

## STATES OF MIND

# I FEEL ANXIOUS

### TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps children manage emotions, create and achieve goals, maintain relationships, learn how to feel empathy, and make good decisions. The SEL approach will help children establish positive habits in communication, cooperation, and decision-making. By incorporating SEL in early reading, children will be better equipped to build confidence and foster positive peer networks.

#### BEFORE READING

Talk to the reader about noticing anxiety. Explain that everyone feels it sometimes.

**Discuss:** Have you ever felt worried? What are some things you have felt worried about? How do you think feeling worried and feeling anxious are the same? What about excitement?

#### AFTER READING

Talk to the reader about the way anxiety makes us feel and act.

**Discuss:** What are some signs and symptoms of anxiety? Does it impact the way you think and feel? What can you do if you feel anxious?

#### SEL GOAL

Anxiety is common and impacts many people of all ages. While it can feel similar to excitement, anxiety is usually defined as a feeling of extreme worry or unease. Some students may struggle with anxiety but not know how to express their anxious thoughts or feelings. Help them find words for their feelings and inner experiences.

### GOALS AND TOOLS

#### GROW WITH GOALS

Notice when you feel anxious. Try these strategies to help.

**Goal:** Be mindful! Breathe slowly and deeply. Identify something around you with each of your 5 senses. Paying attention to your body instead of your racing thoughts can help you relax.

**Goal:** Change the story! Identify thoughts that make you feel anxious. Replace them with positive thoughts that are helpful.

**Goal:** Let it out! Write or draw your thoughts and feelings in a journal. Then share them with a friend or an adult you trust.

#### TRY THIS!

When you're feeling anxious, it can be hard to calm down. That's why it's helpful to prepare before it happens. Make a Calm Kit so you'll be ready when anxiety strikes.

1. Find a bin, basket, or box. Label it "Calm Kit."
2. Gather items that make you feel calm. These could include favorite toys, items, or photos of people, places, and things that make you feel safe and loved. These items could also include written reminders to yourself or supportive notes from family members, teachers, or friends.
3. Keep your Calm Kit somewhere where it is easy to find.



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BOOKS**

published by: **jump!**