### Separation worries

- Develop a plan for the student’s arrival at school (e.g., provide an immediate reward for attending) with appropriate staff (with parental permission).
- Provide consistent and predictable arrival routines.
- Maintain regular communication with the parents and encourage their participation in classroom activities.
- Arrange for a buddy to greet the child in the playground and help with the transition into the classroom.
- Provide positive reinforcement for brave behaviour and refrain from commenting on anxious behavior.
- Work with the parents to identify positive ways to reward non-anxious behavior (e.g., allow the student to take home a special book or toy as a reward for not crying).

### Specific fears

- Recognize any progress, however small, that the student makes towards confronting the fear. Connect with the parents to determine how the fears are managed at home.
- Try not to allow the student to avoid an activity because of the fear.
- Observe the student’s behaviour to make sure that the student is not avoiding participating in everyday activities.

Sources: Adapted from Table 1: "Manifestations of generalized anxiety and corresponding classroom strategies", from K. Manassis, "Generalized Anxiety Disorder in the Classroom", in J.Q. Bostic and A.L. Bagnell, eds., issue titled "Evidence-based School Psychiatry", *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 21, no.1 January 2012; with additional information from Ryan & Warner, 2012; CYMHIN-MAD, 2011; Hincks-Dellcrest-ABCs, n.d.
### Specific Strategies for Supporting Students with Anxiety-Related Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom or behaviour</th>
<th>Classroom Strategies</th>
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| **A range of anxiety-related behaviour**                          | *Work with parents, the school team, and others involved with the student to establish consistent expectations for the student at school, at home, and in other areas of activity. This provides predictability and reduces confusion for the student.*  
  *Reward brave, non-anxious behaviour. Notice when the student is being brave in attempting something he/she finds challenging.*  
  *Check in with the student at the beginning of each day.*  
  *Learn what situations the student can handle and determine how to respond when she/he is unable to cope.*  
  *Check with the student that assignments have been written down correctly.*  
  *Reduce schoolwork and/or homework based on information from parents and the school team about how much stress the student can handle.*  
  *Maintain the student’s regular schedule as much as possible.*  
  *Ask the student’s parents what strategies work at home to relieve the student’s anxiety.*  
  *Encourage and reward all positive steps in managing anxiety.*                                                                                         |
| **Perfectionism**                                                 | *Communicate the message that mistakes are normal, or reframe mistakes as learning opportunities.*  
  *Reassure the student that "everyone makes mistakes sometimes" or "nobody’s perfect".*  
  *Encourage the student to produce rough drafts and use brainstorming.*  
  *Work with parents and the school team to establish strategies suited to the academic and mental health needs of the student (e.g., a focus on quantity rather than quality of work; flexibility about deadlines).*  
  *Avoid drawing unnecessary attention to mistakes (e.g., avoid posting test scores or publicly commenting on mistakes).*  
  *Recognize and reward small improvements (e.g., finishing a task on time without continual revising to make it perfect).*                                                                                   |
| **Fear of large assignments**                                     | *Help the student break the project or large assignment into manageable chunks.*  
  *Help the student make a schedule to do each chunk.*  
  *Have the student hand in one chunk at a time (rather than trying to meet one final deadline), and provide positive reinforcement for each submission.*  
  *Reduce the size of the chunks if the student continues to have difficulty.*  
  *Build the student's confidence by rewarding partial success or evidence of effort (instead of praising only complete pieces of work).*  
  *Help the student focus on his or her strengths and ability to improve performance with effort.*                                                                                             |
### Specific Strategies for Supporting Students with Anxiety-Related Symptoms

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| **Test anxiety**                   | • Engage in dialogue with parents and the school team to determine if the student would benefit from different arrangements for taking tests (e.g., provision of a separate, quiet room for a student who is upset by distractions).  
• Clearly indicate (when appropriate) how much a test or exam will count towards the final grade (all students).  
• Allow extra time to complete tests for students who are upset by time pressure.  
• Avoid giving surprise quizzes or tests.  
• Encourage the student to take a few slow, deep breaths before starting.  
• Encourage the student to identify an easy question to start with. |
| **Anxiety about time pressure**    | • Avoid "minute math" or other tests with time pressure.  
• Provide incentives to encourage the student to work at an appropriate pace (e.g., "When you finish working on x, you can go back and work on the computer."). Flexible time limits will help decrease anxiety.  
• Encourage the student to finish one task at a time before starting another (i.e., discourage multitasking). |
| **Intolerance of uncertainty**     | • Provide information to increase the student's ability to predict events and outcomes wherever possible. Provide clear daily schedules and clear deadlines.  
• Warn the student if something out of the ordinary is planned and help him or her to prepare for it.  
• Provide checklists and other visual reminders for tasks and upcoming events.  
• Develop a coping plan for unexpected events (e.g., if there is a fire drill; if there is a substitute teacher) that the student can keep at his/her desk. The plan may include a pause for slow, deep breathing, sitting next to a chosen buddy (who knows about the plan), and referring to a summary of the student's needs and daily routines. (Such a plan could be used to help a substitute teacher ensure that the student's routines are maintained in the absence of the regular teacher.) |
| **Excessive reassurance seeking**  | • Try to respond calmly (this may help to decrease anxiety).  
• Answer questions with a simple explanation and repeat once, using the same words (to minimize chances of confusion).  
• Encourage the student to save further questions for a specific time, and then be available at that time.  
• Positively reinforce any progress towards increased independence.  
• Provide realistic but reassuring information about specific worries or fears.  
• Encourage the student to write down his/her worries before seeking help from an adult. |
## Specific Strategies for Supporting Students with Anxiety-Related Symptoms

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| **Physical Symptoms** | • Practise relaxation exercises with the whole class (beneficial for all).  
• Encourage slow, deep breathing when the student appears stressed.  
• Have a quiet place where the student can go for a few minutes if he/she is feeling overwhelmed.  
• Agree on a signal the student can use when he/she needs to go to the washroom. Encourage the student to try to extend the time between washroom visits and to return to class within a few minutes.  
• As appropriate, discuss with parents under what circumstances the student could be allowed to call home or ask to be picked up from school. |
| **Interpersonal sensitivity** | • Maintain a clam, patient tone of voice when talking to the student.  
• Avoid penalizing the whole class when a few students misbehave.  
• Set firm limits for misbehavior and remain clam while enforcing them.  
• Set reasonable academic expectations that take anxiety into account but are not too low and do not single out the student who is anxious.  
• Quickly address any teasing or bullying among students.  
• Positively reinforce efforts to seek help by students who are usually afraid to ask for help (perhaps for fear of being criticized or looking stupid) |
| **Social anxiety** | • Connect with the student’s parents to determine if the same behavior occurs at home and in other situations and to learn what successful approaches they use to help their child.  
• Work to develop an atmosphere of acceptance throughout the classroom.  
• Talk openly about the fact that everyone feels nervous about speaking in front of a class.  
• Resist pressure to allow the student to avoid social interactions.  
• Encourage autonomy, to allow the student to develop effective coping and problem-solving skills.  
• For a student who fears answering questions in class, first try providing the student with the answer to the question before class. Gradually work up to rehearsing questions and answers with the student before class, to prepare the student to answer out loud in class.  
• If a student is extremely worried about responding to questions in class, have the student answer yes/no questions first (instead of open ended ones).  
• Create an environment in which students feel welcome to speak up and socialize.  
• Provide opportunities for students to work, socialize, and speak in small groups, first with one other person, then with two, three, or four people.  
• Identify activities the student can do that will help increase his/her level of comfort (e.g. returning forms to the school office, helping with the school newspaper, working in the library).  
• Pair the student with another student who is open and welcoming.  
• Encourage the student to participate in extra-curricular activities. |