

Unraveling Anxiety

Causes, Symptoms, and Coping Strategies

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Grade Level	11th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	100 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	2 Periods
Course	Psychology		

Essential Question

What is anxiety and how is it caused? How do we manage our anxiety?

Summary

This lesson introduces students to the emotions of anxiety and anxiety disorders. Students identify the causes and symptoms of certain anxiety disorders, including Social Anxiety Disorder, phobias, and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Students then have an opportunity to explore different coping strategies that can be used to ease anxiety and determine which ones might work best in several hypothetical scenarios.

Snapshot

Engage

Students read several statements about anxiety and determine if they are always, sometimes, or never true.

Explore

Students use a Choice Board to identify and examine the causes and symptoms of different anxiety disorders.

Explain

Students create Cognitive Comics that depict a cause and a symptom of an anxiety disorder, along with a coping strategy that could be used to ease anxiety associated with that disorder.

Extend

Students participate in a Magnetic Statements activity in order to determine which coping strategies would work best at easing anxiety in several hypothetical scenarios.

Evaluate

Students use an Emoji Reflection activity as an opportunity to determine which coping strategies they or someone they know might use to alleviate anxiety.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Psychology (9th through 12th grade))

PS.8: The student will examine how psychological disorders are diagnosed, classified, and treated.
PS.8.2: Describe symptoms and causes of major categories of psychological disorders including schizophrenia mood, anxiety, personality, somatoform, and dissociative disorders.
PS.9.1: Identify and explain potential sources of stress, effects of stress,and various coping strategies for dealing with stress.
PS.9.4: Identify mental health disorders such as eating disorders and obsessive compulsive disorders.

Attachments

- Anxiety Disorders Choice Board—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.docx
- Anxiety Disorders Choice Board—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.pdf
- Anxiety Disorders Choice Board—Unraveling Anxiety.docx
- Anxiety Disorders Choice Board—Unraveling Anxiety.pdf
- Choice Board Note Catcher—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.docx
- Choice Board Note Catcher—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.pdf
- Choice Board Note Catcher—Unraveling Anxiety.docx
- Choice Board Note Catcher—Unraveling Anxiety.pdf
- Cognitive Comics Template—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.docx
- Cognitive Comics Template—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.pdf
- Cognitive Comics Template—Unraveling Anxiety.docx
- Cognitive Comics Template—Unraveling Anxiety.pdf
- Emoji Reflection—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.docx
- Emoji Reflection—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.pdf
- Emoji Reflection—Unraveling Anxiety.docx
- Emoji Reflection—Unraveling Anxiety.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Unraveling Anxiety.pptx
- Magnetic Statements—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.docx
- Magnetic Statements—Unraveling Anxiety - Spanish.pdf
- Magnetic Statements—Unraveling Anxiety.docx
- Magnetic Statements—Unraveling Anxiety.pdf

Materials

- Computers with Internet access
- Scrap paper
- Pens/pencils
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Anxiety Disorders Choice Board (attached; optional)
- Choice Board Note Catcher (attached; one per student)
- Cognitive Comics Template (attached; optional; one per student)
- Emoji Reflection handout (attached; one per student)
- Magnetic Statements Coping Strategy Posters

15 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to facilitate this lesson.

Begin by telling students they will be participating in an Always, Sometimes, or Never True exercise. Display **slide 3** and explain to students that during this exercise, they will be shown statements about anxiety and will be asked to determine if those statements are *always*, *sometimes*, or *never* true.

Move to **slide 4** to begin the exercise. Click on the slide once to reveal the statement. Make sure to display it without revealing the answer. After students have had about 30 seconds to think about the statement and write down on a piece of notebook paper if it is *always*, *sometimes*, or *never* true, you can reveal the correct answer by clicking again on the slide. Take a moment to go over the explanation with your students. Additional statements will be presented on **slides 5-10**. Repeat the process with each statement.

Optional Facilitation with Mentimeter

While not required, it may be more engaging for students to see their answers projected on a Smartboard or similar device in real time using Mentimeter. Mentimeter is an online tool that enables you to gather data from your students and display it in different configurations in real time. Feel free to watch this tutorial to learn how to create an interactive presentation in Mentimeter.

Before moving on, display **slides 11** and **12** and introduce students to the essential questions and learning objectives.

Teacher's Note: Discussing Anxiety with Your Students

It's important to be mindful of the potentially sensitive nature of this subject. Anxiety is a common experience that affects people to varying degrees, and some students in our classrooms may have personal experiences with anxiety disorders. Throughout this lesson, you will want to consider:

- Emphasizing that experiencing anxiety is a normal part of being human and a natural response to many situations.
- Framing discussions in a way that highlights the universality of the topic without making any student feel singled out.
- Creating a space for open dialogue where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and questions and where it's okay not to have all the answers.
- Reinforcing the idea that there are effective ways to manage anxiety and that seeking support is a positive step.
- Bringing awareness of available resources, both within and outside the school, for those who may want additional support. These can include counseling services, helplines, or informational materials.

Remember, our goal is to foster understanding, empathy, and a positive learning environment. If any concerns arise or if a student appears to be struggling, please reach out to the appropriate support staff. Also, if you're looking for strategies for discussing anxiety with your students, feel free to consult this video.

30 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 13** and go over the Choice Board instructions with your students. Explain to them that they will be splitting into small groups and will be using the Wakelet Choice Board to research various anxiety disorders. Make sure you distribute the **Choice Board Note Catchers** to your students before dividing them into several groups of three or four.

Ideally, you should split them into at least six groups so that you can assign each group one of the six featured anxiety disorders to research. You have the option of either having them click on the link included in slide 13 or directing them to the attached **Anxiety Disorders Choice Board.** As they view the videos and read the articles included in their portion of the Choice Board, they will fill out the column corresponding with their assigned disorder in their Note Catchers**.** Before groups begin their research, let them know that they will need to elect one representative of their group to provide the class with a brief summary of what they learned.

After student groups have had 20-25 minutes to complete their research, have your class reconvene. Give each student group representative a minute or so to share with the class what their group discovered about their assigned anxiety disorder to research. As each representative shares, have students enter information about each disorder in the corresponding columns of their Note Catchers.

20 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 14**. Let your students know that they will be using the information they learned during the research phase to draw Cognitive Comics relating to the disorders their groups researched. Students have the option of using the attached **Cognitive Comics Templates.** In the story panels provided in the template, have them show the cause, a symptom, and a coping strategy that someone with the disorder might use to ease their anxiety. They should also make sure to explain what is depicted in each panel in caption bubbles below the panels.

Teacher's Note: Reminder for Students

Remind your students to be respectful of others who may be dealing privately with an anxiety disorder. Ask them to be mindful of stereotypes and to avoid reinforcing stigmas associated with mental health.

As an alternative, students can draw their own comics on sheets of scrap paper. Make sure to share the examples of comics on **slides 15-18** so that they have a better idea of how to design their comics.

Pass out the templates or scrap paper and give your students 10-15 minutes to complete their drawings. Afterward, call on a few student volunteers to show and explain their drawings to the rest of the class.

25 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Magnetic Statements Activity Preparation

Prior to this activity, hang the six coping strategy posters around the room.

1. Grounding
2. Unwinding
3. Mindfulness
4. Health
5. Structure
6. Social Support

Display **slide 19** and spend a couple of minutes reviewing the distinction between stress and anxiety with your students. Once you are certain that your students have a clear understanding of the distinction, move to **slide 20**. Tell your students that they will be watching a brief video that goes over a few different coping techniques that adolescents can use to overcome their stress and anxiety.

After you have finished playing the video, display **slides 21-23**. Review the categories of coping strategies covered in the video (Mindfulness, Grounding, Health, and Social Support) and introduce them to a couple of other categories (Unwinding and Structure).

Display **slide 24** and tell your students that they will be participating in a Magnetic Statements activity. During this activity, they will be given a hypothetical scenario. They should individually think about the scenario, how they or someone with anxiety would feel, and what coping strategy they would use or suggest to a friend in this case.

Direct your students' attention to the **Magnetic Statements Coping Strategy Posters** that have been placed around the room. Then display **slides 25-31** one by one, providing time for students to walk to and stand beside the poster for the type of coping strategy they would use or advise someone else to use to address the anxiety in the given scenario.

After each scenario is displayed, provide time for students to discuss in groups at their posters why they selected this coping strategy to manage anxiety in that hypothetical situation.

Have someone from each group share with the whole class a summary of their discussion about how to use that coping strategy in the provided scenario. Repeat this process for as many of the scenarios as you are able to get through.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 32** and tell your students the lesson will conclude with an Emoji Reflection activity. Pass out the **Emoji Reflection** handouts to each of your students and explain that they will need to circle three emojis that best represent a strategy they or someone they know could use to cope with anxiety. Ensure that students also include a brief response at the bottom of the handout in which they justify their reasons for choosing each image.

At the end of the activity, ask for a few volunteers to share the emojis they selected and their responses with the rest of the class. You can collect these handouts at the end of the lesson and use them as a form of summative assessment.

Resources

- ABC News. (2023, May 12). Comedian Howie Mandel opens up about his OCD diagnosis | ABCNL [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDIq_o-A51M&t=1s
- Anxiety Canada. (2017, August 14). Symptoms and strategies for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in children and teens [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WJS0O1llUo
- As/Is. (2014, December 12). What panic attacks feel like [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPlhgtQqA6c
- Charleson, K. & MacIntyre, M. (2023, November 6). Everything you need to know about living with social anxiety disorder. Verywell Health. https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-social-anxiety-disorder-5087486
- Cherry, K. & Gans, S. (2022, October 14). 10 of the most common phobias. Verywell Mind. https://www.verywellmind.com/most-common-phobias-4136563
- Child Mind Institute. (2022, September 29). What is social anxiety disorder? - Child Mind Institute [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK4tr5C-IQo
- Cleveland Clinic. (2022, October 13). 4 warning signs of Generalized Anxiety Disorder [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ieJU5gklO4&t=1s
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Wakelet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2180
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- Osmosis from Elsevier. (2016, March 2). Phobias - specific phobias, agoraphobia, & social phobia [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCOg2G797ek
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