

# Theme: Anxiety



## Associated Trolls: Dwellor

### Communicate current knowledge and understanding/ pre-assessment

#### Introduce topic:

How are you feeling today? How were you feeling yesterday?

How is your friend feeling today? Is it the same or different to you?

How can you help if they are feeling worried or anxious about something – if a pupil has said so ask how the class could help.

Use emotions cards if needed or word bank, age/stage appropriate.

Give me any examples of when you have been:

- In pain
- Sad
- Happy
- Delighted
- Worried
- Frustrated
- Overjoyed
- Surprised

Select one – e.g. frustrated: when you were frustrated, how did it feel?

Encourage describing any bodily responses they can already recognise

Ask pupils if they can do the same for when they felt: Anxious/surprised/or another

Read a selected segment of the Trolls book / select cartoon and ask if they can identify when they think any of the characters might have felt -any of the emotions described. Stop at pupil identified points.

Discuss why they think that and how they might feel at that time in the story, does that character always feel the same emotion or are there examples of when they are different?

### Developing strategy/addressing misconceptions

Provide a definition of anxiety – age appropriate definition chosen

Provide an example of someone who is in a situation where they may be experiencing anxiety – from a recent class text or foundation subject e.g. historical/ sporting moment. How do they think that person/people would have been feeling, what might have been happening in their body and how do they think they managed their anxiety at that time? Were they able to overcome/ manage their anxiety?

Ask the class to think of a time when they were really anxious about something. Close eyes, place hand on heart and imagine that situation is happening again – can anyone describe any differences in their body when they started thinking about that time? Discuss.

#### What is anxiety?

Definition: “Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel that we are under threat. It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.”

Give a list of examples of different body responses, some for anxiety some not. Ask the class to identify which are responses to anxiety or not.

You could use some examples of symptoms from <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/7089/anxiety-and-panic-attacks-2021-pdf-version.pdf> (also some helpful background information if you are not familiar with anxiety).

Ask the class to again close their eyes, but this time think of a special place where they are happy, calm and content (a beach, walking in a green open space, in favourite jumper tucked up on sofa, pretending to fly like a bird) and speaking very calmly ask them to breathe in deeply through their nose, and slowly out too, repeat several times.

Ask pupils how this made them feel? Did it help reduce the anxiety they felt earlier when thinking about different moments?

Does the class believe everyone feels anxiety at some point in their life?

Does the class believe that people can try and manage their own anxiety?

Does the class feel that some people might need help from others to manage anxiety?

# Theme: Anxiety



## Contextualise – use real or fictional example

### Choose an appropriate context for your class

A real example, a character in a book they are familiar with, or a scenario the class decide could make them be anxious.

Decide if this were a person in a story how they might be coloured in in a picture – what might the background and clothing be – create a picture.

Then ask them to recreate the picture when the person knows the “situation” is under control or is not as threatening as they thought – how will the colours and the background, or clothing change?

Discuss if the colours had changed and why?

Ask the pupils to picture in their mind a time when they were anxious – colour in the picture in their head, now slowly change the colours in their head picture to those they used in their second drawing – did it help them think the situation/ moment of anxiety going away/ lessening as they changed the colours?

Ask the class which of the three strategies explored – breathing, thinking about special place, and changing colours in their head – would be more effective for them if they were experiencing anxiety about something?

Remind the class of the example read / watched from the Trolls book/ cartoon. How might any of the characters use these strategies to help each other when Dwellor is around to combat his grey, gloomy presence?

## Enquire into how they might be able to overcome or manage anxiety/worry

Create a roundabout activity to include the following:

- Making slime
- Building a playdough statue or special shape
- On a squared piece of paper creating a repeating coloured pattern of the squares
- A wordsearch puzzle to solve
- Listening to soothing music
- Sitting with their head on a table or head bowed, eyes closed, slowly breathing deeply

In between each activity pupils should be vigorously active to raise heart rate and be excited, have active fun. Maybe also use music.

Ask the pupils to rate the activities in terms of how feel it may help them manage if they feel anxious.

Give pupils an example of yoga to watch or participate in. Name different physical activities people might use – boxing, yoga, dance, running, walking, cycling, Joe Wicks HIIT workouts.

Consider how different physical activity might also help manage anxiety. Age appropriate discussion about “exercise releasing hormones that help you feel better about yourself” – could this help reduce anxiety for some/all?

Explore what people could do if they don't feel any of these strategies can help them manage their anxiety? Explore perceptions of “it's ok to ask for help”.

## Theme: Anxiety



**Evaluate their ability to recognise anxiety and manage it, identifying more than one strategy they could try**

**Link back to previous stages**

- Pupils can explain to a peer/adult, through giving examples from earlier lessons or other examples, when people/ characters might have felt anxiety and why.
- They can also give clear examples of times when they might have experienced anxiety, and when they might feel anxiety in the future and what that might feel like in their bodies.
- They show clear understanding that anxiety is different for everyone in different situations, and some people might rarely be experiencing anxiety, others more frequently. And that this is ok. They can say how they might help a friend who is feeling anxiety.
- Pupils can also explain a range of ways they might try to manage their anxiety in these situations.
- They can also clearly state who they could get help from if these strategies weren't working how they might do that and how they would then feel.

## Theme: Mental health



### List of books as a context for mental health/managing anxiety/ developing empathy discussions

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Don't feed the worry bug                            | Andi Green   |
| How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?               | Jayneen Sanders  |
| Hector's Favorite Place                             | Jo Rooks   |
| In My Heart: A Book of Feelings                     | Jo Witek   |
| My Many Colored Days                                | Dr. Seuss  |
| Tough Guys (Have Feelings Too)                      | Keith Negley   |
| One Wave at a Time: A Story About Grief and Healing | Holly Thompson   |
| The boy at the back of the class                    | Onjali Rauf (teaching activities book also available)          |
| The way I feel                                      | Janan Cain   |
| Ruby's worry: A big bright feelings book            | Tom Percival   |
| Breathing is my superpower                          | Alicia Ortego  |
| <b>Older KS2</b>                                    |  |
| The Goldfish Boy                                    | Lisa Thompson  |
| The Star outside my window                          | Onjali Rauf (must be read by teacher before considering using) |

# Theme: Mental health



## Possible mental health misconceptions: Agree or don't agree task

Provide green and red cards or move to indicated space in the room/learning space after the statement has been read aloud.

Then discuss with the class why they think what they do, justify their responses, and give opportunity to move at the end of the discussion if their thinking has changed.

1. People with mental health difficulties are crazy
2. People with mental health difficulties are violent and dangerous
3. It only affects females
4. You cannot do 'normal everyday things' if you are suffering with mental health difficulties
5. You won't be able to get a job if you have had or have mental health difficulties
6. It is your fault if you have mental health difficulties
7. There is nothing you can do if you have mental health difficulties and you can't make positive decisions about your life (choose an age/stage appropriate example)
8. Other people cannot help you if you are suffering with mental health difficulties
9. People will think you are attention seeking or making it up if you try to talk to them about your mental health needs
10. If you are worried about your schoolwork being hard you have mental health difficulties
11. If you get cross or angry you have poor mental health
12. I understand that there is a wide range of mental health issues that can affect people very differently

# Theme: Mental health



## Role play scenarios

### Scenario 1 – Low Mood

#### Character 1

Background: You have been feeling sad for the last couple of months. The feelings started when you had an argument with your friend and you haven't made up since. You have stopped going to school on a regular basis because you wake up and feel sick or have a tummy ache. You have recently stopped eating and sleeping properly. You don't feel like hanging out with friends, and feel sometimes that you'd rather just stay in your bedroom all day. You refuse to talk to your parents, a teacher, or another adult because you think they would think it's stupid and wouldn't believe you anyway.

**Role play: Decide on the person you will talk to – friend/ teacher or other adult and have a conversation to let them know how you are feeling**

#### Character 2 – concerned about a friend's upset

Background: You are the best friend of Character 1. You've noticed they've been really quiet and not as involved since their argument with your other friend, they do not seem to be getting over it. Even though they say they are not bothered, you feel that it is affecting their mood. You're concerned and worried and feel like you are losing a friend too as you are not sure how to help.

**Role Play: Decide who you will speak to so as to try and work out what to do. Practise a conversation of how to explain your concerns to a friend/ teacher/ another adult.**

Practise what you might say to either of your friends. What things can they do for themselves? How can they rebuild the friendship between the friend they argued with? What services/other people are available for them to talk to?

How will you speak to them, so they know you want to help? What will you say?

### Scenario 2 – Special Need

Background: A new pupil has joined your class, they are very quiet and not joining in. They are not following some of the class rules and your friends have noticed too. People have started to ask questions, e.g.:

“why is \_\_\_\_ allowed to do that but I'm not” “It's not fair that \_\_\_\_ is allowed to have a toy at their desk and I'm not”.

You've noticed they have some equipment on their desk, and a toy bear. They don't look at you or your classmates as much and don't seem to be very friendly – you are not sure why.

Some people are teasing the new pupil about their bear even though they don't know why they have a bear with them. The new pupil gets angry when people do this. It makes you angry to think that other people will treat you differently.

You feel uncomfortable with people teasing the new pupil and don't want anyone in your class to be rejected or laughed at but you are not sure what to do. You feel stressed about this behaviour by your classmates to someone new.

**Role play: At least three people – the new pupil, the one teasing, and the other concerned pupil.**

At first, the new pupil is teased and tries to ignore this, the teasing continues and the new pupil loses patience and shouts and hits out. They could say things like “go away, nobody likes you.” You could scribble on their work or throw their equipment on the floor, call them a baby with a bear etc

New pupil: After speaking to character 2 and losing your temper decide who you will speak to and why apologise and explain why you are treated differently sometimes – it may be your bear reassures you as you get really worried when you find your schoolwork hard, your bear might have been given by a family member who has moved away or died, or another reason.

Concerned pupil: How will you engage with the new pupil or the other classmate?

# Theme: Mental health



## Associated Trolls: Instarr, Dwellor, Mutator, Gobblor, Tormentor & Convincar

### Communicate current knowledge and understanding/ Pre-assessment

#### Pre-assessment

##### Introduce topic

- What does mental health mean to you?
- What does healthy mental health look and feel like?
- Who does mental health affect?
- What things contribute to unhealthy mental health?
- What things contribute to healthy mental health?
- How do you feel about this topic?
- What experiences do you have?

Scribe responses/post it notes/verbal discussion.

### Developing strategy /addressing misconceptions

#### Provide a definition

Mental health includes: our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Reflect on whether this definition fits the conversations from the pre-assessment:

- Was it acknowledged that mental health is related to physical health?
- Discuss how feeling sad/worried, angry, guilty are normal emotions and doesn't necessarily mean that people have 'mental health difficulties' it is ok to not be happy all of the time.

Try to correct misconceptions surrounding mental health (separate resources available).

### Contextualise – use real or fictional example

#### Choose an appropriate context for your class:

- Trolls book/website
- Images (see additional details below on separate page)
- Youtube clips/videos
- Extracts from 'Inside Out'
- Role play drama scenarios\*
- A picture book\* (see separate list)

# Theme: Mental health



## Enquire into how they might be able to overcome or manage anxiety – worry

### Child led enquiry:

- What things affect the mental health of children most? This could be done through a survey or interviewing other children.
- Develop a 'toolbox' of strategies that can be used when children feel they need to support their mental health
- Use YouTube/go noodle websites to practise mindfulness and breathing videos. Discuss how they feel before and after partaking in these.
- Watch <https://vimeo.com/301241209> for an A-Z of strategies. Ask children to try these out and research which ones are the most popular strategies.
- Use YoungMinds website to complete the positives activity. <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/how-many-positives-activity-sheet/>

### Contextualise:

- Provide images of different emotions, label and sort into positive/negative emotions. Discuss when children might have felt these emotions themselves and who they could speak to about it. Reinforce that it is normal to experience a range of emotions and negative emotions are temporary – there are ways to support these feelings. It is important for children to recognise how they are feeling and act upon it to ensure these feelings do not take over. Link to the Trolls characters... 'fight the troll' choose your super power (speaking to an adult or a friend, doing some exercise, mindfulness breathing and exercises).
- In addition to images, you could use clips from familiar cartoons or movies and ask children to identify emotions of characters at different points.

## Evaluate their ability to recognise anxiety and manage it, identifying more than one strategy they could try

### Link back to previous stages:

- Add to pre-assessment in different colour.
- Design a superhero version of yourself, what superpowers do you have and how will you use them to support your mental health and those of others? What advice can you now give people? What things does your super hero need to stay strong and healthy (sleep, nutritious food, exercise, social interaction etc. based on what they have learnt about mental health).
- Describe what challenges the superhero might face along the way e.g. possible causes of mental health and how they will 'fight' and overcome' these.



## Positive Mental Health Toolbox

Encourage children to think of things that they could use when they need to support aspects of their mental health. They could use the template provided to brainstorm ideas or use it to create a poster to display at home/school/keep in a diary or they could physically create a box/bag with items in it.

Below are some suggestions:

- A photo of someone, something or somewhere special
- Bubbles
- A tube of a favourite sweets
- Something tactile like a silky ribbon, a feather, Velcro, bubble wrap
- Something that smells nice like a piece of soap
- Something to squidge or squeeze like a stress ball or playdoh
- A mini puzzle or maze to focus the mind and distract
- A favourite poem or book
- A cuddly toy
- Concentric circles of importance diagram – child at centre, next circle next important people or things, next circle less so.

Children can add to this whenever they need to.