



M E N T A L H E A L T H

Let's Talk About Anxiety

Do you ever feel nervous when you do not have a job? Do you feel like your heart beats fast if you think you don't have enough money to pay for something? These are feelings of *anxiety*. Here is an example of someone who feels very *anxious*:



Vocabulary

- Anxiety
- Anxious
- Panic attack
- Relax

Jorge works at a berry farm. He is thinking about the phone call from his dad last night. His mom is sick. She is getting worse. Jorge works hard to send money home for her medical care. Work has been slow. He doesn't have enough money to send home. He worries that it is his fault his mom is not better. He worries that he will not find a job. So far, his feelings have lasted only a few days. Jorge is having feelings of anxiety that anyone might face.

Several weeks have gone by. Jorge has worried every day and wakes up at night. He has headaches. Suddenly, he feels like his heart beats very fast. It is hard for him to breathe. He feels dizzy. His stomach hurts. These feelings happened several times. Jorge goes to the health clinic. The doctor tells him he had a *panic attack*. He learns from the doctor that panic attacks are a sign of an anxiety disorder. She tells Jorge that with help, he can feel better.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal feeling you may have when you feel stressed. You may feel afraid. You may not be sure what will happen in the future. Usually, the feeling soon goes away.

Sometimes, a person may feel a lot of anxiety. It may cause trouble in day-to-day life. The anxiety may last for weeks or months. If the anxiety lasts for six months or more, the person may have an anxiety disorder.

Do I have an anxiety disorder?

If you have the following symptoms you may have an anxiety disorder:

- Worrying for many hours a day even when there is no trouble.
- Not knowing how to stop worrying even when you want to.
- Feeling very afraid about your health.
- Feeling afraid about safety, money, and your family. Not knowing what to do about these fears.
- Not sleeping well or waking up feeling worried about a problem. Not always knowing why you are worried.
- Not enjoying normal activities. For example, you do not like to work.
- Not wanting to eat.
- Not wanting to spend time with people you love.
- Having frequent panic attacks.
- Getting frequent headaches, stomach pain, nausea, or trembling.



Only a doctor can diagnose an anxiety disorder. If you think you have an anxiety disorder, go to your local health center. Don't wait.

What can I do about my anxiety?

You can do something about the anxiety you feel. Here are some ideas:



Talk with your friends and family

If you feel anxious, it can help to know you are not alone. Spend time with people you love. Ask for help when you need it.



Relax

Sit quietly for a few minutes. Breathe deeply. Imagine a calm and happy time or place.



Accept that life can change

We can't always control what will happen in life. We can control how we respond to change.



Talk with someone

Talk with a friend or a counselor. Talking with someone you trust can help you think clearly about your fears.



Take your medicine

Your doctor may give you medicine for anxiety. The medicine can help you feel calm. It can help you feel much better.



Take care of yourself

Do things you enjoy. Get enough sleep. Eat well. Exercise 30 minutes most days of the week.

Here are more ideas to help you feel better:

- Consume less cola, coffee and energy drinks. These have caffeine, which can make you feel nervous.
- Go to work. It is important to continue your regular activities.
- Be kind to yourself!



Anxiety can be treated in many ways. With help you can feel like yourself again.

Vocabulary & Definitions

Anxiety: A feeling of nervousness, fear, or tension.

Anxious: When you feel nervous, afraid or tense about something.

Panic attack: A feeling you have when you feel very anxious. Your heart may beat really fast. You may begin to sweat. It may be hard for you to breathe.

Relax: When you try to stay calm and not feel anxious.

Let's Talk About Anxiety

Lesson Plan

Materials needed	Handouts	Estimated time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry erase board and markers • Pencils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Let’s Talk About Anxiety” lesson • “Listening Activity” handout • Skills Practice Worksheet • Pre-Assessment • Post-Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: To accommodate the literacy levels and educational experiences of the participants, oral and/or group activities may be substituted for reading, writing, skills practice, and survey activities.

Elements	Activities	Notes
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic. (5 minutes) • Conduct the Pre-Assessment. (5 minutes) • Introduce the new vocabulary. (5 minutes) 	<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you ever felt anxious when you have not had a job? How did you feel? 2. Did your feelings go away or get worse? 3. What did you do to feel better? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Pre-Assessment, and ask students to turn it in when it is complete. • Write the vocabulary words on the board and ask the students to read them aloud. Ask the students if they know what they mean. Provide students with the definitions from the lesson.
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the lesson “Let’s Talk About Anxiety”. (10 minutes) • Identify the vocabulary words in the lesson. (5 minutes) • Distribute and review the Skills Practice Worksheet with the students and ask them to complete it. Use the Answer Key sheet to verify the correct answers. (25 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor leads guided reading of topic. • Students identify the vocabulary words by circling them in the lesson. • Activity 1: Students have 10 minutes to complete this activity. • Activity 2: Students have 10 minutes to complete this activity. • Activity 3: Students have 5 minutes to complete this activity.
Concept Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Post-Assessment. (5 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete Post-Assessment.

Let's Talk About Anxiety

Listening Activity

Listening Activity

Purpose: To practice listening comprehension

Time: 5 minutes

1. Tell your students that in this activity they will practice their listening comprehension skills.
2. State that you are going to read five different sentences twice.
3. Let them know that after you finish reading the sentence for the second time, they need to decide if the sentence is True or False.
4. At the end, check the students' answers to make sure they are correct. If some students do not have the right answer, invite other students to participate in the discussion until the information is clear.

True or False?

Statement	True	False
1. Normal feelings of anxiety will go away after a short amount of time.		
2. You may have an anxiety disorder if your constant worry keeps you from your usual daily activities.		
3. You do not need to see a doctor if you have an anxiety disorder.		
4. There are many ways to cope with and treat anxiety disorders.		
5. If you try hard enough, you can control what will happen in life.		



Let's Talk About Anxiety
Skills Practice Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity 1: What if you don't know what will happen in life?

Alma is the oldest child in her family. She works with her family to help pay the bills. Now the farm where the family works is closing. Alma does not know if the family can find work. They may need to move. She does not know where they will live. She is worried and anxious. On some days Alma feels sick to her stomach. How should Alma respond to the anxiety she feels? Check each that applies.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When she begins to feel anxious, she should take deep breaths. | <input type="checkbox"/> She can let her anxiety get worse until she has a panic attack. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> She could take a walk or see friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> She can accept that change is a normal part of life. She can think about meeting new friends or living in a new place. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> She should ignore her feelings. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> She can talk with someone she trusts so she can see the situation more clearly. | |

Activity 2: Normal Anxiety or Anxiety Disorder? For each sentence, check the correct column.

Sentence	Normal Anxiety	Anxiety Disorder
You feel nervous because you have a new boss.		
For several months you wake up in the middle of the night worried for no reason. You have trouble breathing.		
You are worried about paying a bill on time. You know the worry goes away after you pay it.		
Your heart beats fast when you have to explain your mistake to your boss.		
You do not leave your house for many days. You fear a car might run over you. You do not know how to stop this worry.		

**Activity 3:
 Listening, True or False?**

Listen carefully to your teacher's instructions.

Sentence	True	False
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Let's Talk About Anxiety

Answer Key

Activity 1: What if you don't know what will happen in life?

Alma is the oldest child in her family. She works with her family to help pay the bills. Now the farm where the family works is closing. Alma does not know if the family can find work. They may need to move. She does not know where they will live. She is worried and anxious. On some days Alma feels sick to her stomach. How should Alma respond to the anxiety she feels? Check each that applies.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When she begins to feel anxious, she should take deep breaths. | <input type="checkbox"/> She can let her anxiety get worse until she has a panic attack. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> She could take a walk or see friends. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> She can accept that change is a normal part of life. She can think about meeting new friends or living in a new place. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> She should ignore her feelings. | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> She can talk with someone she trusts so she can see the situation more clearly. | |

Activity 2: Normal Anxiety or Anxiety Disorder? For each sentence, check the correct column.

Sentence	Normal Anxiety	Anxiety Disorder
You feel nervous because you have a new boss.	✓	
For several months you wake up in the middle of the night worried for no reason. You have trouble breathing.		✓
You are worried about paying a bill on time. You know the worry goes away after you pay it.	✓	
Your heart beats fast when you have to explain your mistake to your boss.	✓	
You do not leave your house for many days. You fear a car might run over you. You do not know how to stop this worry.		✓

Activity 3: Listening, True or False? Listen carefully to your teacher's instructions.

Sentence	True	False
1. Normal feelings of anxiety will go away after a short amount of time.	✓	
2. You may have an anxiety disorder if your constant worry keeps you from your usual daily activities.		✓
3. You do not need to see a doctor if you have an anxiety disorder.		✓
4. There are many ways to cope with and treat anxiety disorders.	✓	
5. If you try hard enough, you can control what will happen in life.		✓



Let's Talk About Anxiety

Pre-Assessment

Date: _____

Name: _____

1. Anxiety is a normal feeling we all experience when we are afraid or worried. We can also have anxiety if we aren't sure what is going to happen.

2. Anxiety can cause you to feel which of the following?

3. Which of the following is NOT a sign you may have an anxiety disorder?

4. Only a doctor can diagnose an anxiety disorder.

5. Panic attacks are a sign:

Circle the correct answer.

True

False

a. nervous

b. pain in your foot

c. upset stomach

a. You have trouble sleeping for many weeks.

b. You feel calm and relaxed most of the time.

c. You worry for many hours a day for many days.

d. You fear the worst will happen all the time.

True

False

a. of normal anxiety

b. to see a doctor or go to the clinic

Total Correct: _____



Let's Talk About Anxiety

Post-Assessment

Date: _____

Name: _____

1. Anxiety is a normal feeling we all experience when we are afraid or worried. We can also have anxiety if we aren't sure what is going to happen.

2. Anxiety can cause you to feel which of the following?

3. Which of the following is NOT a sign you may have an anxiety disorder?

4. Only a doctor can diagnose an anxiety disorder.

5. Panic attacks are a sign:

Circle the correct answer.

True

False

a. Nervous

b. Pain in your foot

c. Upset stomach

a. You have trouble sleeping for many weeks.

b. You feel calm and relaxed most of the time.

c. You worry for many hours a day for many days.

d. You fear the worst will happen all the time.

True

False

a. of normal anxiety

b. to see a doctor or go to the clinic

Total Correct: _____

When you feel anxious, what are some things you can do to calm down?
(not scored)