

**Positive**   
**Behaviour**  
*for Learning*  
*School-Wide*

# Understanding Anxiety: Prediction and Control

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High levels of chronic anxiety among children and young people have been shown to have negative effects on both learning and social behaviour. This workshop looks at the role anxiety plays in maintaining challenging behaviour. It will also examine the practical challenges of supporting students with chronic anxiety in schools. This will take a PB4L view to facilitate learning, reduce challenging behaviours and build resilience.

Understanding anxiety: prediction and control

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Stress



Anxiety



Anxiety  
Disorder



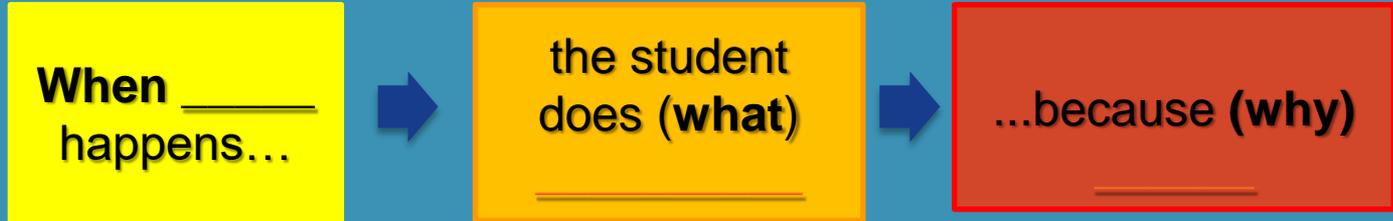
# Who are these anxious kids?

## What do they look like?

The effects of anxiety: Fight, Flight, Freeze and Fatigue!

- **What do they look like?**
- **What might set them off?**

Remember this is also 'every kid'. Anxiety is a normal part of life, especially in childhood.



# Predication and Control:

3 important details

Nothing bad that happens to you will be as stressful if you can see it coming.

Nothing bad that happens to you will be as stressful if you believe you have some degree of control over it.

Anxiety reduction is a very powerful reward.

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Anything that you can do to make yourself feel better when you're anxious is likely to become a strong habit, very quickly.



# The reality of the development of these habits...

Self-sabotaging; seems to make no sense.

Understandable when you understand that it generates a greater sense of prediction and control for an anxious student.

“At least now I know what to expect for the next few minutes, and I made it happen”.

# You can see this in a range of specific behaviours that....

Allow me to escape the task; the class.

I know will get me punished. Anxiety can turn punishments into rewards.

Will 'wind up' an adult.

Will 'wind up' a vulnerable peer.

Make people forget about me.

Give me access to safe places or activities.

# A Side-track .....

Brainstorm

Knowing that prediction and control are important for managing anxiety, why might children coming to school today be particularly anxious?

# Preventative

Strategies to increase prediction  
and control

Expectations and Routines –  
predictability of knowing what to do

Relationships – calm consistent

Errorless learning – for children who  
are anxious the risks are higher

Legitimate sense of control

Key information clear and multiply  
accessible

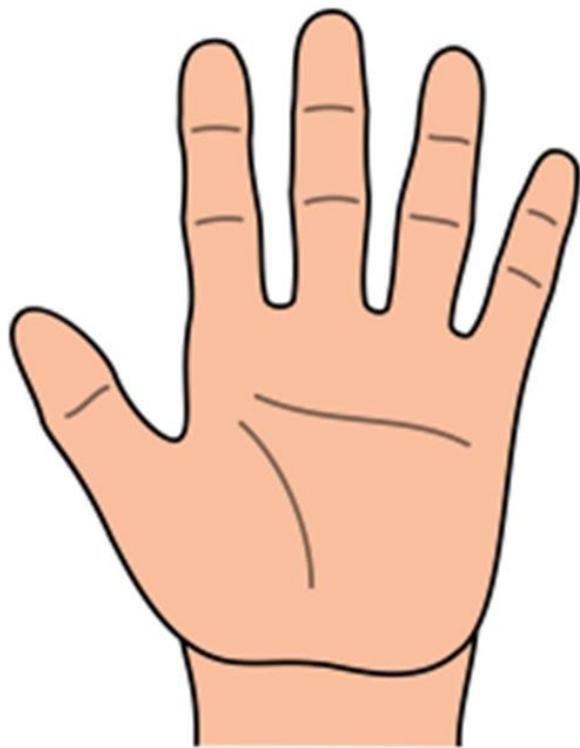
**Hello my name  
is.....I'm going on  
holiday and I am  
going to take...**

Lets play!

**Teach: even when we think they  
'should know'**

**Expectations  
and  
Routines**

## Recognise Expectations in Action



4/1

# Safety is in a relationship

Developing a calm consistent connection that can be relied on...

Every interaction counts...

You always have an audience...

Be deliberate...

# Errorless learning

Support them through the  
success

Set up the task with heavy scaffolding that slowly decreases as they increase confidence and skill set

Risk inherent in failure are disproportionately higher

Success can feel out of their control while failure – they can make that one happen!

# Legitimate opportunity to have control

Sense of belonging

Student voice

Errorless learning (alternative  
behaviour)

Teaching legitimate control –  
voluntary time out, communication,  
small group social skills

Some students need to watch first  
(sometimes for a long time) they  
can still be learning...

# Key sharing of information

Anxious kids are often distractible, fatigued and disorganised. State the obvious. Repeat it. Have it available in hard copy.

Value of routines

Use of visual timetables

Redundancy in communication

Ability to ask questions and have a bail out

# Websites with direct strategies and information to utilise and build positive coping skills...

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/coping-skills-worksheets/>

<https://www.heysigmund.com/>

<http://sparklers.org.nz/>

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**“My student is not giving  
me a hard time, they are  
*‘having’* a hard time”**

Larry Ferazzo

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# St Peters College

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# Self reflection



3 recalls



2 insights



1 question

**Questions /  
thoughts??**