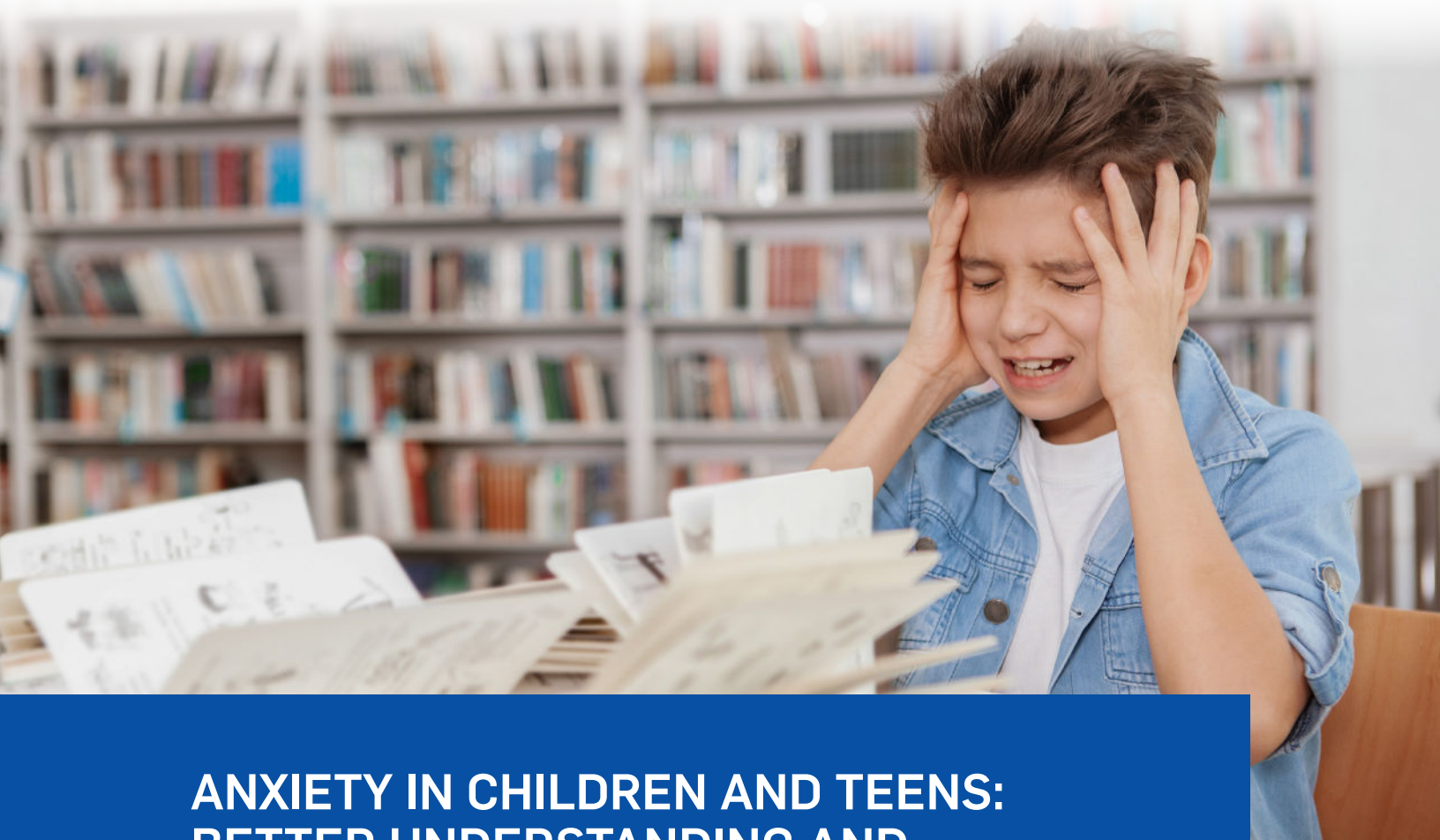




The TOOLBOX

TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THEIR EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS



ANXIETY IN CHILDREN AND TEENS: BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND BETTER MANAGEMENT

TOOL: Prevention | Intervention

TARGET AUDIENCE: Preschool and elementary school children and teens

TOOL INTENDED FOR : Parents, teachers and other professionals

DESIGN

Julie Beaulieu, Ph. D.
Sarah Kirouac, B.A.



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NEEDS AND BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS

- Cognitive manifestations of stress and anxiety
- Physiological manifestations of stress and anxiety
- Emotional manifestations of stress and anxiety
- Behavioural manifestations of stress and anxiety

SPECIFIC GOALS

- To recognize anxiety in children and teens.
- To understand the factors that influence anxiety in children and teens.
- To help children and teens properly manage their anxiety.

DESIGN

- **Julie Beaulieu**, Ph. D. (Professor) - Université du Québec à Rimouski (Lévis Campus)
- **Sarah Kirouac**, B.A. (Elementary School Teacher, Masters Student in School Adjustment) - Université du Québec à Rimouski (Lévis Campus)



INTRODUCTION

The global health crisis over the past few months has plunged society as a whole into uncertainty, resulting in a significant impact on individuals' mental health, particularly children and teens.

Unfortunately, the closure of elementary and secondary schools for several weeks has led to psychological difficulties in many children. The loss of day-to-day social and academic reference points combined with health risks may have triggered fear, stress and anxiety responses in children and teens. More specifically, anxiety is the most common form of psychological distress in children. Without effective intervention, it may have a significant impact on their psychological, academic, social and emotional development. To help children and teens properly manage stress and anxiety, parents and professionals should have concrete, practical tools. This section of the toolbox introduces tools to help support and guide intervention with children and teens in order to better understand fear, stress and anxiety, identify potential triggers, recognize cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioural signs, and promote proper stress and anxiety management by calming their thoughts, body, heart and behavioural responses. While professional and parental support is essential for properly managing stress and anxiety, the main goal of this toolbox is to encourage children and teens to take responsibility for managing stress and anxiety so that they become as independent as possible when choosing and using strategies. In addition, to make stressful and anxious situations more real, book collections for children and teens are provided at the end of the toolbox. Lastly, parents and professionals can increase their knowledge of stress and anxiety by consulting the resources in the collection for professionals and parents. It also suggests practical guides for parents and professionals to support their interventions with children and teens.

To develop a community of practice to specifically address stress and anxiety, a Facebook group has been created to share the best intervention strategies for proper stress and anxiety management for children and teens at home, school and in other environments.

Happy reading!

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Facebook : <http://www.facebook.com/groups/coffreaoutilanxiete/>



TOOL 1

WORDS ABOUT TROUBLES

PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

→ To help children and teenagers better understand and differentiate fear, stress and anxiety responses in order to better prevent them and take action.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

→ 5-12-year-old children.

→ 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

→ In groups, subgroups or alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

→ **Sheet 1a** – Fear, Stress or Anxiety;

→ Large cardboard;

→ **Sheet 1b** – Word Cloud;

→ Tablet or other electronic device (optional);

→ Lead pencil;

→ Websites for creating word clouds (optional);

→ Eraser;

→ Interactive whiteboard (IWB) (optional).

→ Coloured pencils;

LENGTH → 10-20 minutes.

TOOL DESCRIPTION

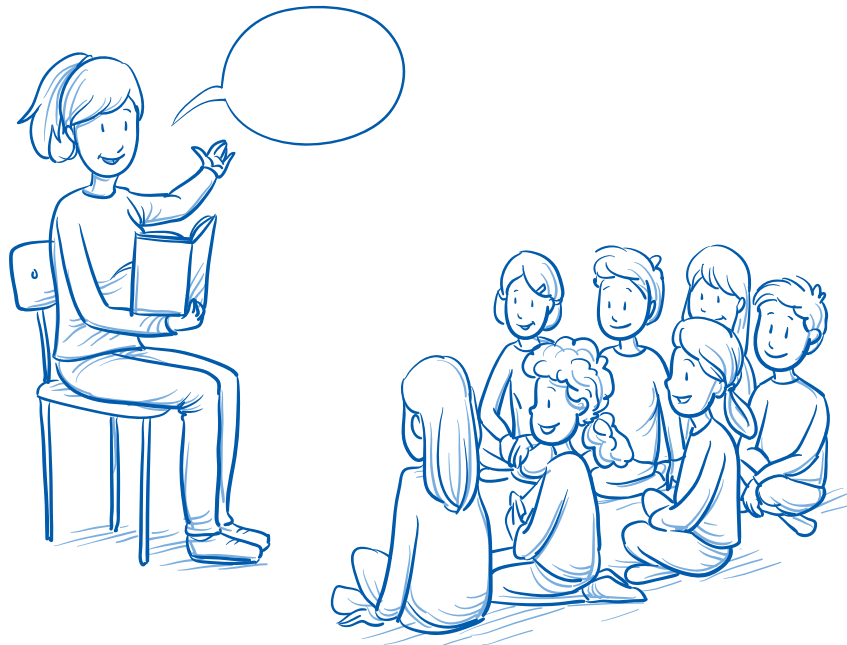
- To help children and teens understand fear, stress and anxiety, it's important to focus on their own conception of these responses.
- As parents and professionals, knowing "what children or teens think" or "what they know about a subject" will help you question and guide them so that they can change their own conceptions, which are sometimes wrong.
- These conceptions are even more important during the pandemic, due to the wealth of information heard, perceived and interpreted by children and teens.
- During this particular and unprecedented period, children and teens have repeatedly heard the words "stress" and "anxiety" in the media and have heard adults around them often use these words, which they might interpret in various ways. But what about children's and teens' ideas of stress and anxiety?
- Closely linked to stress and anxiety, fear is an important driver of these responses. It's important to first define this concept for children and teens and differentiate it from stress and anxiety.



PROCEDURE

IN THE CLASSROOM (in groups)

1. To arouse their curiosity, invite students to read the activity's title: Words About Troubles!
2. Introduce the characteristics of fear using the **1a – Fear, Stress and Anxiety** sheet and ask them various questions to encourage them to express their fears: What are your fears? In what context do your fears arise? How do you react when you're afraid? You can also address the emotion of fear using children's literature (see Tool 18 – Children's Book Collection and Tool 19 – Teen Book Collection).
3. Next, ask students the following question: *What are three words that make you think of stress?*
4. After a few minutes of reflection, invite students to enter their words individually with the tablet (or other electronic device) in order to create a word cloud using a website (e.g. *nuagedemots.co*, *nuagedemots.fr*, *WordArt*, *ABCYA*, *Wordsalad*, *Mentimeter*). Save the word cloud for later viewing.
5. Ask students another question: *What are three words that make you think of anxiety?*
6. Again invite students to enter their words individually using the tablet (or other electronic device) in order to create a word cloud using the chosen website.
7. View the completed word clouds on the board.
8. Begin a discussion with students about the common and different components of stress and anxiety.
9. Next, ask students about the characteristics of stress and anxiety based on sheet **1a – Fear, Stress and Anxiety** in order to change their own conceptions of these notions, which sometimes turn out to be wrong.





PROCEDURE

IN THE CLASSROOM (in subgroups)

1. In large groups, repeat steps one and two of the above Procedure.
2. Put children or teens in teams of two or three and give them tablets.
3. Assign one role per child or teen (tablet manager, spokesperson and timekeeper). A child or teen may play more than one role, if necessary.
4. Next, ask students: *What are three words that make you think of stress?*
5. In subgroups, invite students to enter their words using the tablet (or other electronic device) in order to create a word cloud using a website (e.g. *nuagedemots.co*, *nuagedemots.fr*, *WordArt*, *ABCYA*, *Wordsalad*, *Mentimeter*). Save the word cloud for later viewing.
6. Ask students another question: *What are three words that make you think of anxiety?*
7. Invite students once again to enter their words in subgroups using the tablet (or other electronic device) in order to create a word cloud using the chosen website.
8. Return to large groups and view the completed word clouds on the board.
9. Begin a discussion with students about the common and different components of stress and anxiety.
10. Next, ask students about the characteristics of stress and anxiety based on sheet **1a – Fear, Stress and Anxiety** in order to change their own conceptions of these notions, which sometimes turn out to be wrong.

IN THE CLASSROOM OR AT HOME (alone)

1. Individually, any adult (parent or professional) can ask the children or teens the above questions in order to begin a discussion about the emotion of fear and their conceptions of stress and anxiety. A concept map can also be created with the help of adults, providing an ideal opportunity for sharing between children and adults and for nurturing their relationship.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- This classroom activity can also be carried out without a technological tool by inviting students to write their words on a large cardboard placed at the front of the classroom or using the interactive whiteboard (IWB). Students will then have to write a variety of words and avoid repeating the previously mentioned words.
- Individually or with their subgroup peers, you can also invite students to share their word ideas representing their conceptions and together build a concept map for each of the terms on a page using the **1b Word Cloud** sheet.



FEAR: AN INTENSE REACTION SOMETIMES!

- Fear is the **foundation of anxiety**.
- Like joy, sadness, anger, disgust and surprise, fear is a **basic emotion**.
- Fear is a **healthy emotion** resulting from a state of alarm caused by an imminent danger, a concrete and specific threat. For example, if you see a dog with big teeth barking very loudly and running towards you, you may feel fear. You'll have perceived a form of danger that will trigger the fear that the dog might bite you.
- Fear is an **instinctive and spontaneous response**, sometimes **strong and intense**.
- Fear is a coping response needed for survival; it will allow you to react in the event of danger or a threat.

STRESS: A STRESSFUL REACTION THAT STRESSES ME OUT!

- Stress is a **normal response** of our body in the face of danger, a threat, constraint or challenge, so it's not an emotion.
- Stress causes **physical discomfort** directly related to the immediate reality.
- Stress is a response triggered by a psychophysiological process associated with a threatening situation or direct aggression.
- Stress occurs in situations that lack Control, are Irregular, New and which threaten the Ego (**CINE**).
- Stress occurs **in the present moment and in the presence of a stressor**. For example, during an oral presentation, you may experience stress before and during your presentation. However, once you've finished your presentation, your stress will decrease until it disappears.
- Stress is often based on the **anticipation of a single consequence** or only a few negative consequences directly related to discomfort. For example, when attending a new school, you may feel stressed about getting lost on your first day without thinking that other consequences might occur.



ANXIETY: THE FEAR OF BEING AFRAID!

- Anxiety is based on fear.
- Anxiety is a **universal, normal and healthy emotion** that has a **protective and adaptive function**. Everyone experiences anxiety during their lifetimes. It's quite normal for children and teens to feel anxiety, which is a common emotion in many people. Anxiety allows you to protect yourself from potentially negative consequences and adapt to situations you experience. For example, anxiety might prompt you to prepare for your math test by reviewing concepts and asking questions if you misunderstand something. That way, you'll be able to answer the questions on the test.
- Anxiety is a **response to a sense of danger** (without real danger); the body is alerted in the same way as during a fear response.
- Anxiety is a more vague, discomforting emotion that occurs in a **state of fear**.
- Anxiety is based on the **anticipation** (focusing on the future), **perception** (subjectivity) and **interpretation** (often negative and catastrophic) of a situation.
- Like stress, anxiety occurs in situations that lack **Control**, are **Irregular**, **New** and which threaten the **Ego (CINE)**.
- Anxiety is related to an individual's inability to effectively control their environment.
- Anxiety is indicated by **cognitive, emotional, physical** and **behavioural** signs.
- Anxiety may be present even if the cause is not always clearly identified.
- For children and teens, anxiety can be explained by using the image of an **internal radar**. In anxious individuals, the brain becomes **alert** to its environment and aims to detect sources of danger. They thus have a more reactive internal radar, triggering cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioural responses more frequently and intensely than other people. Responses also vary depending on the individuals' situations. Under these circumstances, anxiety becomes an obstacle to fully and pleasantly enjoying the situations experienced.





To help you tell the difference between fear, stress and anxiety, the following is a practical example:

Fear

"I'm afraid to speak in front of a group of people."

Stress

"I feel stressed when someone asks me a question in front of a group of people."

Anxiety

"I feel anxious in situations where I could be asked a question in front of other people, because I'm afraid everyone will make fun of me."

"I anticipate that someone will ask me a question at any time, so I'm alert."

"I avoid situations in which I believe or imagine that someone might ask me a question."







TOOL 2

THE ANXIETY SIGNS TRIANGLE

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To identify the components of anxiety.
- To recognize the cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioural signs of stress and anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 5-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 2a** – Three Components of Anxiety;
- **Sheet 2b** – Anxiety Signs;
- **Sheet 2c** – How Do You Recognize Your Stress or Anxiety?

LENGTH → Variable (ongoing).

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the children or teens to the three components of anxiety using sheet **2a – Three Components of Anxiety**, explaining that these are the signs to recognize stress and anxiety.
2. Next, describe to the children or teens each component of anxiety using sheet **2b – Anxiety Signs**. This list of cognitive (thoughts), physical (feelings felt in the body), emotional (other emotions felt in the heart) and behavioural (responses) presents the most frequently reported signs by children and teens. To ensure their understanding, it's important for parents or professionals to explain, illustrate or mimic each of the signs for the children or teens.





TOOL 2

THE ANXIETY SIGNS TRIANGLE

PROCEDURE

3. On sheet **2c - How Do You Recognize Your Stress or Anxiety?**, invite the children or teens to identify their own cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioural signs when they are experiencing stress or anxiety in general or in a specific situation (e.g. fear that a family member will die from COVID-19) by completing the following sentences:

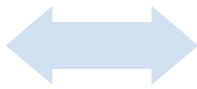
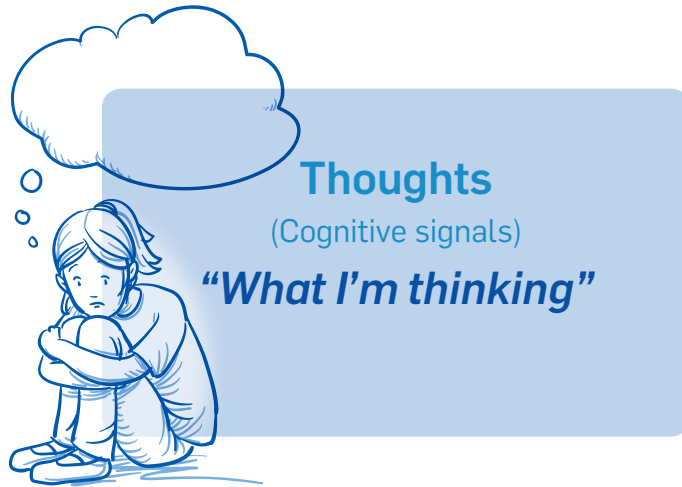
Sentences to be completed:

- *When I'm stressed or anxious, I think...*
- *When I'm stressed or anxious, I feel in my body...*
- *When I'm stressed or anxious, I feel in my heart...*
- *When I'm stressed or anxious, I do or I react...*

The children or teens can refer to sheet **2b – Anxiety Signs to identify their own signs**. The children's or teens' signs might not be mentioned on this sheet. All they have to do is write down their signs on their personal sheet. Encouraging the children or teens to recognize and name their own signs of stress or anxiety allows them to better understand how they are feeling, which makes it easier to manage their stress or anxiety.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

– The children or teens can identify their signs by simply checking off the various signs indicated on sheet **2b – Anxiety Signs** or by depicting them on the children's or teens' images shown on sheet **2c – How Do You Recognize Your Stress or Anxiety?**





This table shows the main cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioural signals that will help you recognize your signs when you experience stress or anxiety.

COGNITIVE SIGNS OF ANXIETY (THOUGHTS)

- My thoughts are negative, irrational and intrusive (e.g. fear that a negative or serious situation might occur, imagining disaster scenarios, overestimating the likelihood of disaster, dramatizing the possible consequences of a situation, perceiving threats in new, ambiguous and anxiety-provoking situations, interpreting situations in a negative way, fear of losing control of a situation, etc.).
- I have difficulty considering other options.
- I have difficulty retaining or remembering information.
- I have difficulty maintaining my attention and concentrating.
- I have difficulty learning new things.
- I have difficulty thinking.
- I have difficulty making decisions and choices.
- I monitor my environment to detect anything that might be threatening.
- ...

In a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation, thoughts invade your mind and prevent you from seeing and interpreting the situation realistically. Instead, they cause you to perceive the situation as negative and threatening or imagine that you will experience a situation that could put you or your loved ones in danger.

1 - Based on Besner, C. (2016). *L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves*. Montréal : Chenelière Éducation



PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ANXIETY (BODY)

- I have butterflies in my stomach or abdomen.
- I have a stomach ache.
- I have nausea or vomiting.
- I breathe quickly and have difficulty breathing.
- I have a choking sensation.
- I have a lump in my throat.
- My heart is beating faster.
- I have chest pains.
- I'm blushing.
- My mouth is getting dry.
- My hands are sweaty.
- My hands and feet are getting cold.
- I have hot flashes and I'm sweating.
- I feel tingling, numbness or tremors in my body.
- I have headaches.
- I feel dizzy or light-headed.
- I have trouble sleeping.
- My five senses are becoming more sensitive (e.g. noise bothers me, smells become stronger, etc.).
- ...

During a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation, your body reacts and sends you various physical signals that may be different from person to person. Despite the discomfort and uneasiness felt, these signals emitted by your body are not dangerous; they are completely normal. Your body reacts to stress or anxiety by sending you various signs.



EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ANXIETY (HEART)

- I'm scared.
- I feel distress and sometimes cry.
- I panic when faced with anxious situations.
- I feel weak, helpless or uncertain.
- I have a low sense of competence and efficacy.
- I'm ashamed of myself.
- I feel guilty.
- I have low self-esteem.
- I'm shy.
- I'm irritable and I get angry more easily.
- I withdraw from social situations and isolate myself.
- ...

Stress and anxiety can cause other emotions experienced by children and teens. It's important that the children or teens also express these emotions in order to provide the necessary support and appropriate interventions.



BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS OF ANXIETY (RESPONSES)

- I avoid or flee from situations that make me anxious.
- I use strategies to cope with anxiety-provoking situations.
- I have compulsions (nail-biting, hair-pulling, skin-scratching).
- I often postpone tasks.
- I try to aggressively exercise control.
- I isolate myself and withdraw in anxiety-provoking situations.
- I freeze when faced with anxiety-provoking situations.
- I'm opposed to situations that make me anxious, risky situations or new situations.
- I have tantrums in anxious, risky or new situations.
- I cry a lot.
- I'm very agitated and have difficulty controlling myself.
- I seek adult protection (mother, father or other trusted professional).
- ...

Stress and anxiety sometimes lead to intense behavioural responses that are not always appropriate for controlling your level of stress or anxiety. It's important for you to recognize them in order to avoid repeating them and use other strategies to manage your stress or anxiety.



When I'm stressed or anxious, I think...

Empty rounded rectangular box for writing thoughts.



When I'm stressed or anxious, I feel in my body...

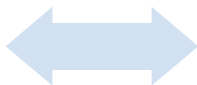
Empty rounded rectangular box for writing physical feelings.

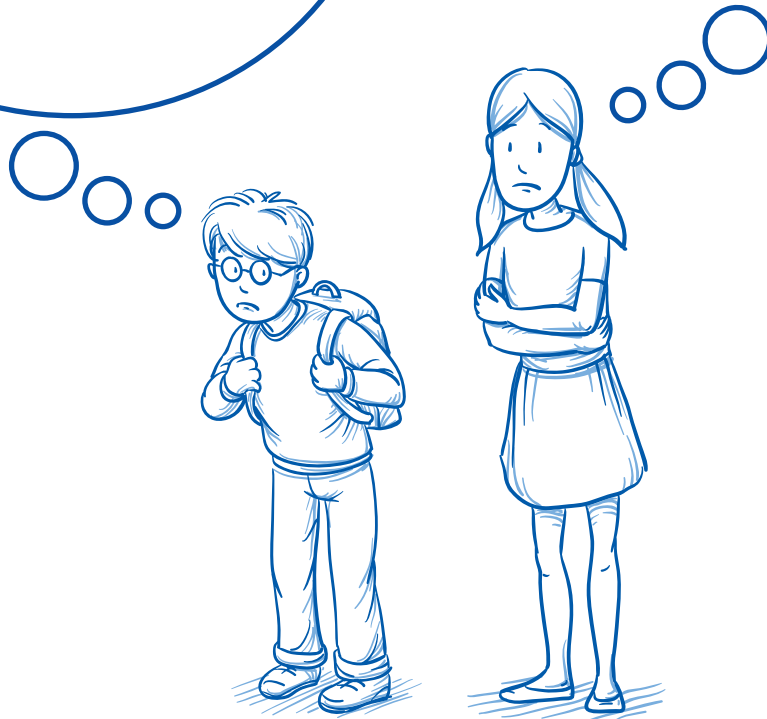
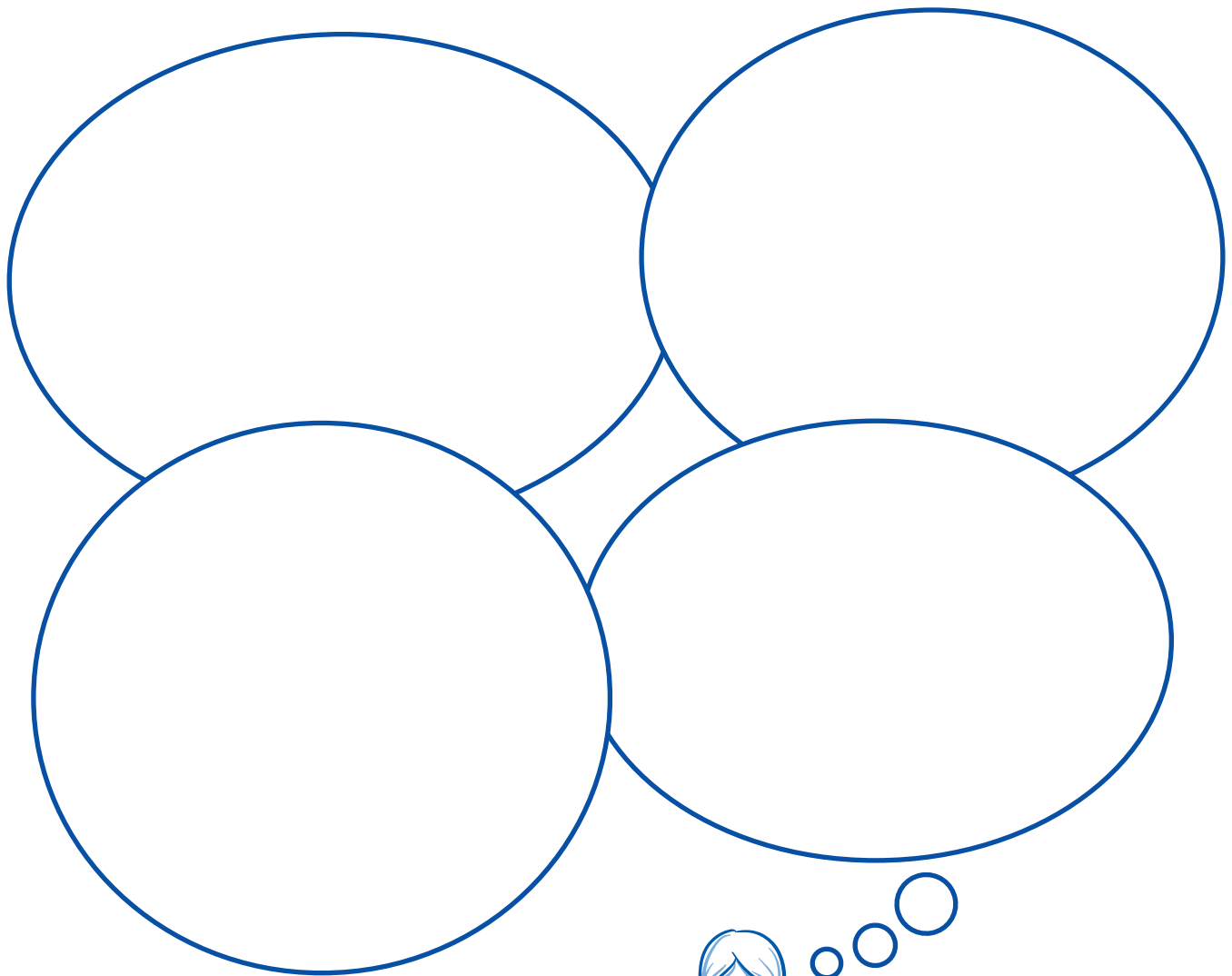
When I'm stressed or anxious, I feel in my heart...



When I'm stressed or anxious, I do or I react...

Empty rounded rectangular box for writing actions or reactions.







POTENTIAL STRESS AND ANXIETY TRIGGERS

PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

→ To help children or teens recognize and identify potential stress and anxiety triggers.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

→ 5-12-year-old children.

→ 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

→ Alone or in groups.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

→ Interactive whiteboard (optional);

→ Tablet (optional);

→ Word cloud websites (*nuagedemots.co*, *nuagedemots.fr*, *WordArt*, *ABCYA*, *Wordsalad*, *Mentimeter*) (optional);

→ Blank sheet;

→ Pencils.

LENGTH → 10-15 minutes.

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Anxiety-provoking stressors are components of our environment that disrupt our habits and take us out of our comfort zone; our internal stress or anxiety radar turns on at a certain level of intensity, triggering various signs of stress or anxiety. Obviously, experiencing stress or anxiety in a new or unexpected situation is completely normal and healthy. However, the difficulty lies in managing and controlling this stress or anxiety response in everyday life. Identifying the sources and triggers of stress and anxiety allows children and teens to be informed of and prepared for what might trigger stress or anxiety in them.

Sources and triggers of stress or anxiety differ from person to person and may sometimes go unnoticed by various professionals. These sources of stress or anxiety are numerous and may come from various environments, such as the school environment, family environment, social environment, etc. These triggers may be new or unforeseen situations, evaluation situations, separation situations, participation in a group activity or field trip, transitions, etc.



POTENTIAL STRESS AND ANXIETY TRIGGERS

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to the children or teens that being able to recognize and identify sources of stress or anxiety allows them to be informed of and prepared for what might trigger stress or anxiety in them.
2. Put the children or teens in teams of two or three and give them tablets.
3. Assign one role per child or teen (tablet manager, spokesperson and timekeeper). A child or teen may play more than one role, if necessary.
4. Ask them to identify 5-10 sources of stress or anxiety in their school, family or social environments. Give them some examples, if necessary, such as a teacher change, separation, school transition, test, etc. It's important to tell them that the sources of stress or anxiety may differ from person to person. For example, one person may be stressed or anxious during a test, while another person may be more stressed or anxious when in a group of several people.
5. Invite them to create a word cloud using a website (e.g. nuagedemots.co, nuagedemots.fr, WordArt, ABCYA, Wordsalad, Mentimeter). When the children or teens incorporate their ideas, their answers will automatically become part of the board. Save the word cloud for later viewing.
6. When all teams are done, discuss their ideas with the children or teens. Help them find possible solutions to make these aspects or situations less stressful and less anxiety-provoking.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO LEAD THE DISCUSSION

- *Why are these situations or aspects a source of stress or anxiety for you?*
- *Do you know of any other anxiety-provoking stressors that we have not mentioned?*
- *What are possible solutions to make these situations or aspects less stressful and less anxiety-provoking?*
- *What strategies could you use to reduce your stress or anxiety signs?*
- *Who could help you with these stressful or anxiety-provoking situations?*

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- This activity may be done individually, in class or at home.
- This activity may also be done without an electronic device. In this case, you may want to suggest that the children or teens write their ideas on cardboard and make a list, diagram or concept map.



CALMING THOUGHTS: CHANGING THOUGHTS

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children confront and change their negative thoughts into positive and helpful thoughts in order to better manage their stress and anxiety.
- To help the children maintain a more positive self-image by changing negative thoughts into positive and helpful thoughts in order to increase their self-confidence and improve self-esteem.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 5-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens. (see Suggestions and Adaptations section).

CONTEXT

- In subgroups of 2-4 children.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 4a** – Game Board;
- **Sheet 4b** – Obstacle Game Cards;
- **Sheet 4c** – Strategy Game Cards;
- **Sheet 4d** – Answer Sheet;
- 4 pawns (different coloured tokens or objects);
- Dice.

LENGTH → About 20-30 minutes.

PROCEDURE

1. Each player puts their pawns of different colours and shapes on the starting square.
2. The youngest player starts the game. They throw the dice and advance their pawns the number of squares indicated on the dice (e.g. if they get the number two by throwing the dice, they advance two squares).
3. When the children land on a square containing an obstacle (image of a small green virus), they must draw an Obstacle card (sheet **4b – Obstacle Game Cards**) and turn negative thoughts into positive and helpful thoughts in order to move forward one square. The children record their answers (change in thoughts) on an answer sheet (sheet **4d – Answer Sheet**), which they can keep and reuse later. When the children land on a square with a rainbow, they must draw a Strategy card (sheet **4c – Strategy Game Cards**) and complete the proposed stress or anxiety management strategy in order to advance two squares. If the player is not able to answer, they can ask a friend for help. If the friend can help the player, they too can advance their pawn one square. If the player asks for an adult's help, they can advance their pawn only one square.
4. When the children land on a square containing a climbing wall, they can advance their pawn to the square at the top of the wall. If the player lands on a square containing a rope, they must lower their pawn to the square at the bottom of the rope.
5. The first player to land on the **sun square** (final square in the game) wins the game.











CALMING THOUGHTS: CHANGING THOUGHTS

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- The children can keep their answer sheets used during the game to remember how to change their negative thoughts into helping thoughts.
- Teachers can act as external mediators to guide and help the children change their thoughts and use various strategies for managing stress and anxiety.
- Teachers or parents could create a set of strategies for the children by printing and cutting out all of the **Strategy Cards**. They could then laminate, punch holes in and insert the cards into metal or plastic rings. This would make it easier for children to use stress and anxiety management strategies.
- If the children or teens do not want to play the game, they can use only sheet **4d – Answer Sheet** to practise changing negative and anxious thoughts into positive and helpful thoughts.
- It may also be helpful to ask the children or teens for negative and anxious thoughts that differ from those mentioned and invite them to change these thoughts into positive and helpful thoughts. The children or teens may also suggest other strategies that are not mentioned on the **Strategy game cards**. Blank cards (**Obstacle and Strategy**) have been added to the tool so that the children or teens can create their own cards if they wish.
- To help the children confront and change their negative thoughts into positive and helpful thoughts, a great alternative to this game would be the thought-changing activities (Activity 3.7 – *Change Your Glasses!* and Activity 3.8 – *Say Goodbye to Dark Glasses!*) suggested by Chantal Besner in the instructional book *L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves*². These activities allow children to recognize and accept the stress or anxiety they are feeling and help them confront and change their thoughts in order to better manage their stress or anxiety.

2 - Besner, C. (2016). *L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves*. Montréal, Québec : Chenelière Éducation. (p. 82-85)



 26	 27	 28	 29	 30
 21	 22	 23	 24	 25
 16	 17	 18	 19	 20
 11	 12	 13	 14	 15
 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
START 1	 2	 3	 4	 5

OBSTACLE CARD #1 

I really suck at everything I do.

OBSTACLE CARD #2 

I won't be able to do it.

OBSTACLE CARD #3 

I'll never succeed.

OBSTACLE CARD #4 

Nobody likes me.

OBSTACLE CARD #5 

If I touch the school doors,
I'm going to catch the virus and
I'm going to get seriously ill.

OBSTACLE CARD #6 

Others will laugh at me if
I don't succeed.

OBSTACLE CARD #7 

If I catch the virus, nobody will
want to play with me again.

OBSTACLE CARD #8 

I'm not good.
I'm always the last to finish.

OBSTACLE CARD #9 

What if everyone catches
the virus?

OBSTACLE CARD #10 

If I give the virus to my teacher,
they will no longer like me.

OBSTACLE CARD #11 

It's really too difficult.

OBSTACLE CARD #12 

I'm always wrong.
I'm really incompetent.

**OBSTACLE CARD #13** 

If I catch the virus, everyone around me will die.

OBSTACLE CARD #14 

I'll definitely fail.
I don't understand anything.

OBSTACLE CARD #15 

School is too difficult.
It's not for me.

OBSTACLE CARD #16 

I'm afraid of the virus because it's very contagious and everyone dies from it.

OBSTACLE CARD #17 

I'm too stressed.
I can't do it.

OBSTACLE CARD #18 

If I don't catch up on last year, I won't understand anything this year.

OBSTACLE CARD #19 

If I fail my year,
I'll be a failure in life.

OBSTACLE CARD #20 

I can't do it.

OBSTACLE CARD #21 

I give up.
There's no point.

OBSTACLE CARD #22 

It's over.
I have no chance of succeeding.

OBSTACLE CARD #23 

I'm too slow.

OBSTACLE CARD #24 

I'll never be able to hug my loved ones again.

**OBSTACLE CARD #25** 

My friends will laugh at me
if I wear these clothes.

OBSTACLE CARD #26 

If I fail this exam,
I'll have to repeat my
school year.

OBSTACLE CARD #27 

If I fail this exam, my parents
will be really angry and
disappointed with me.

OBSTACLE CARD #28 

What if I get lost in this
new school?

OBSTACLE CARD #29 

I'm afraid I'm going to lose
my teacher forever.

OBSTACLE CARD #30 

I always make mistakes
when I speak.

OBSTACLE CARD #31 
additional**OBSTACLE CARD #32** 
additional**OBSTACLE CARD #33** 
additional**OBSTACLE CARD #34** 
additional**OBSTACLE CARD #35** 
additional**OBSTACLE CARD #36** 
additional



OBSTACLE CARD #37 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #38 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #39 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #40 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #41 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #42 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #43 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #44 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #45 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #46 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #47 
additional

OBSTACLE CARD #48 
additional



STRATEGY CARD #1



Strategy: Identify and recognize your emotions.

Identify and share your current emotion.

What emotion do you feel at this very moment?

Why do you feel like that?

STRATEGY CARD #2



Strategy: Recognize potential sources of stress or anxiety.

Name three aspects of the family or social environment that may cause stress or anxiety.

STRATEGY CARD #3



Strategy: Recognize, name and change anxious thoughts.

Name one or two anxious thought(s) you've already had.

How could you change it (them) into helpful thinking?

STRATEGY CARD #4



Strategy: Practise a breathing technique.

Practise "navel" breathing.

- 1- Inhale slowly through your nose by inflating your belly for three long seconds (1... 2...3).
- 2- Hold your breath for three long seconds (1... 2...3).
- 3- Exhale gently through the mouth, releasing for three long seconds (1... 2...3).

STRATEGY CARD #5



Strategy: Be aware and present in the "here and now."

Stop for a few seconds and become aware of what you're doing and what's going on around you.

- How do you feel in your body?
- What do you hear with your ears?
- What do you see with your eyes?
- What smells do you recognize with your nose?
- What do you taste in your mouth?

STRATEGY CARD #6



Strategy: Use a courage helper.

Name an object that gives you courage when you need it.

- Why is this object important to you?
- When do you use this object?
- If you don't have one, what object could you use?

STRATEGY CARD #7



Strategy: Muscle relaxation.

Lean on a wall or something very hard that can't tip over and push very hard counting up to five (1...2...3...4...5). Repeat this exercise 3-5 times.

STRATEGY CARD #8



Strategy: Positive visualization.

Remember a place where you felt good and safe.

- What were you doing?
- Where were you?
- Who were you with?
- How were you dressed?
- What smells do you recognize?
- And what sounds did you hear?

STRATEGY CARD #9



Strategy: Practice relaxing and calming activities.

- What relaxing and calming activity/activities do you do when you feel stressed or anxious?
- What are the benefits of this activity/ these activities for you?
- Where do you practise it/them?
- With whom do you practise it/them?
- Can you demonstrate it/them or explain how to do your activity/activities?



STRATEGY CARD #10



Strategy: Use children's literature.

Name your favorite book about fear, stress or anxiety.

What is the story in this book?

Who are the characters?

Which character looks like you the most?

Why?

What are the strategies used by the characters?

STRATEGY CARD #11



Strategy: Express your fears and confront your thoughts with reality.

Name a fear you have.

Is there a risk that this will happen to you?

Is there any evidence that this will actually happen?

What are the solutions if this fear occurs or comes true?

STRATEGY CARD #12



Strategy: Recognize and identify stress or anxiety feelings.

Name your stress or anxiety signs when you're experiencing a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation (e.g. arrival of a new person or an unexpected test).

What happens in your head, in your body, in your heart and in your behavioural responses?

STRATEGY CARD #13



Strategy: Identify and recognize your emotions.

Mimic your current emotion.

Is it joy, anger, sadness, disgust, surprise, anxiety?

STRATEGY CARD #14



Strategy: Recognize potential sources of stress or anxiety.

Name two aspects of the school environment that may cause stress or anxiety.

What are your ways to deal with these sources of stress or anxiety?

STRATEGY CARD #15



Personal strategy.

Name and explain your preferred stress or anxiety management strategy.

What material do you need?

How does it work?

Where can you do it?

When can you use this strategy?

STRATEGY CARD #16



additional

STRATEGY CARD #17



additional

STRATEGY CARD #18



additional



STRATEGY CARD #19
additional



STRATEGY CARD #20
additional



STRATEGY CARD #21
additional



STRATEGY CARD #22
additional



STRATEGY CARD #23
additional



STRATEGY CARD #24
additional



STRATEGY CARD #25
additional



STRATEGY CARD #26
additional



STRATEGY CARD #27
additional





Negative and anxious thoughts to change



Positive and helpful thoughts



1. I really suck at everything I do.
2. I won't be able to do it.
3. I'll never succeed.
4. Nobody likes me.
5. If I touch the school doors, I'm going to catch the virus and I'm going to get seriously ill.
6. Others will laugh at me if I don't succeed.
7. If I catch the virus, nobody will want to play with me again.
8. I'm not good. I'm always the last to finish.
9. What if everyone catches the virus?
10. If I give the virus to my teacher, they will no longer like me.
11. It's really too difficult.
12. I'm always wrong. I'm really incompetent.
13. If I catch the virus, everyone around me will die.
14. I'll definitely fail. I don't understand anything.
15. School is too difficult. It's not for me.



Negative and anxious thoughts to change



Positive and helpful thoughts



16. I'm afraid of the virus because it's very contagious and everyone dies from it.

17. I'm too stressed. I can't do it.

18. If I don't catch up on last year, I won't understand anything this year.

19. If I fail my year, I'll be a failure in life.

20. I can't do it.

21. I give up. There's no point.

22. It's over. I have no chance of succeeding.

23. I'm too slow.

24. I'll never be able to hug my loved ones again.

25. My friends will laugh at me if I wear these clothes.

26. If I fail this exam, I'll have to repeat my school year.

27. If I fail this exam, my parents will be really angry and disappointed with me.

28. What if I get lost in this new school?

29. I'm afraid I'm going to lose my teacher forever.

30. I always make mistakes when I speak.



CALMING THOUGHTS: USING VISUALIZATION TO CALM DOWN

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help children or teens who are experiencing stress or anxiety to use positive visualization as a strategy to calm their thoughts and reduce their signs of anxiety.
- To help children or teens create positive images in their heads and imagine a time when they were proud of themselves and when they felt confident and in control in order to calm down their body and give themselves confidence and overcome their fears and worries.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 5-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone or in groups.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 5a** – *A Special Moment When You Felt Proud and Confident* (read aloud by the adult);
- Blank sheet;
- Quiet and comforting background music (optional);
- Yoga mat or cushion (optional).

LENGTH → 15-20 minutes.



TOOL 5

CALMING THOUGHTS: USING VISUALIZATION TO CALM DOWN

PROCEDURE

1. Invite the children or teens to sit comfortably on a yoga mat, cushion or chair, with their trunks straight.
2. Ask them to relax and loosen all the muscles in their bodies.
3. Before reading, take the time to explain certain words of the text to ensure the listener's understanding, such as inhale, exhale, ribcage, serene, etc.
4. Invite the children or teens to close their eyes and listen carefully to each sentence and word, focusing on your voice.
5. Ask the children or teens to create positive images in their heads by imagining what they saw and how they felt.
6. Quietly read out loud the text of sheet **5a – A Special Moment When You Felt Proud and Confident**.
7. At the end of the reading, invite the children or teens to describe or draw the images of the special moment depicted in their heads during the reading of the text.
8. To guide the children or teens, you can ask the following questions:
 - *When did you feel most proud of yourself?*
 - *When did you feel most confident and in control of your abilities?*
 - *Where were you at that time?*
 - *When did this special moment happen?*
 - *Who were you with at that time?*
 - *How did you feel at that time? What emotions entered your body?*
 - *How could you recreate these feelings and emotions?*
9. At the end of the activity, remind the children or teens that they can use the visualization strategy to manage stress or anxiety and regain confidence in order to overcome worries or fears.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- You could do this activity by asking the children or teens to visualize a place where they feel good or someone with whom they feel safe.
- In the context of COVID-19, you may want to ask the children or teens to visualize themselves experiencing a special moment with trusted friends or adults in a place where they feel good.



The text I'm about to read aloud is a visualization exercise.

It will help you to feel more confident and in control of your abilities while recalling a time when you felt proud of yourself.

Let go of your thoughts and focus on my voice while trying to create images in your head of a time, place, people, sensations, emotions and smells.

Sit comfortably and relax your muscles to release tension from your body.

Take the time to stretch your legs, stretch your arms and gently turn your neck and head.

You can quietly close your eyes now.

Take a moment to breathe deeply by taking the time to slowly breathe air through your nose.

Count five seconds. 1...2...3...4...5

Your belly should swell and your ribcage should rise.

Then, slowly exhale all the air in your lungs through your nose.

Count five seconds. 1...2...3...4...5

Your belly should deflate and your ribcage should fall.

Do this exercise three times. (Repeat the above sequence for the children or teens)

You're now ready for this visualization exercise.

Listen carefully and focus on every word I say.

Remember a special moment.

A time when you felt proud of yourself.

A time when you felt confident and in control of your abilities.

It can be a challenge you achieved, a prize you won, a trip, or time spent with your friends or family.

It's up to you to choose this moment that made you proud and confident.

Based on your thoughts, imagine this moment and recreate it in your head as if you were experiencing it right now.

Think about all the details of this special moment.

What were you doing?

Where were you?

Who were you with?

How were you dressed?

What smells did you recognize? What sounds did you hear?

What was the weather like? What was the season and month of year?

Remember how you felt at that moment.

What emotions did you feel?

What sensations did you feel in your body?

Based on Besner, C. (2016). *L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves*. Montréal : Chenelière Éducation.

**Really focus on it. Continue thinking about this special moment.**

Take the time to feel in your body the emotions and sensations you felt during that moment.

Think of the people you love.

They have big smiles.

Welcome all the love they're sharing with you.

Embrace that moment in your heart and keep it precious inside your head.

Whenever you lack self-confidence, whenever you get scared, whenever you feel stressed or anxious, you'll think back to this special moment.

You'll remember what you did to experience this moment.

You'll remember the smells, people, sounds, colours, sensations and emotions that entered your body and thoughts.

This will allow you to calm down and feel peaceful.

This moment will restore the courage you need and allow you to overcome your fears and worries.

Be brave.

Believe in yourself and your abilities.

Go ahead, I trust you.

You're capable.

You'll manage.

Be proud of yourself.

Before opening your eyes, take a moment to breathe deeply.

Take the time to slowly inhale the air through your nose.

Count five seconds. 1...2...3...4...5

Your belly should swell and your ribcage should rise.

Then, slowly exhale all the air in your lungs through your nose.

Count five seconds. 1...2...3...4...5

Your belly should deflate and your ribcage should fall.

You can now come back to the present moment and slowly open your eyes.

You're probably feeling calm and peaceful.

Take the time to move and gently stretch all the limbs of your body: your neck, shoulders, arms, legs and feet.

Enjoy and appreciate the moment you've just re-experienced.

You can smile.

Now, in order to always remember it, I invite you to write it down on paper.



TOOL 6

CALMING THOUGHTS: COLOURING A MANDALA

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help children calm their stressful or anxious thoughts by bringing them back to the present moment.
- To allow the children to express themselves using arts in order to reduce their level of stress or anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- 5-12-year-old children.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 6a** – Printable Colouring Mandalas;
- Coloured pencils;
- Quiet and comforting background music (optional);

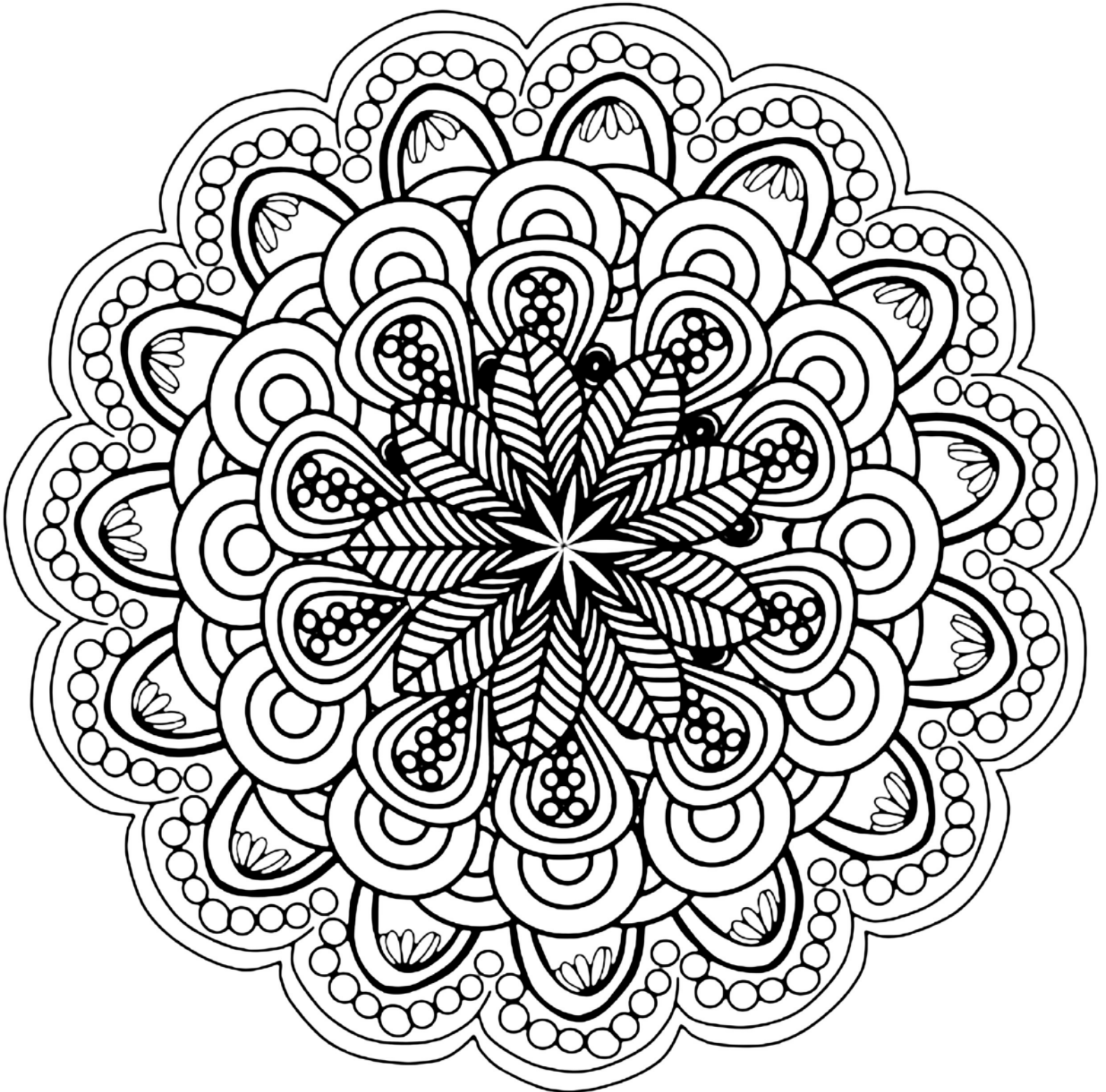
LENGTH → Variable (at least 10 minutes).

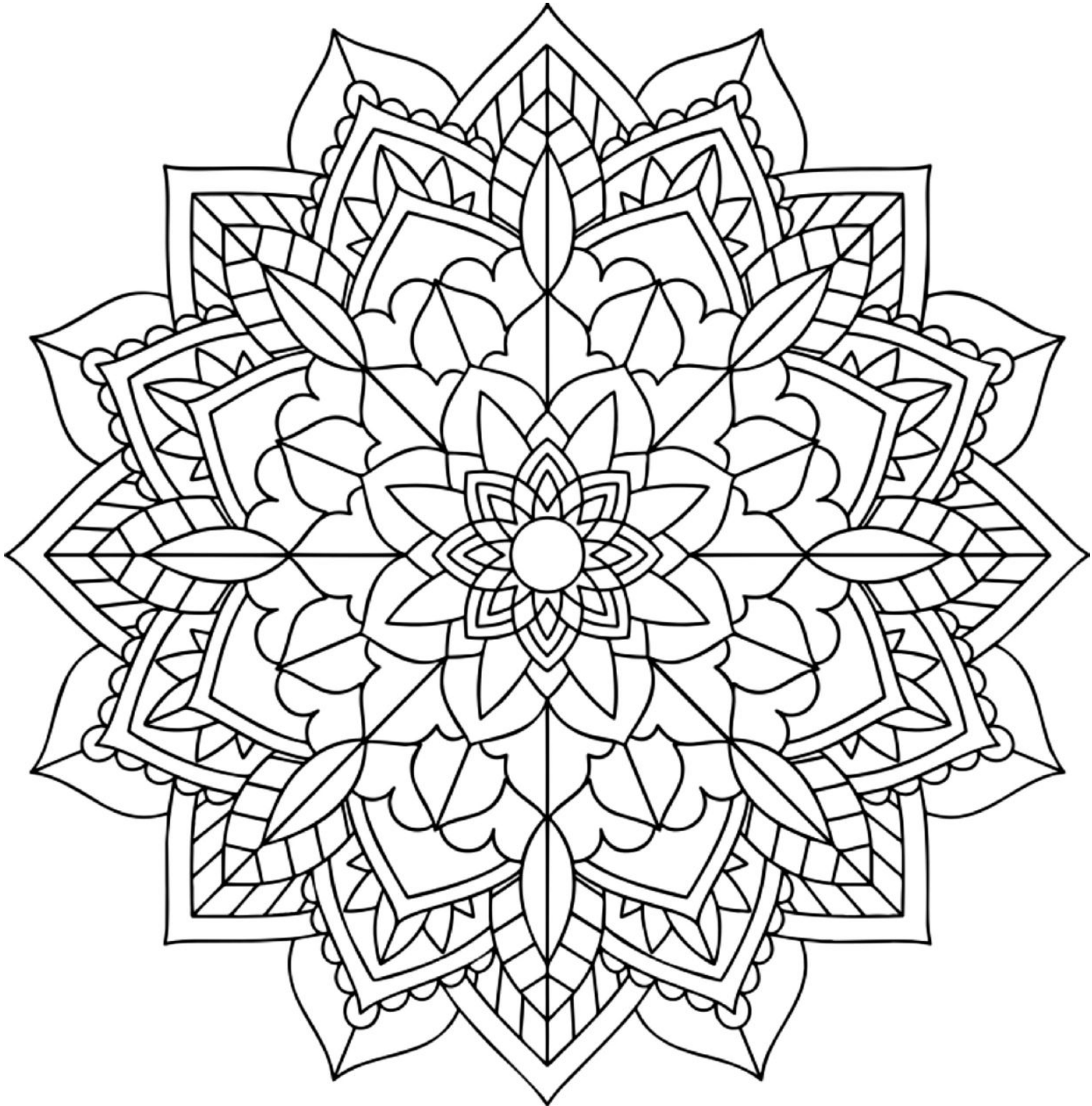
PROCEDURE

1. Invite the children to sit in a quiet and comfortable place.
2. Play quiet, calming and comforting background music for the children (optional).
3. Ask the children to take out their coloured pencils and spread them out in front of them.
4. Give them a printed sheet containing a mandala (sheet **6a - Printable Colouring Mandalas**).
5. Explain to the children that mandalas are designed to stimulate imagination, develop creativity, concentration, calm and refocus in the present moment. If necessary, you can provide examples of mandalas on the computer or in a collection.
6. Tell the children that they should colour each shape using a different colour. However, it's possible to colour identical shapes using the same colour. If the children need to calm down and regain control of themselves, it's advisable to colour the mandala **from the outside to the inside**, as this allows them to refocus in the present moment. If the children would like to express themselves, it's advisable to colour the mandala from the inside to the outside to allow them to open up and express themselves.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- At the end of the activity, you may want to suggest that the children cut out the outline of their mandala and glue it nicely onto a coloured cardboard.
- You could make or buy a collection of mandalas and make it available to the children so that they can use this calming strategy when they feel stressed or anxious.
- You could also suggest that the children include mandalas in their emotions diary (Tool 13 - Calming the Heart: The Emotions Diary).
- Drawing is only one art form that can help children calm their thoughts. Dance, drama, writing, painting and singing can also serve as outlets.







CALMING THOUGHTS: CREATING A MANDALA

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help teens calm their stressful or anxious thoughts by bringing them back to the present moment.
- To help teens open up and express themselves through the arts in order to reduce their level of stress or anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- 12-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 7a** – My Personal Mandala;
- Lead pencil;
- Eraser;
- Coloured pencils;
- Calm and quiet background music (optional).

LENGTH → Variable (at least 10 minutes).



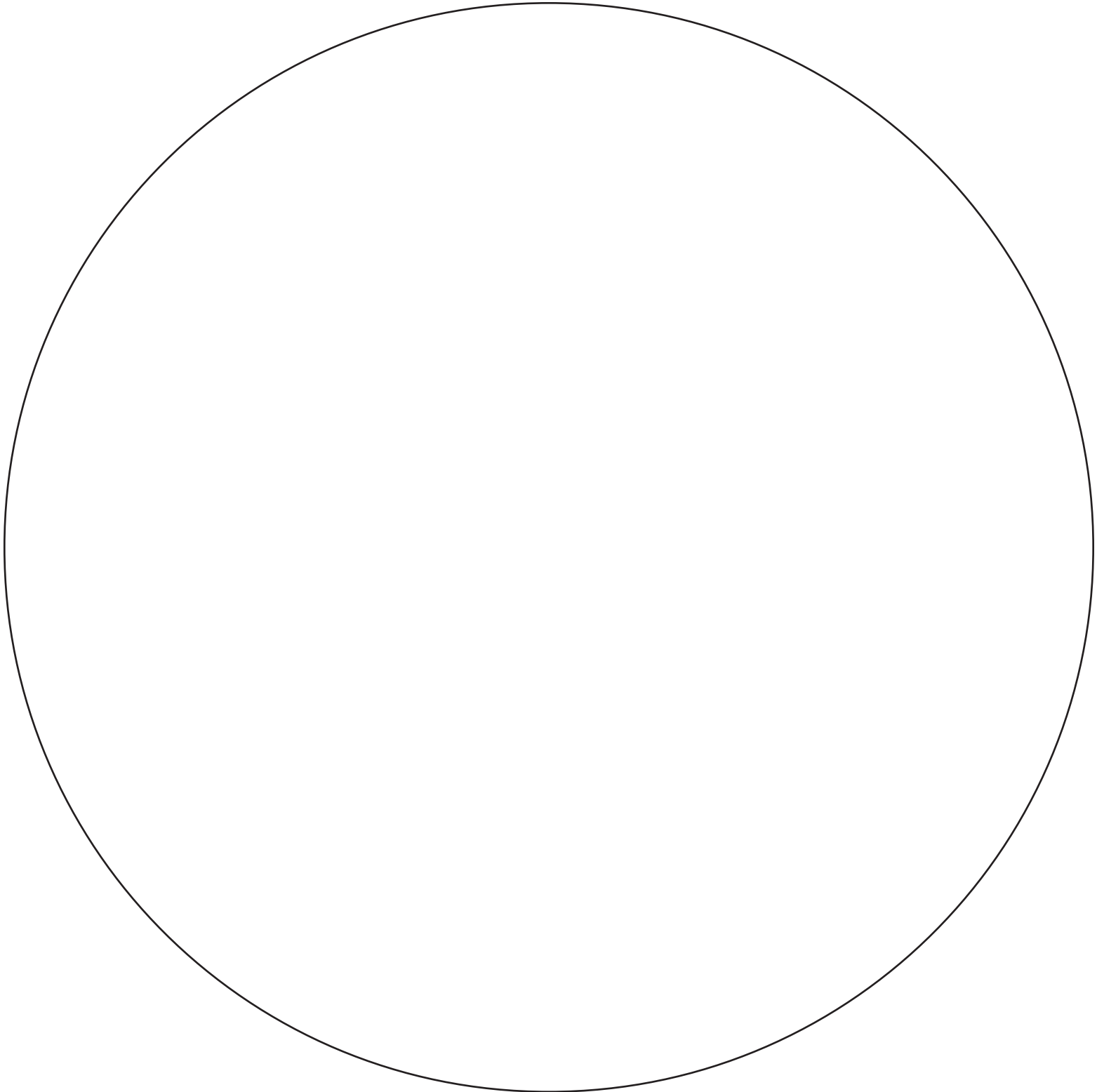
CALMING THOUGHTS: CREATING A MANDALA

PROCEDURE

1. Invite the teens to sit in a quiet and comfortable place.
2. Play quiet and calming background music for the teens (optional).
3. Ask them to take out their coloured pencils and spread them out in front of them.
4. Then give them a printed sheet containing a blank circle to be used for making the mandala (sheet **7a – My Personal Mandala**).
5. Explain to the teens that mandalas are designed to stimulate imagination, develop creativity, concentration, calm and refocus in the present moment. If necessary, you can provide examples of mandalas on the computer or in a collection.
6. Invite them to draw several circles inside the first circle to organize the space. They can also draw several lines to create a square inside the circle and better separate the space.
7. The teens can then use a compass or a circular object to draw even-sized rosettes. They can also let their imaginations run wild and draw various shapes, such as waves, squares, flowers, etc. When the mandalas are finished, they can erase unnecessary pencil strokes.
8. Explain to the teens that they must colour each shape using a different colour by letting their imaginations run wild. If the teens need to calm down, it's advisable to colour the mandala **from the outside to the inside**, as this allows them to refocus in the present moment. If the teens would like to express themselves, it's advisable to colour the mandala **from the inside to the outside** to allow them to open up and express themselves.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- You could suggest that the teens use coloured paint rather than pencils to colour the mandalas.
- You could suggest that the teens make their own collection of mandalas to allow themselves to calm down and refocus when they feel stressed or anxious.
- You could also suggest that the teens include personalized mandalas in their emotions diary (Tool 13 - Calming the Heart: The Emotions Diary).
- Drawing is only one art form that can help teens calm their thoughts. Dance, drama, writing, painting and singing can also serve as outlets.





TOOL 8

CALMING THE BODY: USING DEEP BREATHING TO CALM DOWN

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children or teens control their breathing by teaching them two quick and effective breathing techniques.
- To help the children lower their heart rates and thereby reduce the intensity of physical signs of stress and anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 5-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 8a** – My Bookmark of Breaths;
- Yoga mats or cushions (optional);
- Light object (toy, cushion, ball, paper ball, pencil, etc.) (optional).

LENGTH → About 5 minutes.

PROCEDURE

“Navel” breathing

1. Invite the children or teens to choose a quiet and comfortable place.
2. Then invite them to sit comfortably on a chair, on the floor or on their bed, with their back straight, or simply lying on their back on the floor or on their bed.
3. Ask the children or teens to put their hands on their stomachs to feel them swell and close their eyes if they wish.
4. Explain “navel” breathing to the children or teens. “Navel” breathing is belly breathing. Gently inhale through your nose in order to completely inflate the belly with air and hold your breath for a few seconds. Then, simply exhale quietly through your mouth and the belly will deflate.
5. If necessary, guide the children or teens with their breathing: “Slowly inhale through your nose by inflating your belly for three long seconds (1...2...3); Your hand on your navel should move and rise as you inhale; Hold your breath for three long seconds (1...2...3); Gently exhale through your mouth, releasing for three long seconds (1...2...3).”
6. Suggest that the children or teens repeat these breathing exercises several times to allow the body to calm down and reduce stress and anxiety.



TOOL 8

CALMING THE BODY: USING DEEP BREATHING TO CALM DOWN

“Explosive” breathing

1. Invite the children or teens to choose a quiet and comfortable place.
2. Then invite them to sit comfortably on a chair, on the floor or on their bed, with their back straight, or simply lying on their back on the floor or on their bed.
3. Invite them to close their eyes if they wish.
4. Explain “explosive” breathing to the children or teens. “Explosive” breathing is abdominal breathing (“navel” breathing) ending with chest breathing. Once the “navel” breathing process is done, it’s a question of continuing the breathing by filling your lungs to their full air capacity, as if you wanted to blow them up, and then hold your breath for three seconds, with the torso expanded. After holding three seconds, simply release and gently expel all the air in your lungs.
5. If necessary, guide the children or teens with their “explosive” breathing: “Inhale gently through your nose for three long seconds (1...2...3); Continue by breathing through your mouth as much air as possible to inflate your lungs with air and bulge your rib cage, as if you wanted to explode it like a bomb; Hold your breath for three long seconds (1...2...3); Exhale gently through the mouth all the air contained in your lungs by releasing for another three long seconds (1...2...3).”
6. Suggest that the children or teens repeat these breathing exercises several times to allow the body to calm down and reduce stress and anxiety.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- For the little ones, during the “navel” breathing, you can invite the children to put a light object on their bellies to help them see them rise and fall. This object can be a stuffed animal, a cushion, a ball, a paper ball, a pencil, etc.
- Depending on the children’s age and individual abilities, you can adjust the number of seconds when breathing, exhaling and holding the breath. For example, a teenager could take five seconds to complete their three steps.
- To achieve more effective breathing techniques and promote the assimilation of the steps, it’s recommended to practise them in non-stressful and non-anxiety-provoking situations.
- Given their simplicity, these breathing techniques can be used by the children or teens at various times and in a variety of places. They don’t require any material except for a bookmark (sheet **8a - My Bookmark of Breaths**) created to allow the children or teens to remember and distinguish the different stages of “navel” and “explosive” breathing.



MY BOOKMARK OF BREATHS

“NAVEL” breathing

- 1** Slowly inhale through your nose by inflating your belly for three long seconds (1...2...3).
- 2** Your hand on your navel should move and rise as you inhale.
- 3** Hold your breath for three long seconds (1...2...3).
- 4** Gently exhale through your mouth, releasing for three long seconds (1...2...3).



MY BOOKMARK OF BREATHS

“EXPLOSIVE” breathing

- 1** Inhale gently through your nose for three long seconds (1...2...3).
- 2** Continue by breathing through your mouth as much air as possible to inflate your lungs with air and bulge your rib cage, as if you wanted to explode it like a bomb.
- 3** Hold your breath for three long seconds (1...2...3).
- 4** Exhale gently through the mouth all the air contained in your lungs by releasing for another three long seconds (1...2...3).





TOOL 9

CALMING THE BODY: COORDINATING YOUR BODY WITH YOUR HEART

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children or teens decrease and regulate their heart rate, which is increased by the level of stress or anxiety experienced.
- To help the children or teens control their breathing, using an image or video, in order to better manage their stress or anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 5-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone or in groups.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 9a** – The Breathing Hexagon;
- Relaxation mat or comfortable cushion (optional).

LENGTH → 5-10 minutes.

PROCEDURE

1. The children or teens choose a quiet and comfortable place.
2. They sit comfortably on a chair, their bed or on the floor, with their back and trunk straight.
3. Explain to the children or teens that the term “cardiac” means “heart.” So, cardiac coherence is the control of their breathing or heart rate to help effectively manage stress or anxiety.
4. Explain to the children or teens the main purpose of cardiac coherence. The goal of cardiac coherence is to control your own breathing in order to slow down your heart rate and thereby influence our brains and manage our emotions⁴.
5. Explain to the children or teens the principle of cardiac coherence. Cardiac coherence can be done in a variety of ways, using a watch, timer, electronic application, video or even an image. It consists in controlling your breathing by inhaling and exhaling for a number of seconds. For this activity, explain to the children or teens that they will need to synchronize their breathing with an image by following the direction of the arrows.
6. Show the children or teens the image of the hexagon-shaped stop sign (sheet **9a - The Breathing Hexagon**). Tell them to follow the arrows by inhaling for three seconds (1...2...3) and then exhaling for three seconds (1...2...3). Repeat this principle alternately by completing the hexagon outline. *For the exercise to be effective, it's recommended to count the seconds quietly in your head or out loud.*
7. Explain to the children or teens that they should be able to take six breaths per minute. *One breath = three-second inhalation and three-second exhalation.*
8. Repeat this sequence five times for optimal benefits (calm feeling and decrease in the amount of cortisol (stress hormone) secreted in the body).

4 - Besner, C. (2016). L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves. Chenelière éducation : Montréal, Québec.



CALMING THE BODY: COORDINATING YOUR BODY WITH YOUR HEART

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- This activity can be done several times a day to get more benefits and calm the body and mind.
- This activity can be done with another type of image, for example, a star, snake or wave.
- Abdominal breathing can also be done in conjunction with the proposed cardiac coherence activity, since both techniques have similar objectives: to control breathing, thereby calming the body and reducing the signs of stress and anxiety.
- You can vary the ways of practising cardiac coherence (e.g. timer, cardiac coherence application, video, etc.). The following are a few video suggestions.

VIDEO SUGGESTIONS

- **Breathing for children – Cardiac coherence:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-RAqt7p-3U>
- **Cohérence Kid Music – Cardiac coherence for children:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lin3JOedRvo>
- **5 minutes of Cardiac coherence:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JMey_4vGI4
- **Cardiac coherence for 4-7-year-old children:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bB8a7nAVow>
- **O.zen – Ubisoft video game: connecting to your heartbeat:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKdJsYIGONM>
- **ANTI-STRESS express, to prevent anxiety attacks – Cardiac coherence:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KmoGNpmuw0>





CALMING THE BODY: RELAXING IN THE “HERE AND NOW”

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children focus on the present moment to calm the physical and cognitive signs caused by stress and anxiety.
- To help the children examine the thoughts that cross their minds and become aware of the emotions they feel in order to reduce anxiety and better manage their stress and anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- 5-12-year-old children.

CONTEXT

- Alone or in groups.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- Electronic device (tablet, cell phone, etc.) to project mindfulness meditation videos;
- Yoga mat or cushion (optional).

LENGTH → 5-10 minutes.

PROCEDURE

1. Invite the children to adopt a comfortable position by demonstrating it yourself. The children may be seated in their chairs with their backs straight, or sit on the floor, on a cushion, with their legs crossed and trunk straight. They may also decide to lie down on the floor, on their bed or on a yoga mat.
2. Explain to the children the purpose of this meditation exercise. The main purpose of this type of relaxation is to become fully aware of physical sensations, thoughts and emotions in our body. The goal is not to completely empty your mind of all thoughts or drive out negative emotions, but rather to welcome them naturally by living in the present moment.
3. Encourage the children to pay close attention to breathing. Ask them to inhale through their nose by inflating their lungs with air and counting three long seconds and exhaling slowly through their mouth by completely emptying their lungs of air. Their breathing should be fluid and natural, not jerky. Demonstrate this breathing for the children.
4. Ask the children to gently close their eyes and focus on their breathing and the voice of the person reciting the guided meditation. Then invite the children to observe their thoughts, emotions and physical sensations. Tell them to let them come freely and naturally and welcome them by not trying to drive them away.



CALMING THE BODY: RELAXING IN THE “HERE AND NOW”

5. Have the children listen to a video by demonstrating the expected behaviours for the first time (see video suggestions below). Ask them to look at you while you follow the guided meditation. Then, repeat the exercise by letting the children do it alone. You can repeat this step several times if necessary.
6. At the end of the guided meditation, quietly invite the children to stretch and slowly open their eyes. Praise them for taking the time to focus and practise being in the present moment.
7. Ask them to talk about how they felt, what they thought, what they liked, what they found more uncomfortable. What thoughts crossed your mind? How would you describe these thoughts? What emotions did you feel during the guided meditation? What sensations did you feel in your body? What did you like most during this moment with yourself? What were the things you found uncomfortable during this exercise? It's quite normal that the children may feel several physical sensations, emotions and thoughts due to the situation experienced over the past few months, which may have caused more intense reactions.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- When you start guided meditation with children, it's advisable to practise short sessions of about five minutes at most. If the sessions are too long, the children will become discouraged. The goal is for the children to gradually tolerate their thoughts, physical sensations and emotions. You can gradually increase the length of practices, but a 5-10-minute period of guided meditation properly done during the day can have many benefits, such as improving cognitive functions, attention and concentration, improving reactions to stressful and anxiety-provoking situations, and optimizing physical and mental well-being⁵.
- At the end of the activity, the children can use their emotions diary (Tool 13 - Calming the Heart: The Emotions Diary) to express themselves (in writing or by drawing) in a more personal way. They can also form subgroups in the classroom to share their experiences. At home, parents can take time with their children to discuss it and the parents can also share their experiences with their children. This time for discussion and sharing helps nurture parent-child relationships.

5 - <https://www.ulaval.ca/mon-equilibre-ul/exclusivites-mon-equilibre/meditation-pleine-conscience>



CALMING THE BODY: RELAXING IN THE “HERE AND NOW”

- You can practise these mindfulness relaxation activities simply with the children in various contexts of daily life. For example:
 - Stopping for a few minutes just to become aware of what we're doing...even if it's a matter of picking up a pencil, taking a bath or reading.
 - Promote outdoor class time and outdoor field trips in order to: feel the wind on their cheeks and hair; sniff odours in the air; listen to sounds; observe all the elements of nature (trees, rocks, flowers, clouds, etc.); become aware of the sensations of contact with the ground when we walk or when we take elements of nature in our hands (leaves, tree trunk, rocks, earth, etc.).
 - When you eat snacks, you can make a game out of rediscovering textures, shapes, smells, flavours, etc.
 - Encourage the children to name the sensations they feel by mentioning their five senses (taste, touch, smell, hearing, sight) in various situations (eating, washing their hands, running quickly, writing, etc.).
 - Stop, become aware of our breathing and concentrate on it for a few seconds.
 - When a conflict arises, teach the children to become aware of their emotions and how they feel, rather than quickly reacting.
 - Teach the children to recognize, name and accept various emotions they feel.

VIDEO SUGGESTIONS

- **Guided meditation for children: a peaceful and wise heart:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWRAe2b_Zhl
- **Guided meditation for children: calm and attentive like a frog:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trZ7IYKCGbc>
- **Guided meditation for children – A legendary dragon** (let go, help relieve stress, fear, anger and tension):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yvw31uiZj8M>
- **Guided meditation for children – The magic unicorn** (let go, help relieve stress, fear, anger and tension):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecnjkezFM8E>



TOOL 11

CALMING THE HEART: SELF-CONFIDENCE CAN BE BUILT!

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children or teens increase their sense of competence and improve their self-esteem.
- To help the children develop a sense of pride in their achievements and identify their challenges.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 8-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 11a** – Self-Confidence Can Be Built!;
- Lead pencil;
- Eraser.

LENGTH → About 10 minutes (variable).

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the children or teens to sheet **11a – Self-Confidence Can Be Built!** and explain its goals: “This activity will allow you to develop a sense of pride in your successes or achievements and also help you identify daily challenges. Doing this activity can help increase your sense of competence and improve your self-esteem.” In addition, this activity can be carried out at any time of the day, but it’s best to do it at the end of the day to allow the children or teens to take a look back on their days.
2. Ask the children or teens to think about three aspects of their day that make them proud of themselves or that were positive experiences. These aspects may be a challenge they faced, a moment they experienced, a service they provided, use of a stress or anxiety management strategy that worked well, efforts made on tasks or tests, etc.
3. Invite them to write down the three aspects of their day that make them proud in the appropriate place on sheet **11a – Self-Confidence Can Be Built!** The children or teens may decide to share them with you or choose to keep them to themselves. Respect their personal choices. If they choose to share them with you, you can ask them about their choices. *Why did you feel proud of this? What made you most proud in this moment? Besides pride, what else did you feel at this moment?*



TOOL 11

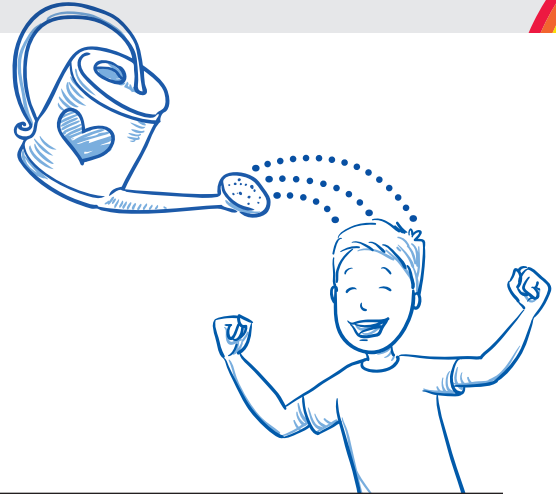
CALMING THE HEART: SELF-CONFIDENCE CAN BE BUILT!

4. Then ask the children or teens to identify a challenge for the next day or upcoming days. However, don't put pressure on them by imposing a specific time limit. This challenge may be a service to be provided, a goal to be achieved, an attitude to be adopted, a stress or anxiety management strategy to be used, etc.
5. Invite them to write down this challenge in the appropriate place on sheet **11a – Self-Confidence Can Be Built!** The children or teens may decide to share them with you or choose to keep them to themselves. Again, respect their personal choices. If they choose to share them with you, you can ask them about their choice. *Why is this a challenge for you? How will you do that? When and where do you plan to achieve this challenge? What are the steps you need to take to achieve it? Who can help you achieve your challenge?*

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- This activity could be incorporated into an end-of-day routine on a daily basis to allow the children or teens to review their days.
- This activity could also be incorporated into the children's or teens' emotions diary (Tool 13 – Calming the Heart: The Emotions Diary).





Name: _____

Date: _____

Name three things you're proud of:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Identify a challenge and one or two concrete way(s) to achieve it:

Challenge to achieve: _____

Practical way(s) to achieve it: _____



CALMING THE HEART: THE EMOTIONS CUP

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children recognize and put their emotions into words.
- To help the children assess the intensity of their emotions in order to identify effective ways to better manage them when they are overly intense or harmful to themselves.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- 5-10-year-old children.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 12a** – The Emotions Cup;
- Tool X - Emotional Regulation (optional);
- Plastic pouch;
- Erasable marker.

LENGTH → 10-15 minutes.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask the children about their current emotions. *How are you feeling right now? What's hidden in your heart? Can you name or describe the emotion you're feeling?* If necessary, consult the emotional regulation tool (Tool X - Emotional Regulation) to help the children name their emotion or allow them to enrich their emotional vocabulary.
2. Invite the children to assess the intensity of the emotion experienced on a scale of 1 to 5. Explain the cup levels: "When you say 1 out of 5, you don't feel nearly any anxiety!," "When you say 2 out of 5, you feel a little bit of anxiety!," "When you say 3 out of 5, you feel a moderate amount of anxiety!," "When you say 4 out of 5, you feel a lot of anxiety!" and "When you say 5 out of 5, you feel a huge amount of anxiety!; be careful, your cup is nearly overflowing!"
3. Put sheet **12a - The Emotions Cup** into a plastic pouch.
4. Ask the children to colour the level of intensity of the emotion felt on their emotion cups. For example, if the children feel anxious at a level of 3 out of 5, they will colour three out of five areas.



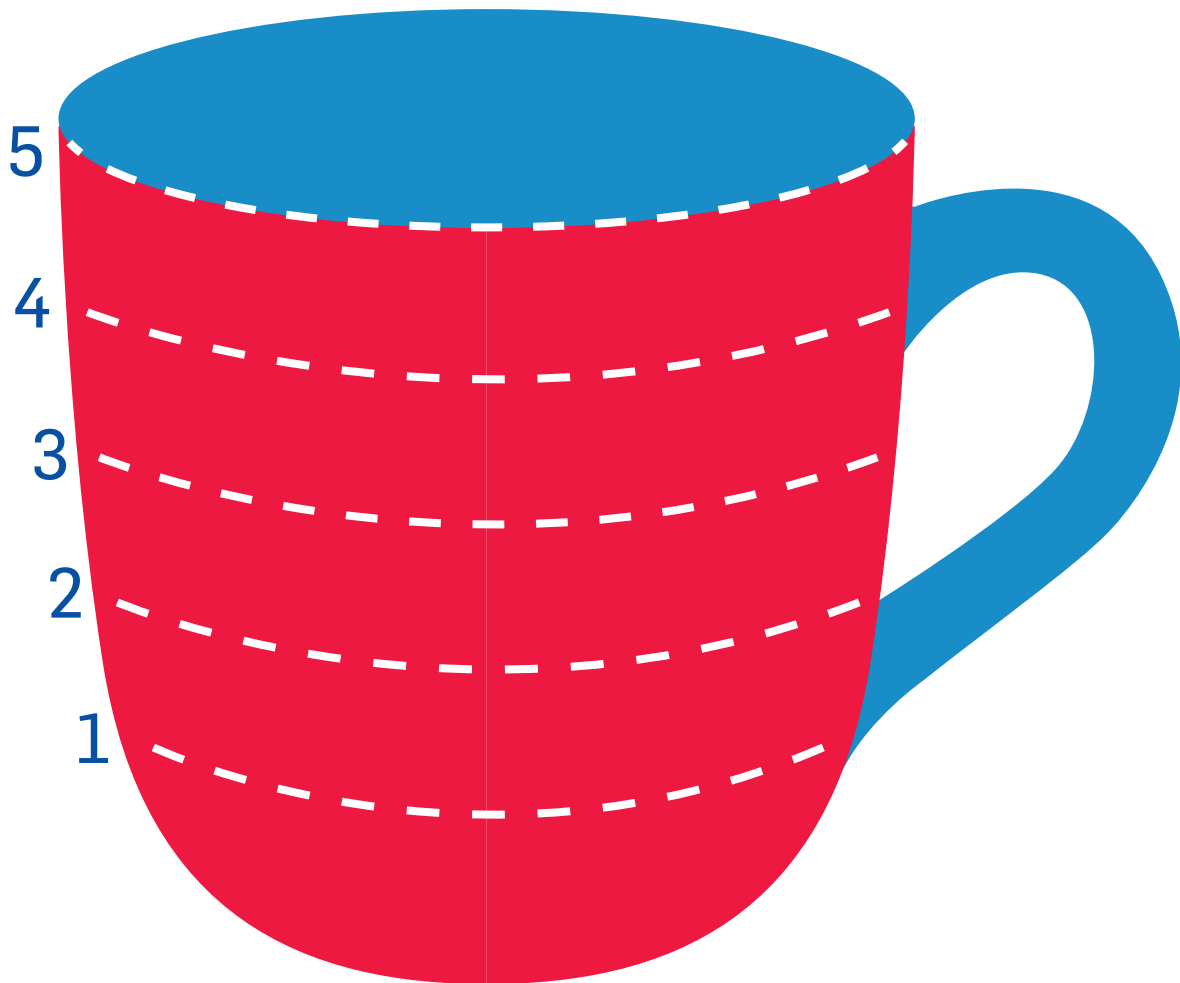
CALMING THE HEART: THE EMOTIONS CUP

5. Explain to the children that the cup overflows when there's too much negative emotion. You don't want to get to that point. That's why we need to identify and use ways and strategies to empty the cup of negative emotions and fill it instead with a pleasant emotion, such as joy. Take the time to explain to the children that there are no good or bad emotions; what we define as positive or negative are the pleasant and uncomfortable reactions and sensations felt inside our body and heart when we experience this emotion.
6. Help the children choose a strategy in the toolbox to reduce the uncomfortable emotion felt. For example, you can together decide to choose the mindfulness meditation strategy (Tool 10 - Calming the Body: Mindfulness Meditation) or use the bookmark of breaths (sheet **8a - My Bookmark of Breaths**).

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- There are many ways to help the children assess the intensity of the emotions they feel, including an emotional thermometer, an emotional wheel, an emotional scale, etc.
- As professionals, you can also enrich and work on emotional vocabulary with the children in many ways, either by using children's literature, by doing mimes, social scenarios and riddles about emotions, by taking pictures of the children mimicking an emotion with their faces, etc.
- If the children can easily name and assess the intensity of their emotions, you can suggest that they think about their emotions in order to enable them to get to know themselves better (Besner, 2016)⁶. This activity recommends that the children draw the positive and negative emotions experienced in certain situations. For older children, this activity invites the children to write three sentences describing the emotions they feel and provides an emotional vocabulary to help the children with their thoughts

6 - Besner, C. (2016). *L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves*. Montréal, Québec : Chenelière Éducation. (p. 73-75)





CALMING THE HEART: THE EMOTIONS DIARY

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children or teens identify their own emotions.
- To help the children or teens express and open up with their emotions by putting what they feel into words in the form of a diary.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 10-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- Lead pencil;
- Eraser;
- Blank notebook;
- Cardboard;
- Coloured pencils.

LENGTH → At least 10 minutes (variable).

PROCEDURE

1. Suggest that the children or teens write an emotions diary to express and open up with their emotions felt on a daily basis. Explain that this activity will allow them to reduce their feelings of stress or anxiety by expressing what they are feeling. This activity can be carried out on a daily basis and will enable them to get to know themselves better. Knowing yourself and your reactions are also an important protective factor related to stress and anxiety.
2. Invite the children or teens to choose a blank notebook and personalize it as they wish. They might decide to cover it with cardboard and draw images that represent themselves (e.g. music, sports, arts, outdoors, etc.).
3. Guide the children or teens with their daily reflection by asking them open-ended questions. These questions are optional and can be changed as needed.



CALMING THE HEART: THE EMOTIONS DIARY

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- *How do you feel today?*
- *Do you feel fear, joy, anger, surprise, disgust, sadness?*
- *Can you describe this emotion or mixture of emotions?*
- *Why do you feel this emotion?*
- *What do you think triggers this emotion?*
- *How do you react when you experience an overly intense emotion?*
- *What happens in your heart, head and body when you experience this emotion?*
- *What are your behavioral responses when you experience this emotion?*
- *How can you experience this emotion less intensely?*
- *What solutions can you use to better control your emotions?*
- *What would make you feel better?*

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- This activity could be adapted and carried out verbally in subgroups or class groups. In this case, the teacher would guide the conversation by letting those who wish to do so freely express themselves.
- This activity could be used as a daily routine in the morning when arriving or returning from lunch to encourage the children or teens to express the emotions that cause them to have negative attitudes or reactions. If the children or teens wish to do so, they may share their emotions, fears and feelings with the teacher. Obviously, they should not be forced to express their emotions; otherwise, they might decide to close up and subsequently refuse to communicate. Rather, it's important to be open, understanding and available to listen to the children or teens who feel the need to do so, without any judgment.



CALMING BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES: THE EFFORT WALL

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children or teens face their fears and anxieties using the gradual exposure strategy.
- To help the children or teens become aware of their achievements and progress in order to develop their self-confidence and feeling of self-efficacy.

TARGET AGE GROUPS

- 5-12-year-old children.
- 13-17-year-old teens.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 14a** – The Effort Wall (optional);
- Lead pencil;
- Eraser;
- Scissors;
- Glue stick;
- Coloured pencils.

LENGTH → 10-15 minutes.

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the children or teens to the “**Effort Wall**” activity. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to enable them to confront their fears and anxieties in order to increase their confidence and make them feel proud of themselves. Depicted by a climbing wall, the effort wall exposes the children or teens to stressful and anxiety-provoking situations where avoidance is often their initial behavioural response.
2. Invite the children or teens to create their own climbing wall or their own “effort wall.” Their walls should consist of about 4-6 climbing holds representing obstacles (steps) to reach the top of the wall, i.e. their personal goals related to the fear or anxiety to overcome. If the children or teens do not wish to draw their own walls, a picture of a climbing wall has been provided on sheet **14a - The Effort Wall**. They can then cut out the holds and glue them directly on the illustrated climbing wall. For older children or teens, it’s not mandatory to do a climbing wall. The children or teens may choose to write their personal fears and goals in their personal diary (Tool 13 - Calming the Heart: The Emotions Diary).



CALMING BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES: THE EFFORT WALL

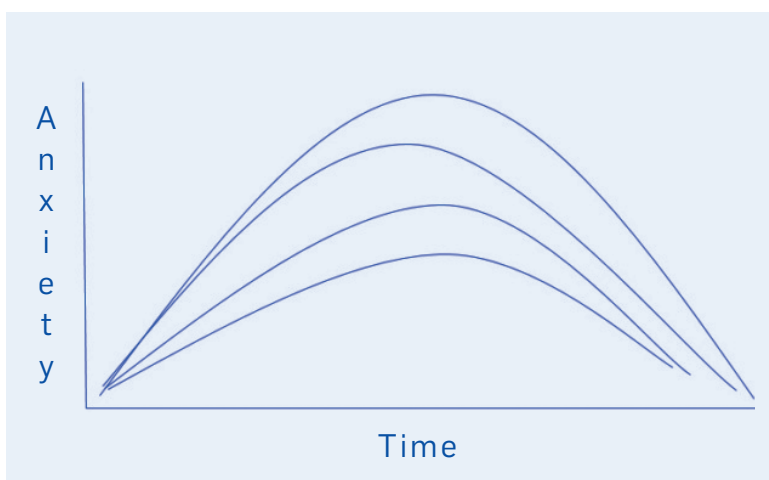
3. Next, invite the children or teens to name the fear to be overcome using the personal form. For example: *"I'm afraid to play with my friends at school because I don't want to get COVID-19."*
4. With the children or teens, set a realistic goal to achieve using the personal form and invite them to write it at the top of their "effort wall." For example: *"I'm going to be able to play with several friends at once, keeping a distance of 2 m and without sharing an object."*
5. With the children or teens, name the various gradual steps (obstacles) to achieve the goal and ask them to write them down below each hold on the wall. For example: *"I'm going to talk to a friend while keeping a distance of 2 m"; "I'm going to play with a friend, keeping a distance of 2 m and without sharing an object"; "I'm going to play with two friends, keeping a distance of 2 m and without sharing an object"; "I'm going to play with several friends at once, keeping a distance of 2m and without sharing an object."*
6. Ask the children or teens to draw themselves at the bottom of their "effort wall."
7. Invite the children or teens to overcome obstacles one at a time by helping them with their gradual exposure and respecting their pace. If you rush the children or teens to climb the climbing wall, you may increase their anxiety.
8. Remind them of their next obstacle without putting pressure on them. Encourage them by verbally acknowledging their efforts and progress as much as possible. Even if the children or teens don't reach the step or achieve the goal, all their courage and efforts made should be praised and positively reinforced. You can also tell the children or teens that they can come down at any time and that you will be their safety net if they fall.
9. When taking a step, congratulate the children or teens and ask them to draw on the hold of the completed step. That way, they'll be able to climb the obstacles (holds) of the "effort wall" while respecting their own pace and feel that they are gradually achieving success. The goal is to develop confidence in their skills and to be proud of themselves. The children or teens will realize that they are able to overcome their fears and will feel more competent.



CALMING BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES: THE EFFORT WALL

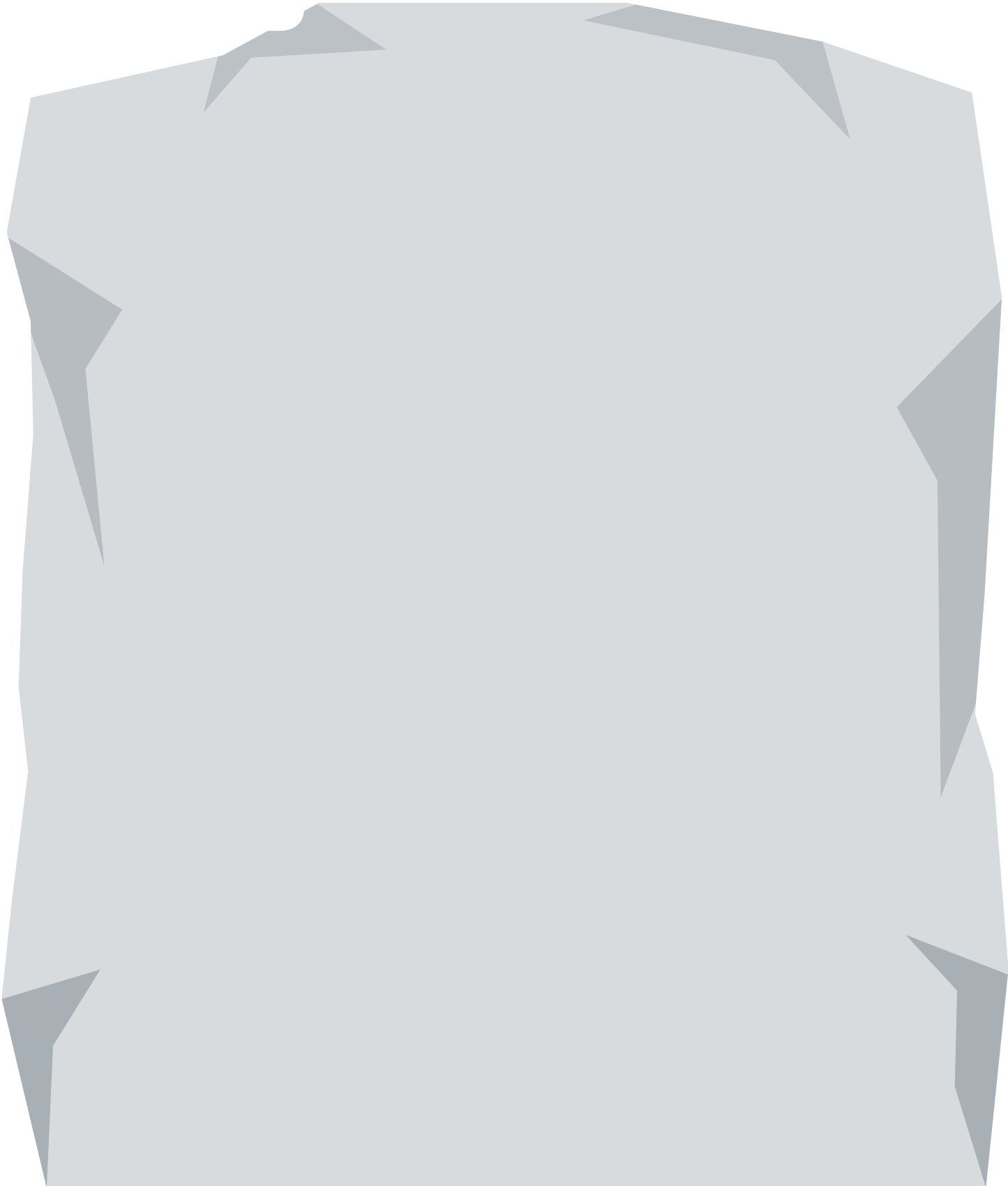
SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

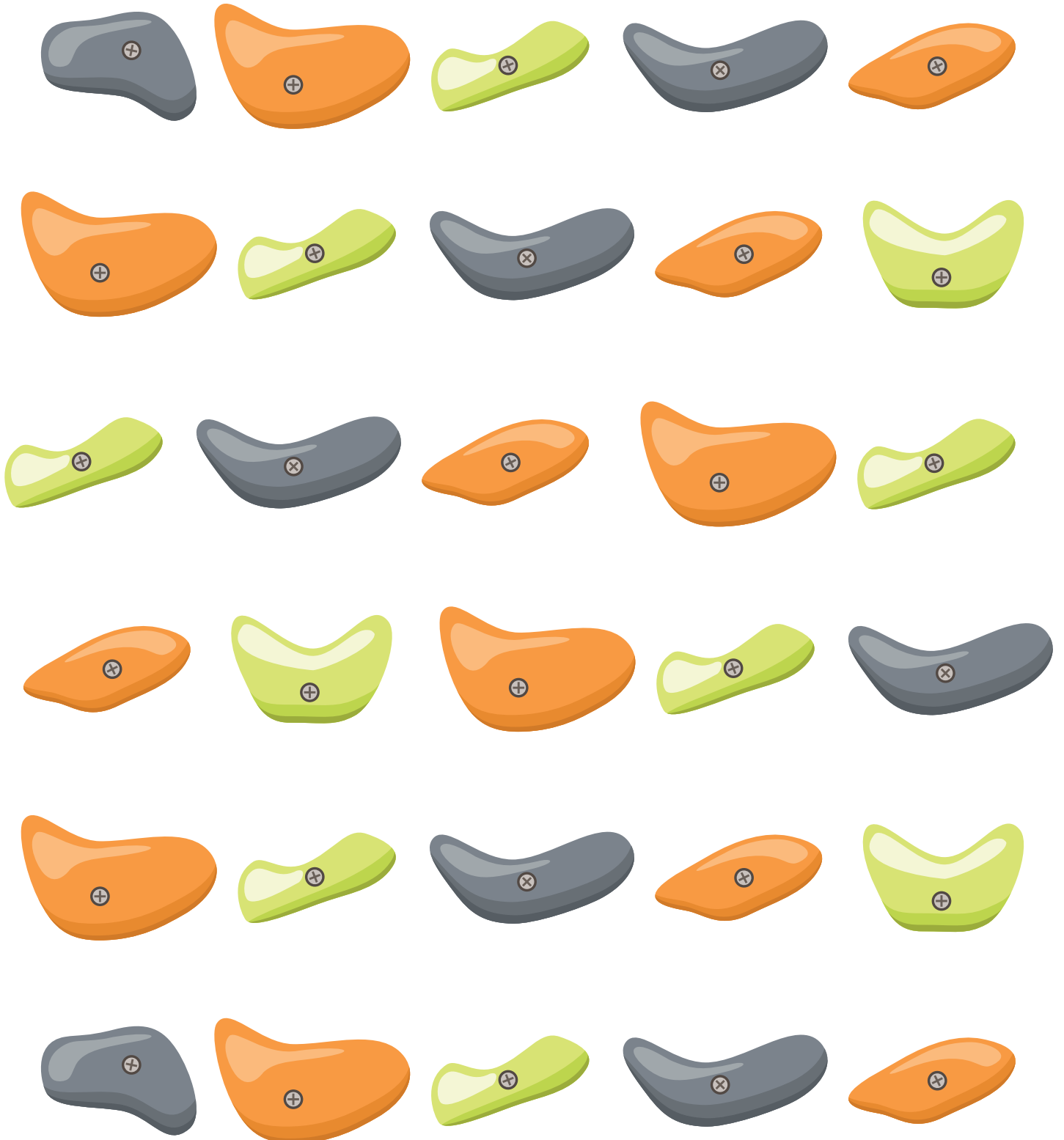
- When the children or teens have various fears, please begin gradual exposure with moderate anxiety-provoking situations and then continue with situations that cause higher levels of stress and anxiety.
- When the children or teens exhibit avoidance behaviours, explain the avoidance rationale by telling them that the more they avoid a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation, the more stress or anxiety will tend to increase. When faced with the same situation again, the children or teens will be more likely to avoid it, due in part to a decreased sense of competence and increased stress or anxiety. To break this vicious circle, invite the children or teens to use the stress or anxiety management strategies suggested in the toolbox.



<https://psydeployment.wordpress.com/category/evitement/>

- The number of holds (obstacles) on the climbing wall, i.e. the various steps to be overcome to achieve the goal, may vary from one child or teen to another, depending on the fear to be overcome and the goal to be achieved.
- Gradual exposure may be depicted in a variety of ways, such as stairs, mountains, ladders, trees or other items that illustrate the children's or teens' ability to climb steps and overcome obstacles.







INTEGRATION TOOL: MY STRATEGY RAINBOW

PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To help the children create their own rainbow of stress and anxiety management strategies.
- To help the children incorporate various strategies to improve their stress and anxiety management.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- 5-12-year-old children.

CONTEXT

- Alone.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

- **Sheet 15a** – My Strategy Rainbow;
- Lead pencil;
- Eraser;
- Coloured wooden pencils.

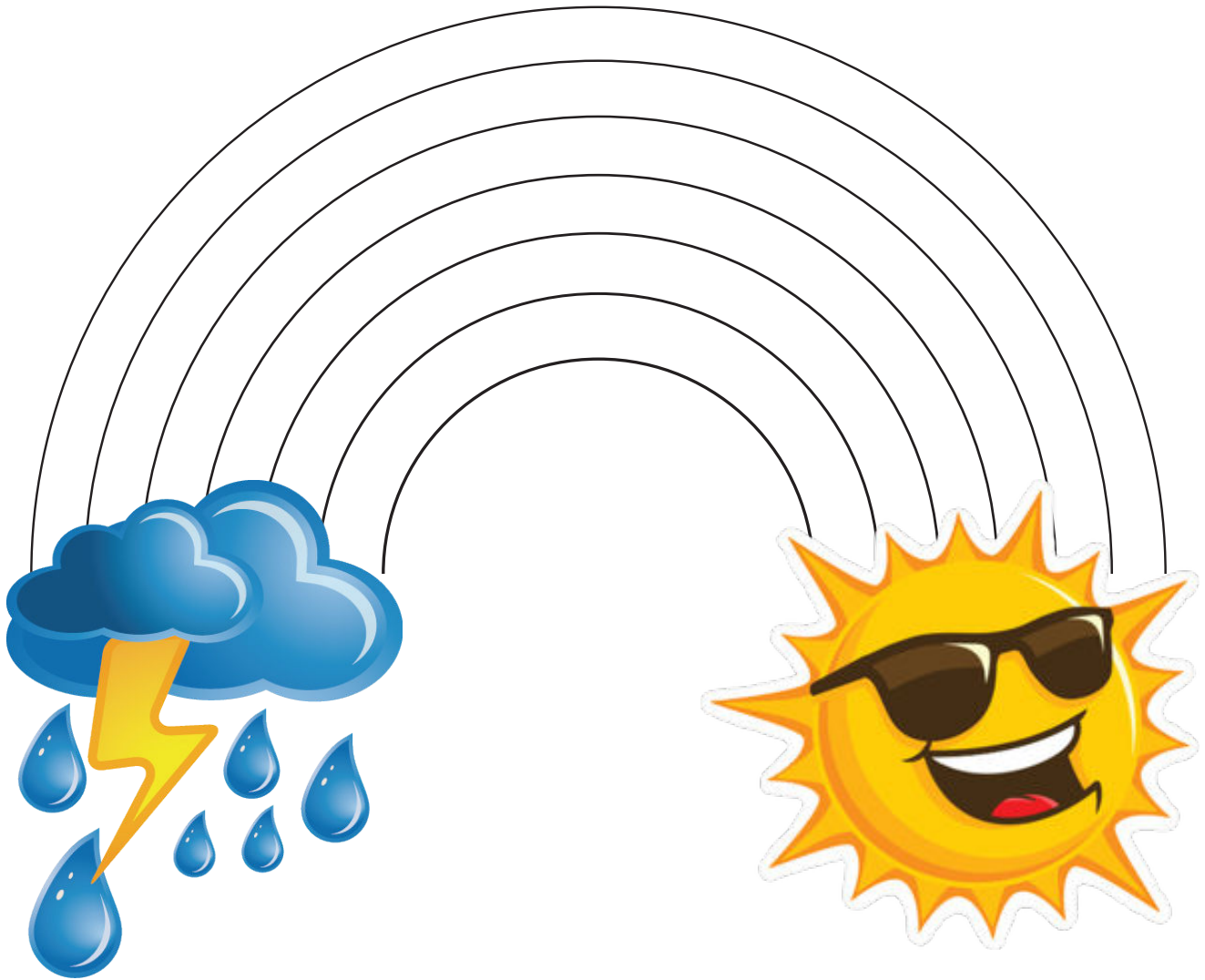
LENGTH → About 10-15 minutes.

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the children to the strategy rainbow (sheet **15a - My Strategy Rainbow**).
2. Explain how the rainbow works. When the children are experiencing a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation or simply an emotionally charged moment and have signs of stress or anxiety, they can use their strategy rainbow and choose the strategy that best suits them to manage stress or anxiety, calm down and restore inner calm. Clouds, lightning and rain represent moments of stress or anxiety while the sun means a return to calm. Rainbow arcs represent the strategies with which the children feel most comfortable to effectively manage stress and anxiety.
3. Invite the children to choose any six stress or anxiety strategies (whether or not contained in the toolbox) that are the most meaningful and effective for the children. To help, the children can use strategies shown in the Strategy Card Game of tool 4 (sheet **4c - Strategy Card Game**).
4. Ask them to write down the strategies in each of the rainbow arcs. The children can then use wooden pencils to colour each of the rainbows using colours contained in real rainbows. This tool serves as a visual reminder for children who may lose their bearings and strategies during a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- In order to remain intact for several uses, you could laminate the children's strategy rainbows.
- If the children use more strategies, you could add more rainbow arcs.
- You could also take pictures of the strategy rainbows to show the children if they ever lose them or if they don't have them in their possession when a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation occurs.





TIPS AND TRICKS TO REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY

TOOL DESCRIPTION

To reduce your stress or anxiety levels, the following are some strategies you can use on a daily basis:

Lead a healthy lifestyle:

- Move as often as possible.
- Practise physical activities that will allow you to relieve stress or anxiety and reduce signs of anxiety.
- Plan some time to relax and rest.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Plan time for and practise your favourite leisure activities.
- Surround yourself with positive, trustworthy people; socializing is good for you.
- Limit your exposure to sources of stress such as tablets, cell phones or overloaded schedules.
- To calm your thoughts, try to have clear, consistent and coherent routines and little rituals (repeated behaviours with a deeper meaning that generate positive emotions, such as personalized greetings to each student when entering class in the morning or a hug before leaving the parent for dance classes).

Practise good sleep hygiene:

- Establish a clear, consistent routine before bedtime.
- Do quiet activities before going to bed.
- Practise relaxation techniques (e.g. relaxation techniques, breathing techniques, cardiac coherence, mindfulness meditation, yoga).
- Go to bed at a reasonable hour depending on your sleep needs.
- Limit your exposure to screens in order to optimize your sleep (e.g. tablet, cell phone, video games, television).

Promote positive thinking:

- Congratulate yourself on your efforts and successes. Be proud of yourself! (*"Great! I did it. I can do it again."*).
- Give yourself compliments (*"I'm strong!" "I'm persistent!"*).
- Repeat helpful thoughts in your head (*"I'm capable!" "I can do it!" "I've overcome my fear!"*).
- Write down your negative thoughts on a sheet and crumple it up.
- Write a personal diary to clear your mind.
- Practise mindfulness techniques to return to the present moment and be more in control of your thoughts.
- Listen to soft, calm music to calm your mind.



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION

PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

→ To be familiar with the basic principles of effective intervention with children and teens who have signs of stress or anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUP

→ Adults (professionals and parents).

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Take preventive action and promote educational strategies.

How? By explaining to the children or teens what will happen in their daily lives. By identifying the triggers of stress and anxiety. By explicitly teaching stress and anxiety management strategies. By reviewing effective strategies in situations that cause stress or anxiety. By helping and supporting the children or teens with implementing stress and anxiety management strategies for independent practice.

Create a predictable environment.

How? By establishing clear boundaries and safe routines. By clearly and transparently communicating expectations. By notifying the children or teens of the day's or activity's procedure. By informing the children or teens when there is a schedule change. By reviewing procedure instructions during activities and transitions.

Consistently and coherently implement various strategies.

How? By reviewing stress or anxiety management strategies with the children or teens. By helping the children or teens implement their strategies. By helping the children or teens with their gradual exposure in order to face their fears. By serving as a role model for the children or teens when implementing strategies.

Persistently implement strategies.

How? By positively reinforcing the children or teens who attempt exposure to a stressful or anxiety-provoking situation. By reminding the children or teens of their ability to overcome their fears. By praising the children's or teens' efforts, attempts, courageous behaviours and progress. By congratulating the children or teens with encouraging and approving words. By helping the children or teens consistently implement strategies.



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION

Be patient, particularly when the children have various signs of anxiety.

How? By staying calm and reassuring. By explaining to the children or teens that they have the right to feel the emotions experienced, but that they must learn to manage their reactions. By helping and providing the children or teens with stress and anxiety management tools. By being patient with the children or teens who are again showing signs of stress or anxiety.

Promote the children's autonomy and commitment to managing their anxiety.

How? By not doing everything for the children or teens. By involving the children or teens in choosing and implementing strategies. By inviting the children or teens to personalize and make their own tools by integrating technology or using various materials (e.g. build a three-dimensional stress wall, make a ceramic emotions cup, write an electronic personal diary, etc.).

Don't minimize the children's or teens' experience; what they are experiencing is real.

How? By not trivializing what the children or teens are experiencing. By not telling the children or teens that their fear, stress and anxiety are not normal or that there's no reason. By not telling them that everything will be fine, that they must move on or that they should not worry about what they are going through. By not making judgments about the children's or teens' experience. By referring to real and tangible facts to reassure the children or teens. By being empathetic and understanding.

Be empathetic and warm towards the children or teens.

How? By comforting and reassuring the children or teens by your physical presence (rather than words). By providing help and support to the children or teens. By lowering yourself to the children and speaking with them at eye level. By using a soft, calm and comforting voice with the children or teens.

Listen to the children and be receptive to their concerns and fears.

How? By adopting a welcoming attitude towards the children or teens. By inviting the children or teens to share their experiences with you. By de-escalating the situation. By bringing the children or teens back to the present moment, the "here and now." By helping the children or teens become aware of what the situation causes in their bodies, heads and behavioral responses. By encouraging the children or teens to verbalize their fears and emotions. By helping the children or teens change their anxiety-provoking and negative thoughts into more positive and helpful thoughts.

Invite the children or teens to freely express what they are experiencing and be available for them.

How? By creating a trusting and peaceful climate. By helping the children or teens verbalize their experience. By using the arts as a form of expression and outlet. By using games as a favorable context to express themselves. By being attentive to their needs. By planning time to be alone with the children or teens. By encouraging the children or teens to verbalize their emotions and thoughts during a time for discussion and in a quiet place.



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION

Normalize mistakes.

How? By explaining to the children or teens that mistakes are normal and that they allow us to learn many new things. By sharing your own mistakes with the children or teens. By using humour to de-escalate times when the children or teens make mistakes.

Ask the children or teens questions.

How? By asking the children or teens questions about the components of stress and anxiety so that they become aware of cognitive signals (*What do you tell yourself in your head when you are (or feel) stressed or anxious?*); physical signals (*What do you say to yourself when you are (or feel) anxious?*); emotional signals (*What emotions do you feel when you are (or feel) stressed or anxious?*); and behavioural signals (*What are your responses when you are stressed or anxious?*) By using playtime with the children or teens. By making connections with the experiences of characters in children's literature.



Observe the children or teens in their daily lives in order to help them identify what makes them stressed or anxious.

How? By listening and observing the children's or teens' behaviour in various contexts of their daily lives. By using grid A (background), B (behaviour) and C (impact) to record observations (sheet **17a - A-B-C Grid**).

Work together with parents and various professionals for the good of the children or teens.

How? By reporting to parents or professionals the observations made, the strategies implemented and the interventions carried out. By being reassuring and open. By learning about strategies that work well at home or in the classroom (previous years). By providing parents or professionals with guidance. By referring parents to specialized external help (psychologist, child psychiatrist, social worker). By consulting with parents and teachers and other professionals, such as psychologists, special education technicians and elementary or secondary school principals.



A

(Background)

Triggers of behaviour(s).

What happens before the behavioural responses or what is anticipated by the children or teens?

What is the situation experienced (or anticipated) by the children or teens?

What is the time of day?

Who is present?

Where does the situation take place (location)?

What do the children or teens do (actions, activities)?

B

(Behaviours)

Behavioural responses to triggers (behaviours).

What are the children's or teens' behavioural signs?

What do the children or teens do in terms of observable and measurable facts as a result of the situation?

For example, the children or teens shout to express discomfort rather than the children are aggressive.

C

(Impact)

Impact on themselves and others.

What is the impact on the children or teens?

What is the impact on their environment?

How does it affect the children or teens (behavioural function)?

For example, the children or teens oppose the task because they seek power, or the children object to the task due to their fear of failing again.



PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

→ To be familiar with children's books about fear, stress and anxiety for 5-12-year-old children.

TARGET AGE GROUP

→ 5-12-year-old children..

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The use of children's literature is an ideal way to address the management of emotions, such as fear and anxiety. Children's books have many educational benefits. In addition to developing the pleasure of reading, children's books allow the children to identify with the characters and emotions experienced by them. In addition, the children discover various ways used by the heroes in these stories to overcome their fears and anxiety. The children also learn that others may experience realities that are both similar to and different from their personal experiences without being experienced in a negative or catastrophic way. Despite the problems and obstacles faced by the characters, they manage to overcome them with courage, determination and perseverance by using strategies acquired and integrated into their toolbox. Through all these stories, the children learn to normalize fear, stress and anxiety, which are emotions and responses that every individual experiences during their development. The following are suggestions for children's books on fear, stress and anxiety for 5-12-year-old children.

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- À New York chez Mamie* - Lauren Castillo & Gaël Renan (2016), Éditions Le Genevrier
- Au loup!* - Marie-Danielle Croteau (2008), Éditions La courte échelle
- Enfin tranquille!* - Mireille d'Allancé (1998), Éditions L'école des loisirs
- Quand j'avais peur du noir* - Mireille d'Allancé (2006), Éditions L'école des loisirs
- La bulle* - Timothée de Fombelle (2015), Éditions Gallimard Jeunesse

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- Petit Panda a peur* - Violaine Dompierre & Catherine Petit (2020), Éditions Mammouth Rose
- Mimo, je n'ai pas peur!* - Christiane Duchesne (2006), Éditions Dominique et compagnie
- C'est la vie Lulu! J'ai peur des mauvaises notes* - Florence Dutruc-Rosset (2004), Bayard Éditions
- La chauve-souris qui a peur du noir* - Valérie Gagné (2019), Les Éditions Coup d'œil
- Comment ça va?* - Élise Gravel (2016), Éditions Scholastic
- Le grand livre des peurs* - Emily Gravett (2007), Éditions Kaléidoscope
- Les choses qui me font battre le cœur* - Catherine Grive (2009), Les éditions Albin Michel
- L'anxiété racontée aux enfants* - Ariane Hébert (2017), Éditions de Mortagne
- Le journal de Miss Pétoche* - Jo Hoestlandt (2012), Bayard Éditions
- L'été de Garmann* - Stian Hole (2014), Les éditions Albin Michel
- Le fil invisible* - Patrice Karst (2019), Éditions Scholastic
- Le courage et la peur* - Brigitte Labbé (2004), Éditions Milan
- P'tit Loup a peur du noir* - Oriane Lallemand & Éléonore Thuillier (2013), Éditions Auzou
- La peur de Mathis* - Martine Latulippe, Nathalie Parent & Sophie Lussier (2020), Éditions Mammouth Rose
- Comment ratatiner les idées noires?* - Catherine Leblanc & Roland Garrigue (2017), Éditions Glénat
- Reconnecte avec toi : apprendre à se comprendre par la méditation* - François Lemay et Martine Cédilotte (2017), Éditions Le Dauphin Blanc
- Bob et Marly : Le monstre* - Frédéric Marais (2016), Éditions du Seuil
- Le grand Secret de Sam : Surmonter la peur* - Stephanie Margolese (2019)
- Plus envie de rien! Le trouble anxieux généralisé* - Brigitte Marleau (2016), Boomerang Éditeur Jeunesse
- N'aie pas peur, Nic!* - Caroline Merola (2001), Éditions Les 400 coups
- Aaaaaah! Une araignée!* - Lydia Monks (2004), Éditions Scholastic
- Simon sous les ronces* - Maude Nepveu-Villeneuve (2019), Éditions Fonfon
- Élizabeth a peur de l'échec* - Danielle Noreau & Andrée Massé (2011), Éditions Dominique et compagnie
- La chambre du lion* - Adrien Parlange (2014), Les éditions Albin Michel
- Lola apprend à danser* - Liane Schneider, Annie Murat & Eva Wenzel-Bürger (2009), Éditions Piccolia



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Le bisou secret - Audrey Penn (2017), Éditions Scholastic

La boîte à monstre - Martyne Pigeon (2014), Boomerang Éditeur Jeunesse

La légende du chien noir - Levi Pinfold (2012), Éditions Scholastic

Le stress... ça me stresse!!! - Trevor Romain & Elizabeth Verdick (2019), Éditions Midi Trente

Lili est stressée par la rentrée - Dominique Saint Mars (2011), Éditions Calligram

Le noir - Lemony Snicket (2015), Éditions Milan

Les peurs - Jacqueline et le haricot magique - Susan D. Sweet & Brenda S. Miles (2018), Éditions Dominique et compagnie

La plus belle victoire - Gilles Tibo (2015), Éditions Québec Amérique

Frisson l'écureuil - Mélanie Watt (2006), Éditions Scholastic

L'enfant qui avait peur du noir - Emma Yarlett (2014), Éditions Circonflexe

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- To enrich the children's understanding, you can do an interactive reading of the albums by asking different open-ended questions: Which character is most like you? What are the emotions experienced by the characters? What are the clues to identify these emotions (e.g. images, words, expressions, etc.)? Do you ever experience these emotions too? In what context do you experience these emotions? What solutions or strategies would you give to the main character to help them better manage their emotions? What are your fears? What do you think would happen in the story if...? If you had to invent another ending, what would it be? What did you like best about the story and why? What did you not like about the story and why? Which character was the bravest and why?
- To develop the pleasure of reading in children, reading children's books should be considered enjoyable and fun. The following are some suggestions to make this activity both fun and rewarding:
 - Read while lying under a table, your desk, your bed or in your imaginary cabin;
 - Take turns reading a passage of the story with your parents, brothers or sisters, grandparents or classmates;
 - Read outside (park, lawn, playground, other);
 - Read with a flashlight and turn off the lights;
 - Read in a tent;
 - Read with your feet in the air;
 - Read on a beach towel;
 - Read to your favourite dog or pet.
- Also invite the children to suggest fun ideas for reading these books.



PURPOSE OF THE TOOL

→ To be familiar with children's books about fear, stress and anxiety for teens.

TARGET AGE GROUP

→ 11-17-year-old preteens and teens.

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The use of children's literature is an ideal way to address the management of emotions, such as fear and anxiety. Children's books have many educational benefits. In addition to developing the pleasure of reading, children's books allow the teens to identify with the characters and emotions experienced by them. In addition, the teens discover various ways used by the heroes in these stories to overcome their fears and anxiety. The teens also learn that others may experience realities that are both similar to and different from their personal experiences without being experienced in a negative or catastrophic way. Despite the problems and obstacles faced by the characters, they manage to overcome them with courage, determination and perseverance by using strategies acquired and integrated into their toolbox. Through all these stories, the teens learn to normalize fear, stress and anxiety, which are emotions and responses that every individual experiences during their development. The following are suggestions for children's books on fear, stress and anxiety for 11-17-year-old preteens and teens.

REFERENCES

- Ma vie de gâteau sec* - Élisabeth Baril-Lessard (2019), Éditions Les Malins
- Journal pour gérer mon stress* - Gina M. Biegel (2011), La Boîte à Livres Éditions
- Guide de survie pour surmonter les peurs et les inquiétudes* - James J. Crist (2016), Éditions Midi Trente
- C.R.A.A.V – Tome 1 : Thérapie de choc* - Véronique Drouin (2019), Éditions Les Malins
- Comment vaincre mes monstres intérieurs* - Earl Hipp (2011), La Boîte à Livres Éditions
- Des loups dans les murs* - Neil Gaiman (2003), Éditions Delcourt
- Jessie Elliot a peur de son ombre* - Élise Gravel (2014), Éditions Scholastic
- Alex : surmonter l'anxiété à l'adolescence* - Nathalie Parent (2015), Éditions Midi Trente
- Comment survivre quand on se trouve nul* - Emmanuelle Rigon & Sylvie Baussier (2004), Les éditions Albin Michel

SUGGESTIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- Invite the preteens or teens to discuss their reading without putting pressure on them. Let them know you are open and available.
- Suggest that the preteens or teens invent and create their own stories, in the form of a book or comic book, about their own fears or anxiety.



PURPOSES OF THE TOOL

- To understand the children's or teens' fear, stress and anxiety.
- To help the children or teens properly manage their fear, stress and anxiety.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- Adults (professionals and parents).

TOOL DESCRIPTION

To help children properly manage their stress or anxiety, this literature collection first introduces a list of references to enable professionals and parents to better understand children's or teens' fear, stress and anxiety. Next, to understand, identify and manage their fear, stress and anxiety, practical tools are suggested so that the professionals or parents can provide practical assistance to the children or teens.

RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS

Même pas peur! - Anne Bacus-Lindroth (2005), Éditions Marabout

Les troubles anxieux expliqués aux parents - Chantal Baron (2001), Éditions du CHU Ste-Justine

10 questions sur l'anxiété chez l'enfant et l'adolescent. Mieux comprendre pour mieux intervenir
Caroline Berthiaume (2017), Éditions Midi trente

L'enfant sous pression - Dona G. Corwin (2006), Éditions de l'Homme

Attention, enfant sous tension! Le stress chez l'enfant - Germain Duclos (2011), Éditions du CHU Ste-Justine

L'enfant anxieux : Comprendre la peur de la peur et redonner courage - Jean E. Dumas (2012), Éditions De Boeck

Maman j'ai peur, chéri je m'inquiète. L'anxiété chez les enfants, les adolescents et les adultes
Nadia Gagnier (2007). Les Éditions La Presse

75 trucs et stratégies d'adaptation : Pour composer avec le stress, l'anxiété et la colère
Janine Halloran (2019), Éditions Midi trente

Anxiété: La boîte à outils - Ariane Hébert (2016), Éditions de Mortagne

Maman, j'y arriverai jamais : Face à la peur de l'échec, comment redonner confiance à votre enfant
Marc Litière (2004), Éditions De Boeck

Quand l'adolescent va mal... L'écouter, le comprendre, l'aimer - Xavier Pommereau (2003), Éditions j'ai Lu

L'enfant et l'adolescent anxieux : les aider à s'épanouir - Dominique Servant (2005), Éditions Odile Jacob



BOOK COLLECTION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS

SUPPORT GUIDES ON PROPER STRESS AND ANXIETY MANAGEMENT

L'anxiété et le stress chez les élèves - Chantal Besner (2016), Éditions Chenelière Éducation

Incroyable Moi maîtrise son anxiété - Nathalie Couture & Geneviève Marcotte (2011), Éditions Midi trente

Extraordinaire Moi calme son anxiété de performance - Nathalie Couture & Geneviève Marcotte (2014), Éditions Midi trente

Super Moi surmonte sa timidité - Nathalie Couture & Geneviève Marcotte (2015), Éditions Midi trente

Attention : Estime de soi en construction - Stéphanie Deslauriers (2013), Éditions Midi trente

Mindfulness- La pleine conscience pour les enfants - David Dewulf (2015), Éditions De Boeck

Opération - Mieux te connaître pour mieux agir. Trousse de connaissance de soi et d'analyse des comportements
Geneviève Dufour (2012), Éditions Midi trente

Pourquoi j'ai mal au ventre? : guide pratique de l'anxiété chez l'enfant de 7 à 12 ans
Susie Gibson Desrochers (2011), Éditions Logiques

Guide d'accompagnement pour la prise en charge des troubles anxieux chez l'enfant
Mylène Guinchereau (2012), La Boîte à Livres Éditions

Champion pour maîtriser ses peurs - Dawn Huebner (2009), Éditions Enfants Québec

Aider l'enfant anxieux. Guide pratique pour parents et enfants - Sophie Leroux (2016), Éditions du CHU Ste-Justine

Calme et attentif comme une grenouille. La méditation pour les enfants... avec leurs parents
Éline Snel (2013), Éditions Transcontinental

Respirez. La méditation pour les parents et leurs ados - Éline Snel (2015), Éditions Transcontinental