

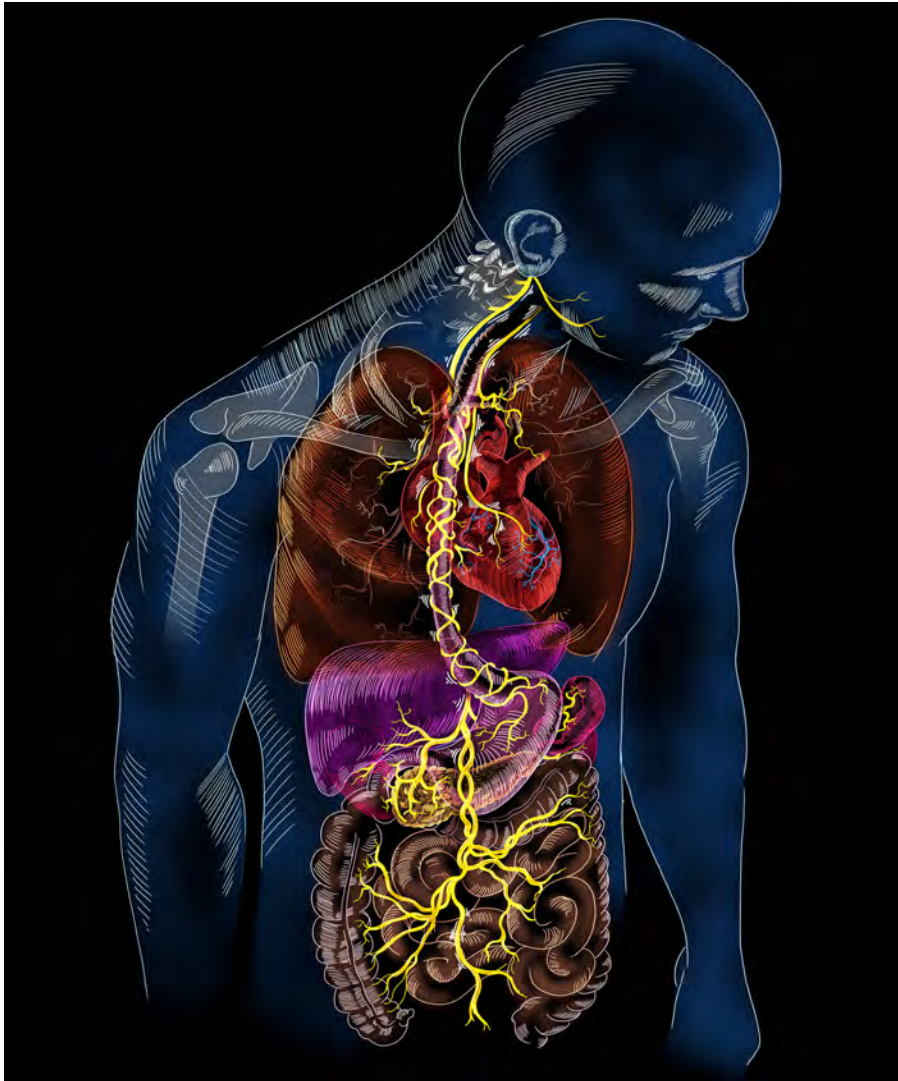
A photograph showing a paved path on the left and a grassy area on the right. Long, dark shadows of several people are cast across the path and grass, indicating it is either early morning or late afternoon. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the lower right portion of the image, containing white text.

Managing Anxiety and
Boosting Family Resilience
in Uncertain Times

Webinar logistics

- How to position video
 - How we'll do Q&A
 - Disclaimer: **Lots of info, still an intro**
 - We will send out a recording
 - Agenda
- Part 1: Personal parental self-care/resilience and why it's important
 - Part 2: Familial self-care/resilience





The Stress Response and Trauma

- Sympathetic / parasympathetic (ANS)
- Vagus nerve
- Fight, Flight, Freeze, Feigned Death
- *If you've been feeling tired, lethargic, etc.*

What is Resilience?



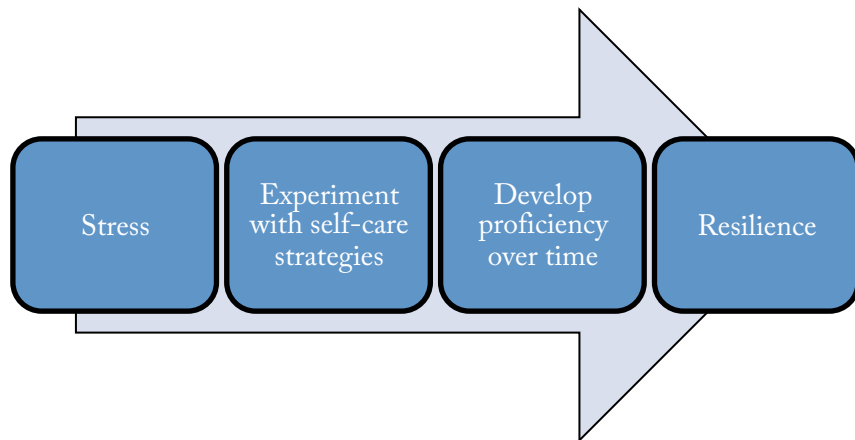
- Ability to overcome difficulty
- How it develops ideally: 1) moderate stress, 2) predictability, and 3) Controllability

What is self-care?

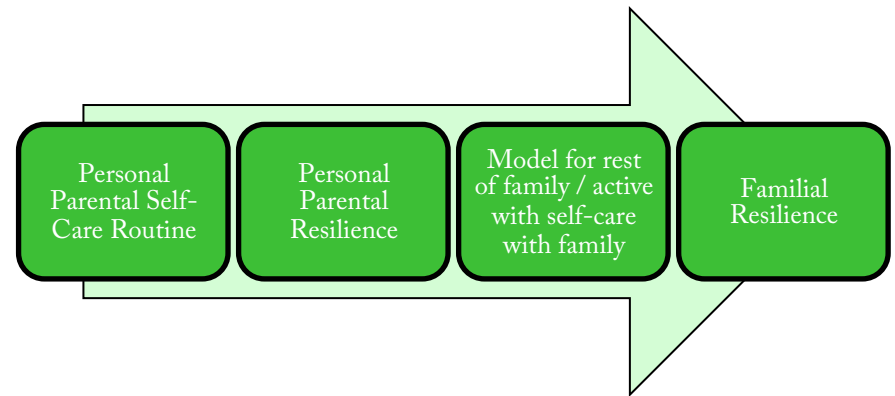


- Simple definition: the practice of taking action to preserve one's physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health
- (1) Regular Relaxation Response
- (2) Effortful Training
- (3) Creative Expression
- (4) Social Connection

How self-care leads to resilience



How personal self-care/resilience leads to familial resilience



“Lean-In”	“Lean-Out”
<p data-bbox="170 527 583 630">Acceptance / Awareness Strategies</p> <ul data-bbox="170 695 562 1133" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="170 695 562 735">• Relaxation techniques <li data-bbox="170 735 562 865">• Mindfulness / Mindfulness meditation <li data-bbox="170 865 562 906">• Prayer <li data-bbox="170 906 562 1036">• Processing / Talking with therapist or trusted other <li data-bbox="170 1036 562 1076">• Sleep routines <li data-bbox="170 1076 562 1133">• Positive Affirmations 	<p data-bbox="619 527 1033 630">Escapism / Avoidance Strategies</p> <ul data-bbox="619 695 970 1044" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="619 695 970 735">• Exercise <li data-bbox="619 735 970 776">• Massage <li data-bbox="619 776 970 816">• Reading <li data-bbox="619 816 970 857">• Netflix / Movies <li data-bbox="619 857 970 954">• Drinking a glass of wine to unwind <li data-bbox="619 954 970 1044">• Hobbies / creative expression

A Useful Schema for Strategies

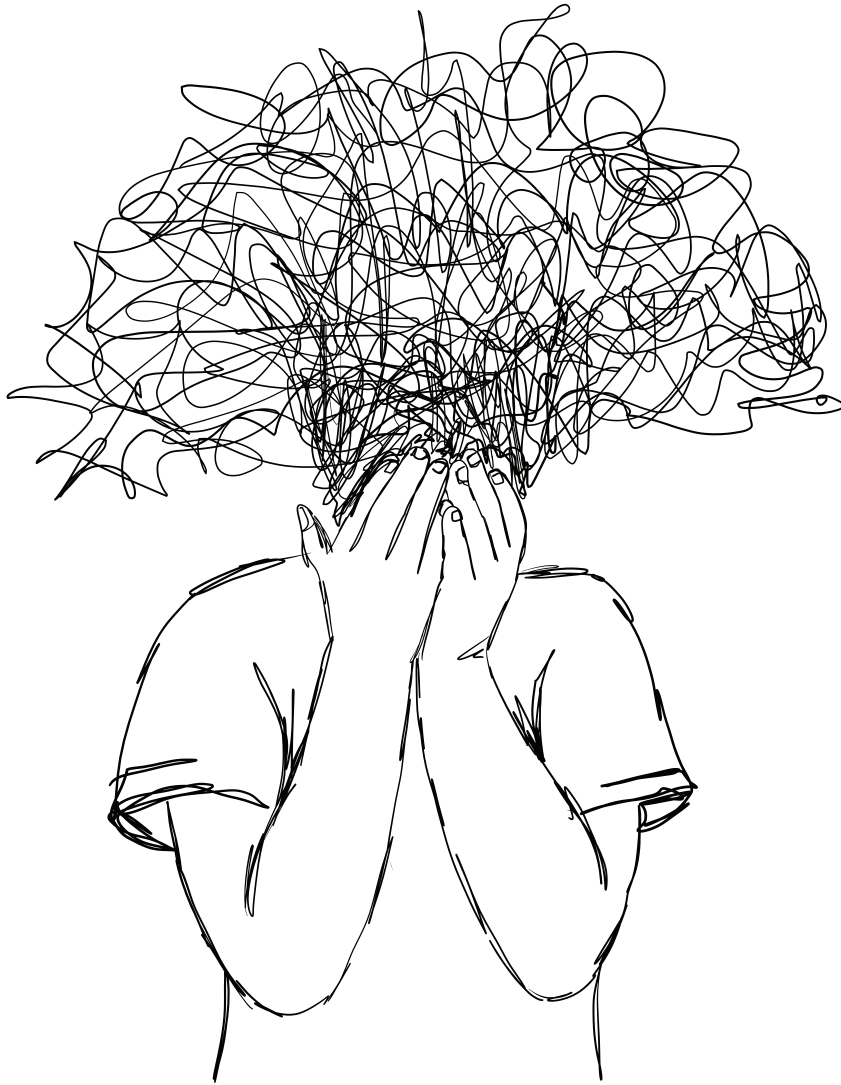
2 Concrete Tools to Practice

1. Calming Strategies (for RRR)

- Defined: Activation of the parasympathetic nervous system
- Main underlying tool: Breath manipulation
- Practical strategy: 4 – 8 breathing

Instructions: Inhale in for a count of 4,
Exhale for a count of 8



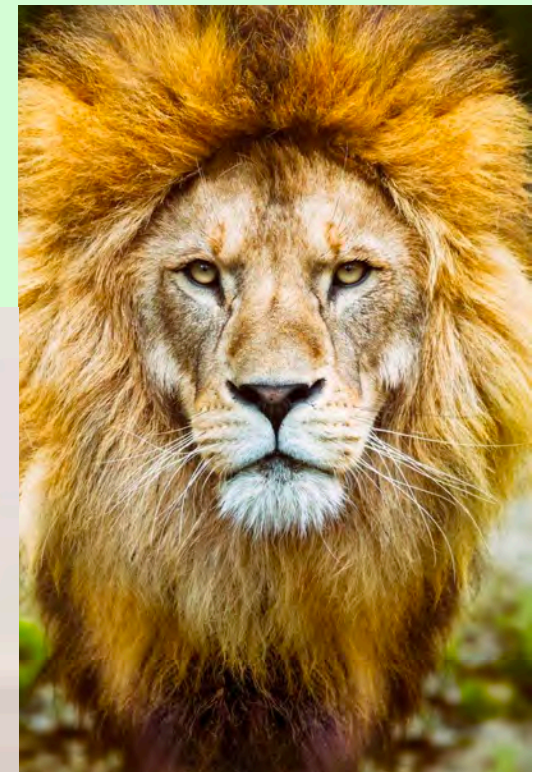


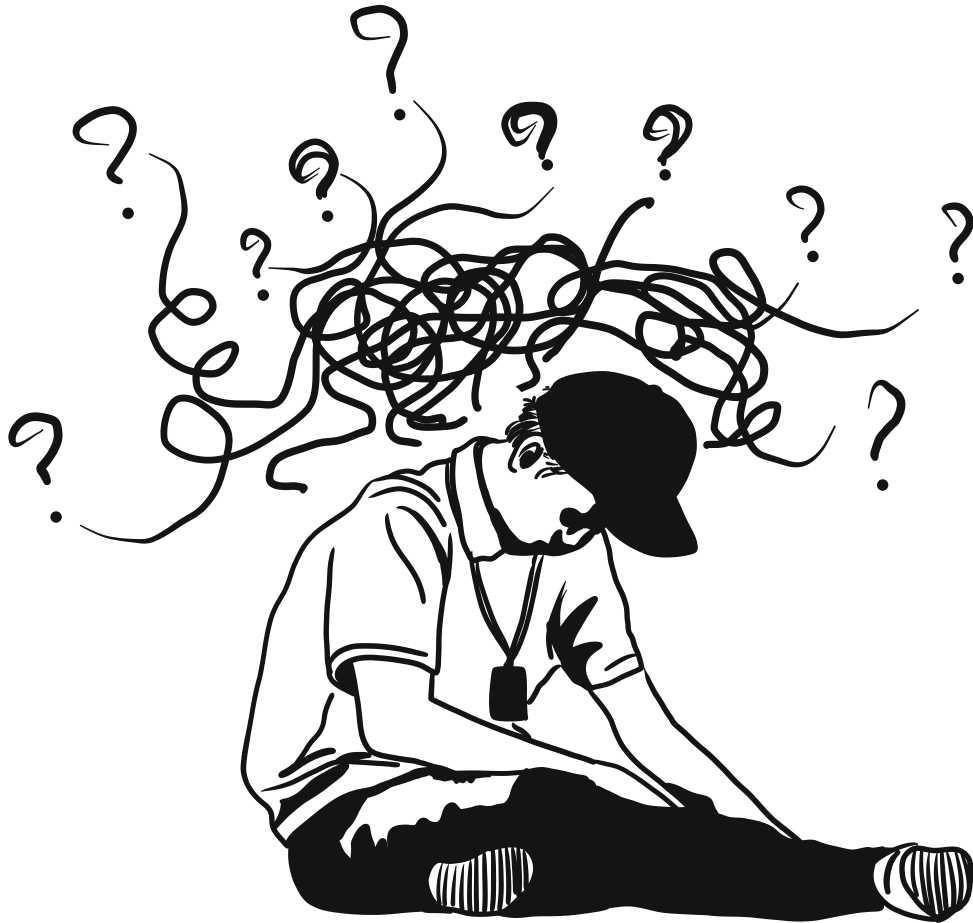
*“What if I can’t
calm down?”*

2. Mindfulness

(for Emotional Regulation)

- Defined:
Present moment,
nonreactive awareness
- Main underlying tool:
Equanimity
- Practical strategy: MOB





I'm too busy for self-care

*I can't get my self-care
strategies to stick*

3 quick tips to making self-care strategies stick

1. Write down your goals and write out a routine and follow it → predictability
2. “Habit Stack”
3. 2-minute rule



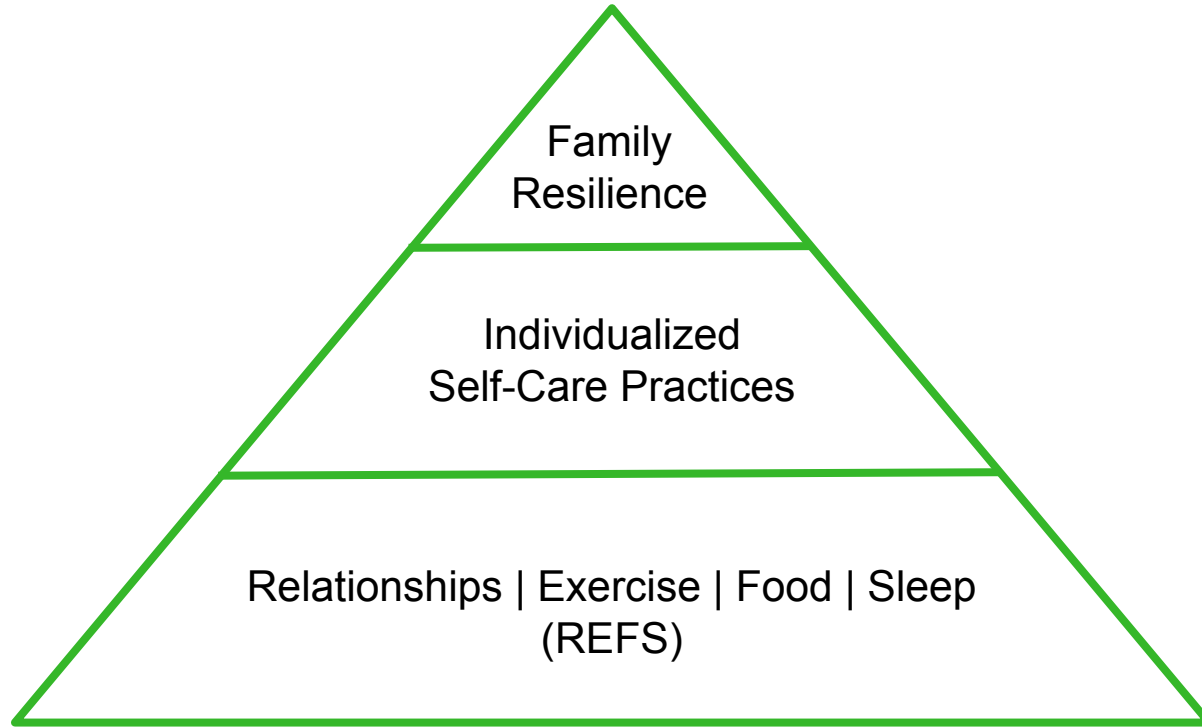
Managing Anxiety and Boosting Family Resilience in Uncertain Times

Sam Himmelstein, PhD
Mica Gonzalez, PhD

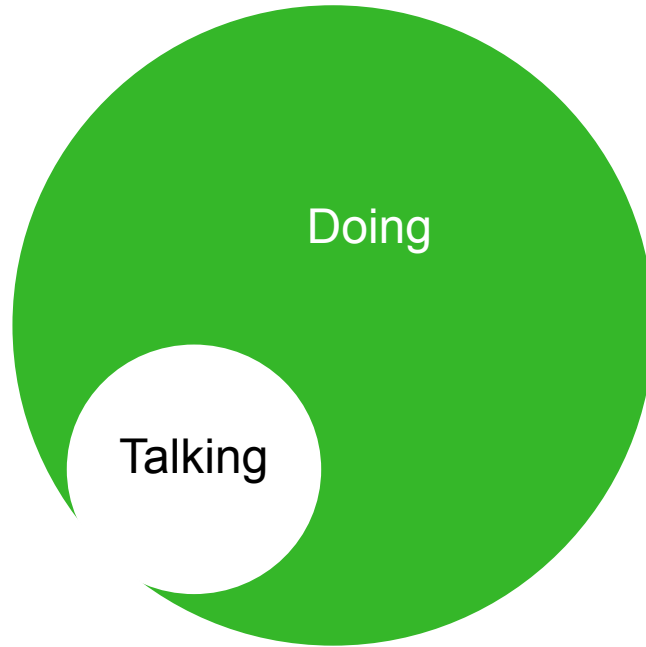


FAMILY FIRST
PSYCHOTHERAPY

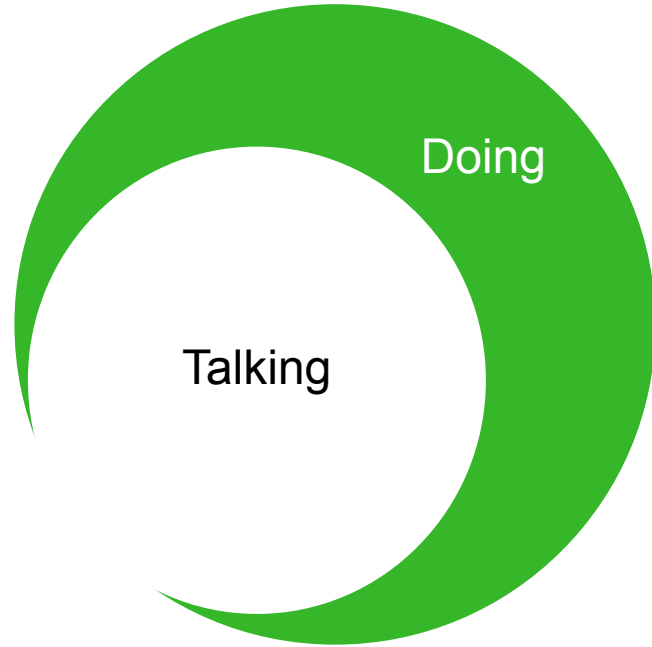
Resilience Pyramid



Reassuring Younger Kids



Reassuring Older Kids



Kids' Stress Management

Anticipate, accept, and respond to their distress

1. Regression in behavior or abilities
2. Grief response: Increased isolation, irritability, anxiety, emotionality, lethargy, sadness, anger
3. Respond when you're not feeling triggered
4. Follow this sequence: Get Calm, Connect, and Problem-Solve



Kids' Stress Management



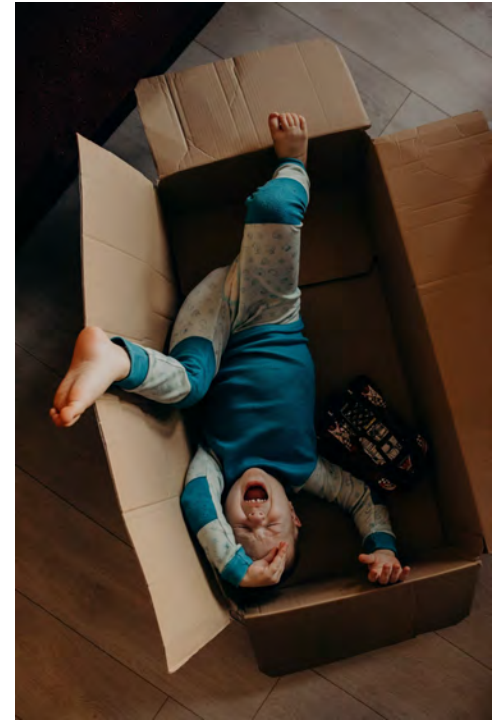
Talking with your kids to help them cope and move forward

1. Focus on safety, reassurance, and consistency
2. When appropriate, give brief, concrete explanations and watch their response
3. Model positive coping
4. Limit their exposure to media and adult COVID conversations

Toddlers

Prioritize safety and simplicity

- “We’re staying home mostly now because some people are sick. When the people aren’t sick anymore, then we can do more of the things we used to, like play with friends.”
- “Sometimes we wear masks because they help us not get sick.”



Elementary Schoolers



Continue with simple reassurance but add in Q and A

- “We’re keeping our distance from others right now so that we don’t share germs with each other and maybe get sick. The doctors say that washing our hands and wearing masks help us stay healthy, too.”
- “Do you have any questions for me about the virus or staying home?”

Middle Schoolers

Focus on back-and-forth dialogue

- “What do you think about all this?”
- “Do you have any questions for me?”
- “Do you need any help thinking about how to stay connected with your friends?”



High Schoolers



Focus on collaboration and teen's agency

- “What have you been learning about the virus and the shelter at home? Do you have any specific worries?”
- “Do you have any ideas for how we can enjoy some family time while we’re sheltering at home?”

Making Things Feel Predictable

The importance of family play

1. Remember that you are their best resource, but they are a close second
2. Lowers stress
3. Keep family emotionally connected
4. It's resilience in action



Making Things Feel Predictable



Creating a written plan

1. Follow a routine: Sleep times and mealtimes
2. Allow for some flexibility, especially when *you* need it
3. Try to have fun everyday, even if briefly (let the kids be in charge of the fun)
4. Help them stay connected to peers
5. Have simple rituals (e.g., family movie or game night, going for a walk together)

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark, curly hair. She is looking directly at the camera with a playful expression, sticking her tongue out. She is wearing a light blue patterned shirt. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

No sane person feels good during a global disaster, so be grateful for the discomfort of your sanity.

-Aisha Ahmad