

ANXIETY 101 CHEAT SHEET

NORMALIZE	REGULATE	EMOTIONAL SCAFFOLDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety is an emotion & we all experience it at some level.• Anxiety is future-based worry and often sounds like “what if...”• Even though it can be uncomfortable and inconvenient, anxiety is a protector.• Anxiety is not “good” or “bad”, it just is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We cannot control our thoughts and feelings, no matter how hard we try.• Our thoughts and feelings can influence behaviour, but are not responsible for it.• Changing our behaviours will give us the biggest bang for our buck.• Regulation strategies are just fancy behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To challenge students to take action, even when they are experiencing anxious thoughts & feelings.• Provide appropriate challenges, starting with lower stakes and moving to higher stakes.• Continually encourage students to check-in regularly before and after taking action. 

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<p>Example Activities/Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anxiety Is/Isn't Activity Anxiety is worry about the future & sounds like "what-ifs"; it is not dangerous or bad. ● The Stress Cycle <i>Exposure to stressor/trigger → Stress response activated → thoughts & feelings → behaviours → cycle repeats or ends</i> ● Fire Alarm Analogy Do we want the fire alarm to work 100% or 50% of the time? ● Practicing Acceptance "I am feeling anxious. I don't like this feeling and it's okay I feel it." 	<p>Example Activities/Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Controlling Thoughts Exercise (Pink Elephant) I will give you a million dollars if you don't think of a pink elephant right now. ● Controlling Feelings Exercise (Never Feeling X Again) I will give you a million dollars if you don't feel anxious ever again. ● Come up with 10 Regulation Strategies as a class Examples: shoulder shrugs, distance from thoughts, & describe an object using 5 senses <p><i>*Note:</i> No strategy will work 100% of the time or take away a feeling completely.</p>	<p>Example Activities/Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Think of a time you felt anxious and did the thing anyway. ● Emotional Scaffolding (Low Stakes → High Stakes) Example: Waving & saying hi → structured sentences → free style discussion ● Pre-Check in Journal Activities Rate anxiety levels; anticipate barriers and strategies. ● Post-Check in Journal Activities Re-rate anxiety levels; review take-aways.