

Levels of anxiety



Context:

The end of the academic year brings lots of transitions and endings. Use this discussion activity as an opportunity to explore your pupils' feelings around this time.

Anxiety can help us to identify and respond to difficult challenges. Most of us worry sometimes and feel anxious when we're stressed, but high levels of anxiety can become a problem and have a real impact on our physical and mental health.

Activity:

- Start the session with everyone lining up and then explain that the room is a continuum.
- Using the templates provided, one end represents being very relaxed while the other end represents being very anxious.
- Read out the scenarios, and ask the group to move up and down the continuum depending on how this makes them feel. Depending on the group, create other scenarios in line with their experiences.
- Where applicable, discuss how they feel before, during and after the event.

Scenarios:

Easing of lockdown restrictions

Moving up a year group or
new school if year 6

Secondary school: Completing
end of year assessments

Primary school: Completing
school work that is challenging

Finishing school and having the
school holidays

Having a new teacher

Making new friends

Having to self isolate due to
school bubble closing

Using social media

During each scenario when pupils change their position, ask them to explain why they are stood where they are and if there is anything that they could do in that situation to make themselves less anxious.

Reflection



Learning outcomes:

Understanding ways to help cope when feeling anxious

Discussion marker:

At the end of the session ask the group to reflect on the activity and think about:

- What have they noticed? Is the anxiety/fear always the same?
- Where do we feel anxiety physically in our body?
- What can we do to minimise the feeling of anxiety or manage events / situations
- Think about what specific situations make them feel anxious
- In these situations what strategies will help us cope better?

Explain to the group that if our anxiety stops us from doing the things that we want to do, and gets in the way of our everyday life, then we might need to get some help with managing it.

Discuss the physical impact of anxiety, such as racing heart, feeling nauseous, loss of appetite or sleep, sweaty palms, feeling angry and what strategies we can put in place to help.

If we can recognise the signs of anxiety in ourselves and the physical cues we get when we feel anxious we can help to identify the things that help us cope.

I feel calm



I feel anxious

