



November: Anxiety

WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

What is anxiety? We all experience moments of stress. But sometimes that feeling does not go away or intensifies, which can cause anxiety. Anxiety is a general term for an emotion that is described by uneasiness, worried thoughts, tension, or fear.

When a child is experiencing anxiety, their body thinks it is in danger and goes into the freeze, flight, or fight response. Anxiety in the classroom can look like: disruptive behavior, inattention and difficulty focusing, a student who doesn't participate or struggles during tests or class presentations, avoiding social situations or group work, and somatic symptoms like stomach aches. You can play an essential role in helping your students manage anxiety. When coping skills and brave behavior are rewarded and practiced in the classroom, children and teens can learn to face their fears and gain confidence.

What you can do to help support your students:

1. If you notice students who struggle with an anxious moment in the classroom, you can support by leading the whole classroom in a breathing exercise. Some resources to use are included below.
2. "Name it to Tame it": It's okay to talk about anxiety, what it is and what we might feel when we experience the emotion with your students. Normalizing the emotion can make it easier to face our fears!
3. Use a "calming corner" or have fidgets available for students who may need to release some anxiety in the classroom.
4. Think of alternatives-for example, if a student appears anxious to give a class presentation in front of peers, offer a one-on-one presentation with you or with a smaller group.
5. Refer students who seem to really be struggling despite supports in the classroom to the wellness team. It's possible they may benefit from additional help!

Additional Resources

- [How Teachers can help students with anxiety](#)
- [Mindfulness Activities for Kids](#)
- [Shark Fin Breathing Exercise](#)
- [Let Go of Stress Mindful Meditation](#)