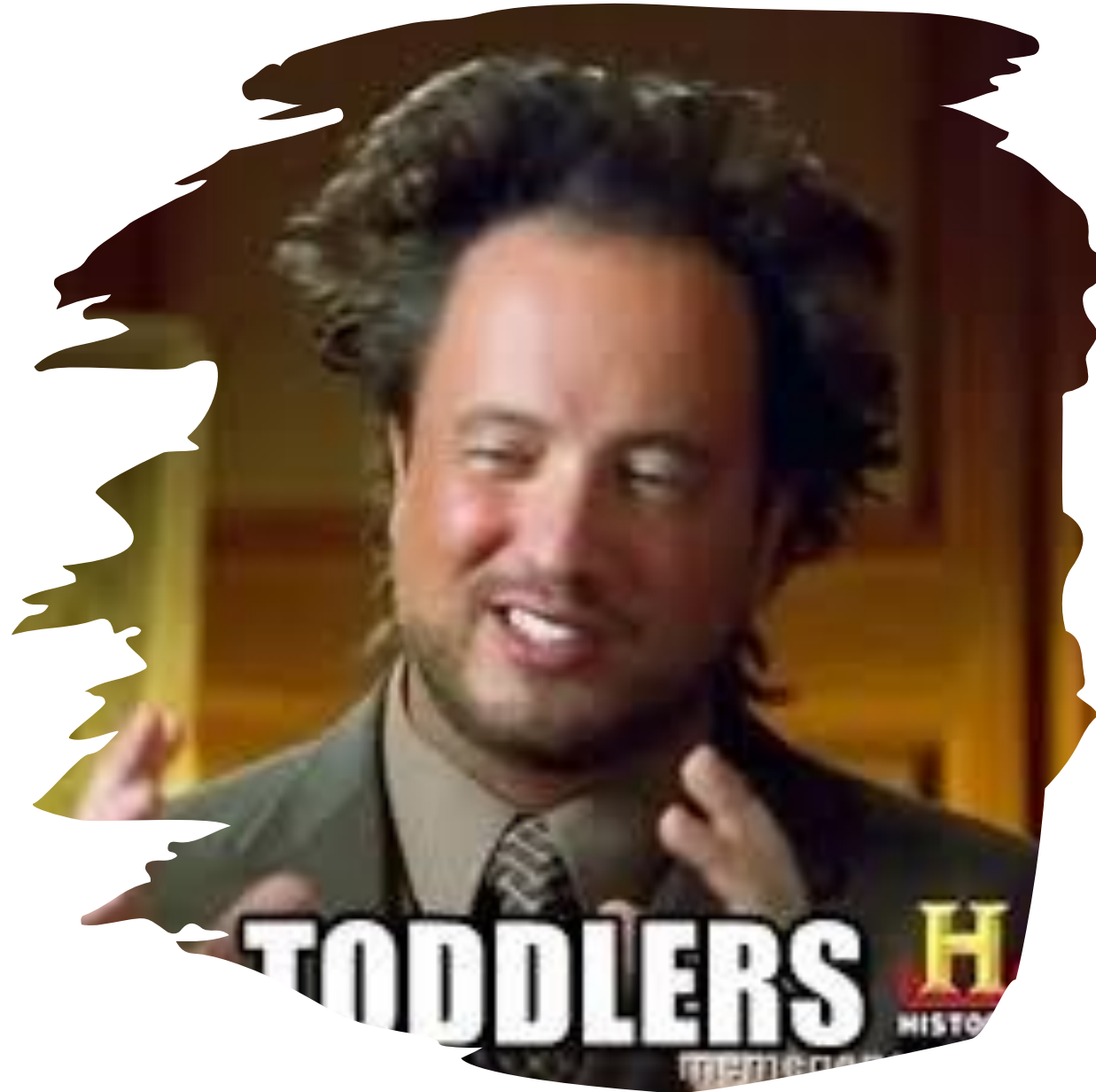


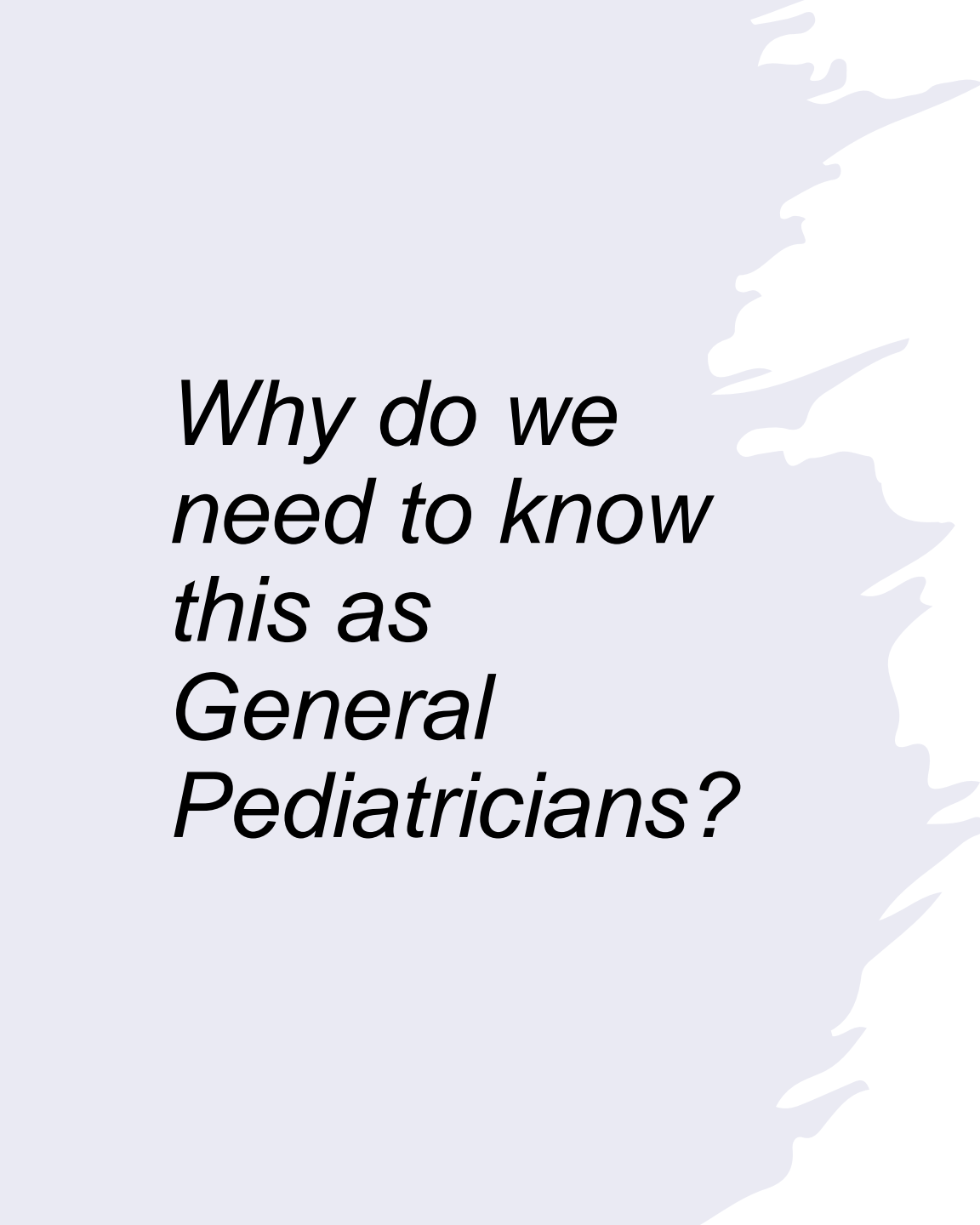


*Temper Tantrums:
What a child-less
pediatrician needs to know*

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UCI-CHOC PEDIATRICS





*Why do we
need to know
this as
General
Pediatricians?*

Just think back to your siblings or cousins when they were toddlers. Or to the last time you went to the mall or grocery store...

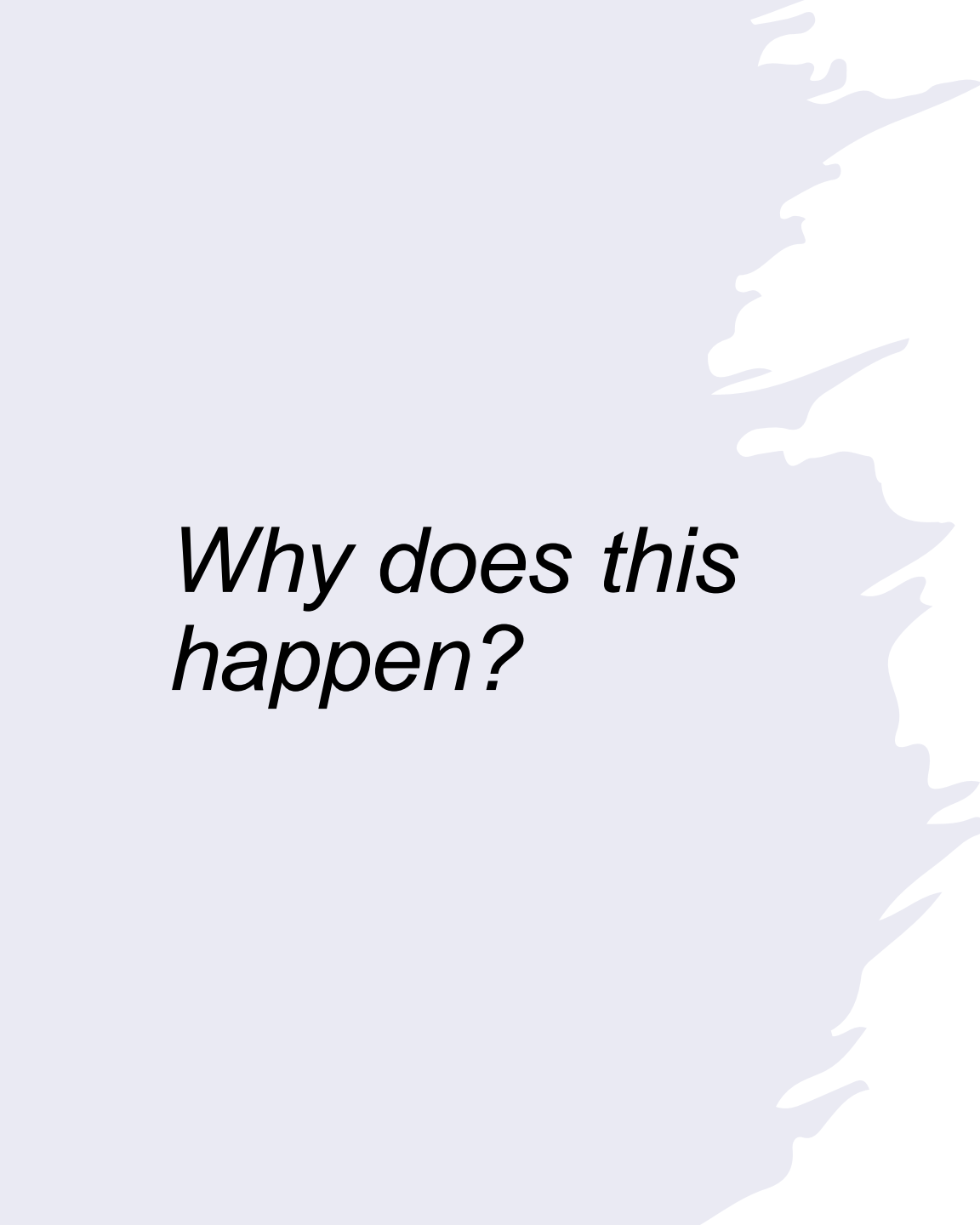
Odds are you can remember a temper tantrum.

Odds are at some point a parent will ask you for advice and you should be ready to offer guidance. So here's a 101 for the child-less PCP.

Is this normal?

- Temper tantrums are common in toddlers
- Usually begin around 12-18 months of age
- Peak at 2-3 years old
- Should become uncommon by school age & rare by adolescence





Why does this happen?

- Immature way of expressing emotions (especially frustration & anger)
- Toddlers lack:
 - Verbal skills to put emotions into words
 - Impulse control
 - Ability to pause & self-calm
- Child may be trying to:
 - Express independence or idea of self
 - Test limits and rules
 - Express hunger or tiredness
- Child may be reacting to:
 - Surrounding stressors (environment, family)
 - Transitions in activities (ie.- daycare to home)

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development



**Sensorimotor
Stage**

Birth to 2 yrs

**Preoperational
Stage**

2 to 7 yrs

**Concrete
Operational
Stage**

7 to 11 yrs

**Formal
Operational
Stage**

12 and up

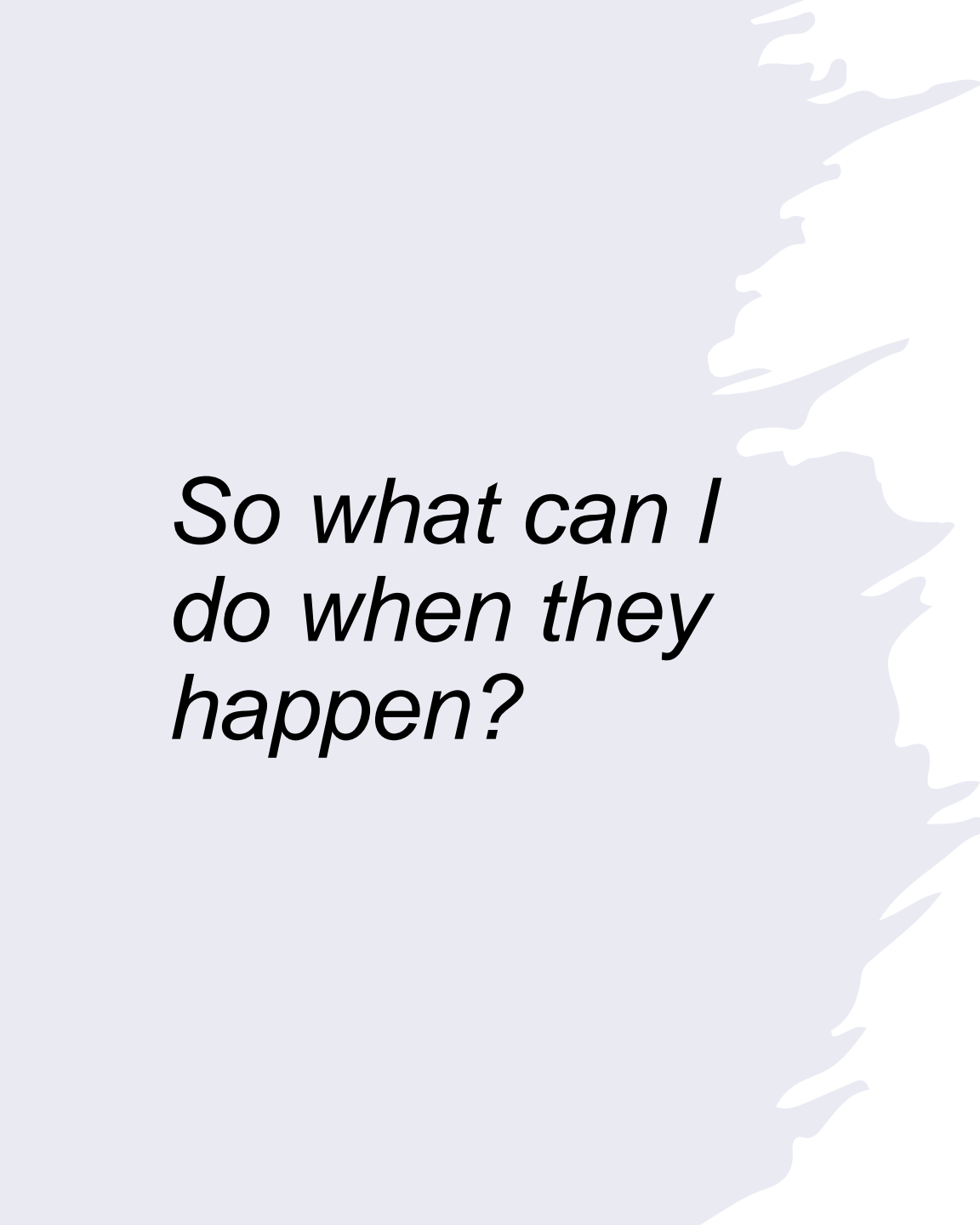
*But they
happen all the
time and for
different
reasons....*

Main types of tantrums:

- Frustration-related
 - Child is frustrated with limitations
 - Child is unable to put something together or express something
- Demanding type
 - Trying to “get their way”
- Refusal type
 - Refusing to follow instructions/rules
- Screaming type
- Aggressive type
- Rage type



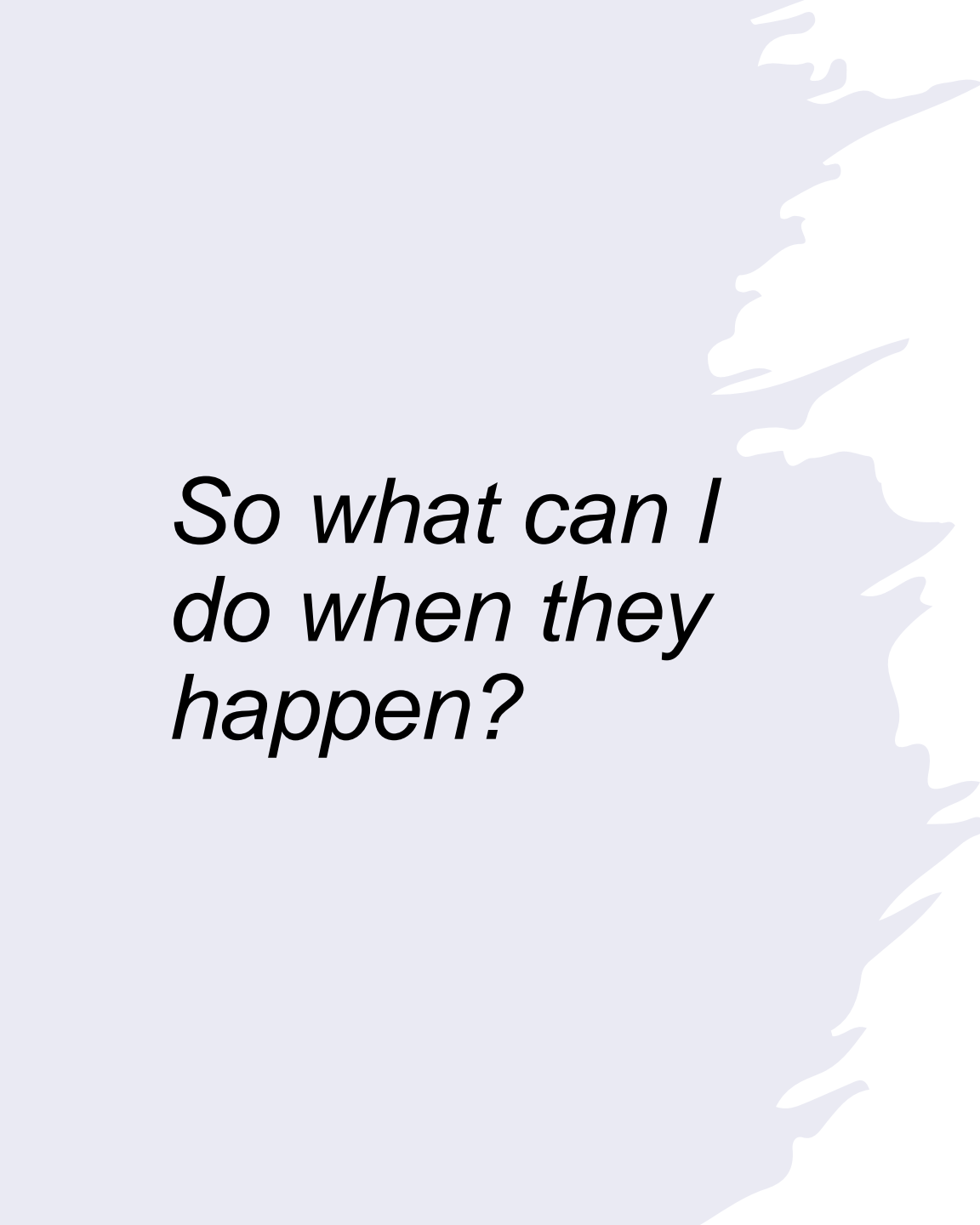




So what can I do when they happen?

- Help child put feelings into words
 - “You feel angry because...”
 - Needs to know that feelings are normal but need to be expressed appropriately
 - Praise child when able to control temper and express feeling verbally
- Teach child that temper tantrums don’t work
 - Don’t change your mind or give in
 - Stay calm & speak in a soft voice
 - Be a role-model in your own relations
 - Avoid screaming or having an “adult tantrum”



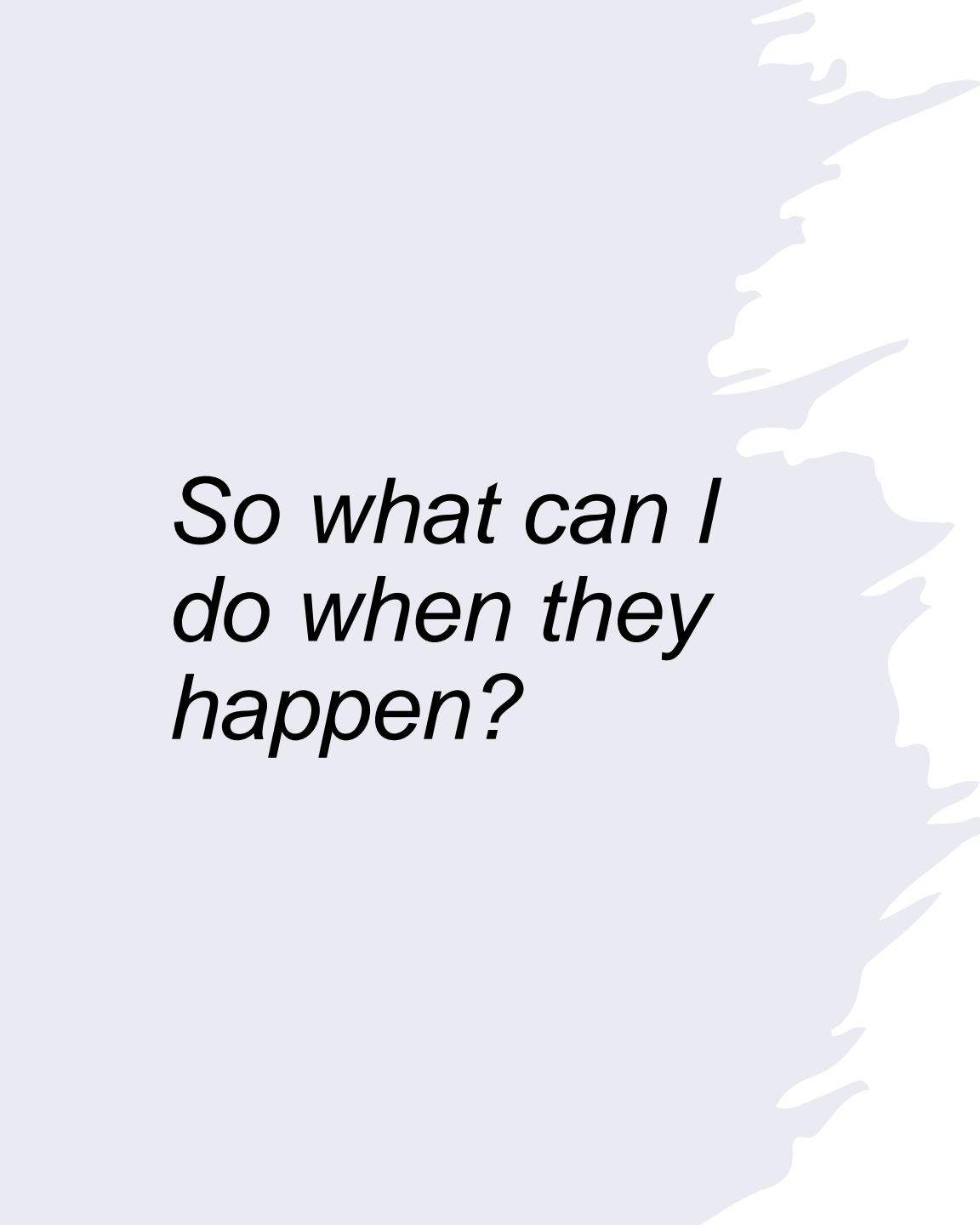


So what can I do when they happen?

Figure out the type &/or cause of the tantrum to help your child deal with it

- Frustration-related – support & encourage child, steer away from areas of difficulty when tired or hungry
 - “I know it’s hard, you’ll get better at it. Anything I can help you do?”
- Demanding type – ignore, shift child’s attention, move away if in a safe place, state understanding but don’t give in, don’t try to reason
 - “You’re mad because you want a cookie but not before dinner.”
 - “I can see that you are angry. I’ll leave you alone until you calm down. Let me know when you want to talk to me.”



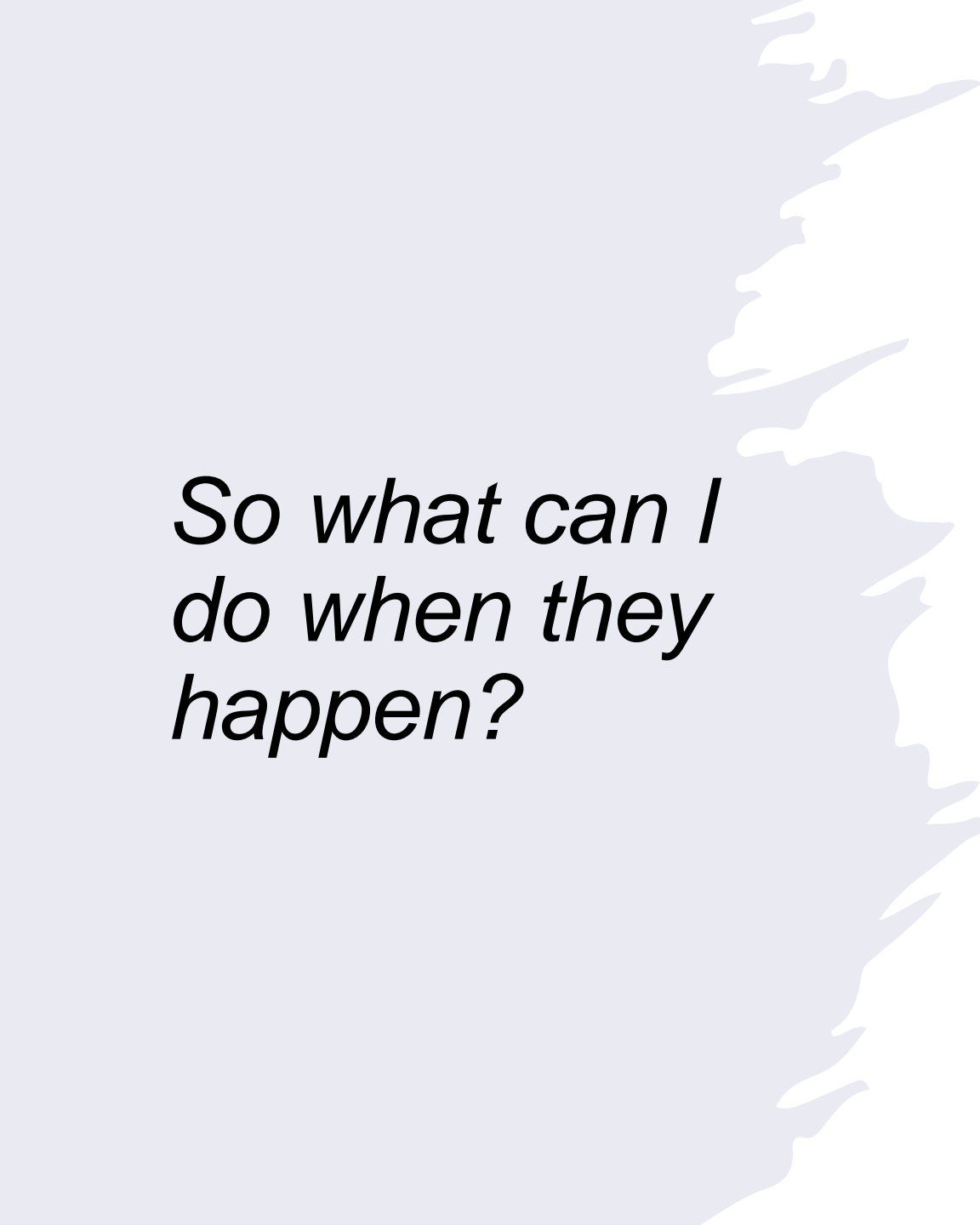


So what can I do when they happen?

Figure out the type &/or cause of the tantrum to help your child deal with it

- Refusal type – gently move child, let it go if unimportant or be firm if important, give a 5min warning
 - “Bedtime soon. In five minutes we’re brushing teeth.”
- Screaming type – give a time-out, clarify no screaming rule
 - “No screaming in our family.”





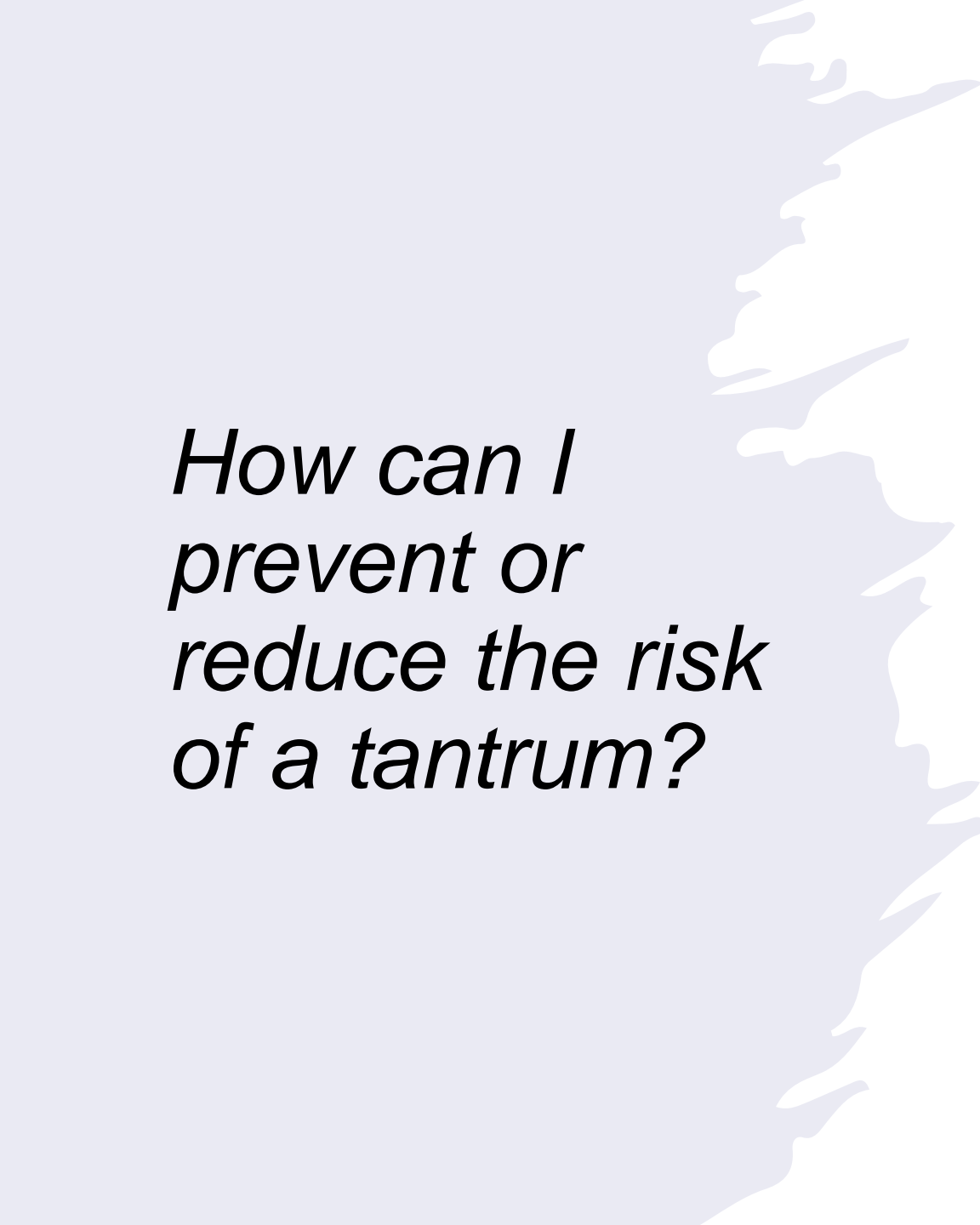
*So what can I
do when they
happen?*

Figure out the type &/or cause of the tantrum to help your child deal with it

- Aggressive type – give a time-out
- Rage type – hold child and tell him/her that you know he/she is upset & transmit calmness; if child does not want to be held, respect this

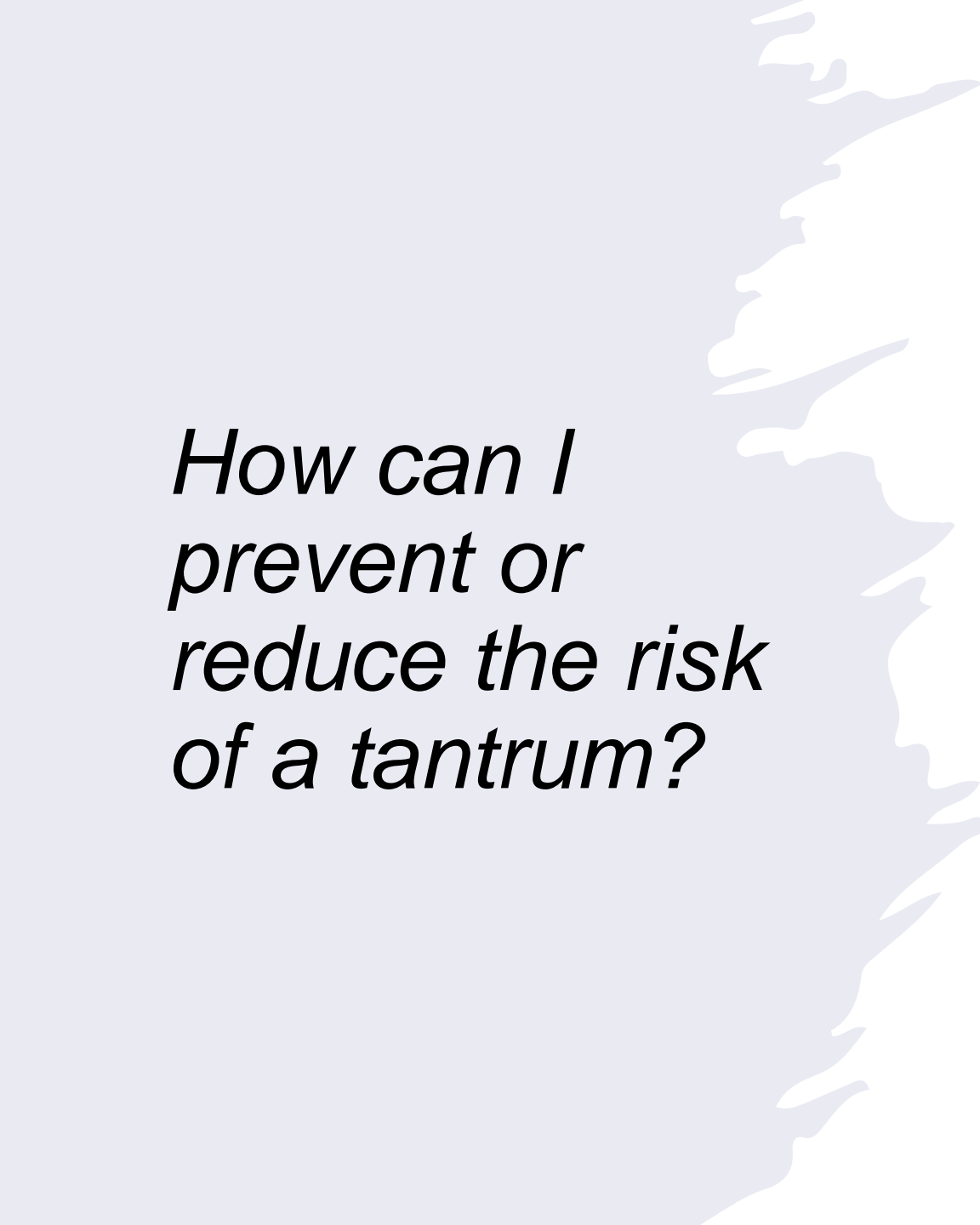
*Anything that I
should avoid
doing?*

- Punish child for having a temper tantrum
- Give in to demands just to stop the tantrum
- Talk too much to a child during the tantrum
- Hit or spank as punishment
- Bribe to stop tantrum




*How can I
prevent or
reduce the risk
of a tantrum?*

- Give enough positive attention
 - Praise good behavior
- Set firm and common limits
 - Make sure all caretakers are aware & stick to them
- Stick to a routine as much as possible
- Let your child choose between options
 - “Do you want an apple or a banana for your snack?”
 - “Time for your bath. Do you want to walk or do you want me to carry you?”
- Try not to say “no” too much
 - Choose your battles



How can I prevent or reduce the risk of a tantrum?

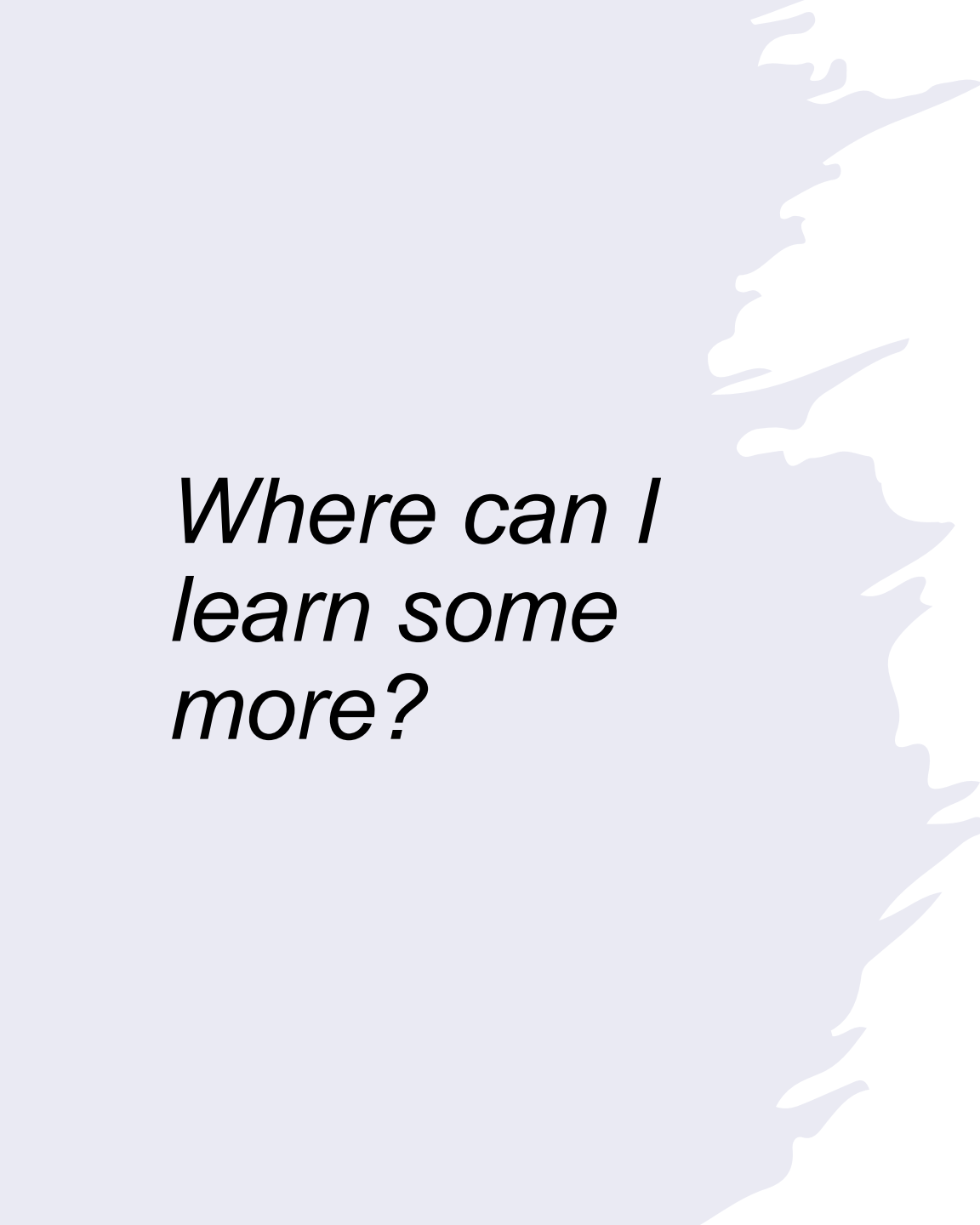
- Give a few minutes warning before changing activities
 - Especially when ending playtime or changing locations
- Encourage child to use words to express emotions
- Have healthy snacks on hand to avoid hunger-related tantrums
- Make sure child gets enough rest
- Set a positive example in your own interactions
- Have clear and realistic expectations
 - Be aware of developmental stages



*Does my child
need to be
seen by a
doctor because
of this?*

May need further evaluation for behavior or developmental disorders if:

- Hurt self or others during tantrum
- Tantrums happen 5+ times per day
- Tantrums happen at home AND at school/daycare
- Child has multiple other behavior problems
- Not improving despite following techniques explained before



*Where can I
learn some
more?*

- “SOS! Help for Parents: A Practical Guide for Handling Common Everyday Problems” by Lynn Clark, PhD
- “The Difficult Child” by Stanley Turecki, MD and Leslie Tanner
- “Bring out the Best in your Children”- AAP
 - www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ttb_bring_out_best.pdf
- Positive Parenting Tips – CDC
 - www.cdc.gov.ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/index.html

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