

Educator Directions: Fill Up Your Worry Cup

This lesson will help your students identify issues that bring on anxiety. First, you will help your students express what may be giving them anxiety with a writing activity, and second, you will provide a coping strategy as a tool to help them deal with anxiety when it arises.

Prep: Print both worksheets for your students and hand out the first one titled "Fill Up Your Worry Cup"

Prompt: Start a conversation with your students about worry. Explain how we all have things we worry about, they may be big or small, and they may make us feel uneasy. Let them know those feelings of worry can creep up on us, and it helps to talk about them. Let's take a few minutes today to think about things we worry about.

Give the students some writing time

After students write down a few examples, you can discuss examples as a class or in small groups.

Next: Hand out the square breathing worksheet. Explain to the students this is like a tool in our toolbox that we can take out when we feel anxious or worried.

Review the instructions with the students and do the exercise as a class.

Give your students some other examples of calming/coping skills:

- * imagine your favorite place
- * picture the people you care about
- * take a break (a walk around)

Educator Directions: Breaking Down Our Thoughts

This lesson focuses on helping your students identify thoughts they are experiencing that may bring on worry or anxiety.

Conversation prompts:

- Our thoughts are closely linked to our emotions and when there is something on our mind that we're worried about, it can grow and can cause us to feel other things such as anxiety or an uneasiness.
- Breaking down these thoughts can help identify if that worry is based on feelings or actual facts.

Prompt: Today we're going to take a few moments and write down something that we may be worrying about. This can be completely private and you do not need to share it with anyone, this exercise is for you. We're then going to break down those thoughts by gathering facts to see the details of that thought.

Give the students time to write

Use the questions below to examine and break down the thought. Ask yourself:

"Is my thought based on a feeling or an actual fact?"

"Is it possible for my thought to come true?"

"What's the worst that can happen if it does come true?"

"Will it still matter to me tomorrow or in the future?"

"What can I do to handle the situation in a positive way?"

Prompt: Explain that by asking these questions above we are going to uncover that we have the power to control how we feel about thoughts that creep into our mind. We can then calm down and come back to a place where we feel in control.

The answers to the questions will show students that most of the time, whatever they are thinking can be broken down to a point where they can feel better about what is causing them to feel anxious.

In addition to the strategy above, share with your students other ways to cope with anxiety in the moment. Instruct students to look at the second page.

Prompt: Having some quick strategies on hand can help us get through a moment of worry. Let's review these two strategies together.

Instruct students on the deep breathing exercise and the clenching fist exercise.