

EASE Overview for Educators



EASE

Everyday
Anxiety
Strategies for
Educators

EASE - Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators

EASE was developed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development in consultation with Anxiety Canada. Combining constructive feedback and insight from educators, school counsellors, and experts in the field of childhood anxiety from all over British Columbia, EASE was developed to be a tangible and practical approach to supporting social and emotional learning and building the capacity of K-7 educators.

Anxiety In Schools

Typical childhood development includes feeling anxious from time to time and children generally learn how to cope with these feelings through their daily life experiences. However, not all forms of anxiety are part of healthy development. Some children are at greater risk of developing an anxiety disorder, which affects up to 4% of BC children and youth (Waddell et al, 2014). Early signs of anxiety problems can be missed when children struggle silently with internal worries and physical distress or when anxiety presents as defiance, aggression, disruptive behaviours, or a lack of focus and attention. Left unaddressed, anxiety can negatively impact a student's relationships, academic success, and day-to-day functioning, potentially developing into something more serious as children grow older. Therefore, it is important to help all students learn coping strategies to manage anxiety early on and EASE, a classroom-based, universal prevention approach, was developed for this very purpose.

EASE Classroom Resources are:

- ✓ Universal – All students can benefit
- ✓ Flexible – Educators may use the resources as stand-alone activities based on the needs of their students, or in a sequenced order that includes all resources
- ✓ Adaptable – Content can be adapted for small or large groups and for specific learning and cultural needs
- ✓ Evidence-informed – Grounded in evidence-based research
- ✓ Aligned with BC Curriculum – Supports all three Core Competencies and the Physical and Health Education Learning Standards

BC Curriculum

 EASE aligns directly with the BC Ministry of Education curriculum. Each lesson is linked to the Core Competencies as well as the Physical Health and Education learning standards. EASE was designed to provide educators flexibility and choice and can be adapted to fit any classroom context. These resources may also help teachers enhance and support social and emotional learning skills, while building skills in recognizing and responding to the mental health needs of a wide range of learners.

Indigenous Perspectives

EASE's holistic approach to coping with anxiety complements the First People's Principles of Learning and supports the integration of locally adapted and applied Indigenous perspectives. Educators are encouraged to adapt EASE lessons according to the specific traditional teachings from the community in which they are using the resource. Authentic adaptations reflect a community's cultural uniqueness, practices, and traditional beliefs through the use of language, land, ceremony, stories, and traditional teachings (Fiedeldey-Van Dijk et al., 2016 Yellow Bird, 2015).

For more information on how to connect EASE strategies with Indigenous perspectives, consult with your local First Nations support staff, Elders, language teachers, and story tellers; or explore the *Authentic First People's Resources Guide for K-Grade 9* which is accessible from the First Nations Education Steering Committee [website](#).

An Evidence-Based Approach

EASE resources are grounded in the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), an evidence-based approach underlying anxiety prevention and intervention strategies. In CBT, children learn about anxiety and the specific coping skills to help them manage anxiety symptoms and situations that cause distress. One of the core principles of CBT is that thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are connected and that changing one can influence the others.

EASE makes CBT accessible to students in classroom settings by teaching strategies that are structured around its foundational therapeutic model, including:

- Psychoeducation – Understanding the experience of anxiety and the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- Somatic Management – Developing awareness and learning to manage physiological responses to anxiety
- Cognitive Restructuring – Replacing unhelpful, anxious self-talk with helpful, calming self-talk
- Exposure – Taking brave steps towards facing fears and challenges, empowering them to deal with anxiety in an optimal way

EASE’s collection of classroom resources is organized by these same CBT categories and corresponding lessons:



Using EASE Resources

- Many EASE lessons reference specific picture books as a way to stimulate thinking and increase personal connections to the concepts being taught. For your convenience, books listed in the Suggested Materials section of each lesson are hyperlinked to the publisher's website.
- All recommended resources (e.g., books, videos, websites) are provided as a courtesy rather than an endorsement, and educators are encouraged to substitute similar resources of their choosing to align with their teaching style.
- To extend the learning about each topic, hyperlinks to extra resources are included in the body of the lessons. A complete reference list with citations and website URLs is available in the Getting Started section of the EASE resource package.
- Stand Alone vs. Linear Approach: Teachers may choose to use one or more lessons that fit their specific classroom needs, or use all the lessons starting from “Setting the Stage for Success” and moving in sequential order to “Taking Action”.



This graphic is included at the top of each classroom lesson. For those who wish to deliver EASE lessons sequentially, the filled text box indicates the lesson’s place in the complete EASE sequence (as per the example above).

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Children and Family Development and Anxiety Canada would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the time and wisdom shared by the many contributors who collaborated with us to develop the Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) classroom resources and workshops. These contributors include educators from school districts and First Nations schools, Simon Fraser University Children’s Health Policy Centre, Open School BC and a host of many other subject matter experts and consultants.