ROOTS OF ANXIETY

E. Environment and Social ROOTS

- ***Stressful Environments*** - work, housing, financial, conflicted/unstable social relationships, poor health.
- ***Uncertainty in Change*** - Post Incarceration Syndrome (PICS), lack of social support network.
- ***Cultural Expectations*** - messages about success, appearance, productivity, beauty, age.
- ***Social Anxiety*** - intense fear of situations if judged, scrutinized by others.



QUOTE:

"My anxiety gives me anxiety."



TAKING STOCK OF YOUR ANXIETY

Evaluation and Self-Determinism

- A) Examine threats to quality of your life
- B) Identify most troubling experiences that trigger/activate your anxiety (use seminar pre-questionnaire)
- C) COMMIT to building skills
- D) Practice this introductory skill all next week to prepare for Seminar II.



MANAGING FEAR IF LOSING CONTROL



Breathe



Focus-focus on your surroundings



Select object, gaze, breathe



Return back to the present



PREVIEW OF SEMINAR II - NOV 19, 2025

A. Examine your "TRIGGERS" that activate your anxiety

B) Participant Role Play

C) Group Discussion

D) Critique of Seminar I Content and Facilitators Performance

