

# SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH SOCIAL ANXIETY



**Grades 4-7**

## **Supporting Each Other Through Social Anxiety Health & Physical Education and Career Education**

### **Purpose of the Lesson:**

Everyone can relate to the experience of feeling nervous in social situations. However, for people with social anxiety, this feeling can become overwhelming and cause them to isolate themselves. Through this lesson, your students will learn about what social anxiety is and how they can all relate to the experience of social anxiety in some way. They will come up with strategies to support their peers in situations that may cause them social anxiety. The lesson closure asks students to reflect on how they can be allies to their friends in other ways as well.

### **Curriculum Competencies:**

#### **Health Education**

- Identify and describe avoidance or assertiveness strategies to use in unsafe and/or uncomfortable situations (Grade 4)
- Identify and describe strategies for avoiding and/or responding to potentially unsafe, abusive, or exploitive situations (Grade 5/6/7)
- Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining positive relationships (Grade 4/5/6/7)
- Describe and apply strategies that promote a safe and caring environment (Grade 4/5)
- Explore strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grade 6/7)
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being (Grade 4)
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being in self and others (Grade 5/6/7)
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use (Grade 4)
- Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity (Grade 4)
- Explore and describe how personal identities adapt and change in different settings and situations (Grade 5/6/7)

# SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH SOCIAL ANXIETY



## Grades 4-7

### Supporting Each Other Through Social Anxiety Health & Physical Education and Career Education

#### Curriculum Competencies:

##### Career Education

- Identify and appreciate their personal attributes, skills, interests, accomplishments, and growth over time (Grade 4/5)
- Recognize the need for others who can support their learning and personal growth (Grade 4/5)
- Demonstrate respect for differences in the classroom (Grade 4/5)
- Use innovative thinking when solving problems (Grade 4/5)
- Demonstrate safe behaviours in a variety of environments (Grade 4/5)
- Appreciate the influence of peer relationships, family, and community on personal choices and goals (Grade 4/5)
- Appreciate the importance of respect, inclusivity, and other positive behaviours in diverse, collaborative learning, and work environments (Grade 6/7)
- Question self and others about the reciprocal relationship between self and community (Grade 6/7)
- Demonstrate leadership skills through collaborative activities in the school and community (Grade 6/7)

#### First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

# SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH SOCIAL ANXIETY



## Video

[Overcoming Social Anxiety](#) - **Marielle Cornes** | TEDxYouth@MBJH

### Guiding Questions:

- Based on this video, how would you define social anxiety?
- Have you ever experienced social anxiety before?
- What does social anxiety feel like for you?
- What are some ways the speaker in the video proposes to address mental health challenges?

# SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH SOCIAL ANXIETY



## Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

**Preparation:** Queue up video/set up projector

**1. Have the students watch the video “Overcoming Social Anxiety”** - This video can be found [HERE](#).

**2. Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.**

**3. Define social anxiety for your students.** Read this definition out to your students: “Social anxiety is more than shyness. It's a fear that does not go away and affects everyday activities, self confidence, relationships and work or school life. Many people occasionally worry about social situations, but someone with social anxiety feels overly worried before, during and after them” ([NHS](#)). Explain to them that feeling nervous in social situations is extremely common, but when this nervousness becomes consuming to the point where you choose to avoid certain social situations, or social situations all together, you might be experiencing social anxiety.

**4. Brainstorm with your students why someone might feel social anxiety.** Have your students think about times when they have experienced nervousness in a social situation. Write these examples down on the board to better contextualize the experience of social anxiety. Even students who don't experience chronic social anxiety will likely have been nervous in a social situation before. This will help to bridge the gap for students who might not be able to relate to the experience of social anxiety completely. Then discuss why they were nervous in these situations.

**5. Explore how social anxiety impacts our lives.** Explain to your students how social anxiety can impact us in many ways. Not only socially, but also professionally, academically, in relationships and so much more. Use a mind map to explore the ways that social anxiety can connect to other aspects of our lives. Place social anxiety in the middle bubble, then branching out, brainstorm where else students can imagine social anxiety impacting someone's life. This will help them see how interconnected and intertwined the experience of social anxiety can be for someone.

# SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH SOCIAL ANXIETY



## Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

### **6. Explain the curriculum connections to your students.**

Inform them that they will be exploring how they can support someone who might be experiencing social anxiety for the active part of this lesson. Break them up into groups and assign them a social situation from the ones listed below. In their groups, have them come up with ways they can support the person in the example. Once they've had sufficient time to do this brainstorming, have them share their examples and ideas with the class.

Example 1: you are going to a birthday party and you invite a friend who won't know many people there. Your friend expresses to you that they are feeling anxious about the party because they won't know many people, but they still want to come and have a good time. How can you support this friend?

Example 2: your sibling wants to try out for the basketball team at school. They play all the time with you at home and are great! But their anxiety about joining a team of new people is stopping them from trying out. How can you support your sibling?

Example 3: your cousin just moved to your city and is going to be starting at your school. They won't know anyone except you on their first day and are very anxious about meeting people and making friends. How can you support your cousin?

Example 4: your friend is struggling with their academic performance. They get nervous about going to the teacher for support due to their social anxiety. They want to get their grades up, but don't know how to overcome this anxiety. How can you support your friend?

**7. Lesson Closure.** Once your students have shared their examples of being allies to friends with social anxiety, have them reflect on other times they can be there for their friends who might be going through something. We all need to lean on our friends from time to time, and understanding the different ways we can support our friends is a great way to foster deeper connections and stronger bonds.