

Children and Anesthesia:

The Good,
the Bad and
the Ugly

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Limited
cognitive skills

Dependence
on others

Lack of self-
control

Limited life
experience

Poor
understanding
of healthcare
system



50%

Dreger, V & Tremack, T (2006). Management of pre-operative anxiety in children. *AORN*, 84(5), 777-804.
Talbot, S. (2010) *The Pediatric Patient*. 2nd ed. St. Louis, MO: Saunders Elsevier; 2010



Sources of fear

Separation from parents

Venipuncture

Loss of control

Change in routine



Behaviors that indicate poor coping

- Appear frightened
- Becoming agitated
- Breathing deeply
- Trembling
- Crying
- Stopping talking or playing
- Urination
- Increased motor tone
- Attempt to escape

Why is this important?





Children who display elevated anxiety prior to surgery are **3.5 times** more likely to be at risk for development of negative postoperative behavior change.

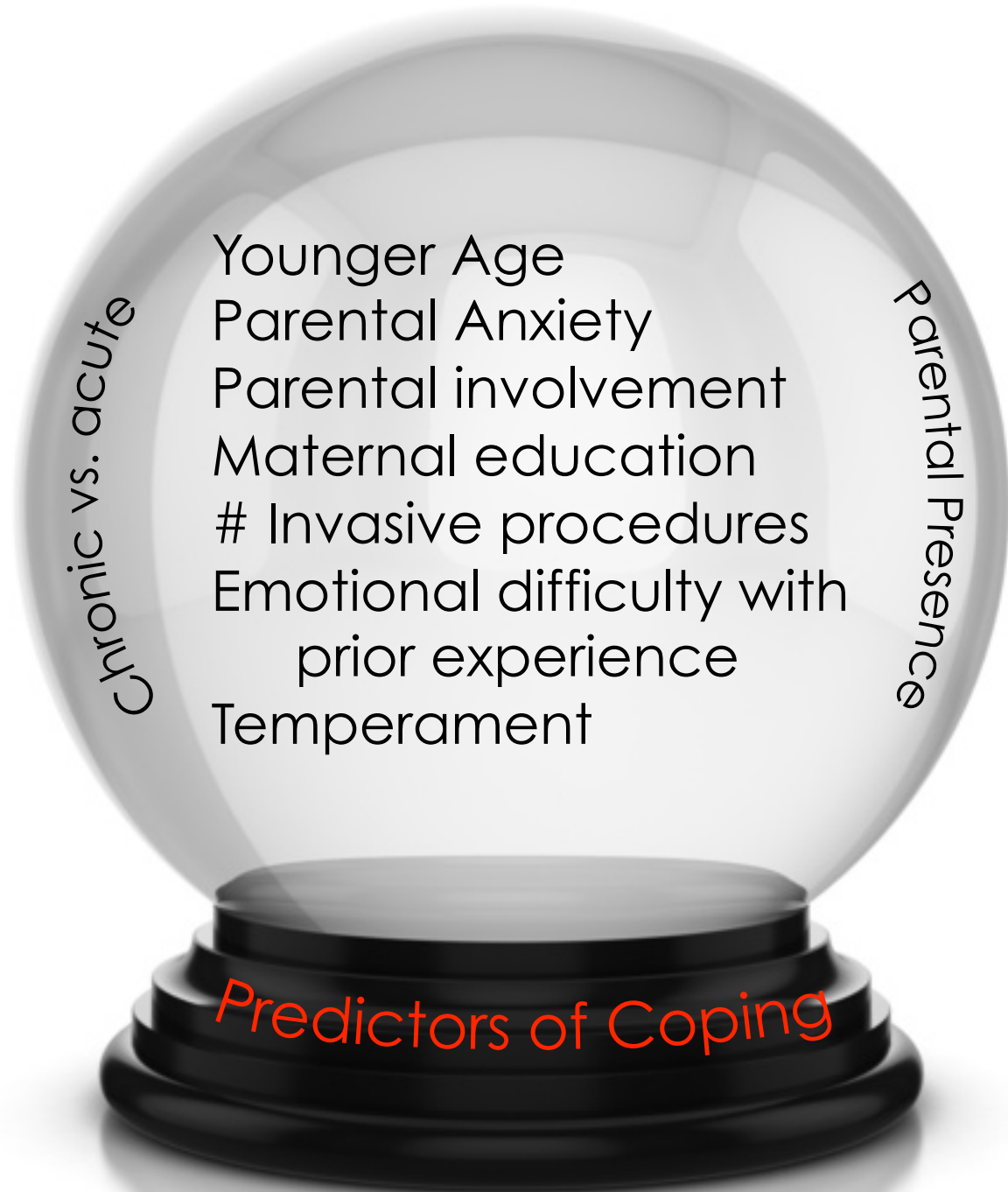
After
discharge...

Post-op
Regressive
Behavior
Disturbances

60%



- Nightmares
- Sleep disorders
- Temper tantrums
- Aggression towards authority
- Separation anxiety
- Bedwetting
- Regression



Chronic vs. acute

Parental Presence

Younger Age
Parental Anxiety
Parental involvement
Maternal education
Invasive procedures
Emotional difficulty with
prior experience
Temperament

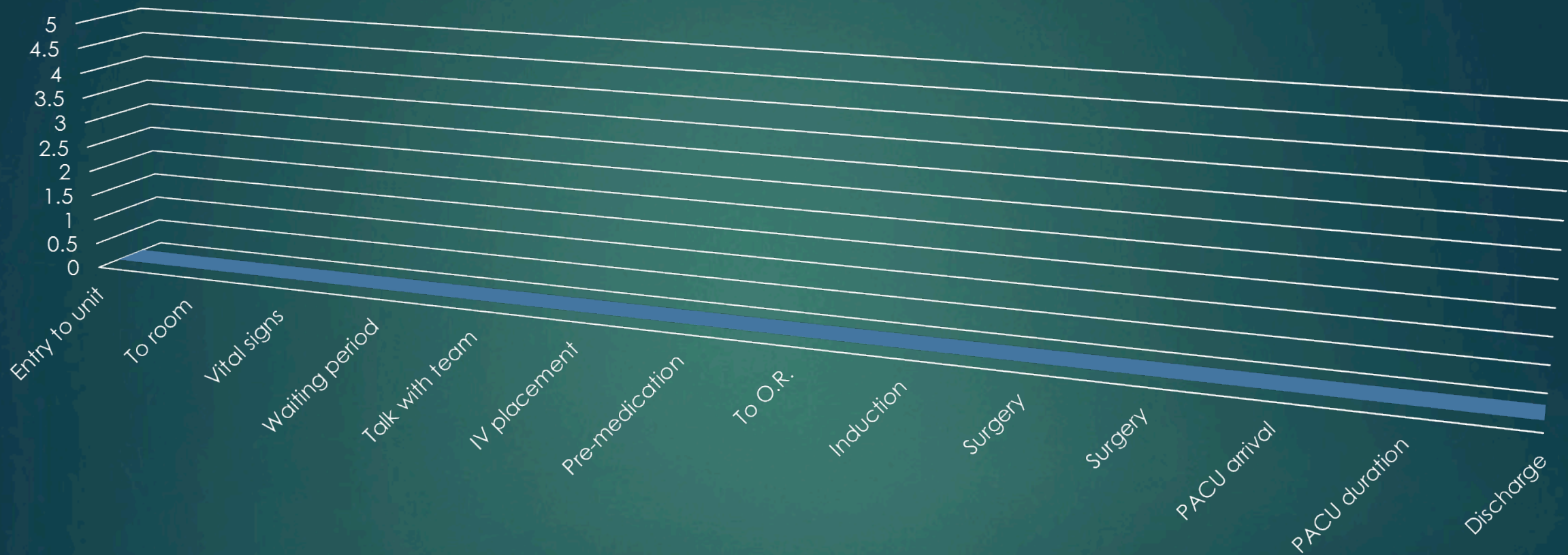
Predictors of Coping

Frequency of negative behaviors



Kain, ZN & Mayes, L. (1996) Anxiety in children during the perioperative period. In M. Bornstein & G. Genevro (Eds.), *Child Development and Behavioral Pediatrics* (pp85-103). Mahwah, NJ.: Lawrence Erlbaum

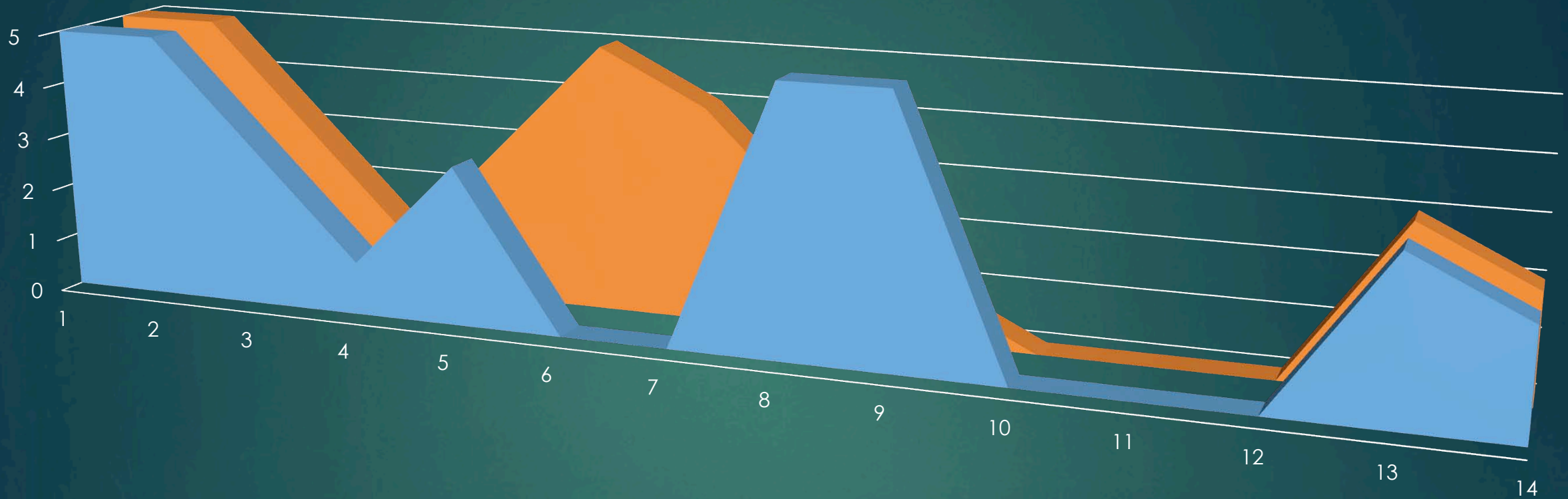
Stress point Timeline



Stress point Timeline



Stress point Timeline



■ Child with mask no versed

■ Child with IV

Stress point Timeline



Stress point Timeline





THE DREAM

WON'T LET GO

Ages
18 months
to 4 years

Fear of
Strangers

Not normal
routine

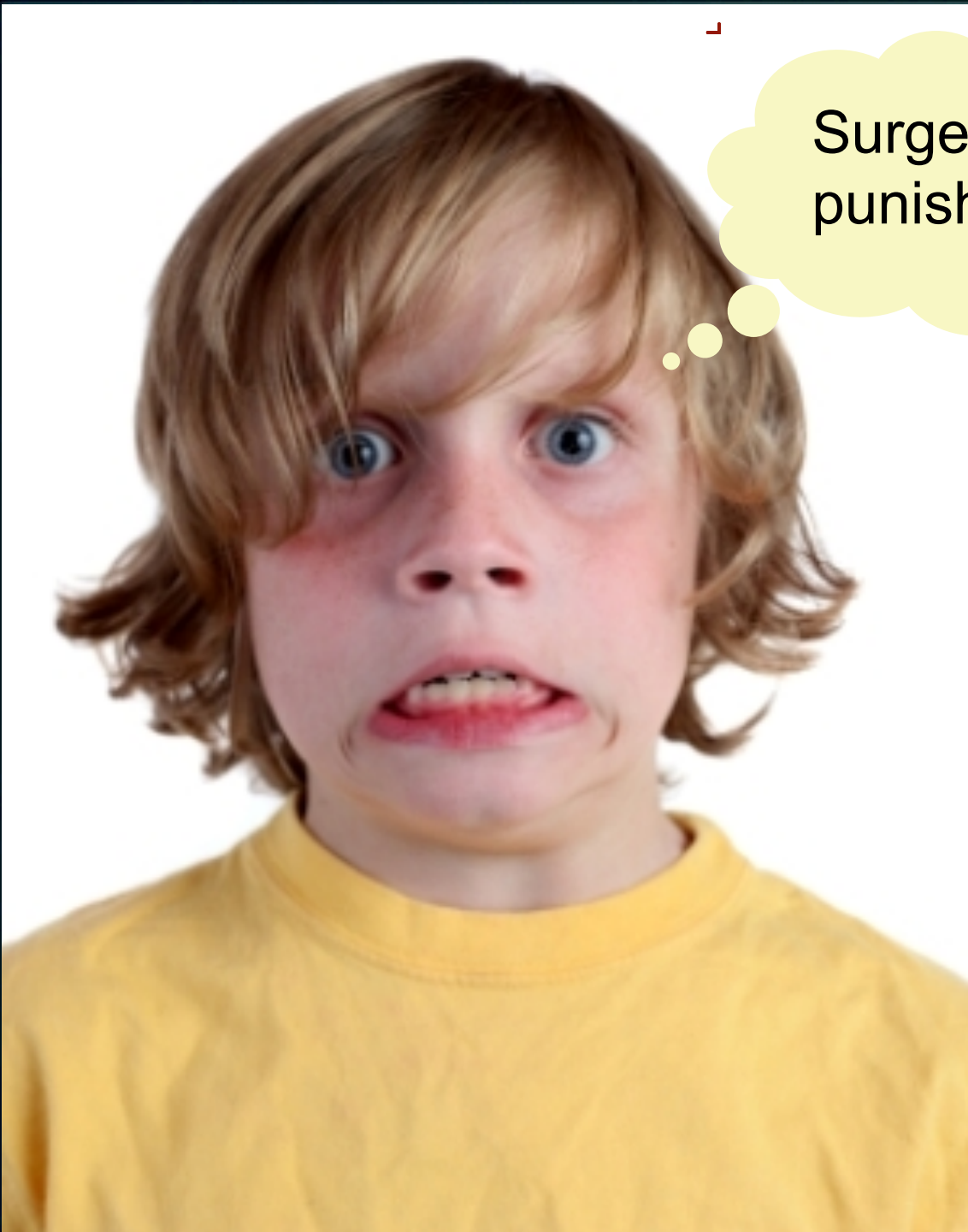
New people
New environment
New expectations



WON'T LET GO

- Transitional objects
(blankies, binkies, lovies)
- Parental presence
when possible
- Less talking in the O.R.
- Familiar songs
ABC's, Twinkle twinkle





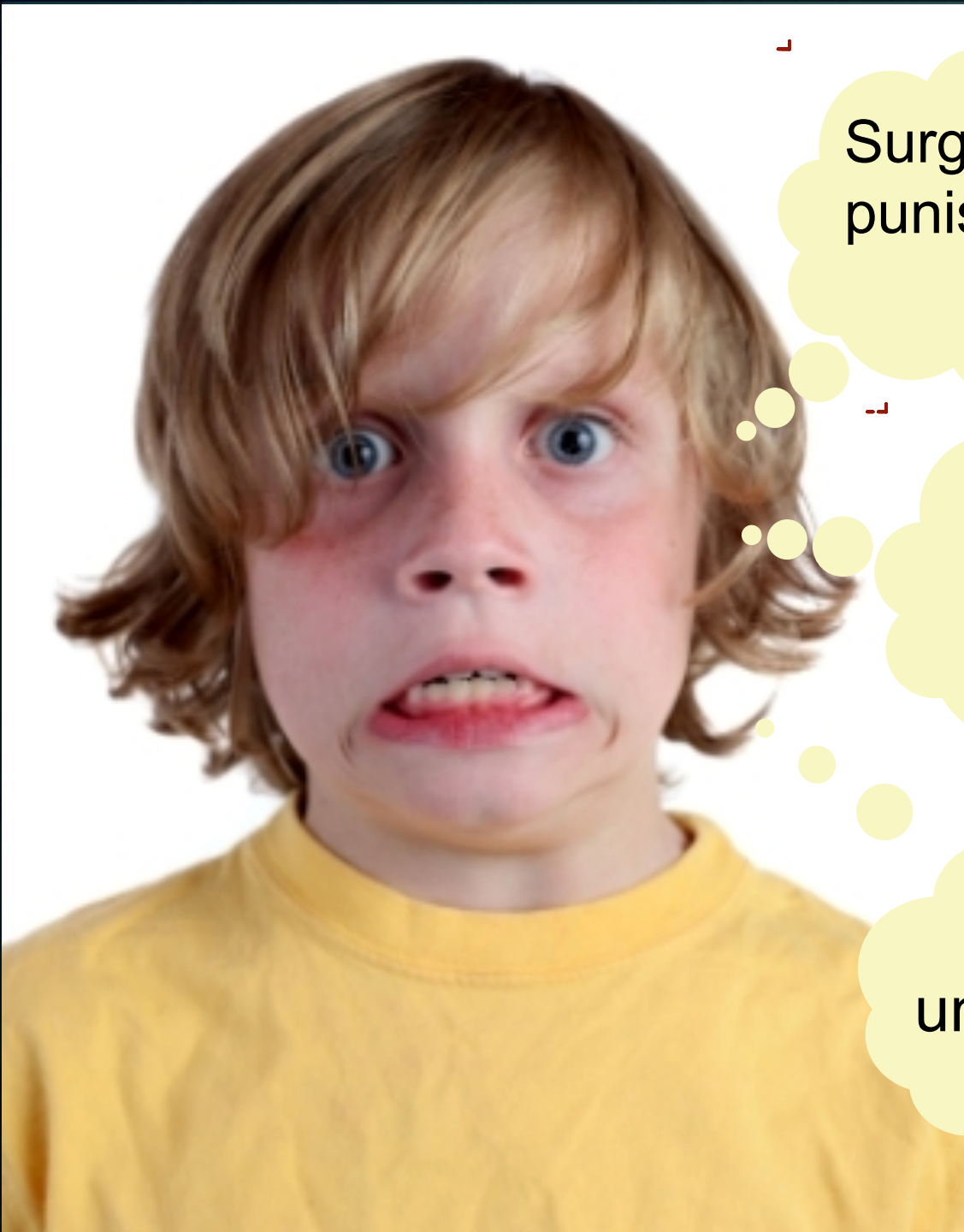
Surgery as
punishment

SCARED KIDS

School-
aged
children

Ages 5-9





Surgery as
punishment

Fear of shots
and needles

Limited
understanding

SCARED KIDS

School-
aged
children

Ages 5-9



SCARED KIDS

AMPAD™

Gold Fibre

- ❑ Rehearsal leading to sense of control





SCARED KIDS

AMPAD™

Gold Fibre

- Rehearsal leading to sense of control
- Concrete explanations
- Small achievable tasks



I've never had
anything this
scary happen
to me

I don't know
how to cope

SUPER
PROTECTED

All ages





SUPER PROTECTED

AMPAD[®]

Gold Fibre

- Teach skills through example and concrete lessons
- Expect success and be confident
- Reinforce coping behaviors

THE NEGOTIATOR

Ages: ALL

I am freaking out

I have lost control

Stalling has worked before for me



THE NEGOTIATOR

AMPAD™

Gold Fibre

- Steady eye contact
- Firm Limits
- Countdowns



“WE DIDN'T TELL THEM”



I didn't know
how to tell them

Ages: ALL

I didn't want
to upset
them

Our culture
doesn't tell
children these
things

“WE DIDN'T TELL THEM”



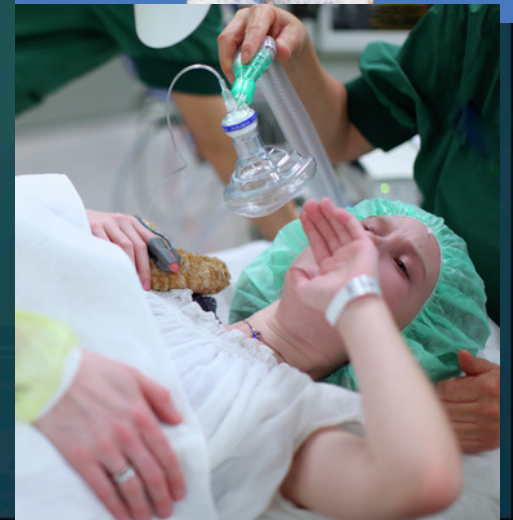
- Find out why...
- Compromise on explanations
- Explain research
- Let it go...

COMMON THEMES

Seeking choices

Seeking control

Seeking validation



How can you
adapt
your practice?



We are not their families

We will see them briefly

We cannot fix them during our time together

We can keep them safe AND instill confidence in
healthcare

We can have them feel successful

Be flexible

Be creative













