

# Let's talk about anxiety: curriculum guidance



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This document is for use alongside the Let's talk about anxiety toolkit. It should be used by teachers and PSHE coordinators to assist with curriculum planning.

## Resource information



The information below refers to the lesson plan. For further specific information about the assembly, please see the assembly plan.

- **Age group:** 11 - 13
- **Timings:** 50 - 60 minutes
- **Key words:** anxiety, mental wellbeing, healthy habits, coping skills

## About this toolkit

The Let's talk about anxiety toolkit aims to help students to normalise, explore, understand and manage anxious feelings.

The toolkit includes a lesson and assembly plan, as well as additional activities that can be incorporated into the lesson, used in tutor time or revisited later in the academic year.

The assembly and lesson may be delivered in combination or as standalone sessions, depending on the needs of your students.

We recommend that this toolkit forms part of a fully planned PSHE education programme, within the context of a whole-school approach to mental wellbeing.

## Learning outcomes



By the end of the lesson, students will know:

anxiety is a normal emotion

anxiety is a feeling of unease in response to threat or stress

different people may experience anxiety differently and in response to different stimuli

anxiety can serve a useful purpose because it helps us to be ready to deal with difficult or dangerous situations

anxiety can affect our bodies as well as our minds, e.g., sweating, heart-racing and butterflies in the stomach. These are part of a helpful biological response that gets us ready to deal with challenges

sometimes we feel anxious even though the threat level is low – this can feel bad or stop us doing things

there are strategies that can help when we feel overwhelmed by strong feelings like anxiety.

Students will be able to:

use a range of different words to describe similar feelings; e.g., fear, worry, nervousness, panic, excitement and explain how these differ

use strategies that help them to regulate strong feelings; e.g., breathing techniques or positive self-talk

choose coping strategies that could help people in different situations.

## Curriculum links

Please see below for a summary of the curriculum links relevant to your setting.

### England - relationships, sex and health education (RSHE)

#### Mental health and wellbeing

Pupils should know:

- how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
- how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health
- how to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing
- strategies for self-control and self-regulation
- how to persevere and respond calmly even when they encounter setbacks
- how to make well-informed, positive choices for themselves
- how to cultivate and practise resilience.

## Northern Ireland – Learning for Life and Work

### Self-awareness and Personal Health

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- investigate the influences on a young person; for example, peer pressure, media, social and cultural trends, fears, anxieties and motivations, etc.
- investigate the influences on physical and emotional/mental health; for example, regular physical activity, personal hygiene, diet, stress, work/life balance etc.
- develop understanding about, and strategies to manage, the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour; for example, puberty, body image, mood swings, etc.

## Scotland – Health and Wellbeing

### Mental and emotional wellbeing

- I am developing my understanding of the human body and can use this knowledge to maintain and improve my wellbeing and health.
- I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.
- I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them.
- I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.
- I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.
- I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available.

## Wales - Health and Wellbeing

### How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional wellbeing

#### Progression step 3

- I can recognise the benefits of being able to focus attention on my perceptions (canfyddiadau) and thoughts and know that I am developing my self-awareness (hunanymywybyddiaeth).
- I can self-regulate (hunanreoleiddio) my emotions in a healthy way using strategies that I have developed.
- I can see the benefits of communicating about feelings as one of a range of strategies which can help promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- I can ask for help when I need it from people I trust.
- I can empathise with others.
- I can understand how and why experiences affect me and others.

#### Progression step 4

- I can independently focus attention on my perceptions, thoughts and feelings in order to further develop my self-awareness.
- I can identify different strategies to self-regulate my emotions in response to a range of experiences.

## Further resources

You may wish to use the further resources on anxiety available on [Mentally Healthy Schools](#), as well as in our [classroom wellbeing toolkit](#) (developed with the Early Intervention Foundation) to support further curriculum planning.

