

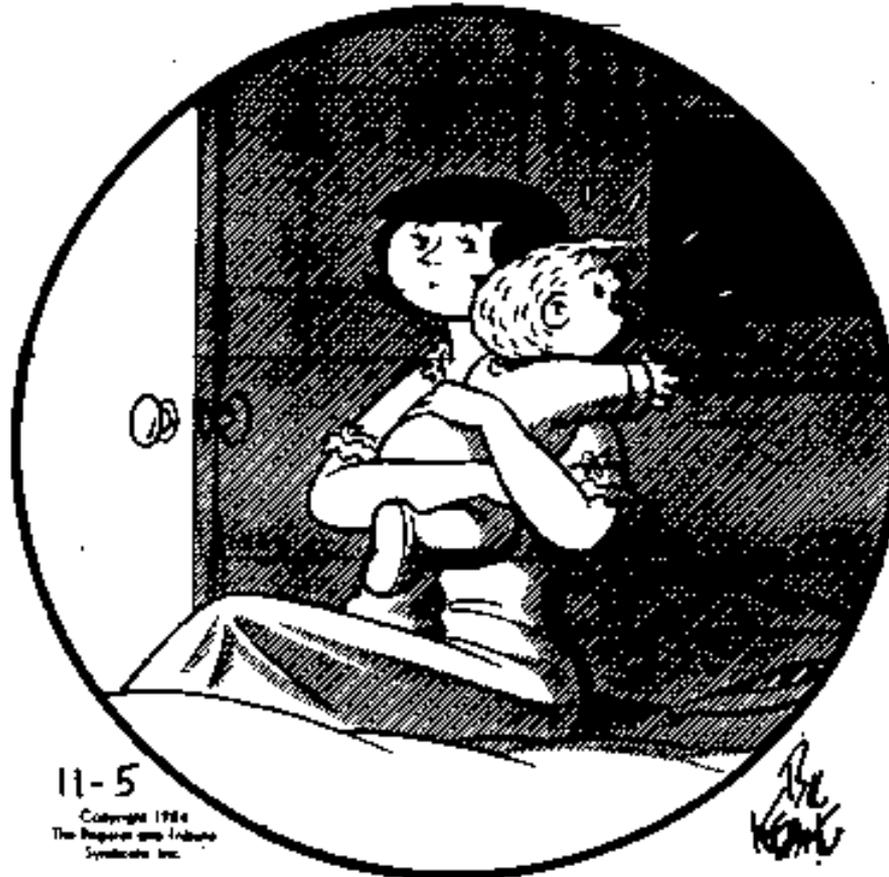
Media Influence on Children's Emotions

Joanne Cantor, Ph.D.

Fears, Anxieties, and Nightmares

THE FAMILY CIRCUS.

By Bil Keane



11-5

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The Register and Tribune
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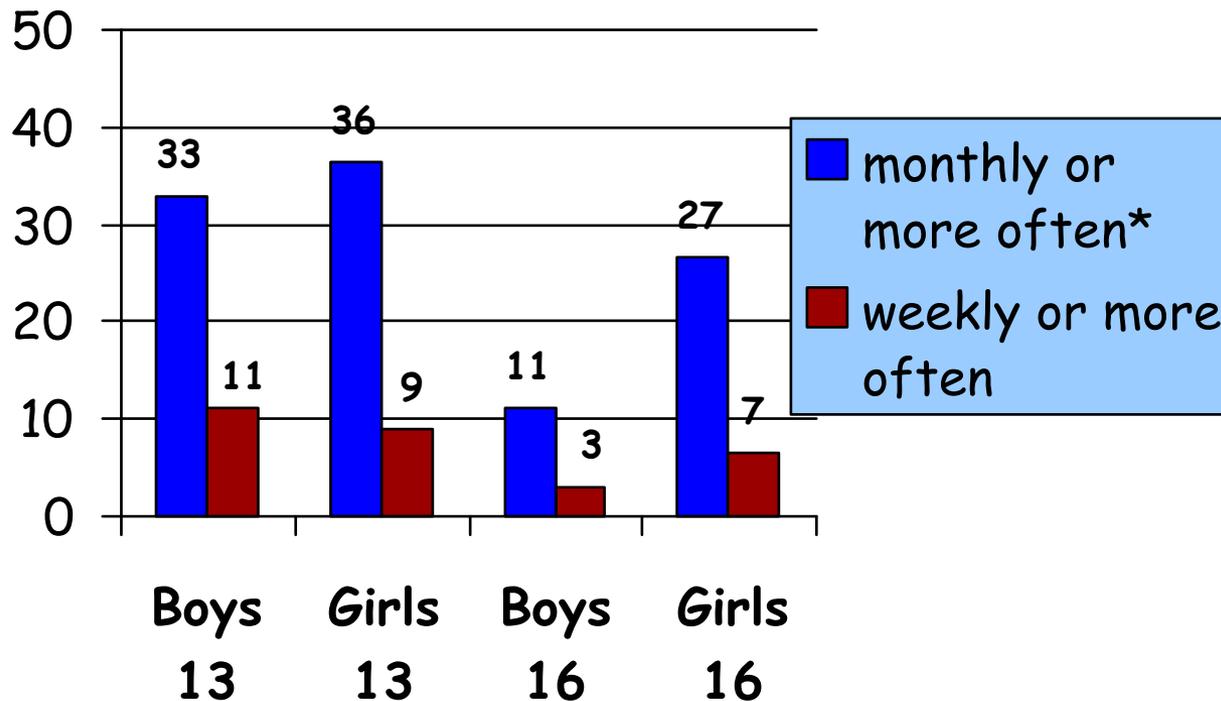
Bil Keane

"Call the Ghostbusters!"

Media Exposure Data

- TV Viewing correlates with anxiety and sleep disturbances

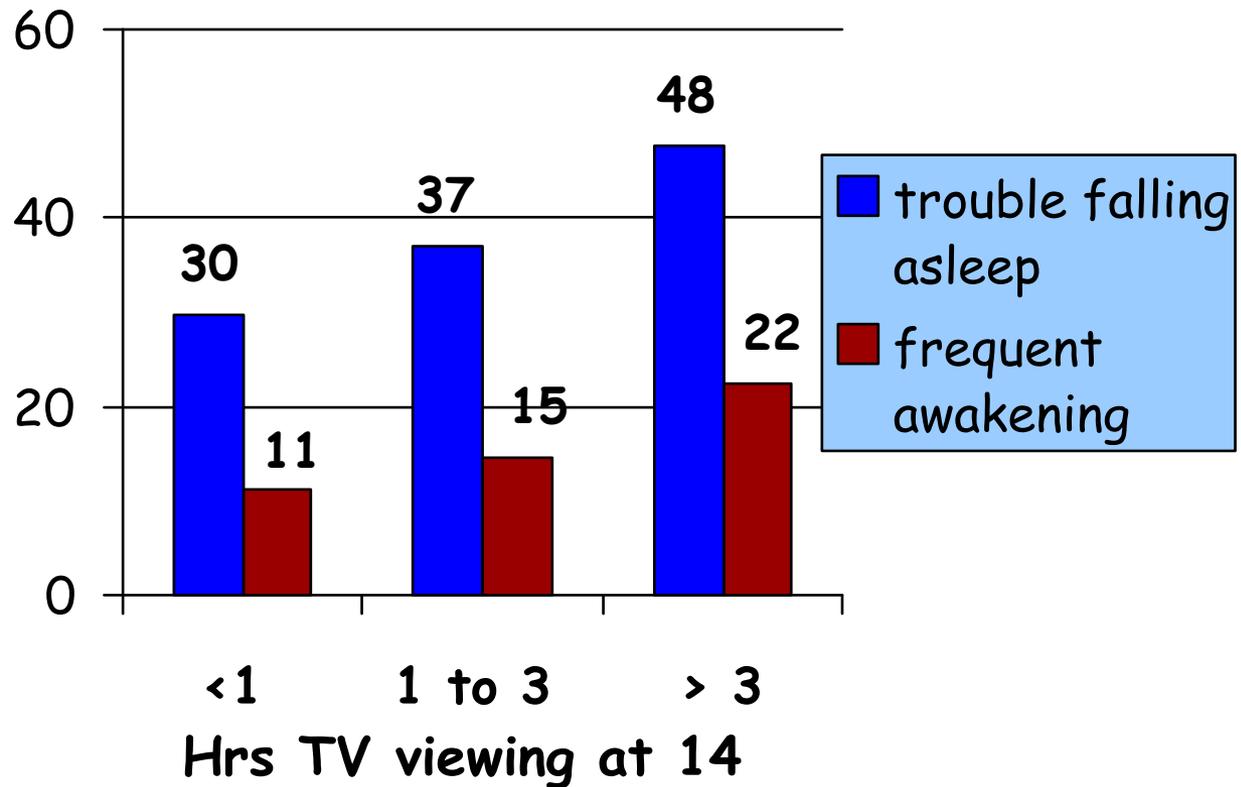
Percent with TV-Induced Nightmares (Belgium)



Van den Bulck, 2004

*(monthly % includes weekly%)

Sleep Problems at ages 16 and 22



Johnson et al., 2004

Effects of Specific Programs & Movies

- Retrospective approach
- Content-analyzing descriptions of previous incidents

Our results

- Experience almost universal (over 90%)
- Usually dramatic descriptions of traumatic memories

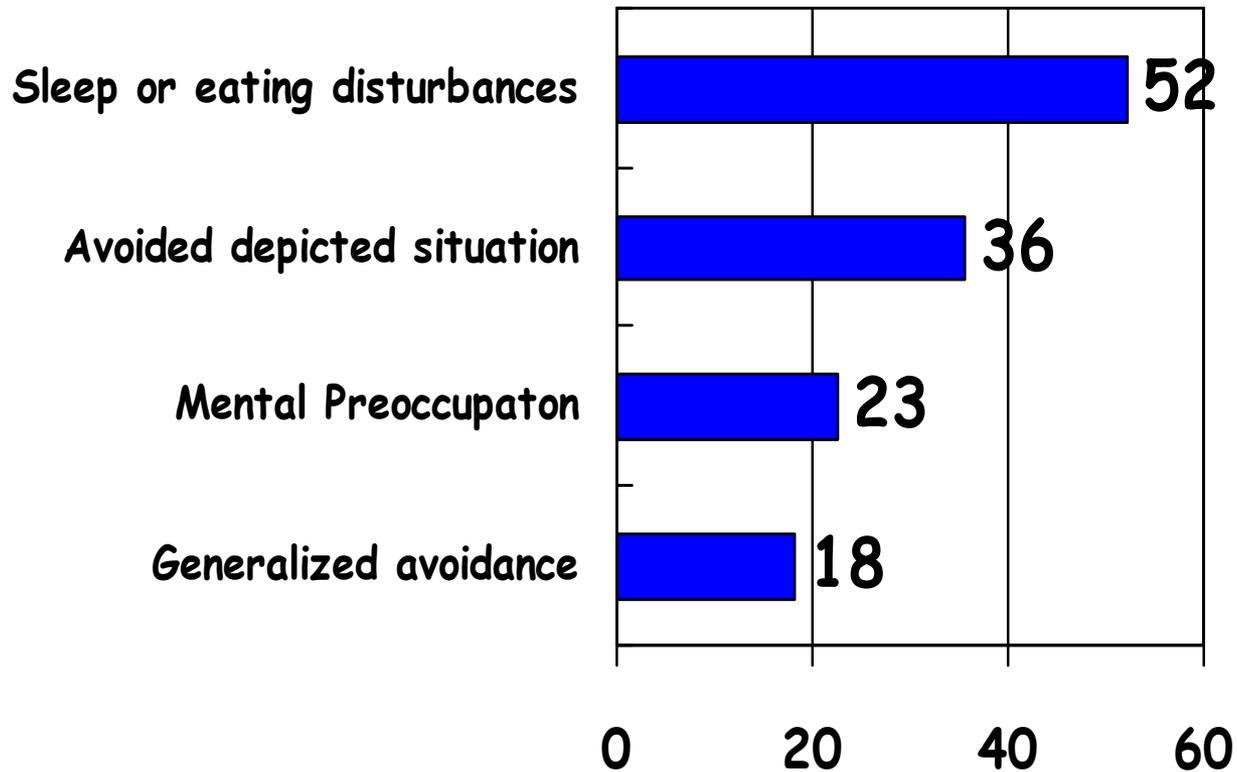
Jaws



Psycho

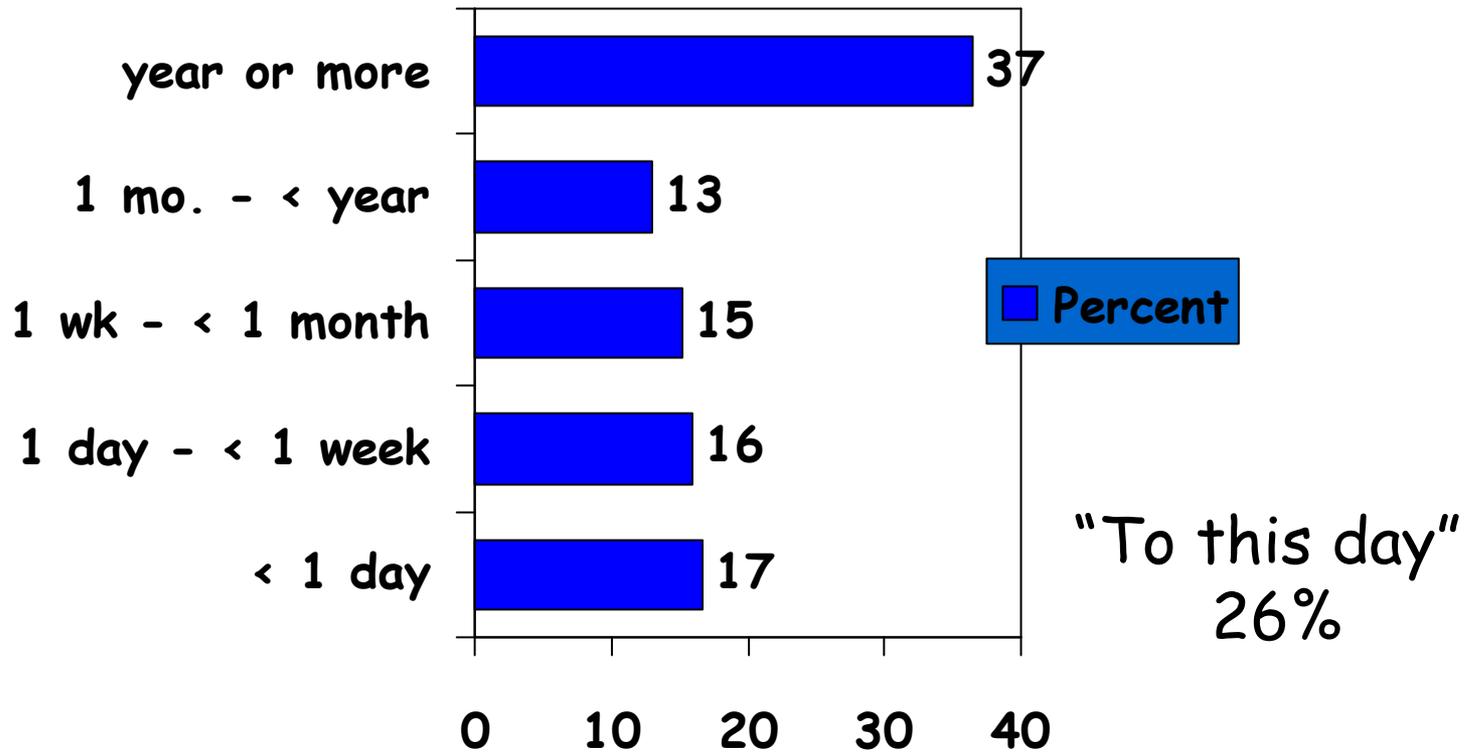


Percent Reporting Lingering Effects



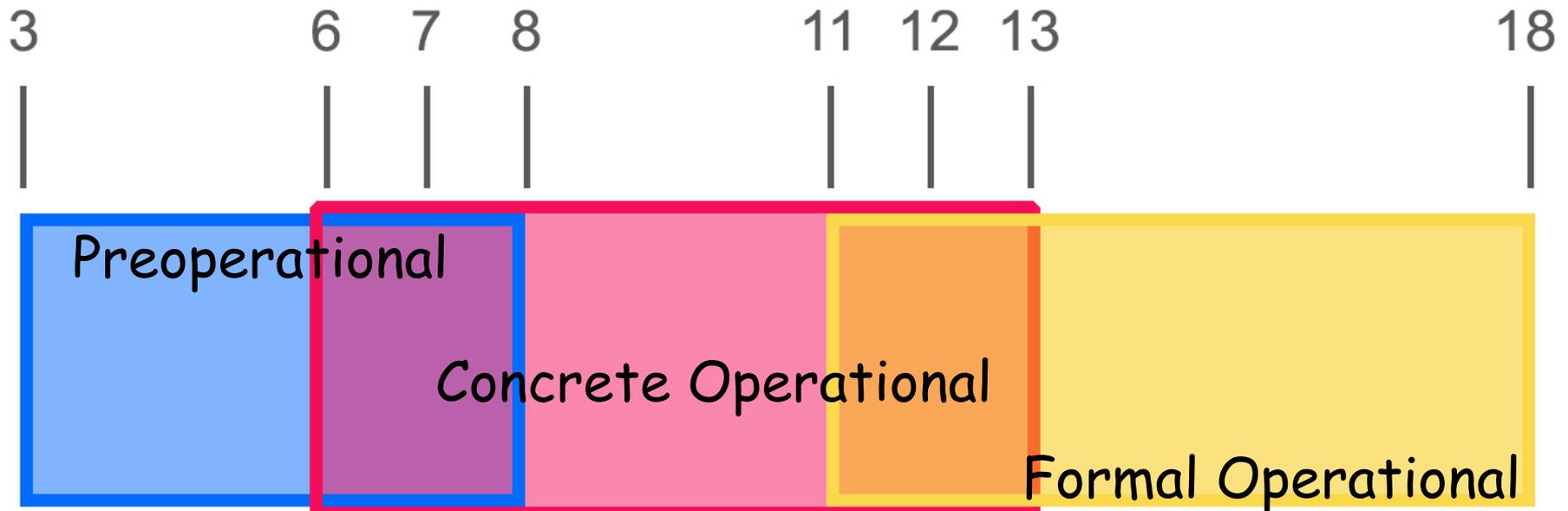
Data from Harrison & Cantor, 1999.

Duration of Effects

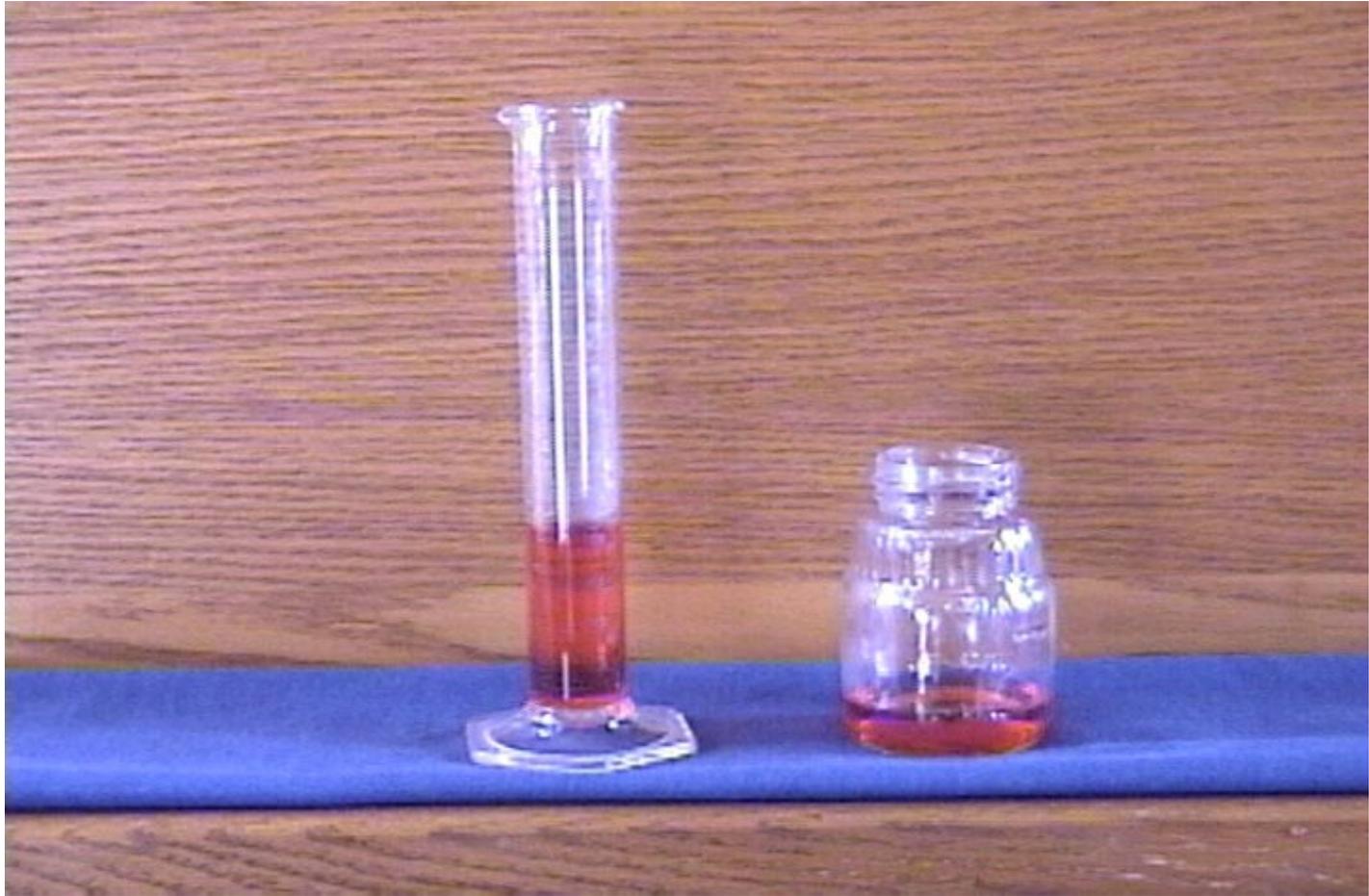


Data from Harrison & Cantor, 1999

Phases of Development



Piaget's Liquid Conservation



"Preschool" thought

- Importance of Appearance
- Fantasy = Reality
- Trouble with transformations

David Banner



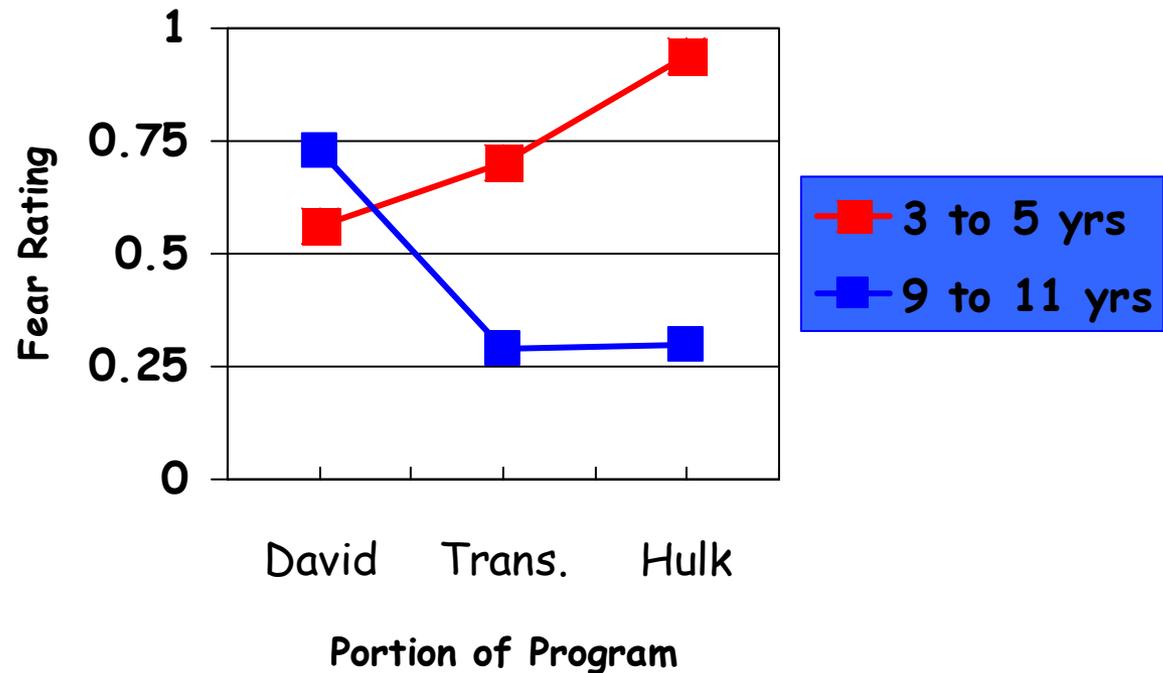
The transformation . . .



The Hulk



Fright during Hulk Program



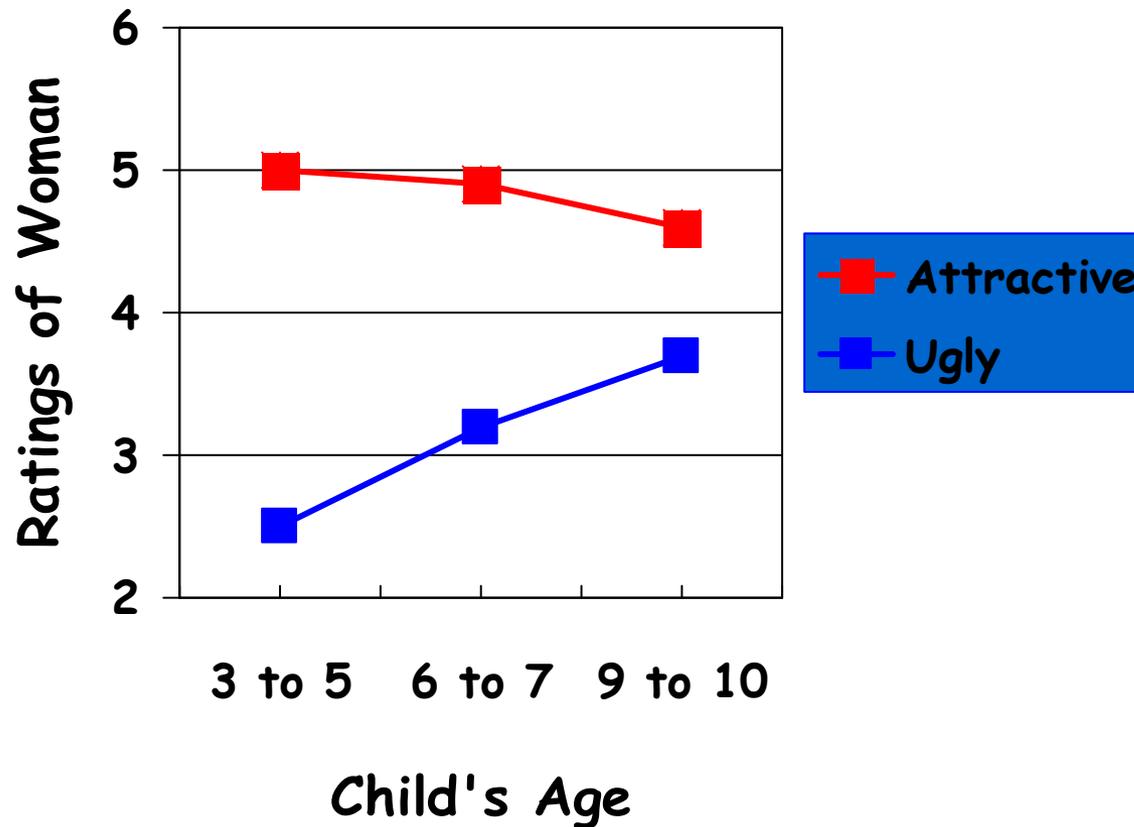
Sparks & Cantor (1986)

"Perceptual Boundedness"



Hoffner & Cantor (1985)

Reactions to Appearance



Hoffner & Cantor (1985)

The Wicked Witch of the West



E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial





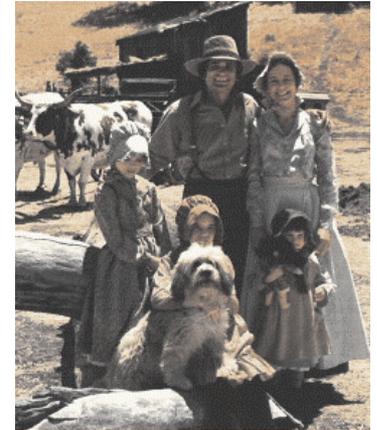
Preschoolers



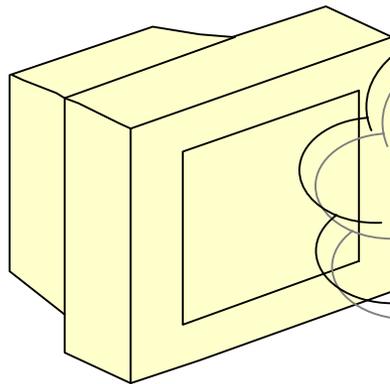
- Grotesque visual images, whether real or not
- Natural disasters and accidents
- Stories involving the death of a parent
- Intense or eerie noises, screams

"School-Age" Children

- Realistic threats
- "Stranger" violence
- Especially child victims



"Little House"



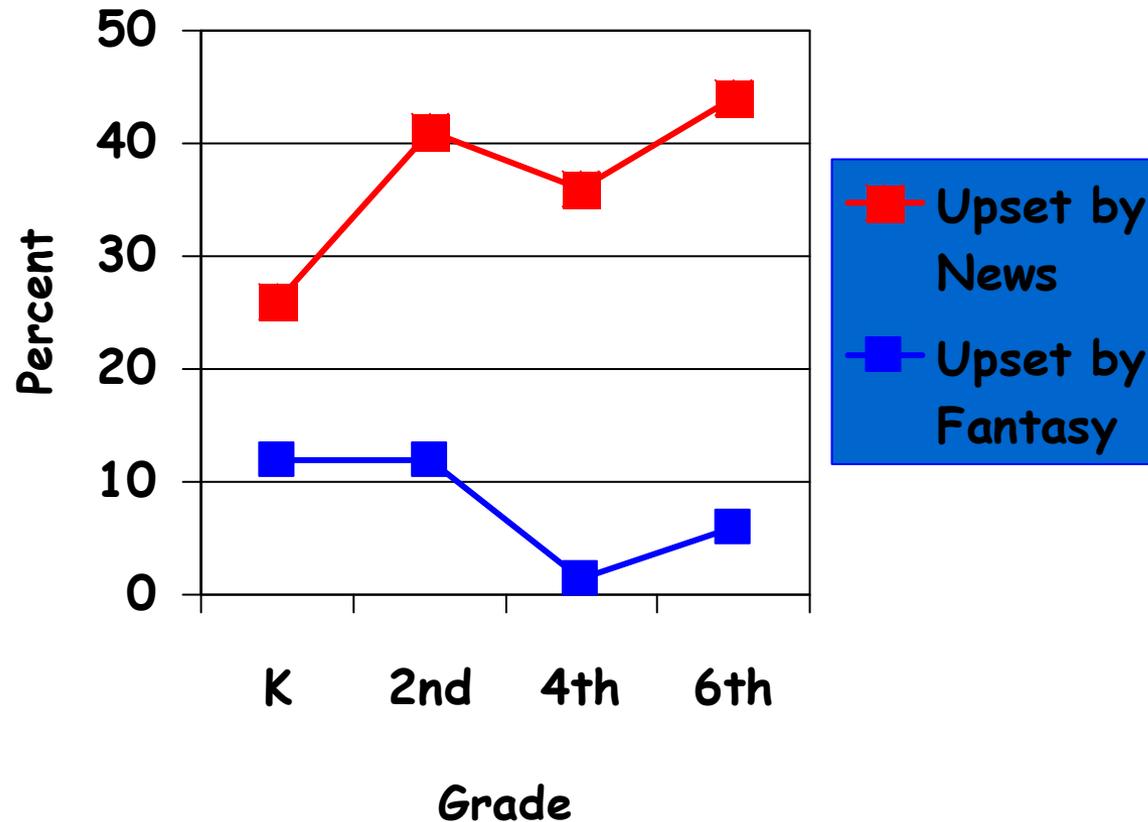
*"The latest on
the kidnapping..."*

Teenagers:

- Stalking
- The Supernatural
- World Problems

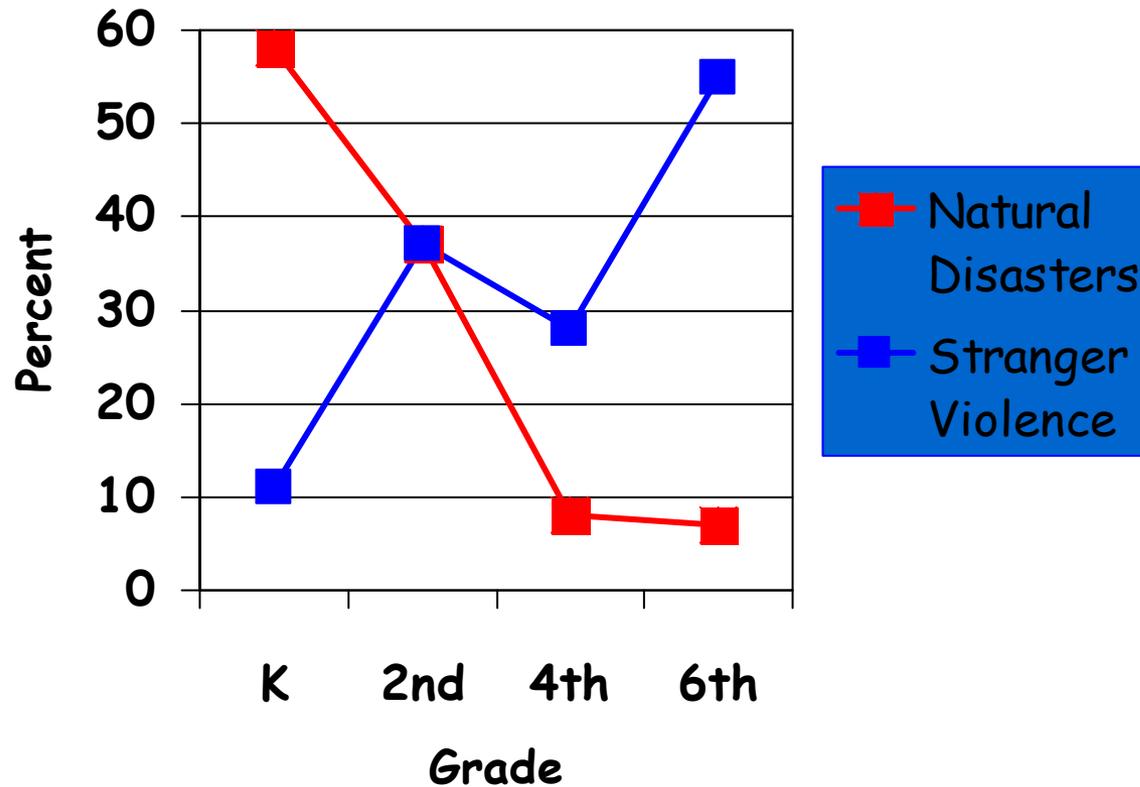


Reactions to News



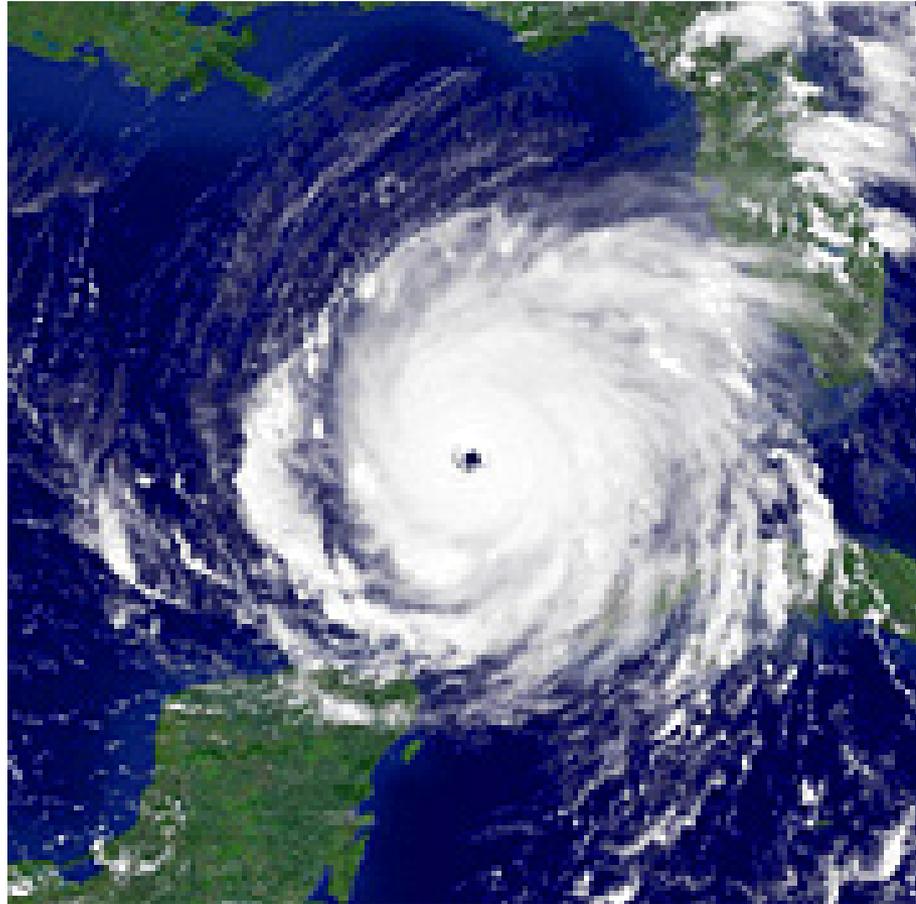
Cantor & Nathanson (1996)

Reactions to Different News Story Types



Cantor & Nathanson (1996)

Natural Disasters!!!!



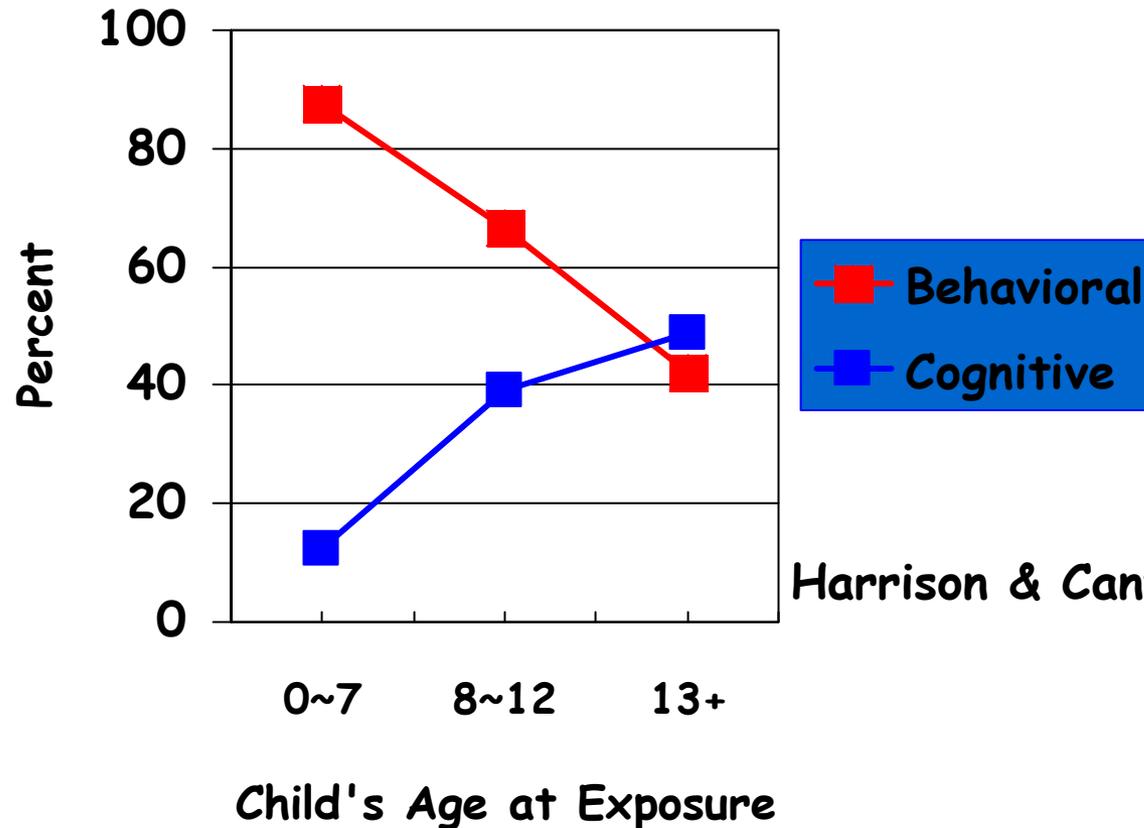
9/11



Coping



Coping Strategy by Age

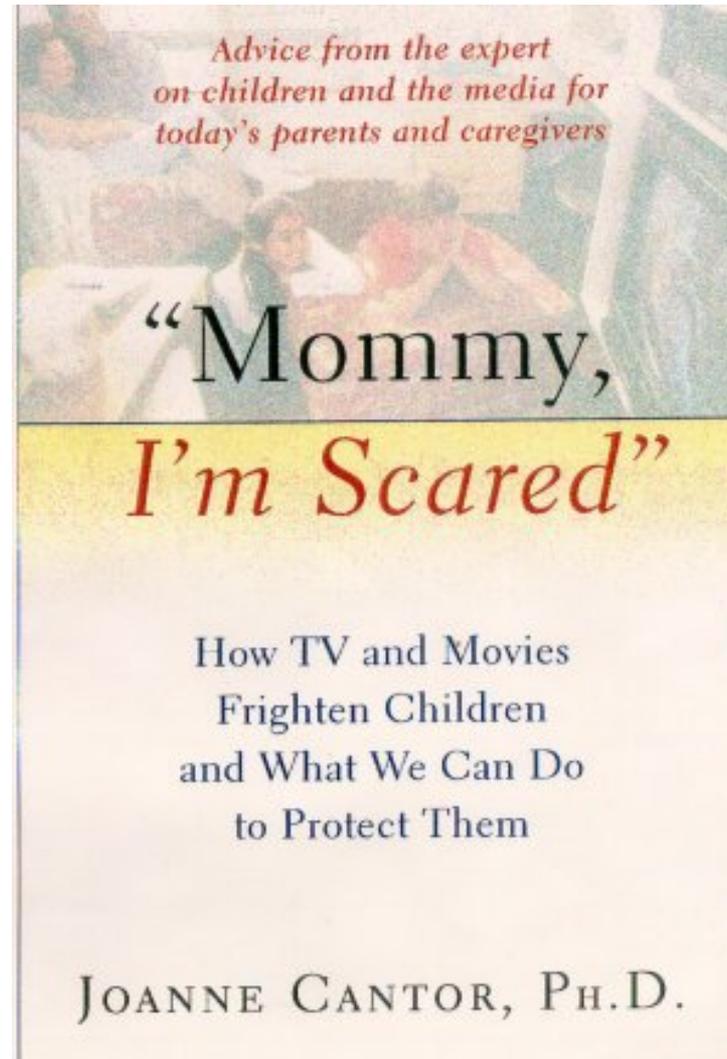


Harrison & Cantor, (1999)

Helping Children Cope

- Age appropriate techniques
 - 2-6 - Nonverbal techniques
 - 7-12 - Reassuring, limited information
 - 13 and up - Sharing, writing

Parenting Book



Children's Book

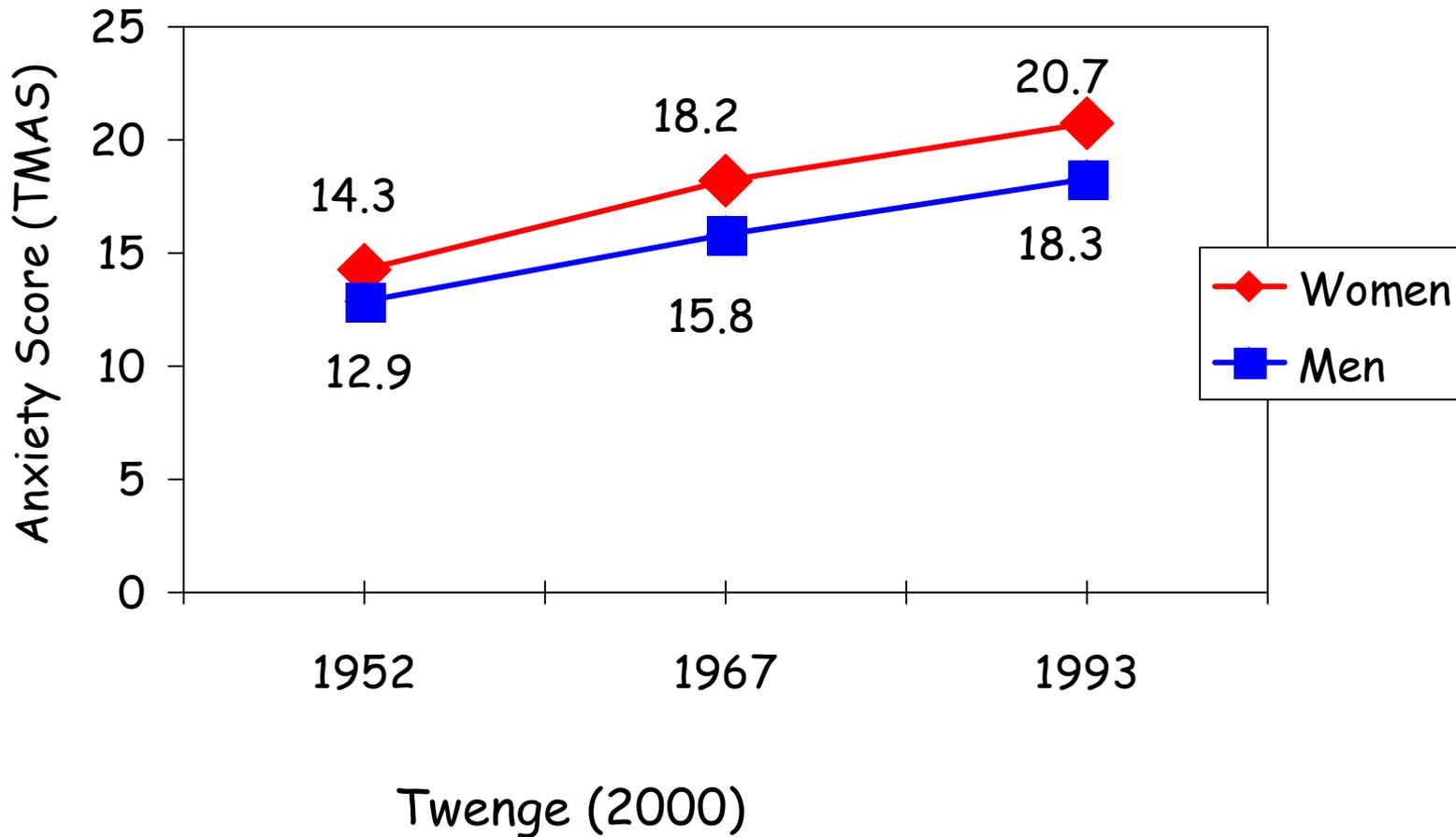
Teddy's TV Troubles



Written by Joanne Cantor, Ph.D.

Illustrated by Tom Lowes

Change in Anxiety Levels over Time



The Emotional Brain

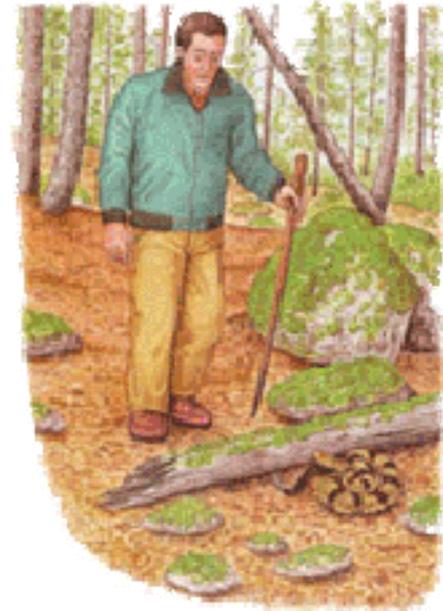
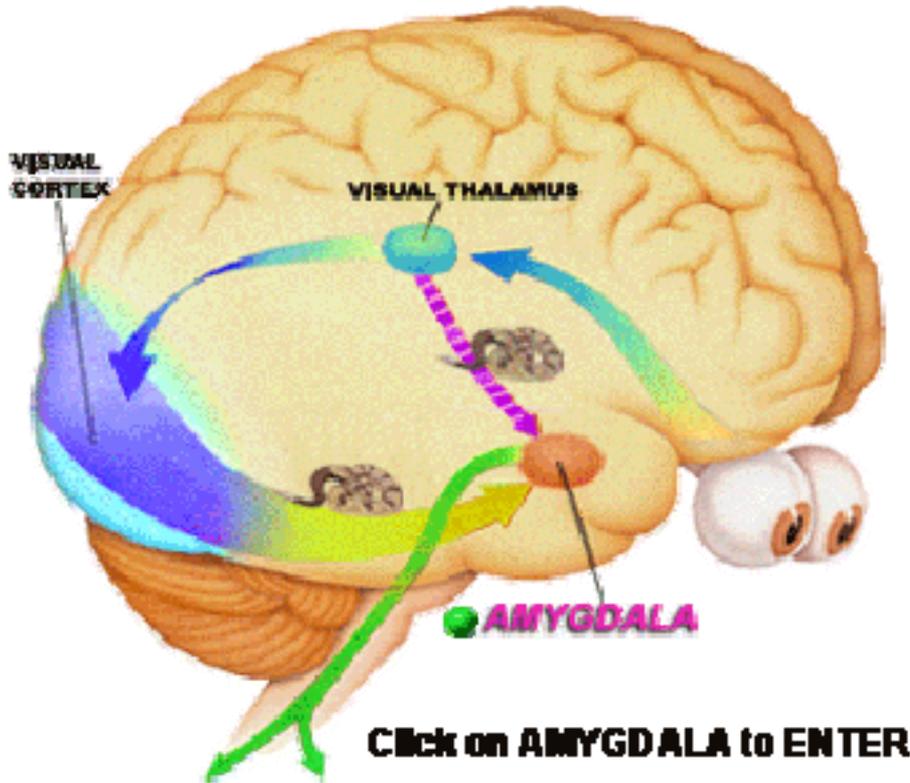


Illustration based on LeDoux JE (1994) Emotion, Memory, and the Brain. Scientific American.

Joseph LeDoux, 1994, *The Emotional Brain*.
(from his web site)

Emotional Memory (LeDoux)

- Two parallel brain memory systems
 - Explicit conscious memories (hippocampus)
 - Implicit, not-necessarily-conscious emotional memories (amygdala)

LeDoux quote:

- *"Unconscious fear memories established through the amygdala appear to be indelibly burned into the brain. They are probably with us for life. . ."*

Implications

- The awesome power of media
- How healthy are our media habits?
 - Study health implications of media diets
- How can we design interventions?