

Brief Instructional Samples  
(based on content from: [MindShift Anxiety App](#))

- Grade/subject: **9, Physical and Health Education**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Assess and evaluate strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others**
- Content – **Signs and symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression**
- Core Competencies:
  - **Communication: Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments**
  - **Creative Thinking: Developing Ideas**
  - **Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Self-Regulation**
- First People's Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

Instructional Sample #1:

**Developing a Plan to Tackle Anxiety**

*Ask students to think about a time when they have experienced anxiety, or been in an anxiety-provoking situation. Some examples might be: managing worry, coping with test anxiety, tackling social fears, public speaking, dealing with conflict with a friend/family member, or dealing with feelings of perfectionism.*

*Have three flip charts posted around the room – one for 'Thinking Right', one for 'Active Steps' and one for 'Relaxation Tools'. Explain that these are three different ways to tackle anxiety: re-framing your thoughts from 'unhealthy' to 'healthy'/'realistic'; practicing relaxation exercises; or trying some coping strategies or behaviours.*

*Ask students to think about helpful ways that they were able to manage their anxiety and put them on post-its, and post these up on one of the three flip charts into the category it best fits. Discuss these strategies as a class.*

**Additional Information:**

Thinking Right: Helpful thoughts might include things like:

- Anxiety is time limited
- This feeling will pass – it never lasts forever
- I can get through this
- I can't predict the future, so stop guessing
- Look at the big picture – A week, a month, a year from now, will this really be as big a deal as it feels now?
- I can't control everything, so I don't need to try to
- I can feel anxious and not let it stop me for doing things
- These are just my anxious thoughts. I don't have to believe them.
- I don't need to assume the worst
- What would I tell a friend who was feeling this way?

Active Steps: Active Steps, or general coping strategies to help cope with anxiety, might include:

- Connecting with others – talk through worries with a friend or family member
- Get physical – go for a walk or jog

- Do something soothing – listen to music, take a hot bath, or do yoga
- Get a good night's sleep
- Avoid caffeine and sugar
- Plan something fun – it can take your mind off anxiety
- Set one or two goals to get something done – getting stuff done can lower your stress level

Relaxation Tools:

- Relaxation exercises like calm breathing or tense and release / progressive muscle relaxation
- Mindfulness strategies, like a body scan or mindful breathing
- Visualizations, like a 'mental vacation'

Resource: <https://www.anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app>

Instructional Sample #2:

### **Group Relaxation Exercise**

*As a class, listen to a relaxation exercise audio recording. Discuss as a class how you felt before doing the exercise, and after, and how these could be useful for managing anxiety.*

Relaxation audio recordings available at: <https://www.anxietybc.com/resources/audio>

Instructional Sample #3:

### **Thinking Healthy Thoughts**

*Ask students to think about an unrealistic or unhelpful thought they might have when they are feeling anxious. Ask them to re-frame this to a more realistic or helpful thought.*

*The following worksheet can be used for this activity:*

[https://www.anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/Realistic\\_Thinking.pdf](https://www.anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/Realistic_Thinking.pdf)

### **Additional Information:**

Helpful thoughts might include things like:

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- I can get through this
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- Look at the big picture – A week, a month, a year from now, will this really be as big a deal as it feels now?
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- What would I tell a friend who was feeling this way?

### **Additional Tips and Information for Teachers**

- The concept of “mental health” is often confused with “mental illness”. The Physical and Health Education curriculum focus on “mental well-being” recognizes that everyone falls somewhere on a continuum between optimal mental health and poor mental health, independent of the presence or absence of a mental illness<sup>1</sup>. From this perspective, classroom-based and whole-school strategies can be geared to enhancing the positive mental health and well-being of all students, including those with and without identified mental health challenges.
- Teachers have an important role to play in fostering the mental well-being of their students, though they do not require specialized or expert knowledge to do so (ie. they are not expected to play the role of psychologist or counsellor). As a guide, teachers may understand their role to include:
  - supporting students to understand how to foster and maintain positive mental health and well-being, and thereby enhance their readiness to learn;
  - creating a welcoming and safe classroom/school environment;
  - highlighting methods to enhance both physical and mental well-being such as adequate sleep, physical activity, healthy eating and stress management techniques;
  - helping students to recognize the signs of common mental health concerns;
  - guiding students to trustworthy information and resources related to mental health;
  - supporting students to know how to seek assistance when needed; and,
  - challenging common stigmas related to mental health.
- There are a number of simple, everyday practices that teachers can use to supplement their instructional approaches to mental well-being. Examples include:
  - increasing opportunities for physical activity
  - taking students outside, even for a short time, to help them to restore readiness to learn
  - leading a circle check-in, where every student has a chance to voice their perspective
  - intentionally strengthening their relationship with students through personal conversations
- For students who are experiencing a problem related to their mental health, sources of support include:
  - talking to a school counsellor
  - Kids Help Phone #1-800-668-6868 ([KidsHelpPhone.ca](http://KidsHelpPhone.ca))

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<sup>1</sup> Consider that “mental health” and “mental illness” can be viewed as two separate but related concepts. From this perspective, someone could have optimal mental health (feeling good about and functioning well in life) while experiencing a mental illness. Conversely, someone without a mental illness could have poor mental health.

- [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#)
- Teachers are encouraged to think about their own mental well-being, and what strategies may be required to support it. A number of helpful health and wellness resources can be found on the [BC Teachers' Federation website](#).