

Anxiety & Low Mood: Navigating the Road Ahead for Parents and Host Families



Who experiences Anxiety & Low mood?

Lots of people!

Regardless of age, gender or culture, many people will experience symptoms of anxiety and low mood in their lifetime.



What is Anxiety ?

What is low mood?

Anxiety



1. A feeling of nervousness, worry, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome
2. A strong desire or concern to do something or for something to happen

Common
Symptoms

**Panic
Attacks**

Symptoms

These vary from person to person:

- restlessness
- nervousness
- feelings of danger
- rapid breathing
- sweating
- trembling
- difficulty focusing
- weakness
- trouble sleeping
- racing thoughts
- stomach pains
- avoidance
- obsessing or ruminating thoughts



What is a Panic Attack?

1. A sudden onset of fear with excessive anxiety symptoms with or without a trigger
2. 4 or more symptoms are present



Low Mood

Simply, an unhappy state of mind



The feelings that dominate in this state of mind are:

- hopelessness
- pessimism
- anger
- despair
- lack of purpose
- sadness

Causes

Suicidal Thoughts

Self-Harm

Causes

Environmental: What the youth is going through i.e. an incident or situational crisis, peer pressure, bullying or a scary relationship

Biochemical: Problems with hormones or neurotransmitters in the brain

Genetic or Hereditary Factors: Low mood experiences can often run in families



Thoughts of Taking your own life

- Many people may have these thoughts when they feel they cannot cope

- It is important to listen and ensure the youth is safe and not alone

- Seek help from a doctor, hospital or counselor quickly to plan the next steps

What does self-harm look like?

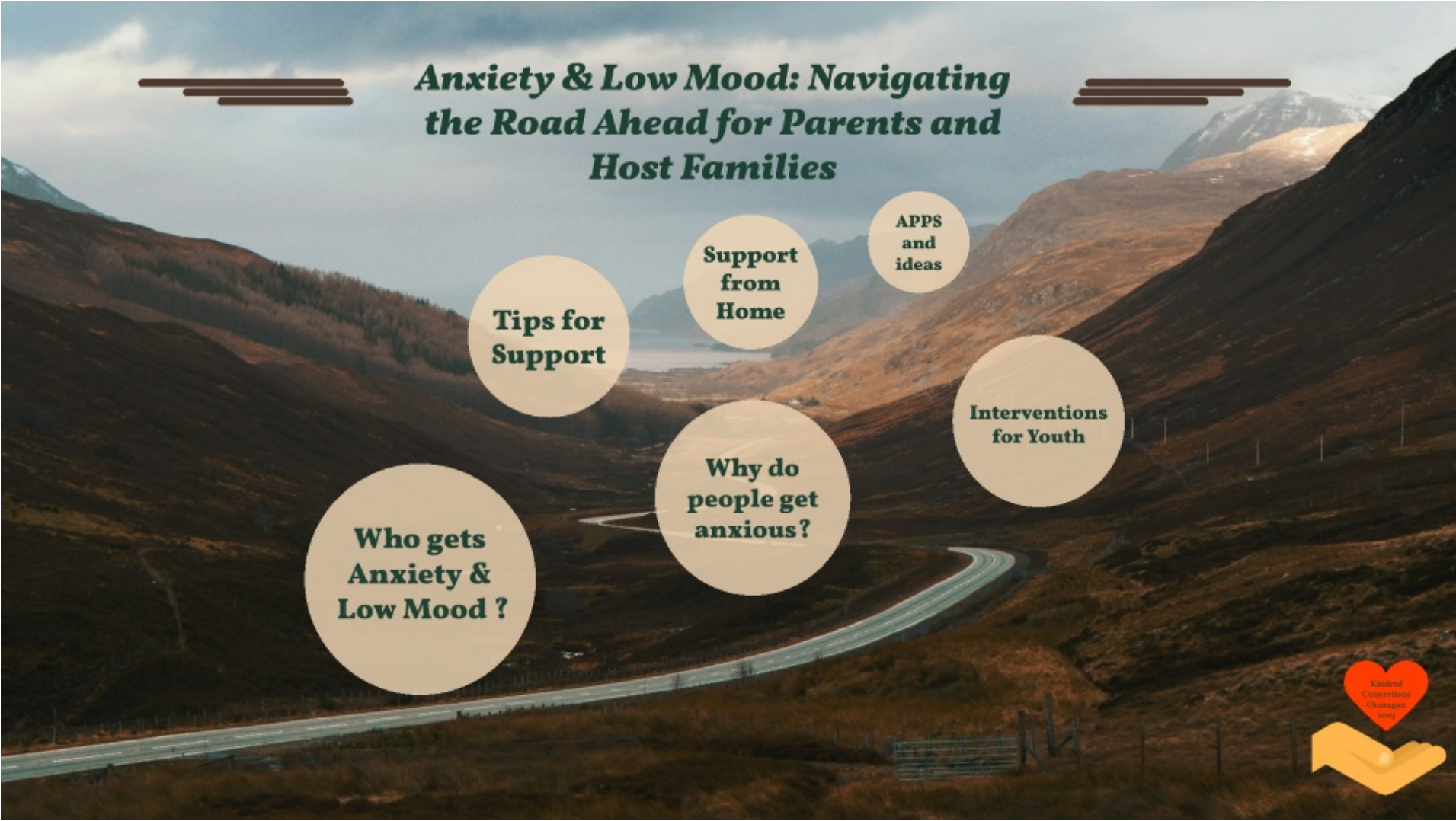
Self harm is deliberate harm to ones self. Often it is used as a negative coping strategy for stress, anxiety and low mood.

This should be taken seriously and medical attention/counseling should be sought.

Types:

- Cutting/scratching
- pinching
- banging head
- hitting self
- hair-pulling
- Burning
- picking at skin





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**Tips for
Support**

**Support
from
Home**

**APPS
and
ideas**

**Interventions
for Youth**

**Why do
people get
anxious?**

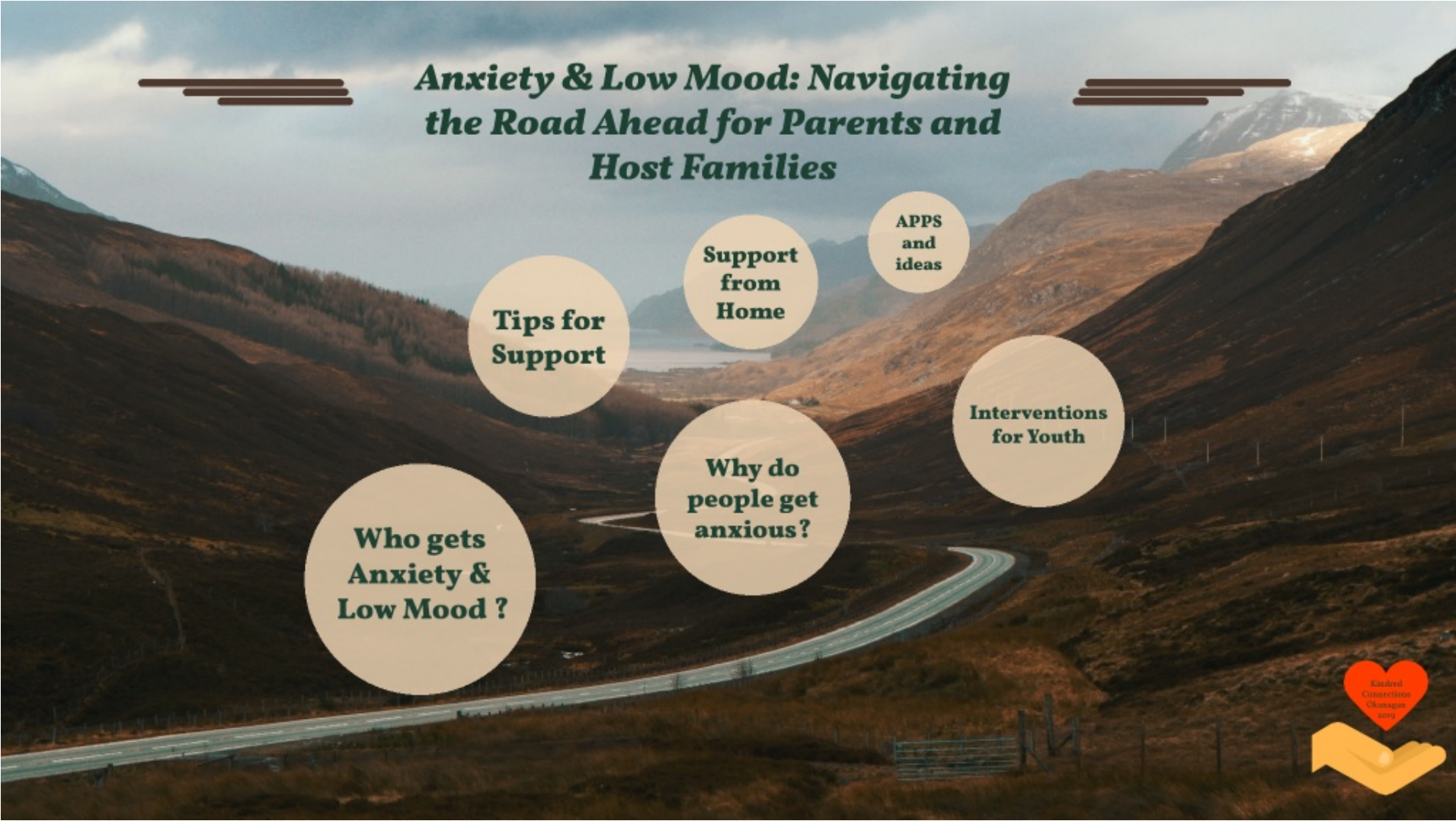
**Who gets
Anxiety &
Low Mood ?**



Common Causes of Anxiety

- Hormonal Shifts and Mood Swings
- Brain Development
- Distancing from Parental Figures
- Isolation
- Social Pressures
- Stress
- Perfectionism /High Expectations
- Drug Use
- Low Mood





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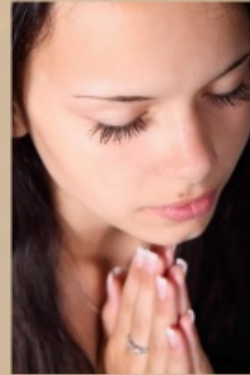
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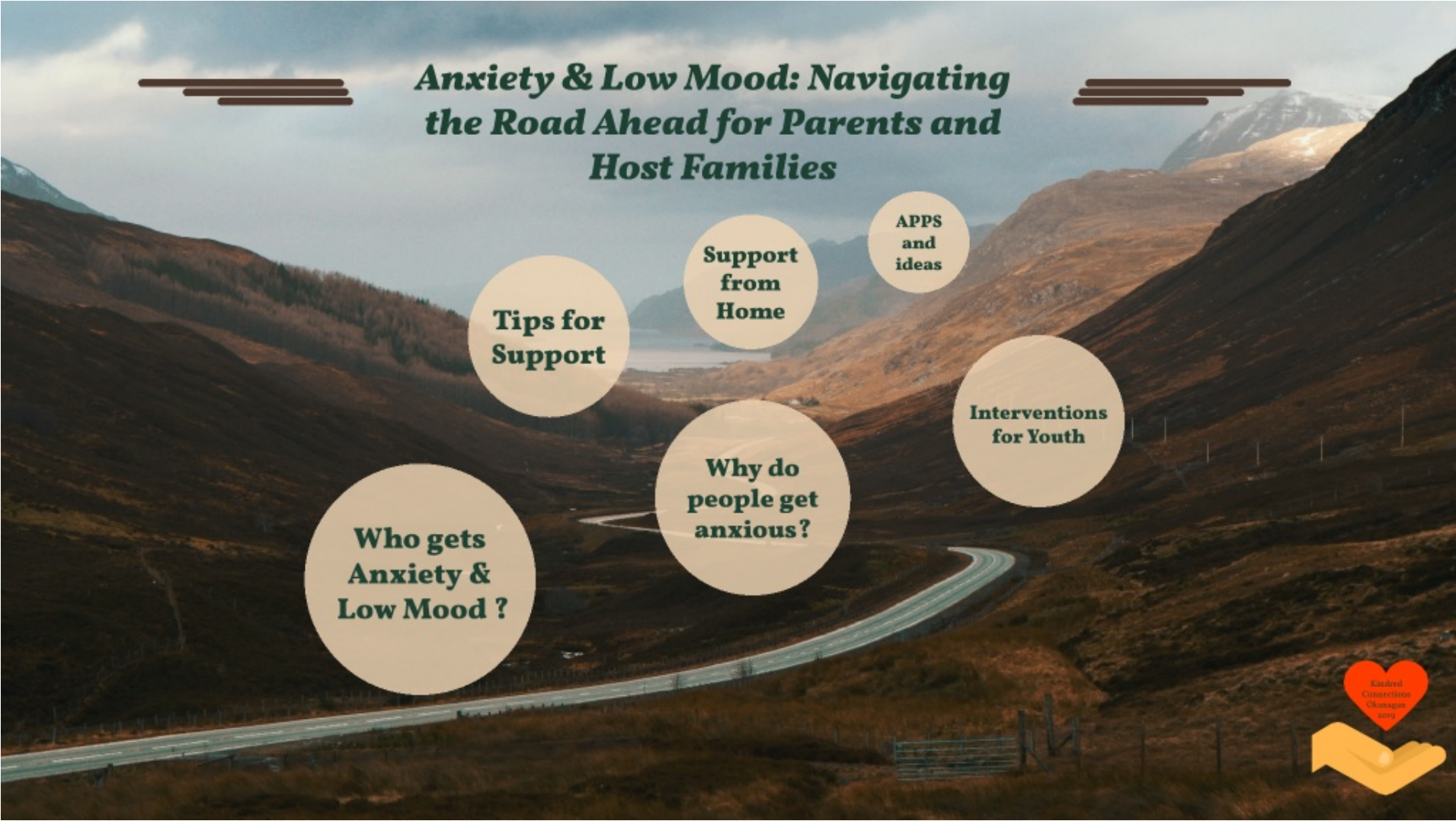
**Who gets
Anxiety &
Low Mood ?**



What can the youth do?

- Get regular exercise or join a team
- Eat regular meals...Yes Breakfast too!
- Distract themselves
- Go somewhere quiet
- Journal
- Positive visualization or praise self
- Create a balanced schedule
- Take breaks, meditate or deep breath
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Get to bed at a good time
- Limit screen time during the day and before bed
- Talk to a counselor at school
- Try some herbal remedies
- Talk to a doctor if you need more
- Connect more with the local Rotary and your host family





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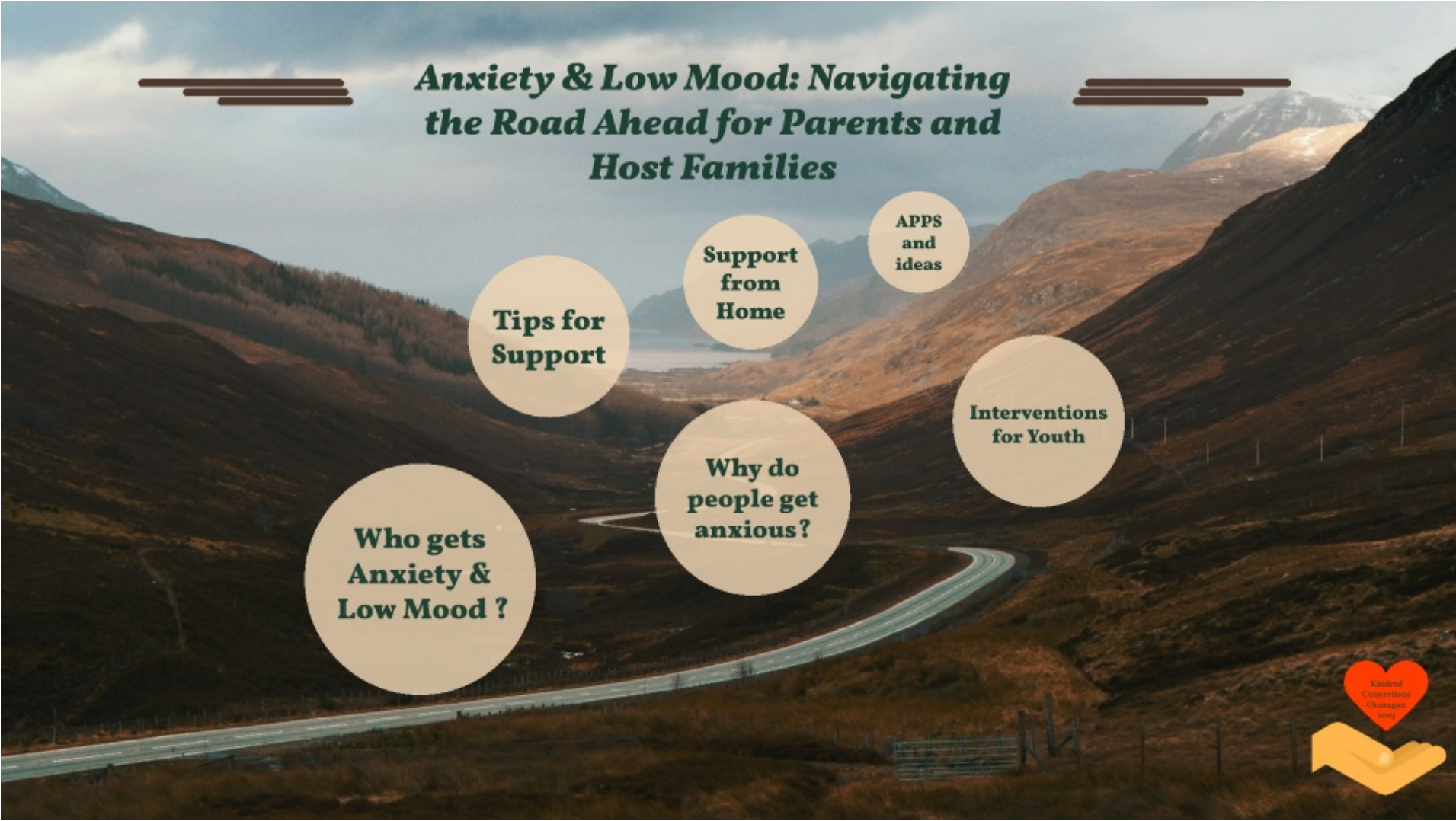


Providing Support in Person

Adults can:

- Reduce Stimulation
- Listen
- Help them problem solve
- Validate feelings: "This must be really difficult for you, what do you need?"
- Be present and do relaxation with them
- Offer a distraction; new activity
- Provide praise and ensure them they are safe and the feeling will pass





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Tips for Support

Support from Home

APPS and ideas

Interventions for Youth

Why do people get anxious?

Who gets Anxiety & Low Mood ?



Support from Afar

- Encourage talking with Host Family
- Listen
- Provide validation, reassurance and help them problem solve
- Praise them and express compassion
- Ask them about the positive things they are doing
- Provide encouragement
- Walk them through some deep breathing or suggest distractions
- Keep a calm tone
- suggest routine times for checking in at home
- Remind them why they went on this adventure



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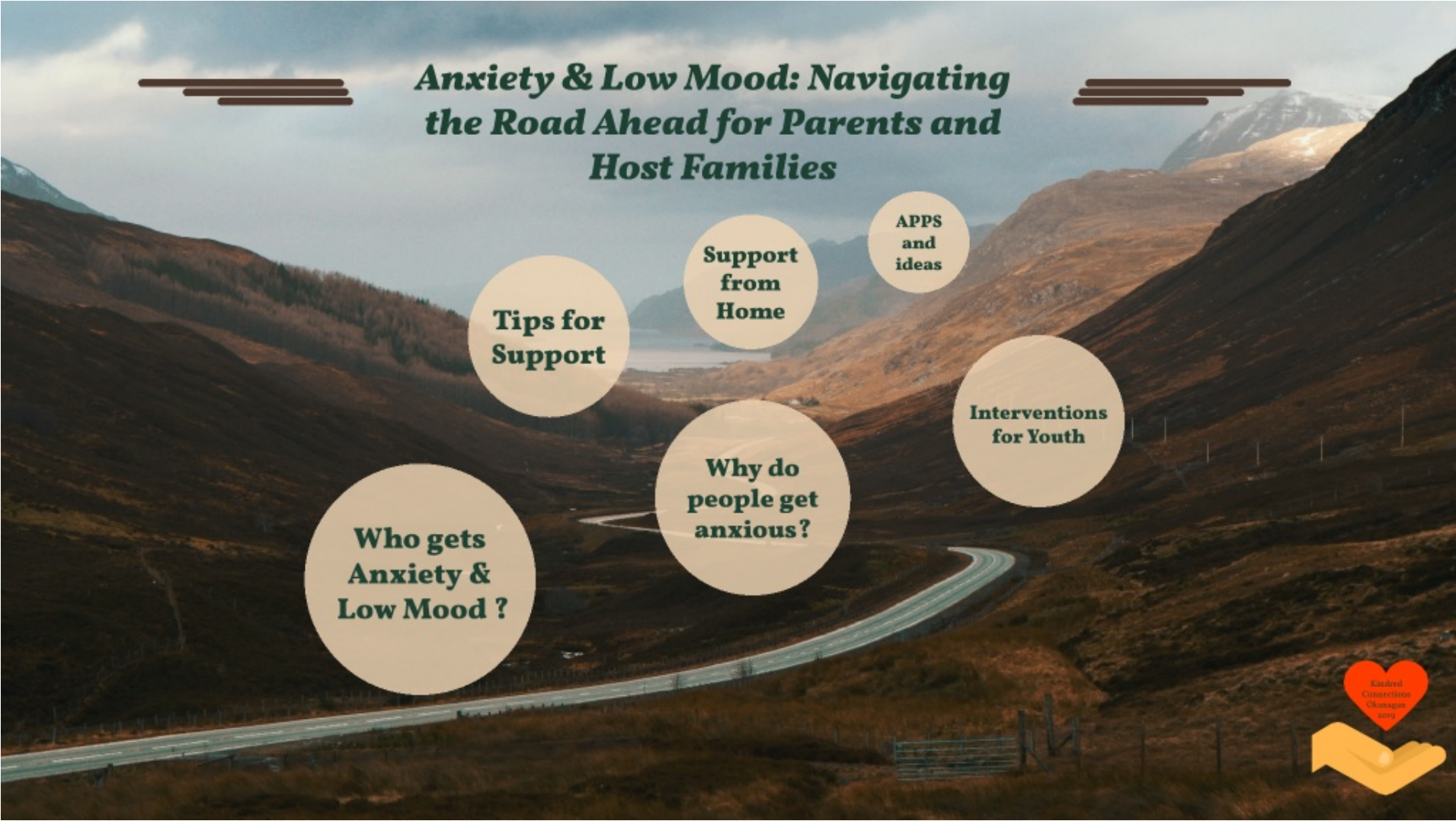


APPS & Ideas

10 APPS for Youth to
download before or after they
leave:

1. Happify
 2. Brain.fm
 3. Headspace
 4. Pacifica
 5. Worry Watch
 6. Mood Path
 7. Talklife
 8. What's Up?
 9. SuperBetter
 10. Talk Space
- deep breathing
 - music
 - positive affirmations
 - exercise
 - distraction
 - build a "calm kit"; fill a pencil bag with things that could relax you
 - progressive muscle relaxation
 - Imagery
 - meditation/yoga
 - reach out; talk to someone
 - slow down; seek quiet
 - rest





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