



MANAGING ANXIETY

Lesson Plan



Welcome to Mistake's Lesson plan about ANXIETY.

This lesson helps teachers address students' anxiety through interactive activities and discussions. It combines storytelling, reflection, vocabulary building, and hands-on activities to support children's emotional well-being and resilience. Follow-up activities provide opportunities for deeper exploration and practical strategies for managing anxiety.

This File Includes:

1. Original story
2. Key points
3. Discussion questions
4. Vocabulary words
5. Classroom activities
6. Two follow up lessons
7. SEL standards
8. CASEL standards
9. Additional resources



Alina & Anxiety

Alina was walking to school when a tiny monster jumped inside her backpack. The little monster grew bigger with every step until her bag was so heavy that she had to stop.

Alina took her heavy backpack off her back with a lot of **effort**. Her heart was **pounding**; she was sweating and short of breath. She opened the bag and saw a monster the size of a big watermelon snuggled between her math and science notebooks!

They both screamed. Alina fell to the ground and crawled behind a trash can. The terrified monster tried to hide inside the backpack, but its body had grown even larger and he couldn't get in.

Alina's heart felt like it was about to jump out of her body. She and the monster stepped out of their hideouts but screamed again when they met each other's eyes.

"Who...who are you?" Alina finally asked. The monster, still growing a little bigger, now the size of a child, said, "My name is... Anxiety."

"And... why are you here?" Alina asked, still **trembling**. "Well... that's something you must find out," said the monster, its green eyes blinking **insistently**. "I don't want you here!" Said Alina.

"Here's the thing," said the monster. "Only you know why I am here. I am invisible to most people around you, but those who care for you can see me. I will stay with you until you figure out why I am here."

Alina was confused and **overwhelmed**; she even got dizzy.

"I will just ignore you," she finally responded. "Ignoring me will only make me bigger," said

Anxiety, standing up.

"I am sure no one can see you," Alina said, **determined**.

"People who care about you can see me." Said Anxiety.

"I will **deny** you," Alina responded, getting nervous.

"Denying me will only make me bigger," said Anxiety.

"I will hide you," said Alina, her voice growing louder.

"You could. But here's a secret: the more people see me, the smaller I get," Anxiety said in a calm voice.

"But they will laugh at me when they see you," said Alina as she **paced** from side to side on the sidewalk. Anxiety said in a **comforting** voice: "Listen, knowing that Anxiety is always with you may overwhelm you. Don't try to hide or deny me; talk about me with people who can see me."

Alina thought and thought. She was not in an **ideal** situation at all.

"So... you won't go away?" Asked Alina.

"No..." said Anxiety. "Wherever you go, I go."

Alina sighed and looked to the ground. She realized there was nothing she could do then because she had to get to school, even though she didn't want to show up carrying a giant monster on her back. Alina rushed into her classroom, hoping no one would notice the monster inside her backpack.

But her friend Matt noticed. "Hey, what's that in your backpack?" He asked.

"Uhm... nothing," Alina responded. Anxiety grew a bit bigger.

"No... something is going on," said Matt. As he sat with her at lunchtime, they spoke and had fun, and Anxiety grew smaller.

Alina got back to her classroom after recess. With every question the teacher asked, Anxiety grew inside her backpack, which became too tight to fit. Alina started sweating, and when the teacher asked her a question, Anxiety suddenly jumped out of her bag, and the whole class screamed!

The teacher asked what was going on. Alina tried to hide under her desk. She was so embarrassed, but Anxiety stood in the middle of the classroom, visible to all her classmates.

"Alina, can you please explain what is happening?" The teacher asked. Alina remembered what Anxiety had told her in the morning: "Introduce me." So, she took a deep breath. Shaking, Alina walked to the middle of the classroom, standing next to Anxiety. She grabbed Anxiety's furry hand and said to her teacher, "This here is Anxiety." Alina said. And everyone gasped.

"Anxiety is my monster. It climbs in my backpack on the way to school, and as I get here, it gets heavier and bigger. It grows when I meet a new person, have a task, or learn a new subject, and sometimes, even when I forget something. Most people don't see it, but it is big and heavy for me. Anxiety has told me that the more I speak about it, the smaller and lighter it will become."

The teacher came closer, "Nice to meet you, Anxiety. I hope you don't grow too big for this room!" She said, "But please know that I understand that you are part of Alina's life, and we respect you."

On the other side of the room, Sarah stood up. With quiet footsteps, she approached Alina and Anxiety.

"This is my Anxiety," she said. Another monster appeared in the room.

"And... this is mine," said Matt. Another monster appeared.

One by one, the kids in Alina's classroom stood up, and one by one, bigger and smaller, anxiety monsters appeared, visible to the rest of the class.

Finally, the teacher said, "Kids, this is my Anxiety." Another monster appeared.

"What are we going to do with so many anxiety monsters?" Asked one of the kids.

"I think... we can all say 'Hi' to them every morning, treat them with love and respect, and they will stay quiet and small," the teacher suggested.

Alina's Anxiety became as small as an apple. She carefully put it on her desk. On her way home, Anxiety crawled from her backpack to her shoulder and said, "Thank you for acknowledging me."



Lesson plan

KEY POINTS

1. Anxiety is when you feel scared or worried about something. It might make your tummy feel funny, or your heart beat faster.
1. It's okay to feel anxious sometimes, but remember that you're safe and loved.
2. If you're feeling nervous, you can talk to someone you trust, like a grown-up or a friend, and they can help you feel better.

TEACHER AND STUDENTS WILL

1. Read Mistake's story about Alina and her monster, Anxiety.
 - PreK through second grade - teacher reads aloud.
 - 3rd through 4th grade - students read silently, and teacher reads aloud.
 - 5th grade - students read aloud.
2. Have the students identify the story's main idea - they tell in their own words what the story was about.
3. Ask your students: when does Anxiety grow bigger, and when does it shrink?
4. A follow-up question: why is it important to introduce Anxiety to people who care about us?
5. Ask your students to think of a time when they experienced anxiety and share how they felt.
6. Discuss additional ways to cope with our anxiety: breathing, drawing, listening to music, going for a walk/run, talking about it, and more.

VOCABULARY

- Discuss the vocabulary words below with your students.
 - Ask your student to describe the vocabulary words in their words.
1. **Anxiety:** a feeling of worry, nervousness, unease.
 2. **Effort:** a determined attempt to do something.
 3. **Pounding:** rhythmic beating or throbbing.
 4. **Trembling:** shaking or quivering.
 5. **Insistently:** continuously or repetitively.
 6. **Overwhelmed:** a strong emotional effect.
 7. **Determined:** having made a firm decision.
 8. **Deny:** refusing to admit the truth or existence of something.
 9. **Ideal:** an idea of something perfect.
 10. **Acknowledging:** saying that you see something or someone.

Follow-up Activities:

Follow-Up Lesson # 1 – Introduce Your Anxiety:

1. Imagine what your anxiety monster would look Like.
2. Create your anxiety monster with play-dough (PreK through 1st grade) / drawing (all grades) / mixed media (5th grade) / poem or song (4th-5th grade)
3. You can create more than one version of your anxiety monster.

Follow-Up Lesson # 2 – Calm Your Anxiety:

1. Divide the students into small groups.
2. Ask them to brainstorm and create a list of:
 - Things that make them anxious.
 - Things they like to do when they feel anxious to help themselves.
3. Divide the second list into thoughts and behaviors. For example:
 - Thoughts: I can do it, I will get through it, I am strong, etc.
 - Behaviors: breathe slowly, meditate, make art, listen to relaxing music, talk to a friend, etc.
4. Share and practice with the class ideas to cope with anxiety.

ELA Competencies

Key Ideas and Details:

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Craft and Structure:

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

- Read and comprehend complex literary texts independently and proficiently.

CASEL Competencies

Self-Awareness:

- Identifying one's emotions
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity
- Linking feelings, values, and thoughts
- Experiencing self-efficacy
- Having a growth mindset

Social Awareness:

- Demonstrating empathy and compassion
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- Responsible Decision-Making:
- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
- Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family and community well-being
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

Self-Management:

- Managing one's emotions
- Identifying and using stress-management strategies

Relationship Skills:

- Communicating effectively
- Resisting negative social pressure

Additional Resources

- [Recommended books about anxiety](#)
- [Anxiety and the five personality elements](#)
- [Featured movies about anxiety](#)
- [Books about back-to-school anxiety](#)
- [Guiding kids through childhood transitions](#)





Dear Teachers,

I hope your students enjoy Mistake's lesson plan about anxiety. This lesson plan helps teachers address anxiety through interactive activities and discussions to support children's emotional well-being and resilience. This lesson provides practical strategies for managing anxiety.

My name is Hagit and I am an experienced educator specializing in early childhood education. I develop educational, cultural, and art programs for children and adults to grow and strengthen meaningful relationships.

About Love Ur Mistakes

Celebrating mistakes as stepping stones to growth.

Love Ur Mistakes reframes failure and imperfections by embracing mistakes as learning opportunities. We view mistakes as steppingstones toward success and self-discovery. At Love Ur Mistakes, individuals find a space to share and own missteps, receiving encouragement and valuable lessons.

We nurture stronger caretaker-child connections in an empowering environment where sharing mistakes and failures yields meaningful learning. We create enriching content to help parents and educators guide their kids in transforming mistakes into growth opportunities. We inspire parents and educators to establish a foundation for open communication about small and big mistakes.

Learn more about our resources at www.makemistakes.club

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