



REINVESTMENT GUIDE

Grade 6

INTRODUCTION TO THE REINVESTMENT GUIDE

The overall aim of the program is to reduce anxiety-related risk factors and strengthen protective factors by promoting mental health and developing psychosocial skills. More specifically, the program aims to develop and promote the following psychosocial skills, which are key determinants of health and well-being.

- Know and value yourself.
- Deal with your emotions and stress.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Assert yourself against social influences.
- Use prosocial behaviour.
- Use lifestyle habits that contribute to well-being.

The workshops conducted in class contribute to the development of these skills. This reinvestment guide is intended for teachers, to assist them in revisiting the content covered.

The “Did you know...” section gives you some theoretical background on the concepts covered during the workshop. This section is designed to provide you with the knowledge you need to run your workshops, and is not intended for students.

The “Challenge” section presents the challenge presented to your students at the end of the workshop. You can pay special attention to carrying out these challenges and encourage students to achieve them.

In the “Enabling Reinvestment” section, you'll find strategies to help you facilitate reinvestment of learning. Implementing these strategies increases the scope of the workshops.

The “Reading Suggestions” section features children's literature that can contribute to the development of the psychosocial skills addressed in the workshops.

WORKSHOP 6.1 – THE STRESS DETECTIVES

Knowing what situations stress you out

DID YOU KNOW?

Supporting students in the healthy management of their stress helps establish a positive classroom climate that is more focused on learning. This support also enables students to develop skills that will help them to become more independent in stressful situations. What's more, this optimal climate brings on openness and support from others, motivating students to ask questions, be curious, try out different strategies without fear of making mistakes, and be sensitive and empathetic to the stress experienced by their peers.

(Tummers, 2011)

This support commences with identifying stressful situations. Recognizing sources of stress is a step toward finding solutions for students.

Indeed, the role of teachers and parents appears to be crucial in students' development of their own sound strategies, as part of their stress management. This role includes establishing a clear communication channel for expressing stress and emotions, with the aim of fostering learning and interpersonal relationships.

(Jensen, 2005)

CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Between now and the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, pay attention to the situations that cause you stress, and choose a way to calm yourself down by referring to your *Ways to calm yourself down* handout.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

If classroom space allows, set up a “calm corner” where students can go to refocus and calm down. Carry out an activity in which you ask your students to write encouraging or helpful phrases or calming tips on coloured cards that you can post in your calm corner.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Romain, T., & Verdick, E. (2018). *Stress Can Really Get on Your Nerves*. Free Spirit Publishing.

WORKSHOP 6.2 – IN MY FACE... OR IN MY HEAD?

Distinguishing stress from anxiety

DID YOU KNOW?

There's a wide variation in physical and psychological maturity among pupils reaching the end of their elementary school career. Some of these discrepancies can be a source of stress for students. For example, being the tallest or shortest in the class can cause stress.

On the other hand, adolescence is also a time of many changes that can lead to stress. Puberty with its hormonal changes, and relationships with friends, family and various authority figures, as well as cultural and social expectations all weigh heavily on a student's stress level. The transition to secondary school is generally a stressful period, with changing points of reference, a different school environment and the student's appropriation of independence.

To help students get through this period more easily, it's important to help them acquire stress management techniques, formulate clear and realistic demands and expectations, provide support and encouragement, and help them recognize their strengths.

(Tummers, 2011)

CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Between now and the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, try using a meditation exercise if you feel you're experiencing stress or anxiety. You can find all kinds on YouTube.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

As a way of reinvesting what has been learned, you could schedule a daily “quiet time” (at recess or lunchtime, for example) and suggest that students use a strategy of their choice (meditation, self-massage, breathing, drawing, reading, etc.) to calm down, before returning to teaching activities. During these moments of relaxation, you can also have the students try out the meditations available at the following address : <https://www.shambhala.com/sittingstilllikeafrog/?srltid=AfmBOooBt8Z3JEHSwU884MZ3m8koK6I1or69ZFtAoF-koUrwGfQEck4W>

READING SUGGESTIONS

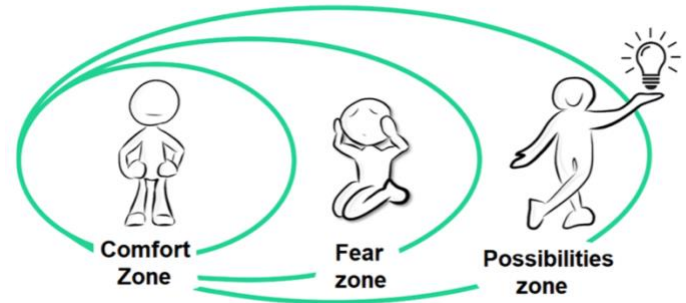
- Hébert, A. (2023). *Anxiety as Told to Children*. Éditions de Mortagne.

WORKSHOP 6.3 – AN OUT-OF-ZONE EXPEDITION

Coping with anxiety

DID YOU KNOW?

The **comfort zone** is the zone where students **feel comfortable** or on familiar ground. To succeed in expanding their comfort zone, students have to break through **their fear zone**. In order to avoid fear, students may tend to return to their comfort zone; this is known as **avoidance**. The more a student avoids fear, the more their comfort zone shrinks **and the more their fear zone expands**. On the other hand, the more a student succeeds in confronting their fears, the more their comfort zone will expand and their fear zone will shrink. They'll discover a world of possibilities!



(Inspired by White, 2009)

Although at first glance avoidance seems to calm anxiety, it ends up exacerbating it.

So it's important to help students cope with anxiety-provoking situations. We call this process **exposure** (therapy). Anxiety is very uncomfortable, but not dangerous!

CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Between now and the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, when you realize you want to flee or avoid an uncomfortable situation, try to use at least one way to reduce or cope with your anxiety.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

When a student tries to avoid a task, an outing or an anxiety-provoking situation, work with them to find ways to help them face the situation, instead of running away from it. Help them get out of their comfort zone, one step at a time, by setting small goals. You can use the following comfort zone image to remind them of the importance of facing their fears.

WORKSHOP 6.4 – BRAVING THE MOUNTAIN!

Using your strengths

DID YOU KNOW?

Our attention is often focused more on our limitations than on our strengths.

However, some researchers suggest that thinking more often about one's strengths and giving them greater importance in daily life can lead to an increase in well-being, as well as a reduction in stress and depressive symptoms.

A strength can be defined as a positive trait that characterizes an individual, such as kindness, perseverance, or the ability to communicate clearly, among others.

Helping students identify their strengths and understand how they can put them to work helps them to develop their abilities more effectively. This support also helps them to better equip themselves to face more difficult challenges and situations.

By helping students highlight their strengths, you remind them that they have important qualities, and you foster their self-esteem by reflecting a positive outlook. By putting their strengths to work in a variety of situations, you encourage them to consolidate their skills and help them understand how useful they can be in a variety of contexts.

(Seligman et al., 2005)

CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Between now and the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, identify two strengths that you'll use in teamwork.

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

Ask the students to think about one of their personal strengths. Ask them to imagine a new way of using it during the day. For example, if a student is targeting perseverance, they might complete a task that they generally find more difficult. Suggest that your students describe this strength in as much detail as possible in a notebook, and then describe how they intend to use it. If you want to experiment further, use their diary to plan the use of one strength each day of the week.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Brown, T.L. (2010). *Soar Elinor!* FSG Kids.

WORKSHOP 6.5 – THE SUMMIT!

Adapting to change

DID YOU KNOW?

For students, the transition from elementary to secondary school represents a major change that challenges their ability to adapt, and can arouse many emotions.

The ability to adapt is based on using the inner resources at one's disposal to deal with an unusual, stressful situation or a problem to be solved. For example, in this case, each student is going through a situation filled with unknowns that can generate stress.

Their ability to adapt adequately depends on their experience, the expectations they have (and that others have) of themselves, what they value, and the support they receive, among other things. This is why their reactions may differ from those of their peers. You can help the students by offering support, creating a climate of openness, discussing upcoming changes in advance, and formulating clear, realistic expectations.

Helping students to develop their ability to adapt promotes stress tolerance, autonomy and self-awareness. It's worth noting that the more the student trains this ability, the more resilient they will become over time.

(Families Change, 2019; Howatt, 2017)

ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To encourage reinvestment, you can keep the green squares in a small box. When a student experiences a change that requires adaptation, you can suggest that he or she dip into this box for ideas on strategies to help.

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Gravel, É. (2014). Jessie Elliot is a big chicken. Roaring Brook Press.