

Taking Charge of Your Worries

Classroom Based Anxiety Intervention
For Grades K-3



A research supported intervention created by
Saskatchewan Rivers School Division #119 Psychologists
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TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR WORRIES

Classroom Based Anxiety Intervention For Grades K-3

Uncomfortable feelings, such as worry and stress, are a normal part of life that we all encounter. The ability to effectively address these unpleasant feelings is an essential component of our mental well-being. Unfortunately, people do not always acquire healthy coping strategies naturally. Many of us need to be explicitly taught how to appropriately manage stress and anxiety.

Without effective coping strategies, prolonged stress and worry can interfere with executive functions such as attention and memory. Overtime, chronic stress can damage brain cells and shrink memory structures (Psychology Foundation of Canada, 2011). Students who lack effective stress management skills are at risk of developing a mental illness. Presently, **anxiety disorders are the most common of all mental health disorders** experienced by children and youth (Psychology Foundation of Canada, 2011). It is estimated that one in ten Canadians is affected by anxiety. In a typical classroom, teachers can expect to have 1-3 students who have an anxiety disorder (Kutcher, 2017).

There are a number of ways that teachers can support mental health among students:

- Form a positive and supportive relationship with individual students.
- Teach students to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress and anxiety.
- Model and teach effective coping strategies.
- Communicate effectively with parents.

Taking Charge of Your Worries is intended to help teachers educate elementary students about uncomfortable feelings, such as worry, fear, and stress, and the effects these emotions may have on their body. Classroom based activities are provided to help build healthy coping strategies such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, positive self-talk, and much more.

This resource presented in modules to allow teachers to move through at their desired pace. Activities are provided for various skill levels. The document works best when used electronically, as there are many hyperlinks to handouts and videos. SRPSD has kits for loan containing recommended books, posters, flash cards, and games.

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Psychological Foundation of Canada (2011): www.kidshavestresstoo.org
Kutcher, Stan: Mental Health & High School Go To Training Program for Teachers and Other Educators.

Anxiety 101: What You Need to Know About Anxiety

Anxiety is normal. Everyone experiences anxiety from time to time. It alerts us to threats, protects us from danger, and helps us reach important goals. For example, it is normal to feel anxious when encountering a bear on a hike or before taking an important exam.

Anxiety is not dangerous. Although anxiety feels uncomfortable, it is temporary and will eventually decrease. The sensations we experience in an anxious situation are designed to alert and activate us. They are normal and part of our body's natural response mechanism.

Anxiety is adaptive. Anxiety helps us prepare for real danger, such as crossing a busy street. It can also help us perform at our best, and motivate us to study for an exam or practice for a big game. When we experience anxiety, it triggers our "fight-flight-freeze" response, and prepares our body to react. For instance, our heart beats faster to pump blood to our muscles, so we have the energy to run away or fight off danger. Without it, we would not survive. We need some anxiety.

Anxiety is part of life. Since anxiety is everywhere, one of the greatest gifts you can give your anxious student is the confidence and skill to tolerate anxiety whenever it occurs, and to continue living his/her life anyway.

Anxiety can become a problem. Small doses of anxiety in certain situations are useful. However, when your student is worrying much of the time, avoiding fun activities, or refusing to go to school because he/she is scared or worried, anxiety has become a problem. Think of anxiety like fog: if it covers everything, makes it hard to see, stops you from doing what you usually do, and generally gets in the way, then it has likely become a problem.

Anxiety may manifest itself in children as:

- Persistent fears and worries
- Excessive shyness
- Avoidance behaviours
- Perfectionism
- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Procrastination
- Physical aches and pains
- Irritability, tantrums and meltdowns
- Constant reassurance seeking

Often, anxiety is 'silent'. Many anxious children struggle internally without actually seeking help from the classroom teacher. They might appear to be quiet or disengaged, but their brains are actually consumed with worry.

While general student worries can be appropriately addressed in the classroom setting, it is important to know when to seek help. If you suspect a student is dealing with an anxiety disorder, talk to his/her parents and share what you are seeing in the classroom. Reinforce the idea that children need lots of physical exercise, and healthy eating and sleeping habits. Referrals to a school based social worker and/or psychologist may be beneficial. Do not hesitate to seek advice from your school based social worker and/or psychologist.

References

Anxiety Canada: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/parenting/anxiety-101>

Psychological Foundation of Canada: www.kidshavestresstoo.org

8 WAYS A CHILD'S ANXIETY SHOWS UP AS SOMETHING ELSE

1. Anger

The perception of danger, stress or opposition is enough to trigger the fight or flight response leaving your child angry and without a way to communicate why.



Chandeliering is when a seemingly calm person suddenly flies off the handle for no reason. They have pushed hurt and anxiety so deep for so long that a seemingly innocent comment or event suddenly sends them straight through the chandelier.

4. Chandeliering



2. Difficulty Sleeping

In children, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep is one of the hallmark characteristics of anxiety.



5. Lack of Focus

Children with anxiety are often so caught up in their own thoughts that they do not pay attention to what is going on around them.

FOCUS

6. Avoidance

Children who are trying to avoid a particular person, place or task often end up experiencing more of whatever it is they are avoiding.

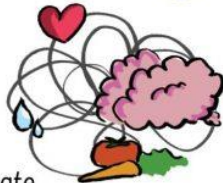


7. Negativity

People with anxiety tend to experience negative thoughts at a much greater intensity than positive ones.

3. Defiance

Unable to communicate what is really going on, it is easy to interpret the child's defiance as a lack of discipline instead of an attempt to control a situation where they feel anxious and helpless.



8. Overplanning

Overplanning and defiance go hand in hand in their root cause. Where anxiety can cause some children to try to take back control through defiant behavior, it can cause others to overplan for situations where planning is minimal or unnecessary.



gozen.com

A Note to Parents and Teachers....

Our attitudes about emotions and how we respond to them can affect how children respond to their own emotions. Responses to emotions vary widely, from sentiments of “tough luck-get over it” to attempts to help another replace negative emotions as quickly as possible. For others still, a display of emotion causes feelings of awkwardness, possibly resulting in dismissal or a glib “Relax!” Whatever one’s response, experiencing emotions including negative ones is part of being human, and children need to learn how to cope and manage these feelings. How adults respond to emotions serves as a model for children.

Refraining from telling children to stop being silly when they feel anxious is an important first step in helping them cope with anxiety.

Responding to others’ anxiety by dismissing it as ‘silly’, or saying “stop worrying”, will not teach children how to constructively cope with that emotion. Whilst their anxiety may seem silly, for the anxious child (or adult) their worries and fears are very real. Demanding they stop being ‘silly’ will usually do little to reduce anxiety or other difficult emotions. As counter-intuitive as it may seem, recognizing and sincerely accepting what another is feeling can be the most helpful response we can give. Research has shown that simply validating and accepting another’s emotions can have a soothing effect for that person. Validation and acceptance of another’s feelings can be done by naming and sincerely accepting their feelings. For example, “I can see you’re very worried about this assignment.” ***Research findings suggest that acceptance and validation of a child’s feelings, as well as the naming of their emotion, can help them gain some control over their feelings, and help calm them.*** Your empathy may also increase the likelihood that the child will accept your guidance and discuss his/her fears with you in the future.

Explaining to children that worry is normal, and that everyone experiences it, especially before tests, class presentations, or before an afternoon sport can also be comforting. It may be useful to help children understand that while anxiety is uncomfortable, and may cause them to feel sick to their stomach, it isn’t a real sickness and will go away with coping strategies.

Reference
(John Gottman, 2005) <http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline/>

Classroom Accommodations and Strategies to Address Anxiety

Classroom and School Environment

1. Help students understand that stress is a normal part of everyday life that everyone experiences.
2. Provide a warm and supportive learning environment where mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process.
3. Offer students a consistent, predictable schedule. Post in a visible place for all students to reference. Add visual supports as necessary.
4. Teach students that worry is a normal emotion. It happens when our brains become stuck on something and decides that it needs to be afraid. Rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, fast breathing, headaches, tummy aches, tight, tense muscles, and nervous panicky feelings can be signs of stress and worry.
5. Inform students that worry normally decreases overtime, with appropriate strategies.
6. Practice deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation techniques regularly in the classroom. These exercises will help to create a calm, safe classroom environment and will allow students to gain effective skills for stress management. Post visual cues for breathing and muscle relaxation techniques within the classroom.
7. Encourage daily physical exercise, and proper nutrition and sleeping habits to reduce anxiety.
8. Encourage writing/drawing in a journal to express feelings and alleviate fears.
9. Talk to parents and find out how kids are coping at home. Reinforce the idea that children needs lots of physical activity, and healthy eating and sleeping habits. Share information about community services available to the family such as Prince Albert Mental Health's Mixed Emotions support group and various programs available through Prince Albert Catholic Family Services.
10. Always attempt to keep children in school. Do not reinforce or increase anxiety symptoms by sending a student home unless necessary. Encourage parents to send their child to school regularly.
11. Establish a "Calm Down Spot" within the classroom for students to go to when they need to reset. Include soft seating, such as a blanket or pillows, ear muffs or earplugs to block out distracting noise, a mind jar, fidgets, some picture books, and a timer. Post visuals for calming strategies.
12. When necessary, offer students "Cool Down Passes" to take a break from the classroom. Clearly explain the concept to the student and watch for signs of discomfort. Examples might include a bathroom break, a walk down the hallway to have a drink of water, standing outside the classroom door for a few minutes, or using a mindfulness app with headphones in the hallway.
13. Identify one adult at school to seek help from when feeling anxious. Parental consent may be required, depending on the individual (e.g., school social worker).
14. Check in with the student at the beginning of each day.

- a. Create a “Things to Do” sheet. This gives the student an overview of work expected for the day.
 - b. Prepare the student in advance for changes in routine.
- 15. Use distraction techniques when a student appears to be escalating (e.g., involve the student in other activities).
- 16. Create a ‘Coping Book’ whereby the student has a guide to help take various steps for dealing with his/her anxiety. For example:
 - a. Stage One - In Class
 - i. Go to the ‘Calm Down Spot’ within the classroom
 - ii. Take five deep breaths
 - iii. Draw in journal
 - iv. Count backwards from 20
 - v. Visualize a calm place
 - b. Stage Two - Outside Class
 - i. Take a time out (Cool Down Pass)
 - ii. Walk down the hall for a drink of water
 - iii. Go talk to a designated safe person (e.g., mentor, social worker)
- 17. Offer positive reinforcement, like stickers, extended computer time, or a special activity when a child tolerates a feared situation.
- 18. Signal the class before giving directions (flashing lights, clapping hands). When possible, have the directions written on the board or elsewhere. It may help assure students that they have understood the directions.
- 19. Prepare student in advance before calling on him/her during class.
- 20. Avoid using jokes, sarcasm and bringing unwanted attention to the student.
- 21. Buddy system: Pair student with a peer to aid with transitions to lunch and recess (these less structured situations can trigger anxious feelings).
- 22. Fears of rejection in the playground can take the fun out of free time. Help bridge the gap by creating ties between small groups of children. A lunch bunch with two or three children can create a shared experience which kids can draw on later. When working in pairs or small groups, don’t always have children choose the groupings themselves. Alternate this with a “counting off” technique or drawing straws to allow variability in the groupings.
- 23. Anxious children often struggle with the unlikely fear that they will get in trouble. Seat them away from more distracting classmates. It may help them focus on their work and not feel responsible for the class.
- 24. Provide extra time and warnings before transitions.
- 25. Offer preferential seating in large assemblies (near the back of the room).

Homework, Tests, and Assignments

- 1. Modify the student’s program if necessary (e.g., academic goals, daily schedule).
- 2. Encourage the use of a study schedule to prepare for tests and assignments. The schedule needs to clearly outline the amount of work needed to be completed each day.

3. Offer extended time on quizzes, exams, and in-class assignments will ease the pressure on for some students, and knowing that the time is available may alleviate the need to use it.
4. Sometimes anxious children become distracted when they see other students working on their tests or turning them in, they may inaccurately assume that they don't know the material as well. In these cases, testing in an alternate, quiet place is preferable.
5. Consider the use of word banks or equation sheets, to cue children whose anxiety may make them "blank out" on the rote material.
6. Frequent check-ins for understanding, prompted by the teacher.
7. Children with extreme social anxiety may have difficulty with oral reports. Do not force these students into situations that are humiliating. Reassure them that they are not alone in feeling embarrassed and consider having the student present to the teacher alone, or audiotape or videotape the presentation at home.
8. Break down assignments into smaller pieces.
9. Record class lectures or use a scribe for notes.
10. Homework expectations-If a student is spending inordinate amounts of time on homework because of redoing, rechecking, rereading, or simply worrying that the assignment wasn't done thoroughly enough, the teacher can set a reasonable amount of time for homework and then reduce the homework load to fit into that time frame. Teachers can also give time estimates for each assignment (this could be helpful to the entire class) so that the anxious child can attempt to stay within 10% of the estimated time. Eliminate repetition by having the child do every other math question, reduce reading and writing assignments, consider books on tape if a child is unable to read without repetition, for a child with writing difficulties, consider having a parent, teacher, or another student "scribe" for the child while he or she dictates the answers.

References:

Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation (2007). *When Something's Wrong: Strategies for Teachers*. <https://www.cmho.org/documents/res-cprf-teachers-2007.pdf>

Evenpar Solutions. (2019). *Anxiety: IEP and 504 Accommodations and Strategies*. <https://adayinourshoes.com/anxiety-iep-504-accommodations/>

Alignment with Saskatchewan's Curricula

ARTS EDUCATION

Kindergarten

CPK.1

Express ideas through exploration of the elements of dance.

CPK.2

Explore a variety of drama strategies.

CPK.3

Create sound compositions exploring the elements of music.

CPK.4

Create art works that express own observations and ideas about the world.

Grade One

CP1.1

Create movements and movement patterns in response to stimuli such as stories, poems, music, or objects as starting points.

CP1.2

Create short dance phrases using the elements of dance.

CP1.4

Use language, visual images, and other ways to represent ideas both in and out of role.

CP1.8

Create art works that express own ideas and explore different forms and media.

CR1.1

Demonstrate understanding that the arts are a way of expressing ideas.

CR1.2

Investigate and describe various reasons for creating arts expressions

Grade Two

CP2.1

Create and connect dance phrases using ideas about community as stimuli (e.g., our school, community events, farm life, city life, cultural heritage).

CP2.2

Create and connect dance phrases using the elements of dance.

CP2.8

Create art works using a variety of visual art concepts, forms, and media.

Grade Three

CP3.8

Create art works using a variety of visual art concepts (e.g., contour lines), forms (e.g., drawing, sculpture), and media (e.g., pencils, pastels, found objects).

ENGLISH LANGUAGES ARTS

Kindergarten/Grade One/Two/Three

CRK.1CR1.1** **CR2.1** **CR3.1****

Comprehend and respond to a variety of grade-level texts (including contemporary and traditional visual, oral, written, and multimedia) that address identity, community, and social responsibility.

Kindergarten

CRK.2

View and interpret the basic message of visuals and objects in a variety of texts including models, photographs, dramas, dance creations, and videos.

CRK.3

Listen, comprehend, and respond to gain meaning in oral texts.

CCK.1

Compose and create various visual, multimedia, oral, and written texts that explore and present thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

CCK.2

Use and construct symbols, pictures, and dramatizations to communicate feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

CCK.3

Use oral language to converse, engage in play, express ideas, and share personal experiences.

CCK.4

Create messages using a combination of pictures, symbols, and letters.

ARK.1

Reflect on viewing, listening, emerging "reading", representing, speaking, and emerging "writing" experiences in the context of teacher-led discussions.

ARK.2

Reflect and talk about new learning.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Kindergarten

USCK.1

Develop basic habits to establish healthy relationships with self, others, and the environment.

USCK.2

Establish behaviours that support safety of self and others (including safety at school and at home).

USCK.3

Explore that who I am includes more than my physical self.

DMK.1

Establish that being curious about health and well-being is important for developing healthy habits, establishing healthy relationships, supporting safety, and exploring "self".

APK.1

Demonstrate, with guidance, initial steps for developing basic health habits, establishing healthy relationships, supporting safety, and exploring "self"

Grade One

USC1.1

Examine healthy behaviours and opportunities and begin to determine how these behaviours and opportunities may affect personal well-being.

USC1.2

Determine, with support, the importance of the brain, heart, and lungs and examine behaviours that keep these organs healthy.

USC1.3

Analyze, with support, feelings and behaviours that are important for nurturing healthy relationships at school.

USC1.5

Explore the association between a healthy sense of "self" and one's positive connection with others and the environment.

Grade Two

USC2.1

Demonstrate a basic understanding of how thoughts, feelings, and actions influence health and well-being.

DM2.1

Demonstrate how, why, and when to ask for help and/or advice when discovering healthy connections related to thoughts-feelings-actions, healthy snacking, affects of illness/disease, respect, safety, and diversity.

Grade Three

USC3.1

Determine the role of a variety of healthy foods and physical activity on the health and development of the mind, body, and immune system.

USC3.2

Examine the spiritual dimension of the "inner self" and determine the importance of nurturing it.

USC3.4

Understand what it means to contribute to the health of self, family and home.

AP3.1

Use the understandings, skills, and confidences related to healthy foods and physical activity, one's "inner self", helpful and harmful substances, healthy family and home, safety at home, and impact of violence.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Kindergarten

PEK.1

Participate in a variety of moderate to vigorous movement activities for short periods of time to increase heart and respiration rate, flexibility, muscular endurance, and muscular strength.

PEK.2, PEK.3

Explore and practise ways to move the body through space and personal space.

PEK.5

Vary, with guidance, the movement of the body through changes in space (personal space, general space, levels, directions, and pathways), effort (time and speed), relationships (body parts and shapes).

PEK.6

Explore and perform rhythmical movement to different auditory (e.g., beat of a drum, clapping, music) rhythms (e.g., quick, slow) using a variety of locomotor movements including walking, running, balancing, jumping, galloping, hopping, and skipping skills.

PEK.7

Use respectful behaviours and safe practices while participating in cooperative games and physical movement activities.

Grade One

PE1.2

Examine and express what it means to live actively each day and the personal benefits of being active.

Grade Two

PE2.2

Analyze daily habits and actions that demonstrate personal engagement in, and taking personal responsibility for, leading a physically active life.

Grade Three

PE3.2

Evaluate the role of participation in movement activities in providing opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, social interaction, increased skill competency, stress reduction, active work life, use of leisure time, contact with nature, and involvement in communities.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Kindergarten

PAK.1

Understand and respect the agreed-upon rules of the classroom, playground, and school, and recognize that rules and expectations are designed to promote a state of safety, self-regulation, peace, balance, and harmony.

One

IN1.3

Assess ways in which relationships help to meet human needs.

Grade Three

IN3.2

Analyze the cultures and traditions in communities studied.

Dealing with Sensitive Topics

1. Encourage all students to participate in class discussions, but avoid forcing any student to contribute if they are clearly reluctant.
2. In the event that a student confides a personal problem, the teacher's role is to recognize and acknowledge how serious the situation is for the student. If the student is seeking someone to talk to, help them identify a trusted adult that may be able to help them. **If a student has confided an issue that compromises his/her safety (e.g., abuse or neglect), the issue must be reported to the Ministry of Social Services Protection Line (1-866-719-6164).**

For more information refer to the [Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol](#) (2017).

Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol 2017



A commitment by the Saskatchewan Government, police, professionals and organizations to collaborate in an effort to prevent and investigate child abuse and provide support to child victims of abuse.

saskatchewan.ca



MODULE ONE

Emotions

Objectives:

- Students will increase their emotions vocabulary (e.g., silly, scared, disappointed, happy, angry, frustrated, shy, bored, jealous, proud, etc.).
- Students will understand that emotions can be communicated nonverbally through facial expressions and body language.
- Students will learn to identify emotions based on nonverbal cues.
- Students will understand that putting their feelings into words (affect labeling) can help them cope with unpleasant feelings.

Materials:

- Books: [*I Have Feelings*](#) (Jana Hunter, 2002), [*The Way I Feel*](#) (Janan Cain, 2000), and [*Happy Hunting*](#) (Magee and Giovanni, 2018)
- Videos: [*Name that Emotion Game*](#) (Sesame Street, Time 5:21), [*Guess the Feeling*](#) (Inside Out, Time 3:16), [*Feelings Song*](#) (Patty Shukla, Time 3:28)
- Handouts: [*Feelings Story \(Keira\)*](#), [*Guess the Feeling Game Recording Sheet*](#), [*This is how I look when I am...*](#), [*Happy Heart Worksheet*](#), [*Feeling Match*](#), [*Draw How You Feel*](#), [*I Feel Statement Cards*](#), [*I-Feel Practice*](#)
- Hand held mirrors (one for each student or small groups of students)
- [*Feelings Posters*](#)
- [*Feelings Bingo Game Cards*](#) and bingo markers (e.g., buttons, beans etc.)
- [*Emotions Flash Cards*](#)
- [*I Have, Who Has Cards*](#)
- [*Emotions Go Fish Cards*](#)
- Unlined Paper
- Pencils and Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers

1. Introduction: Name That Emotion Game

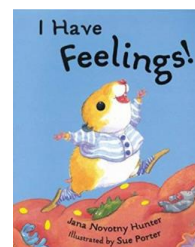
ELA/Health Activity: Watch [*Name that Emotion Game*](#) (Sesame Street, Time 5:21) and/or [*Guess the Feeling*](#) (Inside Out, Time 3:16). Pause the video before each emotion is revealed to give students a chance to discuss and guess each emotion.

Key Questions:

How did you know how the characters were feeling?
What were your clues?

2. Curriculum Connection: Read Aloud

ELA/Health Activity: Hand out a small mirror to each student (or small groups of students). Read [*I Have Feelings*](#) (Jana Hunter, 2002) OR [*The Way I Feel*](#) (Janan Cain, 2000). Pause before each feeling is revealed to give students a chance to discuss and guess each emotion (post-it notes can be used to cover answers). Invite students to practice making the same facial expressions as the characters in the story while looking at themselves using a hand held mirror.



Key Question:

Is it possible for you to communicate your feelings without uttering a single word?

- It may sound strange, but you can actually 'say' things with signals from your body. This is called body language, and it can be a very important way to communicate to others.
- Body language can be more than just facial expressions. People use their arms, their shoulders, and their hands to show how they are feeling. If someone's shoulders are slumped down or they have lowered their head, they might be sad. Have you seen someone with their arms crossed? They might be angry. But if someone's arms are extended wide and their hands are open, they might be happy and ready to hug someone!
- Refer to [Feelings Posters](#) for examples of common nonverbal cues.

Extension Activity: Play various movie clips with the sound turned off. Invite students to make guesses about what is going on in the clip, what the characters are feeling and why, just by watching their faces and body language.

Extension Activity: [Feelings Story \(Keira\)](#) Distribute handout and ask students to write a story about what they think happened to make the Keira feel this way.

3. Curriculum Connection: Draw Your Emotions

Art/Health Activity: Bring small mirrors to class and ask students to look at themselves making an angry face, happy face, sad face, etc. Invite students to create self-portraits capturing themselves expressing different emotions. If desired, students could use the templates provided on the [This is how I look when I am...](#) handout.

Extension Activities: [Feeling Match](#), [Draw How You Feel](#)

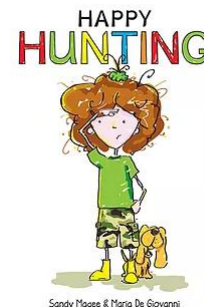


4. Curriculum Connection: The Happy Heart

Key Message:

When we identify the people, places, thoughts and things that help us to feel happy we can access our happy feelings anytime.

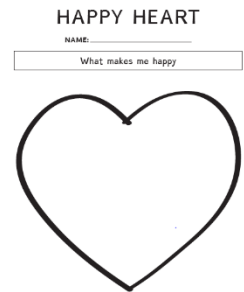
ELA/Health Activity: Introduce students to the book [Happy Hunting](#) (Magee and Giovanni, 2018). Explain that the story is about a girl who thinks she has lost her happy feeling and what happens when she goes hunting for it. Challenge students to watch for what she finds along her hunt, through the story and the pictures, and imagine how she might be feeling at different points along the way.



After reading the story, invite students to close their eyes and begin to imagine all the things that make them feel happy. These might include people, pets, ideas, colours, sounds, smells, wishes, dreams, and more. Give them some time and encourage them to slow down and really experience their imaginings

before opening their eyes. Explain how we all carry these happy things with us in our hearts. Just imagining them can make us feel good.

Show and share the *Happy Heart Sample Worksheet* from the story. Have students complete their own [Happy Heart](#) including all the things they imagined and anything else they think of while being creative. Challenge them to use different shapes, colours, words and images. Source: www.redsandkids.com



Extension Activity: Start a classroom list of favourite activities that can help students turn their attention away from their uncomfortable feelings. Post this list in the classroom so that your students can continue to add to the list over time. This will help students form a connection between feeling troubled and doing something to make themselves feel better.

5. Curriculum Connection: Feelings Games

Feelings Bingo

To Make: Print out the [Feelings Bingo Game Cards](#) on cardstock paper, laminate, and cut out the single cards.
To Play: Give each student (or pairs of students) a bingo card. If you have more than four players (teams) you will have more than one winner at once. Draw one card at a time and show all students. As the card is shown, students can identify the emotion and mark that picture on their bingo card. The first student (team) to have a row of three wins.
Source: www.dorkydoodles.com (Melissa Bastow, 2013)



Emotions Charades

Hand out [Emotions Flash Cards](#) to the class (one card per student). Students take turns acting out an emotion using only facial expressions and body language (no talking) and the rest of the class tries to guess what he/she is feeling.

I Have, Who Has

Hand out [I Have, Who Has](#) cards to the class (one card per student, up to 20). On each card, students have an emotion that corresponds to a description on another person's card. Players will need to look at other players' cards to find the feeling that corresponds to the description on their card. Players will be looking for the emotions that corresponds to the description they have, while providing the emotion that corresponds to someone else's description. Source: Teachers Pay Teachers (Counselor Chelsey, 2016)

Guess the Feeling

Hand out [Emotions Flash Cards](#) to the class (one card per student). Students will act like they are experiencing the feeling on their cards. While continuing to act out their feelings, students must travel to other students in their group and try to figure out the feelings they have by asking questions and/or reading nonverbal cues. Once students figure out which feeling someone has, they will record that person's name and the feeling they have on the [Guess the Feeling Game Recording Sheet](#). Once the activity is over, go over the answers as a group. Source: Teachers Pay Teachers (Counselor Chelsey, 2016)

Emotions Go Fish

To Make: Print out [Emotions Go Fish](#) cards on cardstock paper, laminate, and cut.

To Play: Divide students into small groups. Shuffle the cards and deal 5 cards to each player. Place the rest of the cards face down in a pile. If students are having a hard time holding cards, use a folder for each to put their cards behind so they can lay face up on the table without being seen by the other players. Each player checks their cards to see if they have a match. If they do, they set those cards aside. Each player then takes a turn saying another player's name and asking if they have the same card as they have. "Samuel, do you have sad?" If the other player does, he or she gives the card to the player that asked. The player then sets aside the match and takes another turn. If the other player did not have the card, then he replies, "Go fish." The player who asked for the card then draws a card from the pile. If the card makes a match, the player adds it to his or her matches. Play continues until everyone is out of cards. The player with the most matches wins. Source: www.AutismInspiration.com

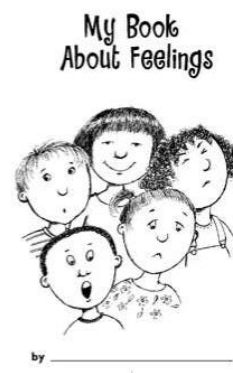
6. Curriculum Connection: My Book About Feelings

Key Questions:

- What scares you?
- What makes you happy and joyful?
- What makes you sad and blue?
- What makes you laugh?
- What makes you mad or angry?
- What is the best feeling you ever had?

ELA/Health Activity: Invite students to compete [My Book About My Feelings](#) (Scholastic).

Extension Activity: Help students understand various emotions by asking them to write an acrostic poem in which each letter of an emotion's name would represent a reason for feeling that way. For example, G in guilt could start the phrase "Gave away my friend's secret."



7. Curriculum Connection: I Feel Statements

Key Message: Putting your feelings into words (affect labeling) can help you feel better.

ELA/Health Activity: Teach students how to express their feelings effectively using I-Feel statements. For example:

I feel ____, because _____. I want/need _____.

I feel ____, when you _____ because _____. I need you to please _____.

If desired, students could use the templates provided on the [I Feel Statement Cards](#) and/or [I-Feel Practice](#) handouts to practice this skill.

8. Closing Activities

Health Activity: Watch Story Bot's [Emotions](#) video (Time 11:08).

Art/Health/Physical Education Activity: Participate in song and dance.

[Feelings Song](#) (Patty Shukla's YouTube Channel) Time 3:28

Supplemental Books:

- *Lots of Feelings* (Shelley Rotner, 2003) [L4U](#)
- *What's That Look on Your Face* (Cherryl Kachenmeister, 1989) [L4U](#)
- *On Monday When It Rained* (Kachenmeister and Berthiaume, 2004) [L4U](#)
- [In My Heart: A Book of Feelings](#) (Jo Witek, 2014).
- *I Have Feelings* (Kalmon) EPIC
- *What I Look Like When I Am Sad, Confused, Scared, Happy* (Randolph) EPIC
- *Afraid, Happy, Sad, Surprised* (Murray) EPIC

Supplemental Activities:

- [My Emotions Emergent Reader](#)
- [Snowman Emotions](#)
- [Emotions Playdough Mats](#)
- [Color By Code Emotions](#)
- [Emotions Match Clip Cards](#)
- [Exploring Feelings Game](#)
- [Feelings Game](#)

MODULE TWO

What is Worry?

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the concept of worry (a normal feeling experienced by everyone).
- Students will understand that some worries can be helpful while others are not helpful.
- Students will increase their emotions vocabulary (e.g., worry, stress, fear, nervous, anxious).
- Students will be introduced to some effective coping strategies (e.g., listen to music, talk to someone you trust, draw a picture, give your worry away to someone/something else, distract yourself by doing something you enjoy, hand exercises, physical activity, and visualization).

Materials:

- Books: *Dealing With Feeling Worried* and/or [*When I Feel Worried*](#)
- Videos: [*Word of the Day*](#) (Sesame Street, Time 1:46), [*Calming Hand Exercises*](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 1:22), [*Don't Worry Be Happy*](#) and [*Happy*](#) (Music Express)
- Handouts: [*Worried Colouring Page*](#), [*My Worries*](#), [*Colouring Bookmarks*](#)
- Worry Doll/Warrior supplies (large wooden popsicle sticks, yarn and/or washi tape, buttons, stickers, fine point markers, and glue)
- Unlined Paper
- Scissors, Pencils, and Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers

1. Introduction: Word of the Day (Anxious)

ELA/Health Activity: Watch [*Word of the Day*](#) (Sesame Street, Time 1:46).

Key Question:

What does it mean to feel anxious?

- Anxiety is a normal feeling that everyone experiences, even adults. It happens when we feel worried or nervous that something may or may not happen.
- Some people use other words to describe feeling anxious such as stress, fear, and worry. These words are all related, so we can think of them a family (e.g., Mama Stress, Papa Anxious, Little Miss Worry, and Little Mister Fear).

ELA/Health Activity: Invite students to draw and label the “Worry Family”.

Extension Activity: [*Worried Colouring Page*](#)

2. Curriculum Connection: Read Aloud

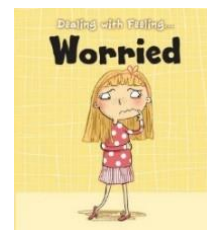
ELA/Health Activity: Read *Dealing With Feeling Worried* (Isabel Thomas, 2013) and/or [*When I Feel Worried*](#) (Cornelia Spelman, 2014).

**If using the read aloud, omit the discussion at the end.*

Key Questions:

What is worry?

- Worry is a feeling that happens when your brain becomes stuck on something and decides that it needs to be afraid.
- Worries are about something that MIGHT happen. They often start with the words...WHAT IF (e.g., What if I get hurt? What if I get in trouble?)
- **Most worries don't come true!!**



What do people worry about?

- Everyone worries are a little bit different, but there are some common things that people tend to worry about at certain ages.
- For example: **2-4 years old:** fear of the potty, the dark, weather, and loud noises; **5-7 years old:** fear of the dark, doctors and needles, bugs and animals; **8-11 years old:** fear of bad guys, being home alone, being laughed at.


3. Curriculum Connection: Draw Your Worries

Key Messages:

One way to feel better when you are worried is to talk to a safe person (e.g., parent, teacher, or friend). No worry is too weird! Sometimes it helps to draw your worry first.

Art/ELA/Health Activity: Invite students to draw their worries and list the names of safe people to talk to. Pets can be great listeners too! If wanted, students could use the [My Worries](#) handout to complete this activity. Encourage students to show their pictures to someone they trust.

MY WORRIES
One way to squash your PEEKY worries is to talk about them with a safe person you trust. Sometimes it makes it easier if you draw your worries first. Draw Your Worries in the Box Below



Who are some safe people you could show your picture to?

Extension Activity: Post two large pieces of paper on the classroom wall. Title them “Worries that Happened Today” and “Worries That Didn’t Happen Today”. Invite students to put a checkmark on the “DIDN’T happen” sheet of paper every time they have a worry that doesn’t happen. Every time their worry does happen, they can put a checkmark on the “happened” sheet of paper. If it does happen, students could also write down how bad it was on a scale of 1-10. By the end of the day, students should start to see a pattern. **Things you worry about might occasionally happen, but they often aren’t nearly as bad as you thought they would be.**

4. Curriculum Connection: Worry Dolls/Warriors

Note. The ability to put worries aside, temporarily, can be very effective in helping children process stressful thoughts.



Art/ELA/Health/Social Studies Activity: Let students know that it can be helpful to give their worries away for a bit so they can take a little vacation, or a rest from their worries. Review *The Legend of the Worry Doll* (below) and invite students to make their own Worry Dolls/Warriors using large wooden popsicle sticks, yarn or washi tape, buttons, stickers, glue, and fine point markers.



THE LEGEND OF THE WORRY DOLL

The indigenous people from the Highlands in Guatemala created Worry Dolls many generations ago as a remedy for worrying. According to the Mayan legend, when worrying keeps a person awake, he or she tells a worry to as many dolls as necessary. Then the worrier places the dolls under his or her pillow. The dolls take over the worrying for the person who then sleeps peacefully through the night. When morning breaks, the person awakens without the worries that the dolls took away during the night. Shamans Market (2015) <http://blog.shamansmarket.com/the-legend-of-the-worry-dolls/>



5. Curriculum Connection: Song and Dance

Key Message: It can be helpful to distract ourselves from our worries by doing something we enjoy (e.g., singing and dancing).

Art/Health/Physical Education Activity: Participate in song and dance.

[Don't Worry Be Happy](#) (Music Express Magazine) [Happy](#) (Music Express Magazine)

Extension Activity: Invite students to use colouring as a distraction technique. Print off [colouring bookmarks](#) on cardstock and encourage students to complete them in their spare class time.

6. Curriculum Connection: Hand Exercises

Key Message:

Hand exercises are a great way to focus and relax ourselves when we are feeling worried about something. This is the reason that many people enjoy using fidgets. Here are some ideas for times you do not have a fidget with you.

- Push hands together
- Pull hands apart
- Squeeze fingers
- Put on imaginary gloves and take them off
- Spider push-ups
- Make circles on your hand
- Touch each finger to each thumb
- Play an imaginary piano

Health/Physical Education Activity: Practice each technique with students. Encourage students to use these exercises at home and school. Each of these techniques are demonstrated on [Calming Hand Exercises](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 1:22).

Extension Activity: Make stress balls using balloons and playdough. Invite students to roll playdough into snakes and then stuff inside a balloon. Younger students will likely require assistance with this activity.

7. Curriculum Connection: Comfort Zone Collage

Key Message:

Picturing pleasant things in our minds is a fun and easy way to feel better when we are worried or afraid of something. For example:

- Think about your favourite place
- Think about your favourite stuffed animal
- Think about a pet

Art/ELA/Health Activity: Invite students to create a “Comfort Zone” collage by drawing or cutting out pictures from old magazines of things that make them relaxed, comfortable, and happy. Display collages in the classroom so students can reference them often.

Supplemental Books:

- *Sometimes I’m Scared* (Jane Annunziata and Marc Nemiroff, 2009) [L4U](#)
- *Wemberley Worried* (Kevin Henkes, 2010) [L4U](#)

Supplemental Activities:

- Make **Worry Stones**, smooth stones people rub to help with anxiety and stress relief. See [How to Make Worry Stones](#) for instructions to make worry stones using polymere clay.
- Make **Dream Catchers**, a Native American tradition that has been around for many generations. See [PBS Parents Crafts for Kids](#) for instructions to make dream catchers using paper plates and yarn.



Instructions

- 1 Cut a hole in the center of the plate, leaving about two inches of edging. Punch holes around the inside edge.
- 2 Paint the remainder (rim) of the plate. This will serve as your base.
- 3 Tie a piece of yarn to the end of a feather while the plate is drying. The length of the yarn will determine how far down your dream catcher hangs.
- 4 String beads onto the yarn. When you’re finished, tie several knots at the loose end of the string to act as a stopper and secure the beads in place. (Tip: Roll a piece of tape around the tip of the yarn, like an aglet on a shoelace, before starting. This helps young kids slide the beads on, saving time—and frustration!)
- 5 Repeat step 4 until you have your desired number of strands.
- 6 When the paint has dried, randomly string your remaining yarn through the holes bordering the plate. Add a few beads or stickers for extra decoration if you like.
- 7 Punch one hole for each beaded strand of yarn at the bottom of the plate and tie on your strands of beaded, feathered yarn.



MODULE THREE

Meet Your Brain

Objectives:

- Students will realize that the brain helps us manage personal thoughts and feelings.
- Students will label various parts of the brain (e.g., Prefrontal Cortex, Amygdala, and Hippocampus) and identify their function.
- Students will understand that the prefrontal cortex shuts down during times of stress. This is the reason it is difficult to concentrate when we are worried.

Materials:

- Videos: [Anxiety in Kids](#) (Sleek Geeks, Time 3:10), [Parts of the Brain](#) (MindUp, Time 1:03), [The Brain](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 3:59), [Hand Model of the Brain](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 1:44), [Mind Jar](#) (SRPSD Student, Time 1:35)
- Handouts: [Brain Colouring Page](#), [Brain Power!](#)
- Brain Model or [Diagram](#) (see image)
- Sample 'Mind Jar' (see instructions below)
- Mind Jar supplies (plastic jars, clear glue, water, glycerin, and glitter)
- Pencils and Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers

1. Introduction: Where Does Worry Come From?

Health Activity: Watch [Anxiety in Kids](#) (Sleek Geeks, Time 3:10)

Key Questions:

What is worry/anxiety?

- A normal feeling that everyone experiences.
- Similar to feeling shy, afraid, scared, stressed, nervous, or uneasy.
- Feels like butterflies in your stomach.

Where does anxiety come from?

- Our brain!
- Different parts of our brain do different things.
- The Limbic System controls emotions like fear, anger, stress, and anxiety.

How common is anxiety?

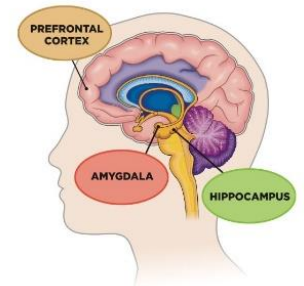
- One in eight kids have anxiety.

What are some things that cause anxiety in kids your age?

- Going to school and being away from your parents.
- Making new friends.
- Getting into trouble.
- Bullying.
- Fear of the dark, bugs, and clowns.

What are some things we can do to help anxiety go away?

- Talk to someone you trust about your worries.
- Deep Breathing: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and breathe out for 8 seconds.



2. Discussion: Meet Your Brain

** If possible, display brain model or diagram for students to reference.*

Health Activity: Explain that together the class will learn about some parts of the brain and what each part does. Give each student a copy of [Brain Power!](#) (MindUP, 2011). Introduce the three key parts of the brain involved in thinking and acting.

Optional Videos:

[Parts of the Brain](#) MindUp Video (Time 1:03)

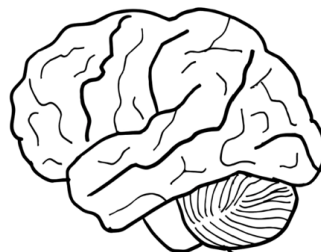
[The Brain](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 3:59)

Key Concepts:

Our brains have three important parts that work together to take care of us.

- The **Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)** is located in the front of our brain, right behind your forehead. This is where thinking happens. It is used to figure things out and make good decisions, and that is why some people call it our ‘Wise Owl’ or ‘The Smart One’.
- The **Hippocampus** is located towards the middle of our brains. It stores and organizes our memories. Some people think of the hippocampus as our ‘Librarian’ - and our memories are the books in the library.
- The **Amygdala** is located right behind our ears. It is small and looks like an almond. Some people like to think of the amygdala as a security guard. Its job is to protect you. It lets the rest of your body know if you are in danger by triggering an ‘alarm switch’. It’s loyal and dependable. No matter what the worry is, the amygdala always responds the same way. *(It might be useful to flip a light switch to illustrate this point.)*

Health/Art/ELA Activity: Draw a picture of your brain. Highlight the amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and hippocampus with different colours. If wanted, the [Brain Colouring Page](#) could be used as a template for this activity.



Extension Activity: Imagine a scary situation. Draw a speech balloon to each part of your brain. Write about how each part reacts. (The MindUP Curriculum: Grade Prek-2, The Hawm Foundation: Scholastic Teaching Resources, 2011)

Health/Art/ELA Activity: Write about or draw a favourite memory that is stored in your Hippocampus. Why do you think your PFC chose to save that memory? (The MindUP Curriculum: Grade Prek-2, The Hawm Foundation: Scholastic Teaching Resources, 2011)

ELA/Health Activity: Imagine you’re the amygdala, PFC, and hippocampus are superheroes. Give each a name and explain its role. (The MindUP Curriculum: Grade Prek-2, The Hawm Foundation: Scholastic Teaching Resources, 2011)

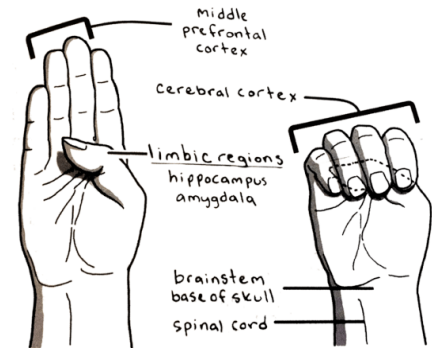
2. Curriculum Connection: Hand Model of the Brain

Health Activity: Explain to students that we can use our hands to represent our brain (see image).

Optional Video: [Hand Model of the Brain](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 1:44)

Concepts:

- Fold your thumb across your palm. The middle part of your brain is where the Amygdala and Hippocampus are located.
- Fold your fingers over your thumb so you have a fist. The outer layer of your brain is called the Cortex. The PFC is located on the front of the middle two fingers. It is where our thinking and planning happens.
- When we are really worried or upset, our Amygdala takes over. The PFC shuts down and loses control.
- Lift the fingers up so they are straight and the thumb is still across the palm. We say, "We flip our lid."
- When we calm down, our Amygdala slows down and allows the PFC to do its job.



Note. "The Brain in the Palm of the Hand" is the work of Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., first published in his book, *Parenting from the Inside Out* (2003) and more recently published in *The Whole-Brain Child* (2011).

8. Curriculum Connection: Mind Jars

Optional Demonstration Video: [Mind Jar](#) (Time 1:35)

Key Concepts:

- Show students a sample 'Mind Jar' with the glitter settled at the bottom.
- Explain that the jar represents their mind, the water is their brain and the glitter is their feelings.
- While their emotions (glitter) are calm and quiet at the bottom of the jar, their brain (water) is clear and focused and is able to concentrate and learn.
- Shake the jar and explain to students that their minds are sometimes full of strong emotions (e.g., worry and anger) that spin around madly inside their head just like the glitter in the jar.
- When our emotions are strong, our amygdala is working too hard. It is difficult for the PFC to do its job.
- It helps to take a few minutes to breathe slowly and let our minds settle so that we can see things clearly again.

** Keep a mind jar within the classroom "Calm Down Spot" for students to access as needed.*

Health/Art Activity: Make Mind Jars.

- Steps: Fill a clear plastic container with water until it's about 3/4 full. Squeeze in about one tablespoon of glycerin, and your clear glue (approx. 1-2 Tbsp. to start; the more glue, the slower the glitter falls so be careful not to add too much or it won't move), glitter and a few drops of food colouring (optional). Whisk or stir until the glue has dissolved and screw the lid on tightly. Give it a good shake to see the effect and add more glitter if needed. Once you're happy with the result and how long the glitter takes to settle, top up the jar with water. Once it's cool, screw the lid on tightly. You might like to glue it shut if you're concerned about little hands being able to undo it.

Supplemental Book:

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain (JoAnn Deak, 2010) [Sora](#), L4U

A Walk in the Rain with a Brain (Edward Hallowell, 2004) L4U

MODULE FOUR

THE WORRY RESPONSE

Objectives:

- Students will begin to understand how the human body responds to worry (fight-flight-freeze response).
- Students will be able to describe what worry feels like in their body.
- Students will use common and accurate language to talk about the fight-flight-freeze response (e.g., adrenaline, cortisol, heart rate, and digestion).
- Students will identify where various organs are located in their bodies (e.g., brain, heart, stomach, kidneys, and adrenal glands).

Materials:

- Videos: [The Fight, Flight, or Freeze Response](#), [The Fight or Flight Response](#)
- Handouts: [How Does Worry Make Your Body Feel?](#), [Worry Checklist](#), [Full Body Playdough Mats](#)
- Pencils and Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers
- Playdough in various colours

1. Curriculum Connection: The Worry Response

Health Activity: Explain that together the class will learn about what happens in our bodies when we feel stressed or worried. Watch [The Fight, Flight, or Freeze Response](#) (Anxiety Canada, Time 2:12).

Key Questions:

What is anxiety?

- Anxiety is a normal feeling that everyone experiences, even adults. It happens when we are scared or nervous about what is happening or might happen.
- Anxiety can feel a different for each person but it usually doesn't feel very nice.
- Maybe your palms get sweaty, or your body tenses up, or maybe you get a stomach ache. Sometimes your mind goes blank and you can't talk.

Is anxiety bad? NO!

- The fight, flight, or freeze thing is pretty cool. It's like having superhero powers that you can activate when you need to activate.
- All those uncomfortable feelings in your body happen because your brain thinks you are in danger and it wants to protect you. Anxiety is the body's way of making you more alert and ready to take on a challenge.
- When our muscles tense up and we sweat, it gets us ready to do a lot of exercise. Which is helpful if we need to run away from something dangerous or fight back.
- Sometimes our minds go blank and we feel like we can't move or talk. That would be great if we needed to hide, instead we just feel stuck.
- The problem with anxiety is... sometimes your brain gets confused and it can't tell the difference between a real dangers and false alarms, like starting a new school, and writing a spelling test.

What happens in our bodies when we enter fight, flight, or freeze mode?

Optional Video: [The Fight or Flight Response](#) (Heather Jeancart, Time 4:02).

- When you are worried, our amygdala assumes you are in danger and takes over.
- It triggers and an alarm system in our body that leads to a lot of changes.

- First, the adrenal glands are told to release two important hormones called Adrenaline and Cortisol. These glands are located on top of your kidneys, just behind your lower ribs. Think of them as spray bottles that squirt super power chemicals into your body so that you are turbo charged.
- The adrenaline and cortisol hitch a ride through your body in your bloodstream and deliver the message to all your body parts to PREPARE FOR DANGER!!!
- In response to this message, your body reacts by making you stronger:
 - First, blood moves quickly to your big muscles to make you strong. You may feel your heart is beating fast in your chest.
 - Next, your digestion stops for a few minutes to save energy for your large muscles, in case you need to use them. This can make your stomach feel weird, like there are butterflies inside. You might also feel sick, like you are going to throw up.
 - Your breathing will change from normal slow deep breaths to fast little breaths. This is because your body is sending more oxygen to your muscles to make them stronger. When this happens, you might feel out of breath and/or dizzy. You might also feel your face become warm.
 - Finally, your body tries to cool itself down so it doesn't overheat. You may start to sweat.

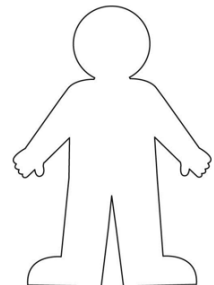
9. Curriculum Connection: How Does Worry Make Your Body Feel?

Key Questions:

Think back to a time you were worried or scared.

- How did your body feel?
- How did your head and neck feel?
- How about your face?
- Your arms and hands?
- How did your legs and feet feel?
- Your stomach?

How Does Worry Make Your Body Feel?
 Draw and write what you feel happens to your body when you worry.
 Everybody's body has different reactions to worry. It could be that your heart
 beats really fast, your mind feels like it's racing, or your stomach feels weird. How
 does your body react to worry?



Health/Art/ELA Activity: Invite students to draw and label what happens to their bodies when they worry. If wanted, students could use the [How Does Worry Make Your Body Feel?](#) handout as a template for this activity. Encourage students to show their drawings to someone else and explain.

Extension Activity: [Worry Checklist](#)

10. Curriculum Connection: Playdough Worry Response

Art/Health Activity: Invite students to recreate the worry response (fight, flight, or freeze) using play dough and washable markers. [Full Body Playdough Mats](#) could be used as template for this activity. Source: Kate Fairlie (2014)

10. Closing Activity

ELA/Health Activity: Read *Hey Warrior: A Book for Kids About Anxiety* (Karen Young, 2017) L4U

Supplemental Book:

Please Explain Anxiety to Me! Simple Biology and Solutions for Children and Parents (Zelinger and Zelinger, 2010) [Sora](#)

MODULE FIVE

The Worry Monster

Objectives:

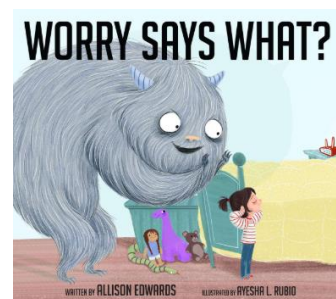
- Students will be introduced to the “Worry Monster”, a child friendly explanation for anxiety.
- Students will practice externalizing negative feelings such as worry, apprehension, fear, and anxiety.
- Students will begin to understand “The Power of Yet”, a simple and effective strategy for overcoming challenges.
- Students will practice talking back to their worries and engaging in positive self-talk.

Materials:

- Book: [*Worry Says What?*](#) (Allison Edwards, 2018)
- Videos: [*The Worry Monster, SRPSD Grade Three Student Describes His Worry Monster, Talking Back to Your Worry Monster, The power of 'yet' with Zoe and Elmo from Sesame Street, Small Talk - Mistakes, Sesame Street: Janelle Monae - Power of Yet, C.J. Luckey's The Power of Mistakes - Official Music Video*](#)
- Handouts: [*The Power of Yet, Positive self-talk statements, Worry Says*](#)
- Pencils and Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers
- Unlined paper

1. Curriculum Connection: Read Aloud

ELA/Health Activity: Read [*Worry Says What?*](#) (Allison Edwards, 2018). Invite students to pay attention to the size of the worry monster throughout the story.



Key Questions:

What is a worry monster?

- A ‘Worry Monster’ is a silly little critter that loves to tell us things to worry about.
- We all have a worry monster. The more we worry, the bigger our worry monster becomes. When we ignore our worry monster and face our fears, it loses its power over us and shrink.

Close your eyes and imagine your worry monster.

- What does he or she look like?
- Is it a mean, ugly creature with smelly breath and long claws?
- Is it a dark blob, like a cloud person who keeps raining worries down on you?
- What colour is your worry monster?
- Is it soft and fuzzy or hard and prickly? How big is it? Does it have a face? Eyes? Ears? What about arms and legs?

2. Curriculum Connection: Draw Your Worry Monster

Optional Videos: [*SRPSD Grade Three Student Describes His Worry Monster*](#) (Time 0:38), [*The Worry Monster*](#) (Heather Jeancart, Time 1:52),

Health/Art Activity: Have students draw name their worry monster. Some examples may include a fuzzy little worry monster or gremlin, an annoying buzzing bee, a security guard, a guard dog, a fierce knight, a brain bug, Mrs. What If?, Mr. Everything Must Be Perfect Etc.



3. Discussion: Worry Monster Secrets

Do you want to know some secrets about the worry monster?

1. Worry monsters love to be taken seriously. They think they are very important and scary, but they are really just silly little critters who are NOT scary at all! The more you laugh at your worry monster the smaller he/she will become. The worry monster wants you to take him seriously, so do the opposite and make fun of him.
2. Worry monsters wants you to pay attention to them. Show your worry monster who is boss by ignoring him and doing something you enjoy. Play with your favorite toy, go outside, read a book, watch TV, or ask your parents if you can help make dinner. The worry monster might continue to talk to you because he wants you to listen to him, so do the opposite and tell him to “get lost” and pay attention to something else instead.
3. Worry monsters love to surprise you. If we expect our worry monsters to show up, they cannot surprise us anymore. You’ll know when they are sneaking in because our bodies will tell us (e.g., knots in your stomach, headache, sweating, shortness of breath, etc.)
4. Worry monsters think it is fun to trick us, so they exaggerate and lie. They want us to believe the most terrible thing will definitely happen, when really that terrible thing is very unlikely to happen. You can’t always trust your worry monster.

The following stories could be used to encourage students laugh at their worry monster:

Billy Monster’s Daymare (Alan Durant and Ross Collins 2007) L4U

Monsters Love Underpants (Claire Freedman & Ben Cort, 2015) Sora

3. Curriculum Connection: Role Play

Optional Video: [Talking Back to Your Worry Monster](#) (Krista Cochrane and Heather Jeancart, Time 5:47)

Health/Art Activity: “When your worry monster visits you, you can laugh at him (because he’s SILLY), shake him off, and tell him to GET OUT OF HERE!” Invite students to role play different ways to shake off their worry monster and talk back to it. For example, students could say:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ○ I don’t believe you! You lie. I’m not going to listen to you anymore. | ○ That’s a bunch of garbage. Leave me alone. |
| ○ Get lost. Go away. SCRAM! | ○ I am brave. I can do hard things. |
| ○ I can’t do this, YET! | ○ You’re so boring, you say the same thing all the time. |
| ○ Thanks, but I’ve got this, I don’t need your help. I can do this. | ○ I don’t have to be perfect to be amazing. |

Note. It is important to encourage students to shake off their worry monster (shaking vigorously, even for a few minutes, helps release contraction of muscles). If their worry monster is still hanging on, students can flick their worry monster off their shoulder with their finger and squash it with their foot.

4. Curriculum Connection: The Power of Yet/Mistakes

Health Activity: Watch [The power of 'yet' with Zoe and Elmo from Sesame Street](#) (Time 3:31) and/or [Small Talk - Mistakes](#) (Time 2:27).

Key Messages:

- Mistakes are part of learning.
- When we believe we can do something and we keep trying, our brain will grow and learn new things.
- Saying 'yet' after talking about things we cannot do, helps us find the courage to keep trying.
- The power of yet also helps to make our worry monsters go away.

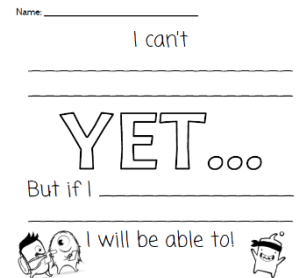
Extension Activity: Read the [Power of Yet poem](#). Invite students create their own statements using the power of yet. If wanted, [The Power of Yet](#) handout could be used as a template for this activity.

Extension Activity: Participate in song and dance.

[Sesame Street: Janelle Monae - Power of Yet](#) (Time 2:41)

[C.J. Luckey's The Power of Mistakes - Official Music Video](#) (Time 3:14)

Extension Activity: Invite students to colour [positive self-talk statements](#) and display throughout the school and/or classroom.

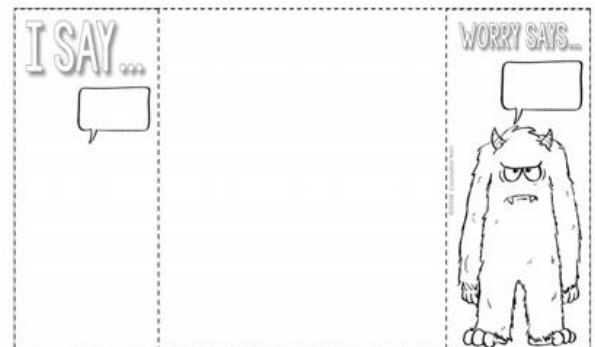


5. Curriculum Connection: Worry Says... I Say

Health/ELA Activity: Invite students to create counter statements to their worries. If wanted, the [Worry Says](#) handout could be used as a template for this activity.

Directions:

- Have students cut out the whole rectangle shape and fold on the dotted lines.
- Under the Worry Says.... flap, students record the things their Worry Monster says to them. For example, students might write, *Worry Says... I will never understand math.*
- Under the I Say....flap, students write the counter messages that they might say. For example, students might write, *I Say... I won't give up because I can do things that are hard, or I do not understand math YET!*
- Challenge students to generate more 'I Say' statements than 'Worry Says' statements.



NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

What is the purpose of labelling anxiety as a Worry Monster?

- This activity is important as it will help students to separate themselves from their anxiety, to feel as though something else is the problem, not them. It also demystifies their discomfort. Rather than it being a scary ‘thing’ that bothers them, it’s something contained - with a name and a look.

Who needs to call the Worry Monster by its name?

- Anyone who has direct conversations with students about their anxiety should refer to the anxiety by the monster’s name. This creates a dynamic where students will understand that you are not angry with them. Rather, you are irritated with the “Worry Monster” because it is bullying your student and/or your classroom in that moment.

Supplemental Books:

- *Keep Calm: My Stress Busting Tips* (Geno Bellisario, 2014) [Epic](#)
- *I Think, I AM! Teaching Kids the Power of Affirmations* (Louise Hay and Kristina Tracy, 2008) [Sora](#) and L4U

MODULE SIX

False Alarms

Objectives:

- Students will learn how to differentiate ‘danger worries’ from ‘false alarms’.
- Students will be introduced to an effective coping strategy, belly breathing.

Materials:

- PowerPoint Presentation: [Real or False Alarm](#)
- Videos: [Balloon Breathing](#), [Animal Friend Breathing](#), [Hot Cocoa Breathing](#), [Pinwheel Breathing](#), [Box Breathing](#), [Lazy 8 Breathing](#)
- Deep Breathing Cue Cards

1. Introduction: Is it a Real or False Alarm?

Health Activity: Share the [Real or False Alarm PowerPoint](#) presentation with students.

Key Question:

How can you tell the difference between a real alarm and a false alarm?

- If you are in danger, it is a real alarm.
- If you are not in danger, it is probably a false alarm.

2. Curriculum Connection: Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

Key Concepts:

- Unfortunately, the amygdala doesn’t know the difference between real dangers (something that can hurt you) and “false alarms” (something that won’t hurt you).
- Have you ever made toast that has got a bit burnt and set off the fire alarm? The fire alarm can’t tell the difference between smoke from a fire and smoke from birthday candles or burnt toast - and it doesn’t care. All it wants to do is let you know so you can get out of there.
- The amygdala works the same way. It can’t tell the difference between something that might hurt you, like a wild dog, and something that won’t, like being at a new school.
- Any worry can trigger your amygdala to set off your worry alarm.

Health Activity: Ask students to use thumbs up/thumbs down to identify the following scenarios as Real Dangers or False Alarms. Examples:

- A tiger is chasing you
- You have a spelling test tomorrow
- A wild dog is chasing you
- You are nervous about starting a new school
- The barbeque is on fire
- The teacher asks you to read in front of the class
- An angry swarm of bees is chasing you
- The school is having a fire drill

Key Question: Can anyone give other examples of a Real Danger? False Alarm?

3. Curriculum Connection: Deep Breathing Exercises

Note: Deep breathing (belly breathing) and the fight or flight response to stress are mutually exclusive, meaning they can't occur together at the same time. When our bodies switch into fight or flight mode, we engage in shallow breathing. On the other hand, belly breathing reduces our heart rate and triggers the relaxation response (parasympathetic nervous system).

Health Activity: Introduce students to deep breathing, an effective strategy for disengaging false alarms. The [Balloon Breathing](#) (Krista Cochrane, Time 2:22) video may be helpful when explaining this concept.

Key Concepts:

- When we have false alarms we can help our bodies feel better by turning off our worry response.
- The quickest way to do this is by taking some deep breaths. Deep/Belly Breathing slows down our heart and relaxes our body. It is a great way to calm down when you have strong uncomfortable feelings (e.g., worry and anger).

Note. The following exercises could be incorporated into your daily morning routine. They could also be used after lunchtime or recess breaks to help settle students and prepare them for learning. Pick and choose which methods work best for your classroom.

1. **Balloon Breathing:** Pretend your belly is like a balloon. With your mouth closed, breathe in through your nose all the way down to your belly and fill your balloon. Repeat until your body feels relaxed. The Kids Help Phone website offers an [animated breathing balloon](#) that can be used as a visual aid while practicing this technique.
2. **Animal Friend Breathing:** This can be done with any kind of stuffed animal. Students will lie on their backs on the floor and place a stuffed animal on their bellies. Inhale for a count of 4, watching the animal rise up as their lungs are filled with air. Hold the breath for a count of 4 and then slowly release for a count of 7, watching the animal slowly fall back down. This method helps students to really visualize the rise and fall of their breaths.
Video Demonstration: [Animal Friend Breathing](#) (Time 0:39)
3. **Hot Cocoa Breathing** - Pretend to hold a mug in front of your face. Breathe in (sniff) through your nose to smell the delicious aromas. Breathe out (blow) through your mouth to cool it off before you take a sip!
Video Demonstration: [Hot Cocoa Breathing](#) (Time 1:16)
4. **Pinwheel Breathing** - Breathe in deeply through your nose and expand your belly, then breathe out to turn the pinwheel. Students can practice breathing out slowly or more quickly, using the speed of the pinwheel as a measure.
Video Demonstration: [Pinwheel Breathing](#) (Vero's Corner, Time 4:38)

Extension Activity: Have students make their own [pinwheels](#) to use while they practice deep breathing.

5. **Box/Square Breathing:** Trace your finger around a square, starting with the bottom left corner. Inhale going up, hold for 4 seconds, then exhale going down and hold for 4 seconds.

Video Demonstration: [Box Breathing](#)

6. **Lazy 8 Breathing:** For a silent, seated breathing exercise students can do anywhere, practice lazy 8 breathing. Give students a printable of the number 8 lying on its side. Students begin on one side of the 8, tracing it with their fingers. They will inhale as they trace half of the 8 and exhale as they trace the other half of the 8. Teachers Pay Teachers offers free [Breathing Boards](#) that can be used as a visual aid while practicing this technique.

Video Demonstration: [Lazy 8 Breathing](#) (Sabrina Kenny Time 0:38)

Note. Visuals (see Deep Breathing Cue Cards) can be used for individual students, placed in a calm down spot for a visual reminder, sent home with students to show their parents, etc.

4. Closing Activity: Book

ELA/Health Activity: Read [My Magic Breath](#) (Nick Ortner, 2018) Sora

Health Activity: Watch "[Just Breathe](#)" by Julie Bayer Salzman & Josh Salzman (Wavecrest Films, Time 3:41).

Supplemental Books:

- *Help! I've Got an Alarm Bell Going Off in My Head* (Aspden, 2016) L4U
- *Sea Otter Cove* (Lori Lite, 2008) L4U

Deep Breathing Cue Cards

These cards could be used as visual cues for deep breathing techniques. Cut out each card, laminate, and attach using a binder clip or enlarge images and post within the classroom.



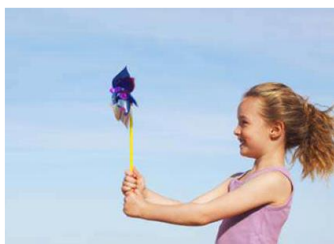
Balloon
Breathing



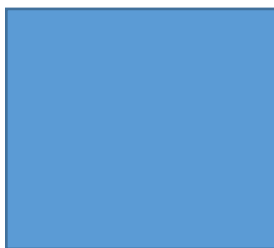
Hot Cocoa
Breathing



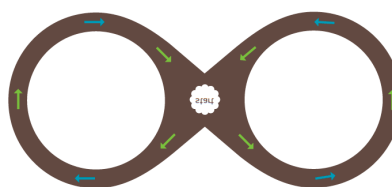
Stuffy Breathing



Pinwheel
Breathing



Box
Breathing



Lazy 8
Breathing

**Deep
Breathing**



MODULE SEVEN

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the concept of progressive muscle relaxation to use when having difficult feelings.
- Students will develop an awareness of the difference between “tense” and “relaxed” muscles.

Materials:

- Book: *Betty Spaghetti* (Counselor Keri, 2016)
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation Cue Cards

1. Introduction: Betti Spaghetti

ELA/Health Activity: “Today I’m going to introduce you to a new friend! Her name is Betti Spaghetti. Betti Spaghetti feels upset and angry sometimes, but she has an amazing way to handle those feelings. See if you can figure out how she does it as you listen to the story.” Read [Betti Spaghetti](#) (use mp4video, PPT, or printable story).

Key Questions:

How did Betti feel at the beginning of the story?

How was she feeling at the end of the story?

What did she do to change the way she was feeling?

2. Curriculum Connection: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

ELA/Health Activity: Invite students to practice tensing and relaxing their arms, hands, legs, feet, and face just like Betti Spaghetti.

Extension Activity: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script (for younger students)

“Start by imagining that you are a newly built snowman. Stand very still with your arms by your sides. Make all your muscles tense, like frozen snow and ice. Now imagine that the sun has come out and it is getting warmer and warmer. You are starting to melt, s-l-o-w-l-y until you are pools of melted snow on the floor. Flop gently on the floor letting your muscles go soft and floppy. Now the clouds come out and lots of snow falls so that you can be built up into a snowman again. Stand up tall and stiff. Shake your arms, hands, and legs, as if you are shaking the extra snow off.”

Extension Activity: Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script (for older students)

1. Pretend you have a lemon in each hand. Squeeze it hard. Try to get all the juice out! Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Don’t leave a single drop. Keep squeezing. (Hold for 10 seconds.) Now relax and let the lemon drop from your hand. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed. ** It may help to give students playdough or stress balls to hold as they practice squeezing and relaxing their hands.*

GIF <https://giphy.com/gifs/food-dairy-queen-dq-fWlesbav1qMk8>

1. Pretend you are a furry, lazy cat and you just woke up from a nap. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Now raise them way up high over your head. Stretch as high as you can. Feel the pull in your shoulders. Keep stretching (Hold for 10 seconds.) Let your arms drop and feel how good it is to be relaxed. It feels good to be warm and lazy.
GIF <https://gfycat.com/preciousgeneralcorydorascatfish>
2. Now pretend you are a turtle. Try to pull your head into your shell. Pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold it tight! (Hold for 10 seconds.) Okay, little turtle, you can come out now. Feel your shoulders relax.
GIF <https://giphy.com/gifs/head-turtle-shell-sfPLC3WxH1ARi>
3. Pretend that a hippo has decided to sit on your stomach. Hold your stomach as tight as you can. Keep holding (Hold for 10 seconds.) Thank gosh! The hippo has moved off your stomach. Let your stomach relax.
4. Now pretend that you are trying to eat a giant, hard carrot. It is very hard to chew. Slowly bite down on it as hard as you can. We want to turn that carrot into mush! Keep biting. (Hold for 10 seconds.) Good. Now relax, you've eaten the carrot eaten. Let yourself go as loose as you can.
GIF <http://mrwgifs.com/rachel-bilson-eating-a-carrot-on-the-o-c/>
** It may help to give students a safe chew toy as they practice squeezing and relaxing their jaws.*
5. Here comes a pesky old fly and he has landed on your nose! Try to get him off without using your hands. Wrinkle up your nose. Make it as wrinkly as you can. Notice that when you scrunch up your nose, your cheeks, your mouth, and your eyes are held up and they get tight, too. Good. You've chased him away. Now you can relax and let your whole face go smooth.

Note. Progressive Muscle Relaxation Cue Cards (see below) can be used as visual supports for individual students, placed in a calm down spot for a visual reminder, sent home with students to show their parents, etc.

Supplemental Book:

The Goodnight Caterpillar: A Children's Relaxation Story (Lori Lite, 2011) [L4U](#)

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Cue Cards

These cards could be used as visual cues for progressive muscle relaxation techniques. Cut out each card, laminate, and attach using a binder clip or enlarge images and post within the classroom.



Squeeze a
Lemon



Cat Stretch



Pull Your Head
into Your Shell



Hippo Sitting on
Your Stomach



Eat a
Crunchy Carrot



Fly on Your Nose

MODULE EIGHT

Bravery

Objectives:

- Students will increase their emotions vocabulary (e.g., bravery, courage).
- Students will be introduced to an effective coping strategy, facing their fears with bravery.

Materials:

- Video: [What Scares You?](#) (Small Talk, CBC Kids, Time 2:30), [Bravery](#) (K. Cochrane and H. Jeancart, Time 3:11)
- Book: *Scaredy Squirrel* (Geno Bellisario, 2014) [Epic](#)
- Handouts: [Bravery](#), [Coping Cards](#)
- Pencils and Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers

1. Introduction: Video

Health Activity: Watch [What Scares You?](#) (Small Talk, CBC Kids, Time 2:30)

Key Questions:

What advice would you give to other kids who are afraid of things?

Why is it important to get over our fears?

2. Curriculum Connection: Read Aloud

Key Message: Life can be more fun when we face our fears.
Bravery shrinks our worry monsters.

ELA/Health Activity: Read the book *Scaredy Squirrel* (Geno Bellisario, 2014) [Epic](#)

Key Questions:

What was Scaredy Squirrel afraid of about?

- Green martians, killer bees, sharks, Tarantulas, Poison Ivy, germs
- Leaving the nut tree

How did he conquer his fears?

- Bravery
- He found the courage to jump out of the nut tree and realized he could fly.



5. Curriculum Connection: Draw Your Bravery

Key Question:

- Have you ever used bravery to conquer one of your fears?
 - Examples could include:
 - Coming to school for the first time
 - Reading out loud in front of the class
 - Sleeping by yourself in your bed

Art/Health/ELA Activity: Have students draw a picture of a time that they were brave and list names of supportive people they could show their pictures to. The [Bravery](#) handout could be used as a template for this activity.

6. Curriculum Connection: Coping Cards

ELA/ART/Health: Have students design their own coping cards to use when their Worry Monster shows up. [Coping Cards](#) handouts could be used as templates for this activity.

Examples of coping strategies to include:

- Talk to someone you trust
- Draw your worry
- Tell you 'Worry Doll'
- Distract yourself by doing something you enjoy (e.g., colour, sing, dance, read, play sports)
- Belly Breathing
- Think about your favourite place
- Squeeze something (e.g., stress balls)
- Use hand exercises
- Stretch like a lazy cat waking up from a nap
- Pretend you are a turtle hiding in your shell
- Talk back to your worry monster
- Use bravery to face your fears

* Students could draw pictures of their chosen strategies. Another option could be to take photographs of students demonstrating these strategies and laminate for future use.

Worry: Coping Cards

When I feel _____ I can...	When I feel _____ I can...
When I feel _____ I can...	When I feel _____ I can...

Emotion Vocabulary: worried, scared, fearful, overwhelmed, apprehensive, anxious, stressed

7. Closing Activity

Health Activity: Watch [Bravery](#) (K. Cochrane and H. Jeancart, Time 3:11)

Art/Health Activity: [Draw Your Own Scaredy Squirrel](#)

Supplemental Books:

- *When Worry Takes Hold* (Liz Haske, 2017) *L4U*
- *Scaredy Squirrel* Book Series EPIC

Appendix A: Mandatory Book List

Mandatory Books:

Module 1

- I Have Feelings (Jana Hunter, 2002)
- The Way I feel (Janan Cain, 2000)
- Happy Hunting (Magee and Giovanni)

Module 2

- When I Feel Worried (Cornelia Spelman, 2014)
- Dealing With Feeling Worried (Isabel Thomas, 2013)

Module 5

- Worry Says What? (Allison Edwards, 2018)

Module 6

- My Magic Breath (Nick Ortner, 2018)

Module 8

- Scaredy Squirrel (Geno Bellisario, 2014) Available on Epic

Appendix B: Supplemental Book List

Link to [Inclusive Learning Team Library](#) (L4U)

Link to [Sora](#)

Link to [Epic](#)

Module 1

- Lots of Feelings (Shelley Rotner, 2003) L4U
- What's That Look on Your Face (Cherryl Kachenmeister, 1989) L4U
- On Monday When It Rained (Kachenmeister and Berthiaume, 2004) L4U
- I Have Feelings (Kalmon) EPIC
- What I Look Like When I Am Sad, Confused, Scared, Happy (Randolph) EPIC
- Afraid, Happy, Sad, Surprised (Murray) EPIC

Module 2

- Sometimes I'm Scared (Jane Annunziata and Marc Nemiroff, 2009) L4U
- Wemberley Worried (Kevin Hanks, 2010) L4U

Module 3

- Your Fantastic Elastic Brain (JoAnn Deak, 2010) Sora/Overdrive; L4U
- A Walk in the Rain With A Brain (Edward Hallowell, 2004) L4U

Module 4

- Please Explain Anxiety to Me! Simple Biology and Solutions for Children and Parents (Zelinger and Zelinger, 2010) Available through Sora
- Hey Warrior! A Book For Kids About Anxiety (Karen Young, 2017) L4U

Module 5

- Keep Calm: My Stress Busting Tips (Geno Bellisario, 2014) Epic
- I Think, I AM! Teaching Kids the Power of Affirmations (Louise Hay and Kristina Tracy, 2008) Sora; L4U
- Billy Monster's Daymare (Alan Durant and Ross Collins 2007) L4U
- Monsters Love Underpants (Claire Freedman & Ben Cort, 2015) Overdrive/ Sora

Module 6

- Sea Otter Cove (Lori Lite, 2008) L4U

Module 7

- The Goodnight Caterpillar: A Children's Relaxation Story (Lori Lite, 2011) L4U

Module 8

- When Worry Takes Hold (Liz Haske, 2017) L4U
- Scaredy Squirrel Book Series - Epic

