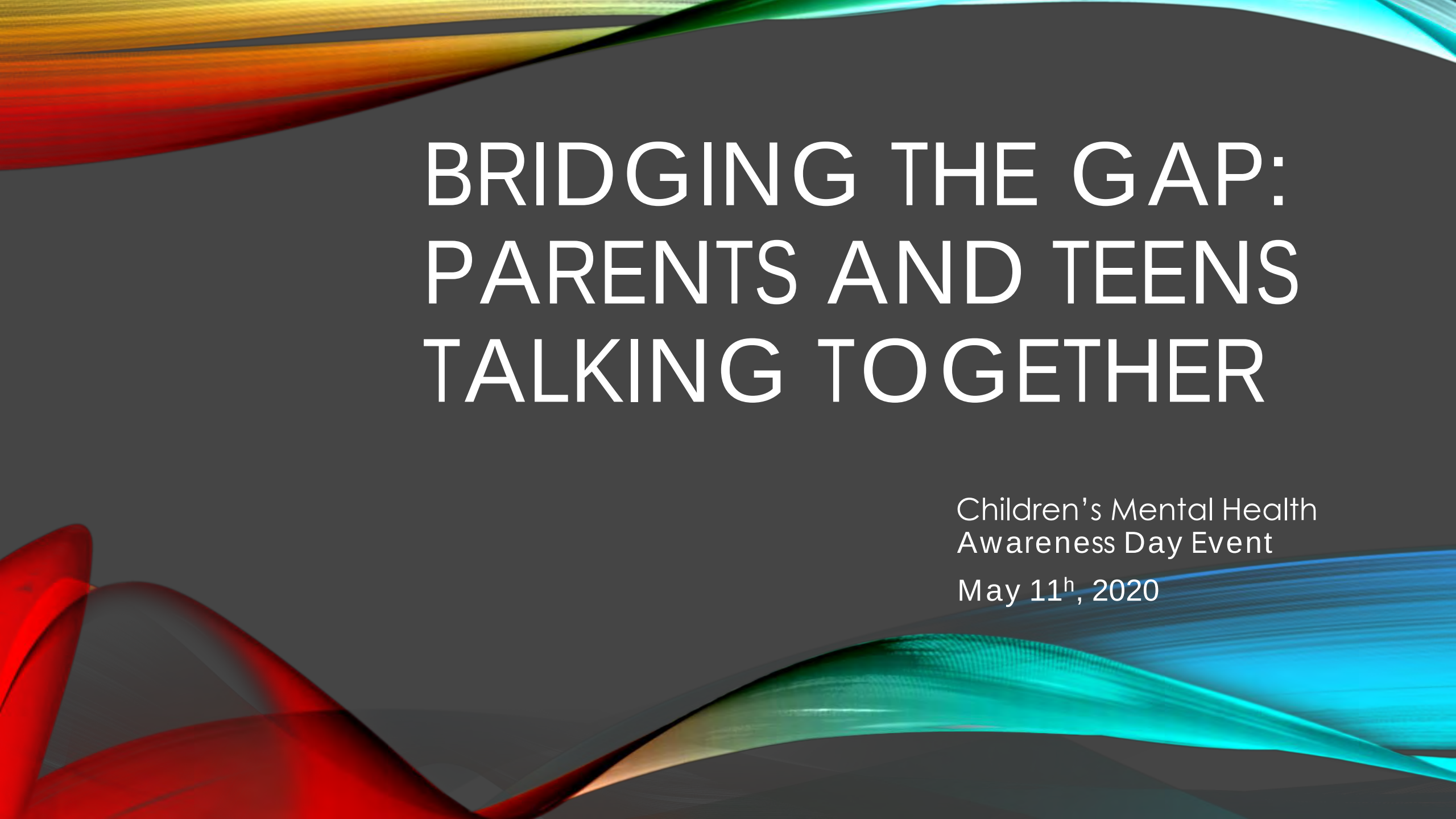




# BRIDGING THE GAP: PARENTS AND TEENS TALKING TOGETHER

Children's Mental Health  
Awareness Day Event

May 11<sup>h</sup>, 2020



Increase understanding of teens' concerns about talking to parents about mental health

Provide tips and skills for having a conversation about difficult topics such as mental health with teens

Increase knowledge about warning signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression

Self-care strategies for parents

Question & Answer



# MENTAL HEALTH

- According to the CDC, “mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.”
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

# TWO PATHS TO HAVING A CONVERSATION

- Your teen initiates the conversation
- You want to initiate the conversation



# TIPS FOR IF THE TEEN INITIATES THE CONVERSATION

|            |                                                                                                          |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stay Calm  | Stay calm and listen carefully to what your teen is saying to you.                                       |
| Understand | Understand that initiating this conversation with you in the first place may be difficult for your teen. |
| Validate   | Validate your teen's feelings.                                                                           |
| Break      | If your teen initiating the conversation with you brings up a lot of emotions, take a break              |



# TIPS FOR IF THE PARENT INITIATES THE CONVERSATION

01

Take some time to prepare for the conversation.

02

Find a good time to talk.

03

Use "I" statements to explain how you feel and any concerns you may have. An example of this is: "I have been concerned that you have become anxious recently. I am here to help you."

# TIPS FOR THE CONVERSATION, REGARDLESS OF WHO INITIATES IT

Practice good  
listening skills.

Make sure you  
are not  
minimizing your  
teen's  
experience or  
feelings.

Communicate  
your thoughts  
and feelings  
calmly and  
clearly.

If it seems like  
you or your teen  
starts to get  
upset with each  
other, it's okay  
to take a break.



## TECHNIQUES FOR OF WHO INITIATES IT (CONTINUED)

5. Reassure your teen that there is help available from people like psychologists and other mental health professionals and that you can help them access that care.
6. Tell your teen that asking for help is a sign of courage and strength, not weakness.
7. Stay focused on your goal. Remember to listen.
8. Ask clarifying questions.
9. Reach out to your teen's teachers or other school staff for resources and support.

# SITUATION 1: KIM AND MAX





# SITUATION 1: QUESTION 1

## RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Kim should prepare herself for the conversation, and take some time to learn more about the warning signs and symptoms of depression.
- b) Kim should wait until Max seems relaxed and less distracted by other things to have the conversation about how she has noticed Max acting differently lately. Kim should also practice some self-care strategies and make sure she feels calm before starting the conversation.
- c) Both a and b

# SITUATION 1: QUESTION 2 RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Kim should say, "Hey Max, I've noticed that you've been spending a lot of time in your room lately. I'm sure that school being closed and track being cancelled has been difficult for you and that you probably miss seeing your friends. I just wanted to check in and ask how you're feeling. I'm here to support you."
- b) Kim should tell Max that she's disappointed in him for not initiating this conversation himself if he has been feeling down for a while. She should remind him that speaking about his feelings and asking for help is a sign of strength and not weakness.
- c) Kim should make eye contact with Max and use body posture & gestures like nodding her head to show Max that she is actively listening to what he has to say.
- d) Both a and c



# SITUATION 1: QUESTION 3

## RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Kim should say, “Hey Max, I think it might be a good idea for us to take a break on this conversation. Let’s just set a time and both promise to come back to it later and finish talking.”
- b) Kim should say, “Sit down, Max. You’re making me stressed.”

## SITUATION 2: BETH AND SOPHIE



## SITUATION 2: QUESTION 1

### RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Beth should ask Sophie if she can just finish this chapter of her book and then they can talk after that. She should then take some time to learn more about the warning signs and symptoms of anxiety to prepare for the conversation.
- b) Beth should wait until she feels relaxed and less distracted by other things to have the conversation with Sophie about how she has been feeling lately. Beth should also practice some self-care strategies and make sure she feels calm before starting the conversation.
- c) Both a and b

## SITUATION 2: QUESTION 2

### RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Beth should make eye contact with Sophie and use body posture & gestures like nodding her head to show Sophie that she is actively listening to what she has to say and cares about her feelings.
- b) Beth should say, "I am sorry to hear that you have been feeling anxious. I understand that it is really difficult to focus with the new distance learning. I am here to help you."
- c) Beth should listen to what Sophie has to say but reassure her that everyone is feeling a little stressed right now with everything going on and that she will be fine and it will pass with time.
- d) Both a and b



## SITUATION 2: QUESTION 3

### RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Beth should start muttering that it's her fault that Sophie feels anxious.
- b) Beth should say in a calm tone of voice, "Hey Sophie, I think it might be a good idea for us to take a break on this conversation. Let's just set a time and both promise to come back to it later and finish talking."

## SITUATION 3: CHRIS AND ANNA





# SITUATION 3: QUESTION 1

## RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Chris should ask Anna if it's okay with her if they sit down and talk together later that night after the show Chris is watching is over. He should then take some time to learn more about the warning signs and symptoms of depression to prepare for the conversation.
- b) Chris should wait until he feels relaxed and less distracted by other things to have the conversation with Anna about how she has been feeling lately. Chris should also practice some self-care strategies and make sure he feels calm before starting the conversation.
- c) Both a and b



## SITUATION 3: QUESTION 2

### RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Chris should make eye contact with Anna and use body posture & gestures like nodding his head to show Anna that he is actively listening to what she has to say and cares about her feelings.
- b) Chris should say, "I am sorry to hear that you have been feeling down and miss your friends. I understand that it is really difficult to adapt to this new normal of social distancing. I am here to help you."
- c) Chris should listen to what Anna has to say, but then remind her to remember all of things that she should be grateful for like having a roof over her head and food to eat and say, "Next time, you should think before complaining to me about being sad."
- d) Both a and b



## SITUATION 3: QUESTION 3

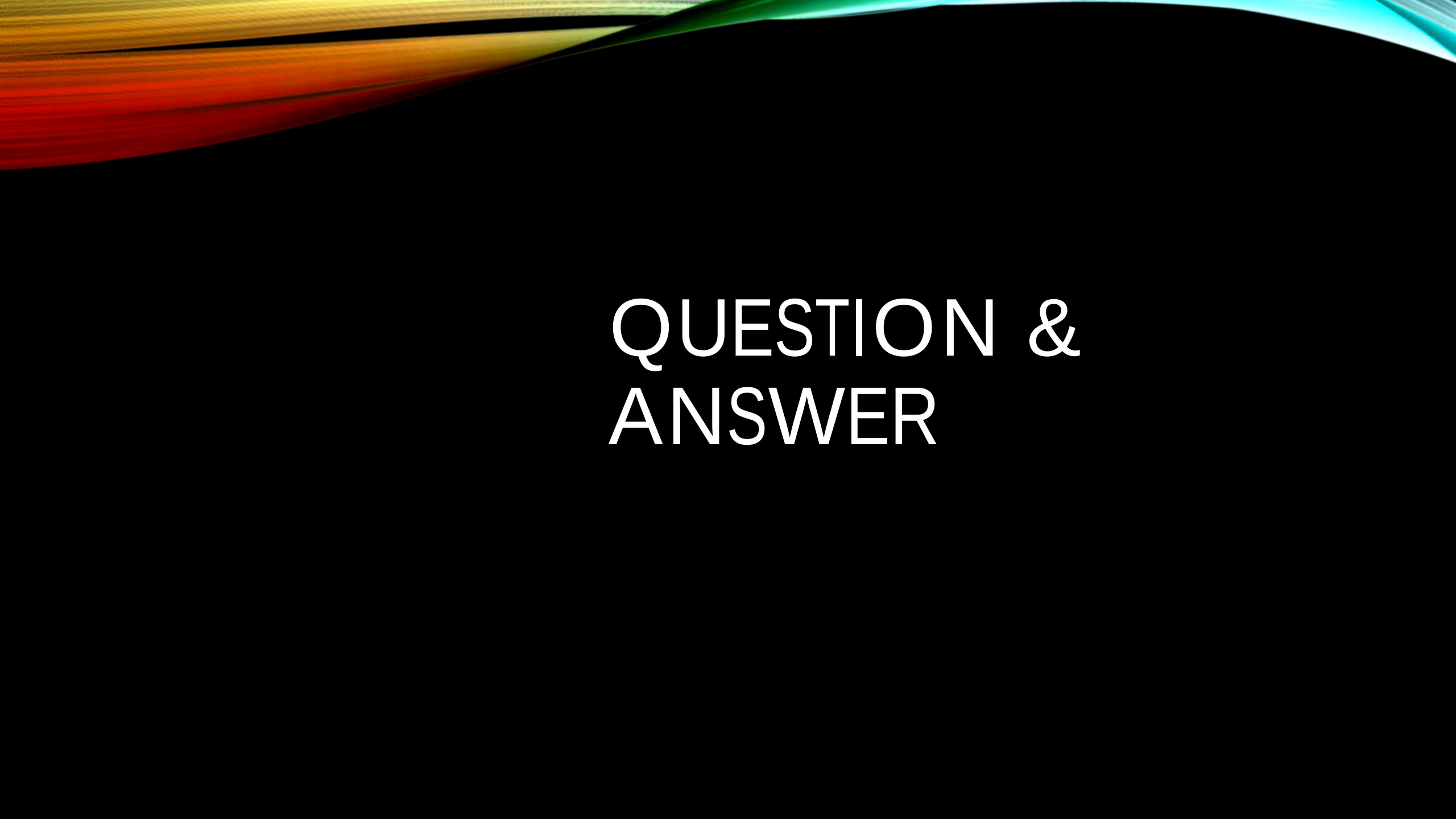
### RESPONSE CHOICES

- a) Chris should try to push through and keep talking to Anna even if it seems like it's escalating.
- b) Chris should say in a calm tone of voice, "Hey Anna, I think it might be a good idea for us to come back to this conversation later. Let's just both promise to come back to it later and finish talking."
- c) Chris should be honest with Anna and say, "I am glad we are talking, but I'm feeling uncomfortable. I think it would be a good idea if together, we reach out to someone else such as someone from your school or a psychologist."

An abstract graphic at the top of the slide featuring a series of overlapping, wavy bands in shades of orange, red, yellow, and green, creating a sense of movement and energy.

# SELF-CARE STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

- Get some exercise
- Deep breathing/meditation/mindfulness practice
- Journal
- Limit media intake
- Enjoy calm, comforting activities before bedtime.
- Give yourself small breaks throughout the day to do something you enjoy, or to do nothing.
- Activate your social network
- Talk to someone



# QUESTION & ANSWER