



Guide to Supporting Students with Anxiety



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Guide to Supporting Students with Anxiety



Education and Awareness

Purpose of the Document:

This document was created to guide adults in supporting students struggling with anxiety at school and/or transitioning back into school. This document covers many situations, including students starting school after an absence/illness, students transitioning into a new school, and students returning to school after being away in specialized programs (e.g. virtual learning, Safe Schools). This document is not intended for therapeutic or diagnostic purposes.

Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal emotion experienced by children, youth, and adults. Anxiety is our body's reaction to real or perceived danger or stressful life events. It alerts us to threats, protects us from danger, and can help us reach an important goal.

Anxious feelings can result from certain medical conditions, difficulties at home, work, or school, and/or stressful life events. Anxious thoughts and feelings can also be associated with several disabilities and disorders. If a child or youth exhibits prolonged worries or fears, and physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, nausea, stomach pains, diarrhea) that are increasing in frequency or intensity, this may be an indication of an Anxiety Disorder. Some common Anxiety Disorders include General Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety, and Separation Anxiety. Depending on the severity and impact on life, families may need to talk to a physician or mental health professional.

It is always important to remember that students face a range of challenges relative to their personal, social, academic, and cultural experiences. Always consider sources of stress, risk and protective factors, and existing ways of coping.

Developmentally Appropriate Fears for Children & Youth - Across Ages and Stages*

Fear will often manifest itself in anxiety. Listed below are some examples of developmentally normal fears. Early fears are related to the environment (external). Over time, fears are more related to internal thoughts.

Late Infancy and Toddlers: strangers and separation from caregivers.

Preschool: things perceived as large, harmful or dark, and imaginary creatures.

Elementary: natural disasters (fire, floods, thunder) and animals.

Middle Childhood: academic, social and performance fears.

Adolescence: academics, appearance, relationships and the future.

*How and when normal fears are expressed will vary depending on life experiences, and individual traits and abilities.

Understanding Normal and Problematic Anxiety

Anxious feelings are experienced by everyone from time to time. If feelings of worry become excessive and persistent over a longer period of time, these feelings and accompanying thoughts can interfere with a student's well-being and ability to learn.

As an educator, you are well-positioned to notice and support a student who is struggling with anxiety at school. Anxious students may be quiet and well-behaved OR due to the fight, flight or freeze response, may be disruptive and non-compliant.

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The chart below lists the characteristics of normal, and signs of problematic anxiety, which may require further support and discussion with a mental health professional.

Normal Anxiety	Problematic Anxiety*
Helpful & Productive	Intense & Detrimental
Manageable	Uncontrollable
Focusing	Overwhelming
Specific to a situation or problem	Generalized
Time-Limited to a situation/problem	Chronic
Age appropriate	Age mismatched

*The expression of Problematic Anxiety will be impacted by lived experiences, environment, and individual characteristics.

*Reference Source: Worried No More. Help and Hope for Anxious Children.

Indicators of Anxiety

The impact of anxiety depends upon the severity, psychosocial risk factors, protective factors and environmental circumstances. Ongoing communication between school and home is important to ensure that children and youth are developing the academic and social-emotional skills to flourish and achieve their goals. Below are some common, but not necessarily all, responses to anxiety. This is a general list; therefore, it is not specific to any one type of anxiety.

Physical Responses

Observable:

- Complaints of Stomach Aches
- Nausea
- Complaints of Headaches
- Rapid breathing
- Trembling or shaking
- Sleep problems/Tired
- Sweating

Other Responses - Harder to Observe

- Flushed skin/Blushing
- Increased heart rate
- Muscle tension
- Dizziness

It is important for students and families to consult with a health professional to rule out underlying medical conditions or other mental health concerns.

Emotional and Cognitive Responses

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Persistent worrying thoughts, even though there is little reason to worry, and "What if" questioning ■ Intense emotions and concerns about being embarrassed or performing in front of others ■ Difficulty speaking in groups or in class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Irritability ■ Test anxiety ■ Perfectionism in assignments ■ Difficulties in problem solving and demonstrating catastrophic thinking ■ Attention and/or concentration difficulties |
|---|--|

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Indicators of Anxiety Contd.

Behavioural Responses

Fight, Flight or Freeze is the body's natural response to perceived threats or danger. The response instantly causes hormonal and physiological changes.

Fight

- Defiance or refusal to comply when asked to perform a task that causes anxiety
- Irritability

Flight

- Cautious or avoidant behaviours- seen in school or social interactions
- Withdrawing and/or skipping class
- Increased absences
- Difficulty transitioning back to school

Freeze

- Not talking
- Indecisive, not responding, shutting down
- Frequent need for assurance

Dr. Perry's Neurosequential Model

Further information from Dr. Perry about Stress, Trauma and the Brain: Insight for Educators can be found in the Resources, Activities and Reference section.



Perry B. D. (2002) *Brain Structure and Function I Basics of Organization*. Adapted in part from "Maltreated Children: Experience, Brain Development and the Next Generation (W.W. Norton & Company).

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Education and Awareness

Tier 1 Strategies

These universal strategies are good for all, but when implemented in a targeted manner, are important for those individuals struggling with anxiety.

Tier 1 Strategies

- Allow the student additional time to feel comfortable and secure in their environment and with the adults in the school
- Plan and provide predictable routines and visual reminders for upcoming events
- Try not to let students avoid school-based activities because of fears. Instead validate fears and encourage smaller and gradual steps toward accomplishing a goal or participating in an activity
- Identify and leverage strengths and efforts
- Teach students to identify and express emotions
- Class-wide calming strategies (deep breathing, fidgets, stretches, visuals)
- Discreetly acknowledge when the student is attempting something they find challenging
- Provide reassurance. Provide reassurance again
- Recognize small improvements like finishing a task on time and discourage multi-tasking
- Communicate the idea that mistakes show growth and are normal. Reframe them as opportunities for learning and developing resiliency
- Warn students when something out of the ordinary is planned and develop a plan for unexpected events. This plan could include pausing for deep breathing and/or having a designated buddy
- Respond calmly to help decrease anxiety, listen, answer questions with concrete explanations and have the student repeat instructions to help avoid confusion
- Where possible, check-in with the student, and have these conversations in a quiet manner and setting
- Explore Brightspace Mental Health & Well-being Digital Resource Binder, Conquering Stress Binder and talk to the Learning Resource Teacher about additional resources
- Chunk & Check-in-Chunk large assignments into smaller tasks for students, make a schedule for each task, hand in tasks at a pre-determined time (provide positive reinforcement for each submission)
- Provide different arrangements for test taking, i.e. provision of separate quiet location, or flexible time limits for those who struggle under pressure
- Explicit scaffolding and skill development for oral presentations

Supporting Student's Skill Development

- Understanding the body's natural responses to stress and perceived danger
- Planning ahead, being organized and finding ways to be comfortable
- Identifying and expressing concerns and emotions.
- Encouraging students to ask questions and learn developmentally-appropriate self-advocacy
- Learning calming strategies, practicing muscle relaxation, focusing on the present
- Developing self-care and coping strategies

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Tiered Support and Strategies

TIER 1 Universal

- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Implement Tier 1 Strategies
- Use universal design to support learning and well-being. Refer to resources on Brightspace PLE
- Utilize Specialized Services staff for professional learning on mental health literacy
- If needed, teach class-wide stress management and calming skills-supported by Child and Youth Worker (CYW)
- School staff initiate and maintain on-going conversations with students and parents/caregivers

YES

Strategies consistently implemented and working

NO

Educators continue to monitor, and revise if needed.

Continue implementing strategies and recognize small changes. Refer to school team for strategies and next steps. Follow up with student and parent/caregiver. Document in the Student Profile which strategies were implemented and the effectiveness

TIER 2 Targeted

- Educator, in consultation with School Team, implements targeted strategies, accommodations and recommendations
- Start Mental Health & Well-being Plan and store in Student Profile
- Consider small group sessions and/or use of calming space/Wellness Room
- Work with mental health professional (Social Worker (SW)) to implement gradual exposure
- Address school absences. If needed, consult with Attendance Counselor, Support family in accessing community mental health and/or medical referral

YES

Strategies consistently implemented and working

NO

Educators continue to monitor, and revise Plan if needed. Document in Student Profile.

Refer back to School Team- and consider Tier 3 Interventions. Follow-up with parents/caregivers.

TIER 3 Intervention

- Individual support or assessment through Specialized Services. Educators, family, and support staff collaborate on a specific plan and accommodations.
- Use Mental Health & Well-being Plan-continue to monitor and adapt to support skills development and growth
- With consent, collaborate with community mental health agencies and/or medical professionals

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Tiered Support and Strategies

TIER 1 Universal

- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment:
smho-smso.ca/blog/online-resources/the-first-10-days-and-beyond
- Teach and Implement Tier 1 Strategies. Reference the Education and Awareness section.
- Provide in-services and access to resources for school personnel and parents/caregivers. Refer to the Reference and Resources section. Request a workshop for staff or parent/caregivers through Specialized Services
- Educators implement universal design: udlguidelines.cast.org
- Identify stressors: biological, emotional, cognitive, social or prosocial:
anxietycanada.com and self-reg.ca/self-reg-framework-5-domains-stress
- Implement class-wide strategies that support calming and stress management
Brightspace conquering stress binder:
smho-smso.ca/emhc/stress-management-and-coping/calm-classroom
- Discussion at School Team and involvement of the CYW to support identity-affirming social-emotional learning and mental health literacy
- Supporting families to connect with community mental health agencies and/or medical personnel

TIER 2 Targeted

- Discussion at School Team-targeted and specific accommodations and skill development. Develop plans from an asset based approach.
- Pay attention to changes in frequency and intensity of behaviours rather than the absence of a behaviour, allow time for gradual changes and monitor strategies
- Start Mental Health & Well-being Plan and store in Student Profile
- Targeted accommodations during times of heightened stress (i.e. transitions, exams)
- Seek student voice and allow for choice
- All educators, including subject specific teachers, made aware of recommendations and accommodations
- Student Plan can include safe places and Wellness Room
- Consider small group sessions for targeted interventions and skill development delivered by CYWs and SWs.
- Work with mental health team (CYW and SW) to implement gradual exposure

TIER 3 Intervention

- Referral to Social Worker for short-term counselling and/or referral to community mental health and/or medical professional
- On-going and updated discussion with School Team, when needed
- Ensure all educators, including subject specific, are aware of Mental Health & Well-being Plan
- Case conference to ensure common understanding, goals and next steps
- Develop a plan for school absences (increase days and time attending)
- Consider personalized time tabling at the secondary level

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Tiered Support and Strategies

Guidelines for Supporting Student's Return/Transition to School

Connect with parent/caregiver

1. The classroom educators will connect with School Admin/LRT/Guidance to make them aware of student's absence/entry into the school and identify a point person for follow-up with family.
2. Point person contacts the parent/caregiver and gathers information about the reason for not attending/reason for transition. Where appropriate, discuss past attempts at re-engagement.
3. If the student has been absent ask the parent/caregiver and student directly why they have not been attending school. Use this information as the basis for further planning and the elimination of barriers to attending, learning, and well being.
4. Arrange a meeting with the student/parent. Inquire as to whether the family has any community-based supports they would like involved in the meeting.

The point person along with the school team develops a plan with the family for the student's return/transition to school.

Consider the following:

- Arrange for work to be done at home/at school to ensure the student gets caught up with schoolwork. Consider the option to work in a separate space (i.e. Office, Resource Room, Guidance office, etc.)
- Support student in determining how they will respond to peers/classmates' questions about why they have been absent and/or recently transitioned to the school.
- Have a discussion with the student about how to manage anxiety at school (slow and deep breathing, comfort item, calming strategies such as pictures or music, use of fidgets, identifying staff members they may be comfortable talking to)
- Plan with the student to develop coping and calming strategies when they start to feel anxious.
- Determine with the student how they would like to re-enter/enter the classroom (arrive early, consider seating arrangement, level of student/teacher/peer interaction, plan for catching up on work with the option of reducing the workload, rescheduling assignments/tests. Communicate back to the teacher with a re-entry/entry plan
- Predetermine how the student leaves the classroom for a break (e.g. exit card, hand signal etc.)
- Arrange for parents/caregivers to drive/walk the student past the school or visit the grounds outside of school hours or have a virtual meeting.
- Create a gradual re-entry/entry plan that could include adjusting daily schedule (e.g., mornings only, attending for one block, arriving after the bell, leaving early, staying in at recess, etc.)
- Provide the student with access to a private room/office for gradual re-entry to the classroom/quiet place.
- Arrange for sibling/friend to walk to school/ride bus/arrive together
- Create a specific role/job for the student to be responsible for in the classroom/school (e.g. handing out books, organizing, if an older student they could assist in the JK/SK classroom).
- Check-in by teacher/LRT/Admin with parent/caregiver and student to ensure feedback, identification of successes, and ensuring common goals.
- Determine with the student, the staff member they are comfortable with, e.g. teacher/LRT/Admin. Arrange contact to ensure student is feeling on track with classes. Keep up to date materials on Brightspace.

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Resources, Activities and References

Student Mental Health and Well-Being Plan (To be kept in the Student Profile)

Name:	Date:
School:	Grade:
Key Information (e.g. preferred name and gender, formal identification or diagnosis):	
Reason for Plan:	
Plan Developed By:	Plan Shared With:
Known Stressors and Triggers: (i.e. biological, emotional, cognitive, social, prosocial- https://self-reg.ca/five-domains/)	Concerns/Behaviours/Expressions of Distress
Tier 1 Plan: (e.g., class SEL skill development, class wide calming strategies, promote planning and organization, assessment in quiet space, regular communication with parents/caregivers, identified safe adult, reference Grand Erie Tip Sheets)	Tier 2 Plan: (e.g., recommendations from in school team re skills development, specific personalized strategies for self-soothing/calming, specific accommodations for learning or behaviour, communication with home)
Tier 3 Plan: (e.g., consult with social work regarding referral, attendance consult, gradual exposure, planning, creative timetable, collaboration with parents, physician, community mental health)	Additional information:

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Resources, Activities and References

The final section includes Resources and References to support students struggling with anxiety. This section includes books and activities to develop emotional literacy and learn the skills that help tackle anxiety. There are classroom activities that promote welcoming and inclusive classrooms and schools. Tip Sheets, as well as additional resources, can be found on Brightspace (Conquer Stress and Mental Health & Wellness Digital Resource Binder).

Brightspace Resources

Conquer Stress Binder

- Chapter 1 Understanding Stress and Anxiety
- Chapter 2 Challenging Stress, Anxiety and Negative Thoughts
- Chapter 3 Coping Strategies and Self-Care
- Chapter 4 Additional Resources
- Chapter 5 Classroom Stress Buster & Managing Exam Stress

Mental Health & Well-Being Digital Resource Binder

The Mental Health and Well-being Digital Resource binder is a tool for all school staff. Staff can find resources for elementary and secondary students in areas such as Self-Reg, Healthy Relationships, Mindfulness, and Mental Health. Staff also have access to professional learning in Shanker Self-Reg, Third Path, and Developmental Assets.

Dr. Perry: Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators

- How Stress Impacts the Brain: <https://youtu.be/COMwI2akgqM>
- Regulating Yourself and Your Classroom: <https://youtu.be/nqW2Xv16bWw>
- Educator Strategies for the Classroom: <https://youtu.be/cNzkyFPA7Lc>
- Neurosequential Model: Regulate, Relate, Reason: https://youtu.be/TpsK_fY2BpQ
- Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators-The Neurosequential Model: https://youtu.be/_3is_3XHKKs

Websites

- School Mental Health Ontario: smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Breathing-strategies-all.pdf
- Neurosequential Network: <https://www.neurosequential.com>
- Anxiety Canada Video: Fight, Flight or Freeze - A Guide to Anxiety for Kids: https://youtu.be/FfSbWc3O_5M
- Anxiety Canada Video: Fight, Flight or Freeze – Anxiety Explained for Teens: <https://youtu.be/rpolpKTWrp4>
- Strong Minds Strong Kids: <https://strongmindsstrongkids.org/>

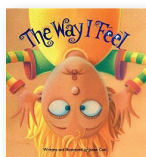
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Resources, Activities and References

Literacy that Builds Skills

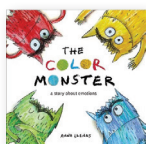
Additional books and videos can be found on the Mental Health & Well-Being Digital Resource Binder.



The Way I Feel

The Way I Feel uses strong, colourful, and expressive images which go along with simple verses to help children connect the word and the emotion. Children will learn useful words giving parents, teachers, and caregivers many chances to open conversations about what's going on in their child's life.

■ youtube.com/watch?v=c-nsVfnKO08



The Color Monster by Anna Llenas

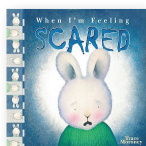
One day, Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place; he feels angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at once! To help him, a little girl shows him what each feeling means through colour. As this adorable monster learns to sort and define his mixed-up emotions, he gains self-awareness and peace.



Listening to My Body by Gabi Garcia

Listening to My Body is an engaging and interactive picture book that introduces children to the practice of paying attention to their bodies. Through a combination of story and simple experiential activities, it guides them through the process of noticing and naming their feelings and the physical sensations that accompany them so that they can build on their capacity to engage mindfully, self-regulate, and develop a deeper sense of well-being.

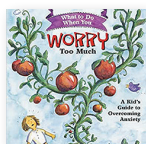
■ youtube.com/watch?v=zr0yFEBFyUU



When I'm Feeling Scared by Trace Moroney

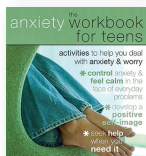
Have you ever been so scared that your heart races? Do creepy, crawly spiders and being alone in the dark make you tremble? The little rabbit knows how it feels to be scared and what to do to feel better.

■ youtube.com/watch?v=TQemRAINMFs



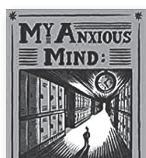
What to Do When You Worry Too Much

This interactive self-help book designed to guide 6 – 12 year olds and their parents through the cognitive and behavioral strategies.



The Anxiety Workbook for Teens

This book normalizes anxiety and mental health and speaks to the everyday experiences and pressures that teenagers navigate. Lisa Schab provides helpful tools in ways that are strength based and encourage healthy habits and ways of thinking.



My Anxious Mind

A book to help teens take control of their anxious feelings by providing cognitive behavioral strategies to tackle anxiety.

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Resources, Activities and References

Social-Emotional Vocabulary in Young Children

Social-emotional vocabulary is important for children/youth to be able to express themselves and describe how they feel. It is also important for children to understand and recognize the feelings and emotions of others.

By teaching children a variety of words to describe feelings, you can increase their emotional vocabulary. This way, children will know and be able to use many words to specifically describe how they feel and how others are feeling. Try expanding beyond the typical emotions of 'happy', 'sad', 'mad', etc. For example:

Happy: cheerful, excited, delighted, etc.

Sad: unhappy, frustrated, confused, hurt, etc.

Activity #1	Activity #2	Activity #3	Activity #4	Activity #5
Let's talk about feelings: Grab a really big piece of paper and a marker. Sit down with the children to brainstorm a list of all the feelings you can think of (happy, sad, angry, excited, etc.). After you are done with the list, have everyone talk about how they are feeling today.	Have the children think about a favourite movie or book? Ask them to talk about how it made them feel when they were watching the movie or reading the book. Try role-playing (acting out) a scene from a favourite movie or book. Each child can pick a character and then act out how the character was feeling during that scene.	Talk about something that is bothering you that happened today. What happened? How did it make you feel? Is there anything that can be done to help? At the end of the day, take turns saying what your favourite part of the day was. What happened? How did you feel when it was happening? Why was it your favourite part of the day?	Play an emotion guessing game. Take a piece of paper or small blanket and hold it in front of your face. Lower it down to reveal your face showing an emotion. Have the children guess the emotion you are feeling and then have them try to make the face too. Discuss what might make you feel this way or a time when you felt this way. After a few turns, let the children have a turn making faces and having you guess the emotion.	Throughout the day, help children learn to label their own emotions by voicing them aloud, e.g., It looks like you are feeling mad because we can't go to the park; what can we do instead to help you feel happy? Also help them to identify the emotions of others, e.g., Look how happy Flynn looks! He must be feeling excited to play with you!

Extra Tips, Information and/or Resources:

- Learn more social-emotional words on this video: [Feelings - The Kids' Picture Show](#).
- Sing about how you are feeling in [this song](#).
- Read more about how to use social-emotional words to [build communication skills here](#).
- [Teaching Your Child to Identify and Express Emotions](#).

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Resources, Activities and References

Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive classrooms are welcoming and support the diverse academic, physical, social, emotional, and communication needs of all students. Some activities are identified in this document. More activities can be found at [TheFirst20Days.pdf](#) and [Relationship Skills SMHO.pdf](#)

Activity: Daily Greeting

Level: Primary, Junior, Intermediate

Materials:

- ✓ Poster (optional)

Description:

Greet students each day as they come into the school/class and during transitions (e.g., coming in from recess).

Greetings may include:

- ✓ Apply the 5 x 10 rule: If someone is within 10 feet, make eye contact and smile. If they are within five feet, say hi!
- ✓ Give students a high five.

- ✓ Use a visual prompt/poster with different types of greetings and let students choose (e.g., fist bump, handshake, smile, dance, high five). Post it at the entrance to the classroom. (See our greetings poster.)

School Mental Health Ontario: Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource. (n.d.).

smho-smsso.ca/emhc

Kindness Jar

Purpose: Encouraging kindness and respect in the classroom

Division: All

Time Required: Less than 5 minutes

Materials: Jar, beans/marbles or jelly beans

Instructions:

- ✓ Beans are added to the jar for each kind act the teacher observes
 - ✓ Students can nominate others for “Bean Awards” when they notice or experience an act of kindness
 - ✓ When the jar reaches a certain level there is an acknowledgment associated with that level
- NOTE: Kindness beans CANNOT be removed.

Supplementary Resources:

Darling R. (March 12, 2012). Peaceful parenting: Make a kindness jar. Retrieved from:

kidsactivitiesblog.com/10849/peaceful-parenting-kindness-jar

Adaptations:

Could be done as “Filling Buckets” activity, but this is not essential.

In this variation, students make “buckets” and notes are dropped into these.

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Resources, Activities and References

Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Classrooms

Activity: Read – Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller

Level: Primary, Junior

Materials:

- ✓ YouTube video 'Be Kind' By Pat Zietlow Miller

Description:

After the story, ask follow-up questions:

- ✓ What does it mean to be kind? How can we show kindness to others?

This story focuses on ways we can help and include others. Invite students to discuss ways that they can be kind and support one another at school (e.g., sit next to someone).

School Mental Health Ontario: The First 10 days and Beyond. (n.d.). School Mental Health Ontario.

smho-smso.ca

Relationship Skills

Creating Collaborative Classroom Norms

Purpose: To establish norms as a group and to identify what matters to students as a group/classroom

Division: All

Time Required: 1 or 2 periods

Materials: Paper, pencils, sentence strips, chart paper, markers, tape

Instructions:

- ✓ Independently, students make a list of classroom expectations (e.g., trying new things, attentive listening, keeping the room clean, etc.).
- ✓ In pairs, each student shares their list and identifies ideas they find important.
- ✓ The pair selects their top four or five expectations and joins another pair.

- ✓ In small groups, repeat the process.
- ✓ The small groups select their top four or five expectations and write these clearly on sentence strips.
- ✓ Groups present their sentence strips.
- ✓ As a class, students select the top five or six most important norms.
- ✓ The selected norms are written on chart paper, so they are visible for everyone.
- ✓ Reference School Mental Health Ontario

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Resources, Activities and References

Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Classrooms

Activity: Table Talk

Level: Primary, Junior, Intermediate

Materials:

- ✓ Blackboard or chart paper
- ✓ Topic questions

Description:

This exercise is a great way for students to get to know each other and to start a discussion on a specific topic. Write a few topic questions on either the board, chart paper, or on index cards for individual groups. Students can be in a large group or small groups. Have students discuss and share their thoughts and opinions on the topics.

Example questions:

What's the funniest thing you have ever seen?

(Primary - Junior grade question)

Is there such a thing as 'perfect'?

Where would you most want to go, and why?

Would you rather live for a week in the past or future?

What can you do today that you couldn't do a year ago?

Icebreakers: Symonds, V. (2021, July 2). 21 Free Fun IceBreakers for Online Teaching, Students & Virtual and Remote Teams. Symonds Research Training Course Materials.

symondsresearch.com/icebreakers-for-online-teaching

Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

Level: Senior

Materials:

- ✓ None

Description:

This energizer is great for building inclusion and re-entry after a school vacation. Have each person write down three things about themselves, what they did

over vacation, etc. Of these three statements, two must be true and one must be a lie. Suggest that the lie should not be obvious; it can even be a small detail. The rest of the class (or small group) must guess which one is the lie.

Relationship Skills

Kindness Wall

Purpose: To help students practice acts of kindness

Division: Primary / Junior / Intermediate

Time Required: 5 to 10 minutes

Materials: Coloured markers, chart paper, Post-it Notes

Instructions:

- ✓ Discuss the goal of creating a kinder classroom/school by being kinder people. Why should we spread positivity and kindness at our school? What do acts of kindness look like, and why are they important?

- ✓ On chart paper, brainstorm kind acts students have seen or would like to see in the class/school (e.g., saying something kind to a peer, making a new friend, sitting with someone who is alone - no names).
- ✓ Tape the chart paper up in a visible place in the class.
- ✓ Provide all students with Post-it Notes.
- ✓ Write down the kind acts that students have witnessed others perform.
- ✓ Review and repeat.

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Resources, Activities and References

Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Classrooms

Relationship Skills

That's Me!

Purpose: To help improve group cohesion in the classroom

Division: Intermediate

Time Required: 10 minutes

Materials: Pre-made statements

Instructions:

- ✓ Someone starts with an appropriate statement about themselves – what they like to eat, their favourite hobby, TV show, book, etc.
- ✓ If the statement is true for someone else, they stand up and say: "That's me!"
- ✓ Repeat until everyone has the opportunity to participate and share a statement.

Discuss:

- ✓ Did you learn something new about your classmates?
- ✓ How did it feel to be standing at the same time as others?
- ✓ What about standing alone or only with a few students?
- ✓ Sometimes we like to be a part of a group, but there is always value to being unique.

Statement Ideas:

- ✓ I like to eat pizza
- ✓ I would eat a worm for \$1 million
- ✓ I have a pet
- ✓ My favourite colour is blue
- ✓ I'm the youngest of my family
- ✓ I want to have a superpower
- ✓ I'm an only child
- ✓ I like spicy food
- ✓ I can speak a different language

Guide to Supporting Students with Anxiety



Resources, Activities and References

Positive Messages to Use When a Student is Returning To School

Positive Message to Use More	Message to Use Less
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ It's nice to see you.■ I'm glad you're here.■ Is everything okay? Can I help you in any way?■ Let me help you get caught up.■ Let's see where is best to start with the work.■ How can I help you get here more often?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Where were you?■ Why were you away?■ Where's your note?■ Nice of you to show up today! (Sarcasm)■ You're late! Go to the office!■ Here is the work you missed. You better get started.■ You have been absent/late X days.

Sourced Information

- [Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well Being, Ministry of Education 2013](#)
- [Waterloo Region District School Board School Information & Strategies to Support Students with Anxiety](#)
- [Here to Help-Mental Health & Substance Information](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario](#)
- [Strong Minds Strong Kids Psychology Foundation](#)
- The Handbook of Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology by Alan Carr
- Worried No More. Help and Hope for Anxious Children by Dr. A Wagner





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