

# Teach stress management, anxiety and coping skills

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Support self-advocacy
- Teach positive self talk
- Teach deep breathing exercises
- Use the 5-point scale for anxiety
- Self-assessment
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health](#)

Suggestion: [Teach stress management, anxiety and coping skills](#)

Date

17 May 2024

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/teach-stress-management-anxiety-and-coping-skills](https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/teach-stress-management-anxiety-and-coping-skills)

## Support self-advocacy

| Emotional triggers and strategies to support    |  |
|---|--|
| Triggers  | Strategies   |
| Surprise at a new task                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plan ahead where possible</li><li>Use multiple representations to support the new tasks (visual, audio)</li><li>Prepare students for transitions, ensure all students hear and see what is coming next</li></ul>   |
| Negotiating spaces that may regularly change    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide online and paper maps</li><li>Provide models that students can manipulate and talk about</li><li>Prepare students for change</li><li>Create familiar spaces that stay the same</li></ul>   |
| Frustration with materials and tools            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Allow students to choose what might work best for them</li><li>Offer choice and variety (digital and non-digital)</li><li>Introduce new tools with supported guidance</li></ul>  |
| Social interactions and working collaboratively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offer options for students to work alone or in a group</li><li>Let students know ahead of time the groups they will be working in</li><li>Provide verbal or visual prompts to support and promote collaborative interaction</li><li>Explicitly teach skills required for working collaboratively with others</li><li>Give direct instruction supported by visual and audio cues how long the activity may go for</li></ul> |
| Test or assessment anxiety                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Be clear about the purpose and share this with your students</li><li>Offer multiple ways for students to express their understanding</li><li>Prepare students ahead of time with exemplars and opportunities to practice</li></ul>   |
| Noise levels                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offer headphones</li><li>Provide quiet spaces</li><li>Provide calming spaces</li></ul>   |
| Moving around crowded and large rooms           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Define areas by colour, add visuals and clear labels</li><li>Create accessible, uncluttered pathways</li><li>Have a home base where students can return to if feeling overwhelmed</li></ul>  |
| Self Confidence                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Guide students to recognize when they are enjoying their learning</li><li>Build upon personal strengths</li><li>Support students ability to solve problems</li></ul>   |

Source:

Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

<https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/assets/inclusive-education/slide-images/Emotional-triggers-1.jpg>

[View full image \(925 KB\)](#)

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## Teach positive self talk

Self coaching or self talk is a useful strategy for all students.

When a student approaches a situation that they may perceive as difficult or challenging, they can repeat to themselves a mantra or phrase to remind or encourage them towards the desired behaviour.

This strategy can increase feelings of calmness and increase confidence. It is particularly effective when paired with a breathing technique such as [box breathing](#).

[Explore example mantras](#) for social situations, starting a task, starting the school day, test taking, transitions. Plus a blank template so students can create their own mantras or phrases.

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## Teach deep breathing exercises

Deep breathing exercises can help a student calm down by focusing on the here and now.

They redirect the mind away from anxiety-provoking events from the past or fears of what might happen in the future.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/p5iN1WzmH6Q>

No captions or transcript

Source:

[Anxiety New Zealand Trust](#)

<https://www.anxiety.org.nz/>

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## Use the 5-point scale for anxiety

Introduce **the 5-point scale** to teach social and emotional skills through a systems approach.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/L2zZOxSwkzI>

No captions or transcript

Source:

[Autism Live \(US\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSR-PtIMWK7QzRHKDKJItRA>

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## Self-assessment

Are these strategies emerging, partly in place, or established in your practice?

Illustrate your response with examples from your own teaching.

- ✓ There are scaffolds and tools available to support self-regulated behaviour.
- ✓ I acknowledge students when they demonstrate self-regulation (for example, waiting their turn, sharing with others, using a strategy to calm down).
- ✓ I explicitly teach and model self-management strategies.
- ✓ Students receive feedback for using the strategies.
- ✓ I regularly check in on students, giving supportive feedback that builds their view of themselves as active learners.

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## Useful resources



### Break cards

Break cards enable students to tell adults they need a break. Discuss and agree boundaries and expectations around how to use break cards. Three, free, downloadable break card options.

Publisher: Teachers Pay Teachers

[Visit website](#)



### Self-coaching

Explanation of a technique for students to use by repeating words to provide calm and focus, especially in challenging situations.

Publisher: Goalbook

[Visit website](#)



### Pause, breathe, smile mindfulness in schools

A researched based mindfulness programme developed for New Zealand schools and endorsed by the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.

Publisher: Mindfulness Education Group

[Visit website](#)

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