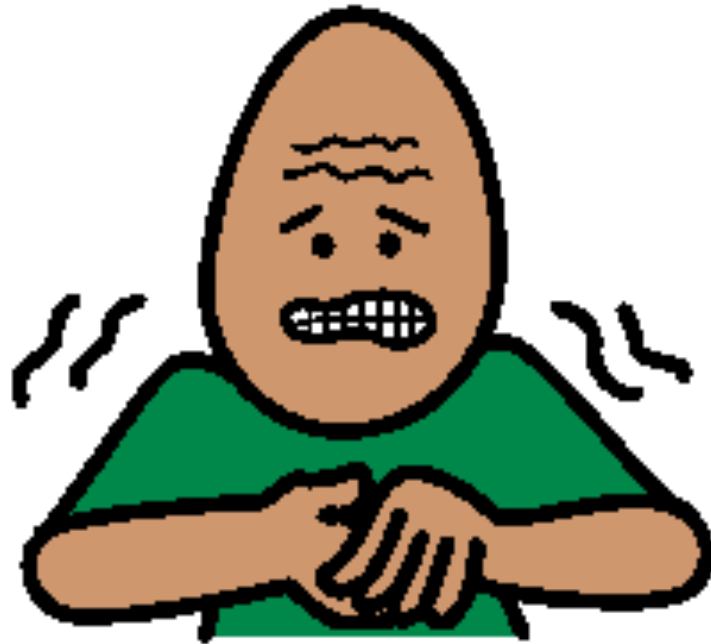


Supporting Children with Anxiety

(Support Package for teachers, parents and students)



About this Program....

The Psychoeducation Objectives of this program include::

- For the individual to recognise physical signs of anxiety and coping strategies. Encouraging the individual to recognise dizziness, sweating, heart palpitations and an upset stomach as signs of distress. To encourage the individual to practice controlled breathing to support the program.
- For the individual to recognise unhelpful patterns of behaviour and how they can reinforce negative mood states. For example "if you sleep all the time, you will feel low in energy which will make you feel sad and go back to sleep. If you are physically more active, you will feel happy and have more energy. During these times, encourage the individual to refer to pictures of the body.
- For the individual to be comfortable with heart palpitations and sweatiness that comes with physical exercise. Treat this in the same way as you would signs of anxiety and not to let it become an excuse to stay at home and remain physically inactive. For example "it's okay if you feel dizzy. You can sit down and drink some water.
- For the individual to create a list of pleasant and enjoyable activities during times of sadness or boredom. Encourage the individual to identify a number of pleasant activities that they enjoy, for example, is it colouring in? watching favourite tv shows? Craft? Going to the park? Help the individual to draw on their list and help them to associate positive feelings with performing these activities e.g.: "Tell me what things you did today to make you feel happy?"

I Feel Anxious



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal feeling.
Everyone feels anxious from time to time.

Anxiety is when you feel scared and worried a lot of the time.

Sometimes you might not even know why you feel this way.

Other words for anxiety are **“stressed out”**, **“freaking out”** and **“feeling worried”**.

Sometimes it can be very strong and get bigger and bigger. When this happens it can feel like time is racing or running out.

Too much anxiety can be a problem. It can make you feel out of control.

What does having anxiety feel like?

When you are anxious you may feel some of these things:

Feel changes in your body like:

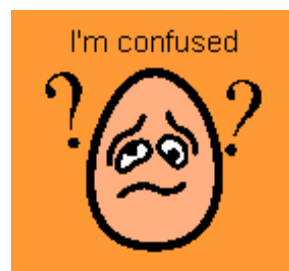
- A quick heart beat
- Dizzy
- Sick in the tummy
- Sweaty and shaky
- Needing to go to the toilet to wee a lot
- Tight muscles
- You can't stay still
- Hard to go to sleep

Feel changes in your thinking like:

- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Confused
- Thinking about the same thing over and over
- Having strong thoughts zap into your head

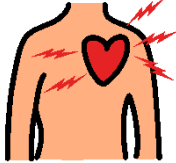





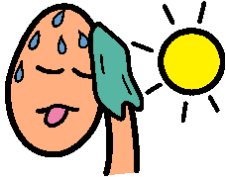


Feel changes in the way you behave like:

- Not wanting to do things
- Biting your fingers, picking at sores
- Jumpy and finding it hard to sit still
- Asking lots of questions



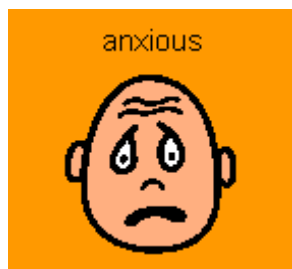
Tick if you have these symptoms when you are

ANXIOUS?

	Quick Heart Beat	
	Feeling Sick in the Tummy	
	Feeling Shaky	
	Muscles tighten	
	Hard to go to sleep	
	Dizzy	
	Sweaty	
	Need to go to the toilet a lot	
	Can't stay still	

How many people have an anxiety problem?

About 1 in 4 people have an anxiety problem.

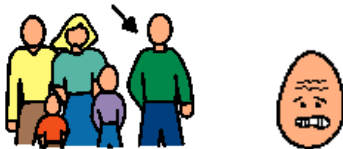


What causes anxiety problems?

There are many reasons why someone may have an anxiety problem. Some reasons are:



A stressful or unhappy thing happened.



Other people in your family have an anxiety problem.



Not having help from others. Feeling alone and isolated.



Feeling unsure about the future and what may happen.



Changes in your body.

Sometimes people have an anxiety problem and no-one knows why.

You can get help for your anxiety! HOW?

You can talk to a counsellor.



A counsellor can help you to feel more relaxed.

A counsellor can teach you ways to feel less anxious.



You can practice relaxation exercises.

You can take some medicine to help with your anxiety.



SOME THINGS FOR YOU TO REMEMBER:

REMEMBER lots of people have anxiety.

REMEMBER some anxiety is normal but too much is a problem.

REMEMBER you can be helped.

Controlled Breathing

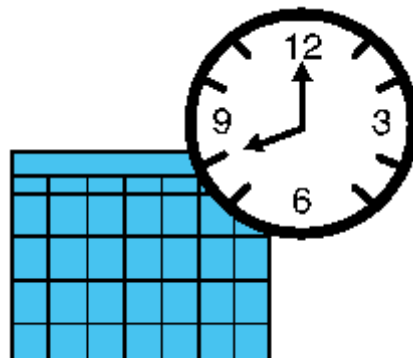
Encourage the individual to practice controlled breathing daily in order for this intervention to become familiar enough to use it during times of distress. Practicing on a daily basis will also assist in promoting general feelings of wellbeing for the individual. Support the individual to help make the link between feelings of calm with the practice of controlled breathing.

What to do....

Sit in a chair with both feet flat on the ground and back straight.

1. Breathe in through your nose (count 1,2);
2. Breathe out slowly through your mouth while thinking “r-e-e-e-l-a-a-a-x” to yourself (count 1,2)
(You can provide a visual prompt and be creative by getting the individual to blow into a piece of craft/crepe paper)
3. Repeat the process 5 times.

Encourage the individual to practice controlled breathing at least once a day at regular times and in a quiet location free from distraction. It's important to monitor progress by encouraging the individual to build awareness of feelings of relaxation after practicing the technique.



TIP....
Create a calendar and tick it off daily to indicate that you have practiced this skill.

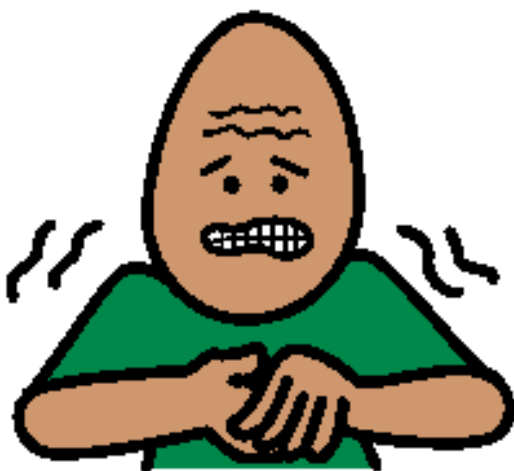
Conquering Your Fears!

(Social Story)

My name is _____ and I can be brave!



Sometimes, there are things that make me feel anxious. Everyone feels anxious sometimes.

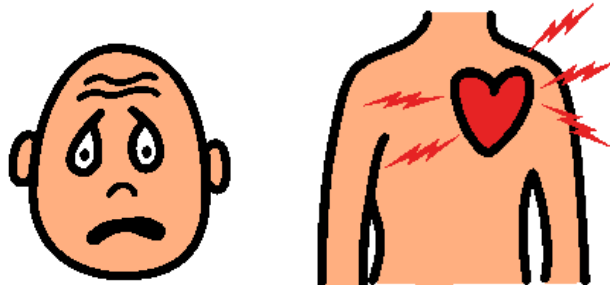


When I get anxious or worried...

My breathing gets faster



Sometimes my heart beats quickly



My shoulders tense



I get more sweaty

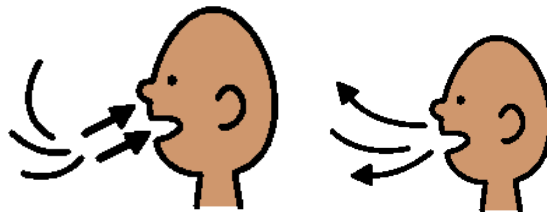


When this happens, I can:

Sit down and put your feet flat on the floor.



Take some deep breaths.....



Count slowly 1...2...3...4...5



Drink some water



Remember, I can do this!

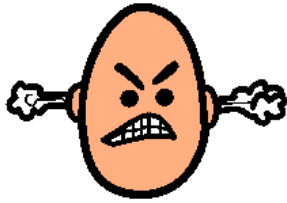
Well Done! You have conquered your fears!



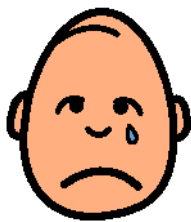
You should be very proud of yourself – we are



Match the Word with the Emotion



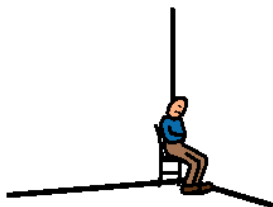
Excited



Happy



Lonely



Angry



Sad



Anxious

Implementing Relaxation Training



There are several types of relaxation training. The most common is *progressive muscle relaxation*. This teaches a person to relax by tensing and relaxing specific groups of muscles. As people with anxiety disorders are thought to have tense muscles, progressive muscles relaxation may also help to reduce anxious thoughts and behaviours. Another type of relaxation training involves thinking of relaxing scenes of places.

Being able to relax when feeling stressed is a SKILL. Teaching the individual how to relax will be a long and difficult process. *Relaxation needs to be practiced on a regular basis as part of the individual's routine for them to become familiar with it.*

General Tips

- **Be a role model.** Demonstrate your confidence in the safety of your world by setting a good example in preventing and managing worries.
- **Develop Routines.** The individual will feel safe when they know what to expect. Daily routines give them a sense of stability and security
- **Exercise.** Encourage the individual to move and walk as exercise may help them to release nervous energy and improve their mood. It may also contribute to changing her brain chemistry, improving her sleep and coping ability and as a distraction from her worries.
- **Try activities the individual may find relaxing.** Offer relaxing activities to the individual as often as you can. For example: turn the TV off and put on some music; read stories together (especially in the evening); give them a foot spa or a hand massage. Use aromatherapy oils. Although there is not enough evidence that aromatherapy works for people with anxiety disorders, the pleasant aromas may improve their mood. The individual might be encouraged to try Bach flower remedies, which are highly diluted flower extracts. A popular combination of five remedies is sold as Rescue Remedy. Again, there is not good evidence to say Bach flower remedies work, however, a few drops of Rescue Remedy under her tongue can become a safe step in a *calming ritual* for the individual.

Teaching the individual to Recognise Anxiety

Try to **identify and record** those places, times or events when the individual is *more* anxious. For example, are they more anxious when they are alone? What other places, events and people trigger their anxiety?

Reflect back to the individual when you recognise they are feeling anxious or worried. This means, when you see they are worried, **label** this emotion back to them. For example, you say "(insert name). You are feeling *anxious*. Sometimes you feel anxious when you go to the doctor".

Make the emotion **concrete**. Ask the individual to describe how their body feels when they are anxious. E.g. "I can see you are feeling anxious (insert name). What is your body doing? Is your tummy tight? Do you feel hot or cold?"

Prepare them. Before events you know will cause anxiety, speak to the individual and explain. "We are going to the doctor and if you feel (hot, sweaty, tummy ache) then you can relax. We can sit down and breathe slowly."

Teaching Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Start by choosing or setting up a **comfortable, quiet, relaxing and safe location for relaxation training**:

- Room
- Time
- Position (lying down or sitting)
- Decrease sensory stimuli

Prepare the individual for relaxation session. Do they need movement before relaxation or a quieter activity before relaxation? Be aware of the individual's alertness level and what activity you will program after relaxation.

Provide cues to prepare the individual for a relaxation session. Dim the lights and use an aromatherapy burner with essential oils e.g. lavender). Provide a meditation eye-bag. You may choose to play quiet relaxation music.

Use teaching aids to help the individual understand their body or how to breathe from their diaphragm. For example, place an object on their tummy they can see / feel moving, use blowers, feathers or candles, or ask her to *hold* a squishy stress ball or an orange rather than

to “imagine” holding an orange. If the individual is comfortable, it may help her to understand her muscles if you use light touch as you read through the script. E.g. if you refer to their shoulders, touch the shoulders lightly to help bring her attention there.

During a “teaching session”, use the **same sensory inputs**:

- Visuals
- Auditory (e.g. same quite voice, music)
- Tactile (massage techniques, deep pressure, blankets, pillows, soft materials, sensory items)

Start with **short sessions, and increase** the length of time (e.g. start with a few minutes, then gradually building up to 20 minutes).

Practice regularly.

Reinforce. Praise the individual. As you work through the exercises, encourage effort, and say something like ‘You’re doing well Karen, we will keep going.’ Reward by following a relaxation session with an activity she enjoys.

Over time, start to change the location of training sessions. As the individual practices and learns deep breathing and muscle relaxation, prompt them to use these skills in times of stress or before an activity you know will stress the individual.

Relaxation Scripts

The following scripts can be read to the individual to teach them to relax their muscles. More recorded scripts are available free on the internet. They can also be bought on CDs.

Model the exercises and breathing for the individual.

The script sequences are a guide to lead her through progressive muscle relaxation exercises. Use the same words at first, and later you can adapt.

If the individual has trouble paying attention to a whole story, you can focus on the section that represents her stress (for example; if she complains of feeling sick when she is worried, focus on the tummy section).

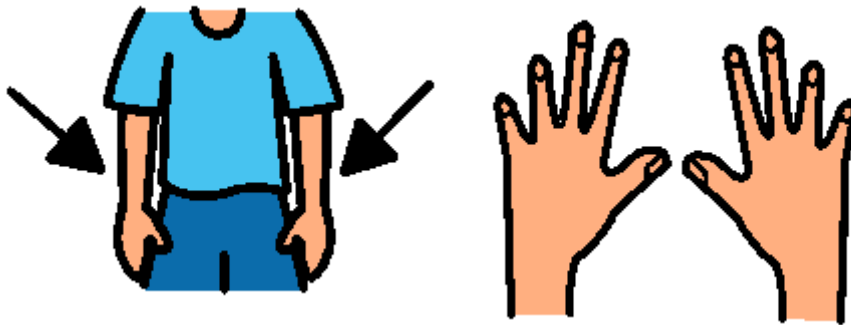
Muscle Relaxation Script 1

Take some deep breaths and begin to focus on your body. Feel your body start to relax and sink into the chair or floor. You can close your eyes if you want.

Hands and Arms

Think about your hands and arms. Pretend you have a whole orange in your left hand. Squeeze it hard. Try and squeeze all the juice out of it! Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Now drop the orange and let your hand go and relax. Feel how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed. Take another lemon and squeeze it with your left hand and squeeze hard. Squeeze all the juice out. Now relax and let the lemon drop from your hand.

Repeat for right hand and arm



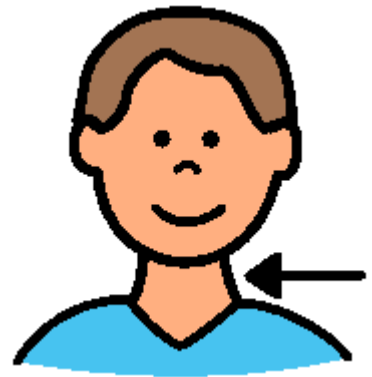
Arms and Shoulders

Pretend you are a furry lazy cat. You want to stretch. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Raise them high up above your head. Way back. Feel the pull in your shoulders. Stretch higher. Now just let your arms drop back to your side. Then stretch again. This time we'll try and have a great big stretch. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Raise them above your head. Pull them back, way back as far as you can. Now let them drop. Notice how your shoulders feel more relaxed. It feels good and warm and lazy.

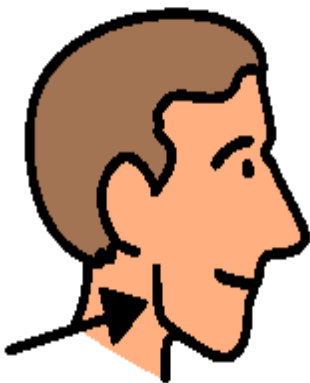


Shoulders and Neck

Now pretend you are a turtle. You're sitting out on a rock by a nice peaceful pond just relaxing in the warm sun. It feels nice and warm and safe here. Oh! You sense danger! Pull your head down into your house. Try to pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold it tight. It isn't easy being a turtle! The danger is passed now. You can come out into the warm sunshine and relax and feel the warmth. Watch out now, danger! Hurry, pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders back into your house. Do it as tightly as you can. Now relax. Bring your head free and let your shoulders relax. Notice how much better it feels to be relaxed than to be all tight. Once more push your head down and your shoulders up to your ears. Hold it. Feel the tenseness in your neck and shoulders. Okay you can come out now! It's safe again. You can relax now and feel comfortable. You feel good.



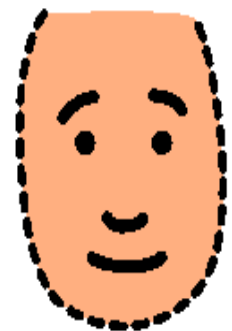
Jaw



You have a giant jawbreaker bubblegum in your mouth. It's very hard to chew. Bite down on it. Put your teeth together really hard and clench your jaw. Let your neck muscles help you. Now relax. Just let your jaw hang loose. Notice how good it feels just to let your jaw relax. Okay let's crunch that jawbreaker again! Bite down hard again. Hold it. Now relax again. Just let your jaw drop. It feels so good just to let go. Now one more time bite down. Bite down as hard as you can. Harder! Now relax. Try to relax your whole body. Let yourself go as loose as you can.

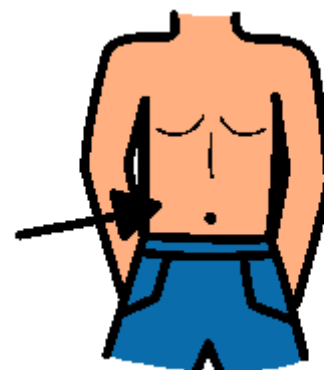
Face and Nose

Here comes a pesky old fly. He has landed on your nose! Try to get him off without using your hands. Wrinkle up your nose. Make as many wrinkles in your nose as you can. Scrunch up your nose really hard. Good-you've chased him away! Now relax your nose. Oops here he comes again! Shoo him off! Now wrinkle up your nose again. Wrinkle it up hard. Hold it as tight as you can. Now relax your face. Notice that when you scrunch up your nose that your cheeks, mouth and forehead all get tight too. When you relax your nose, your whole face relaxes too, and that feels good. Now you can just relax. Let your face go smooth. Your face feels nice and smooth and relaxed.



Stomach

Hey here comes a cute baby elephant! But he's not watching where he's going. He doesn't see you lying there in the grass and he's about to step on your tummy! You don't have time to get out of his way - just get ready! Now tighten up your stomach muscles really tight. Make your stomach really hard. Don't move. Hold it. It looks like he's going the other way. You can relax now.



Let your stomach go soft. Let it be as relaxed as you can. That feels much better. Oops, he's coming this way again! Get ready! Okay, again, tighten your stomach really hard. Hold it, and then relax. Settle in, get comfortable, and relax. Notice the difference between a tight stomach and a relaxed one. That's how we want to feel. Nice and loose and relaxed. You won't believe this, but this time he really is coming for you! This is really it. You've got to hold on tight. Once more, tighten up. Tighten hard. Hold it. He's stepped over you! Now you can relax completely. You can feel nice and relaxed.

This time, imagine you want to squeeze through a narrow fence. You'll have to make yourself really skinny if you're going to make it through! Try to suck your stomach in. try to squeeze it against your backbone. Pull it in as much as you can. Now relax. You don't have to pull it in now. Just relax and feel your stomach being warm and loose. Okay let's try and get through that fence again. Once more, squeeze in your stomach again. Try and make it touch your backbone. Get it really tight. Hold tight. Now relax. You got through that skinny fence! Settle back and let your stomach come back out where it belongs. You can feel really good now.

Legs and Feet

Now pretend you're standing barefoot in a big fat mud puddle. Squish your toes down deep into the mud. Push down and spread your toes apart. You'll probably need your legs to help you push. Push down, spread your toes apart and feel the mud squish up between your toes. Now step out of the mud puddle. Now relax your feet. Let your toes go loose and feel how nice that is. It feels good to be relaxed. Step back into the mud puddle. Squish down your toes. Let your leg muscles help you. Push your feet. Push hard. Try to squeeze that mud puddle dry. Come out now. Now relax your feet, relax your legs, and relax your toes. It feels good to be relaxed. No tenseness anywhere. You feel warm and relaxed.



Progressive Relaxation Script 2

Feel your whole body resting on the floor or chair. Try to let your hands and feet to be very still. Now, with the help of your breathing, we are going to gradually let your body relax. Try to feel your breathing. Feel the flow of your breath entering your body and leaving it again. As you breathe out, you let go ... relax ... allow this relaxed feeling to become stronger and stronger, deeper and deeper.

Now feel that your light, soft breathing is letting you to relax more and more.

Now try to feel your body parts. Feel your feet and your toes. Can you feel your toenails?' Breathe in and curl your toes under very tightly – this is tension – now let them unwind as breath out and feel your feet relaxing ... feel the tension leave every part of your body. Relax your ankles, breathing in and out.

Feel the lower part of your legs between your knees and your ankles. Can you feel the weight of your legs as they press against the floor?

As you breath out, just let the lower part of your legs relax. Relax your knees. Breathe in, and think about the tops of your legs and see if you can feel those big muscles there. Let them relax ... let them become soft and flowing as you breathe out. Feel the whole length of your legs very relaxed.

Breath in and relax your bottom ... let your bottom feel as if it is sinking into the chair/carpet/floor.

Now feel right along your back ... try to feel the part of your back which doesn't touch anything ... feel your back stretch out taller. Breathe in.

Can you feel the very soft movement of your breathing in your back? Can you be so quiet inside yourself that you can feel the movement of each breath as it flows in and out of your back?

Now as breathe out, allow your back to relax completely. Just let your back melt ... really try to feel that lovely relaxed feeling coming into your back. Feel your shoulders relax as you breathe in and out.'

Relax your arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers as you slowly breathe in and out.'

Relax your head, your forehead, your eyes, your nose and your mouth as you slowly and gently breathe in and out.'

Roll you head around once. You can shake you arms. And the exercise is over.

I Can Relax

Sometimes I feel anxious. I feel anxious when I am alone.

I can use breathing to feel relaxed.

I sit down in a quiet spot.

I breathe out – very, very slowly!

Breathe out very slowly, 5 times.

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5

I can ask for a drink.

Drink very slowly, one sip at a time until the glass is empty. I feel how the drink goes into my mouth, down my throat, and then into my tummy. This feels good.

Tell myself: I am ok! I can do this!

Tell my anxious feelings to Go Away!

Wait for 5 minutes so my worried feelings can go away.

EXAMPLE OF AN

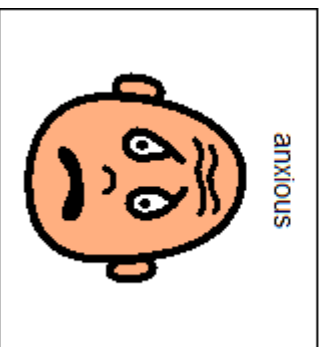
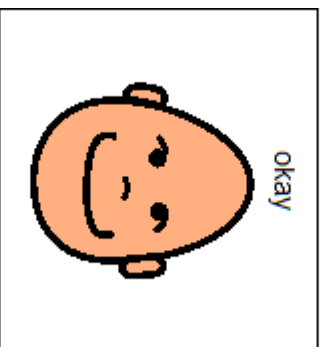
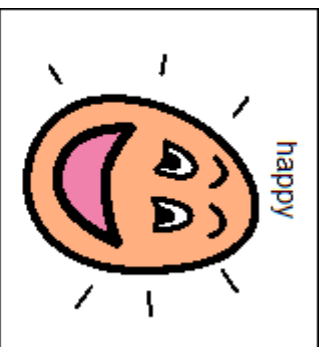
ANXIETY MONITORING CALENDAR



How did you feel going to school today?

Mark the date using the faces below as a guide.

June

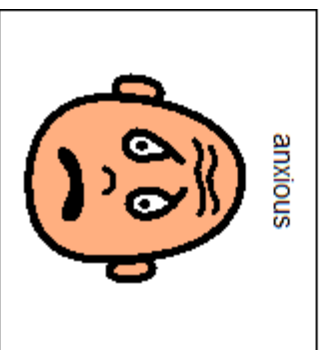
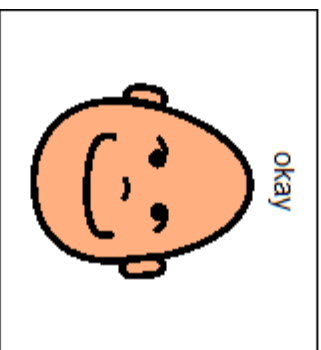
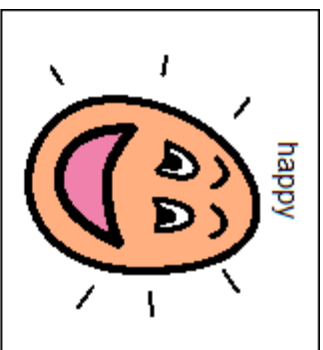


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

How did you feel going to school today?

Mark the date using the faces below as a guide.

May



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
	4	5	6	7	8	9
3						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						