

Psychology Month, Dufferin-Peel C.D.S.B.

Stress and Worries: Too Much of a Good Thing?



It's normal to feel a little worried now and then. It can even be helpful, motivation to work harder. But too many worries can impact the ability to concentrate, learn, and remember, which can affect academic achievement.

Table with 2 columns: Normal Worries and Too Many Worries. It compares four types of worry, such as 'Occasional worry about circumstantial events' vs 'Frequent and exaggerated anticipatory worry'.

**Here are some classroom strategies that can help students learn to manage their worries before they get too big:**

1. Educate students about anxiety. Let them know everyone experiences anxiety sometimes, that it can be helpful at times, and that an anxiety free life is not realistic. Teach and discuss positive coping skills with your students.
2. Model positive ways to prevent and manage anxiety (e.g., self-talk).
3. Allow students to use coping strategies during particularly stressful events (e.g., when giving a speech or taking an exam). This might involve things like using a stress ball or listening to soothing music.
4. Teach relaxation tips (i.e., take a deep breath and count to 10; listen to music; take a deep breath, and then let out tension while exhaling; tense muscles for five seconds and release; visualize a peaceful and relaxing setting).



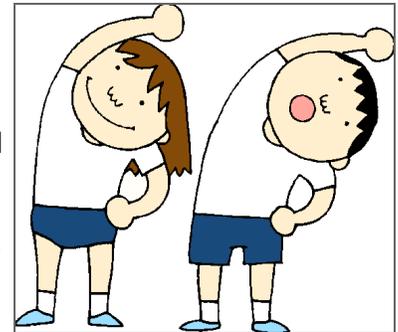
5. PRAISE! PRAISE! PRAISE! Praise students for their use of positive coping skills. Praise effort, not outcome.

6. Teach students to visualize success through mental rehearsals.

7. Teach students to focus their attention on a specific object (e.g., the sound of the heater, the way their body feels, etc.) and have them continue to focus on this one thing for several minutes.

8. Allow students opportunities to practice and apply coping strategies.

9. Provide an open-communication classroom.
10. Provide movement breaks. Physical activity helps relax both body and mind.
11. Get students involved. Being active in the community allows students to create a support network and gives them a break from everyday stress.
12. Invite support services staff into your classroom to help educate students and teach these skills.



The **FRIENDS** Program is a *school-based anxiety prevention* program for students designed to be implemented in the classroom. The program's goals are to prevent and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as promote a number of skill areas relevant to all students (e.g., positive thinking, problem-solving, emotional resilience, using peer support, conflict resolution, self-esteem, self-expression, building positive relationships with peers and adults). For more information contact your friendly school psychologist.

**Sabrina Moraes, PhD.**

For further information contact the psychology staff member at your school or Dr. Debra Lean, Chief Psychologist. You can access this or other interesting articles at: <http://w3.dpccsb.org/CEC/Programs/Special+Education/Support+Services/PSY/Resources.htm>