Free Elementary School Tour
Program Report 2018-2019

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Sharah Meservy
Education Coordinator
ZOMBIE THOUGHTS

Written by Jennifer Kokai and Oliver Kokai-Means
Directed by Cheryl Cluff
Design by Arika Schockmel
Stage Managed by Sharah Meservy
Alicia Washington as Pig
Katie Jones as Sam (35 performances)
Sharah Meservy as Sam (20 performances)
Artwork by Aaron Swenson

We have had Plan-B Theatre Company do two performances for us: one last year and the most recent was yesterday. Both times our kids really enjoyed the experience. Even though it is just a couple of actors, they are so good at captivating the students’ attention and sharing a positive message. This time we watched ZOMBIE THOUGHTS which did an amazing job talking about anxiety. The students are watching two characters in a video game talk about and share what it feels like to experience anxiety and learn helpful coping strategies. The play has some built in “choose your own adventure” options and adapts based on what the kids choose. It was very engaging!

Rebecca Reeder
K-6 Digital Learning Supervisor, Davis School District
Overview

55 performances across 15 counties
49 (predominantly Title I) schools
Total audience 10,232
23 new locations added to the tour
62 survey responses
First theatre experience for 798 students

This is very timely for many of our students, and as I looked around I saw teacher engagement in the assembly as well. Thank you thank you for presenting theatre in a way that is more than just fun but has an applicable message. And material that kids get - leveling up and using apps. The kids loved the humor and the performers were able to get the kids calmed back down to focus more on the show and the message very quickly.

Jessica Evans, 3rd Grade Teacher
Centennial Elementary
Duchesne County, Utah
## Touring Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct 1</th>
<th>Newman Elementary</th>
<th>Oct 30</th>
<th>Moss Elementary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Flaming Gorge Elementary</td>
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<td>Bennion Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Lapoint Elementary Centennial Elementary</td>
<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>Franklin Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Deerfield Elementary Parkside Elementary</td>
<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Burton Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Wallace Stegner Academy Mountain View Elementary Weber State (Browning Center)</td>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>HighMark Charter School</td>
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<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Davis Connect</td>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>Layton Christian Academy North Davis Preparatory Academy</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Lakeview Academy</td>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Stansbury Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Endeavor Hall Redwood Elementary</td>
<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>Foxboro Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Granger Elementary</td>
<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>James Madison Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 13</td>
<td>Main Library Chapman Library</td>
<td>Nov 12</td>
<td>Gramercy Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Salina Elementary Oscarson Elementary</td>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Highland Park Elementary Riley Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Loa Elementary STEAMfest</td>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Davinci Academy</td>
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<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>Bryce Valley Elementary Delta North Elementary</td>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Spanish Fork Jr High</td>
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<td>Oct 22</td>
<td>Taylor Elementary</td>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>Blanding Elementary Bluff Elementary Montezuma Creek Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Park City Day School</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Dilworth Elementary</td>
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<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>Open Classroom Escalante Elementary</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Adams Elementary Salt Lake County Center for the Arts</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Crestview Elementary Syracuse Arts Academy North Glendale Library</td>
<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>PARC</td>
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<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Liberty Elementary</td>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Highland Park Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>Esperanza Elementary</td>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Safe Harbor</td>
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Tour Highlights

Lapoint Elementary, Lapoint, Uintah County

Principal Dennis Atkin talked to us for several minutes afterwards. He really appreciated the play and talked about how anxiety has become a real issue for a lot of their students. He told us they have a behavior interventionist on staff who works one-on-one with the kids who need it, but there’s only one of her, and the district pays her about $11/hour. It seems clear that most teachers/administrators are recognizing the need for better mental health care support in school.

Centennial Elementary, Roosevelt, Duchesne County

Katie relayed this conversation she had with a boy who came up to hug her:

Boy: I have a lot of anxiety.
Katie: Me too.
Boy: Are you really afraid of all those things you said in the play?
Katie: I’m afraid of some of those things, but not all of them.
Boy: I’m afraid a lot. I have nightmares.

He then gave her another hug before rejoining his class.

Principal Bruce Guymon really loved the whole program and thanked us effusively afterwards. He said he’d been hesitant to schedule us because he’d never heard of the program before, but he was so glad he did. “Sign us up for every year!”

Mountain View Elementary, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County

This group came in noisy and boisterous, and the teachers were clearly on edge trying to hush them. Alicia and Katie did a great job at crowd control and remembered to use the quiet signal when needed. Afterwards, a teacher said, “That’s the most engaged I’ve ever seen them.” The actors reported that the students were enthusiastic with praise on their way out. “That was such a good play!” was repeated many times.

Katie commented that during each performance she always notices kids that are looking down instead of looking up at them like their classmates. She says these kids are the ones that raise their hands to answer questions during the post-show, so she thinks it’s a sign that the play is resonating with them.
A teacher approached us afterwards to say “Thank you. I have several kids in my class with GAD, and it’s so great to be able to talk about it.”

One quiet boy said to Katie: “I really related to this. Thank you. I needed it.”

A girl told Katie “I also deal with anxiety, so I go to a counselor.”

A teacher told Alicia that she’d loved it and wished her son could see it.

Drama teacher Tamara Howell remarked, “Utah county is a funny place. I don’t think the parents talk to their kids about these things at all, even though ‘anxiety’ is the buzzword everyone’s using when talking about their kids.”

**Endeavor Hall, West Valley City, Salt Lake County**

One teacher seemed very invested in the play right from the beginning, and he joined in the voting. His participation was infectious and other teachers started voting too. (I even saw another teacher voting with both hands for the demon wolf!) Afterwards he approached me to shake my hand. “Thank you,” he said, “I actually have an anxiety disorder, as do several students in my class. This was really great and helpful.”

The most effusive praise came from a boy named Lio: “That was the best play I’ve seen since I was 2, and I’m 9 now. Sam was my favorite character, and I don’t know why she doubted herself. I really liked when she defeated the witch by being nice.” When Katie responded that she was glad he liked it, he very emphatically corrected her, “I didn’t like it. It was THE BEST. You should make a movie of it. I would watch it over and over again.”
I spoke with a mom afterwards. The play had really struck a chord with her. “That was really intense,” she said, “I wasn’t really prepared for how it made me feel. I remember feeling all those same anxieties when I was a kid, but my parents never talked to me about it. Now I have a 14-year-old daughter who’s going through it. She says all those same things that Sam said- I’m stupid, everybody hates me. I wish she’d been here to see this.”

Park City Day School, Park City, Summit County

Before our performance, a teacher passing by in the hall told me: “My 5th grade class is so excited for this.” A student, realizing why I was here, was likewise excited, saying: “It’s my favorite assembly of the year!”

Syracuse Arts Academy, Syracuse, Davis County

The principal had already been happy to have us, but I think seeing the KSL feature her even more excited. She told the students how lucky they were to get to see this “famous” play!
Both students and teachers responded well to the play. Several students approached Katie afterwards to tell her that they too had anxiety. One boy said, "You impersonated me! That was me! Sam is me."

**Stansbury Elementary, West Valley City, Salt Lake County**

This was a wonderfully responsive audience, and several students and teachers came up to thanks us afterwards. One girl, when asked what her favorite part of the play was, responded, "All of it!"

A boy gravely informed Alicia, “Anxiety, if it gets bad enough, can lead to suicide.”

A teacher told us, "This is one of the best things that has come to this school. Please come back! They were so attentive because these kids experience this every day."

**Foxboro Elementary, North Salt Lake, Davis County**

Principal Chris McCoy told us, “You really nailed everything our students need to be able to talk about anxiety.” She praised the performance and the program, referencing last year’s show as well. She liked the study guide so much she not only encouraged her teachers to use it in class but sent it home to parents too.

**Highland Park Elementary, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County**

Principal Debora Cluff said, "This show is very, very pertinent and much needed. Do you have plans to bring this show to more kids? I especially liked that both sides are portrayed in the show; it shows adults how anxiety manifests and how adults can help these kids. We are seeing more and more and younger and young kids with extreme anxiety. This was by far the best assembly we've ever had."

**Montezuma Creek Elementary, Montezuma Creek, San Juan County**

The students were all enthusiastically responsive. At the beginning I thought this might be a noisy and difficult to control crowd (just based on how long it took the teachers to get them quiet enough to introduce us), but once we got going it was completely fine as they all seemed very engaged.

Art paraprofessional Kaitlin Harrison loved (and was surprised by) how interactive it was. She said most assembly presenters expect the kids to just sit and listen which is often just too hard for them. The voting element of our program kept the students very involved throughout. She also said, “[Anxiety] is usually such a difficult topic to explain, but the way you did it was just perfect!”
Survey Responses

My students enjoyed the performance.
61 responses

The performance was appropriate for the students' age range.
61 responses

The message was valuable and relevant.
61 responses

The study guide was useful.
54 responses
# Did this performance lead to activities and/or discussion in your classroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Evans</td>
<td>Third Grade Teacher Centennial Elementary</td>
<td>I had a student today (the day after the show) come to me and tell me another kid had started calling things stupid and getting upset. I told her &quot;do you remember Sam from the show - is <em>&quot;the boy</em> acting like Sam? How did Pig help?&quot; and at that moment I saw the lightbulb hit and she went to help him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca Keddy</td>
<td>Third Grade Teacher Centennial Elementary</td>
<td>We discussed what anxiety was before the performance. The students also drew a picture of a time that they felt anxious. After the performance they drew another picture of things they could do when they feel anxious. We practiced the breathing techniques and positive self-talk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meagan Jones</td>
<td>Teacher Endeavor Hall</td>
<td>Yes. The students were very keen on discussing how zombie thoughts are like anxiety and having difficulties doing things. They loved hearing about strategies to combat stressful situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Nash</td>
<td>Fifth Grade Teacher Endeavor Hall</td>
<td>Yes! Some of my students talked about how they feel that way sometimes when they take tests, and they were excited to try the strategies they had learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jodi Johnson</td>
<td>Teacher and Principal Oscarson Elementary</td>
<td>Students drew a picture about something that gives them anxiety to share with a group.</td>
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<td>Delna Bliss</td>
<td>Principal Delta North Elementary</td>
<td>Students commented on how great the assembly was. Many deal with anxiety and to hear it brought out in a play, helped them realize what they feel daily is something others may experience. I think it will open them up to talking about their fears more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alyssa Escalante Dixon</td>
<td>Fifth Grade Teacher Esperanza Elementary</td>
<td>Yes - We talked more about anxiety and how to help someone who is struggling with it. They also just loved talking about all of the funny parts of the play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paula Clemente</td>
<td>Fourth Grade Teacher Esperanza Elementary</td>
<td>Yes. We were talking about times were students have felts anxious and nervous and we discussed them, and all together came up with ways we could help that situation to be better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Whitaker</td>
<td>Principal Foxboro Elementary</td>
<td>I don't have &quot;a classroom&quot; - but I can tell you we'll use it from our office perspective in working with students!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Jones</td>
<td>Teacher Gramercy Elementary</td>
<td>2 of my most emotional children with multiple problems had issues since your performance. As I talked with them I referred to the character Sam, and how she handled her fears and the situation. I was glad to have your play to refer to, I think it helped immensely as a comparison to their problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kris Cary</td>
<td>Special Ed Teacher Spanish Fork Jr. High</td>
<td>My students all suffer from anxiety, so this is something that we are discussing on a daily basis. In our controlled classroom environment, we are able to simulate stressful situations and then help our students process through these stressful situations. It was nice to see this type of anxiety acted out on stage for my students and my staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chelsea Whitby</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator Davinci Academy</td>
<td>Yes! It’s given some common language around the symptoms of anxiety that so often we see in our students and allowed us to have a tool for identifying and discussing it.</td>
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Thanks for filling out this survey! Here’s space for anything else you want to share with us:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School/Role</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Kunkel</td>
<td>Art Coordinator, Flaming Gorge Elementary</td>
<td>The subject matter is a hard one to talk about one on one. But, seeing it and hearing the same feelings and worries from total strangers and presented at their high interest level of gaming, was genius! The coping skills taught was very valuable to our students. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Watkins</td>
<td>Vice Principal, Deerfield Elementary</td>
<td>Thanks for coming and thanks for doing it at no cost. Anymore it is so expensive to get good assemblies that we don’t have many like these. Especially ones as meaningful as yours. Thank you so much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Reeder</td>
<td>Davis K-6 Digital Learning Supervisor</td>
<td>I can’t speak highly enough of the two actors in this performance. They were so engaging and fun to watch. The pacing of the play was perfect and addressed such a difficult topic in an honest and helpful manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlie Bell</td>
<td>Sixth Grade Teacher, Granger Elementary</td>
<td>I had a resource girl in my room make a comment about how she got bullied before and how this year is different. She brought up how she doesn't feel alone any more. She told everyone how she thought that the bullying would never end and how she was wrong about that. This girl has trouble expressing herself and her speech generally is disjointed and kind of stuttering. When she talked about this her speech was smooth and she had the calmest demeanor. All of my kids and I were riveted to her and it was a very poignant moment in my career! Thanks!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delna Bliss</td>
<td>Principal, Delta North Elementary</td>
<td>Please tell Oliver a big &quot;Thank You&quot; from my school. I could see the looks on many children's faces throughout the play. I felt my students were happy to see someone who had the same fears as them. The suggestions on how to cope with those anxieties really helped many students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesli Schott</td>
<td>Teacher, Crestview Elementary</td>
<td>I absolutely loved this assembly. The actors were really good at conveying the emotions and the compassion and the anxiety very well. As a mom and teacher, I see these things quite often.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Tolman</td>
<td>Sixth Grade Teacher, Taylor Elementary</td>
<td>IT WAS AMAZING!!! I really enjoyed it, thought it was incredibly relevant and handled the topics really well. Great job!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eve Bean</td>
<td>6th Grade Teacher, Burton Elementary</td>
<td>Your presentation was very simple, but very effective. I appreciate this approach and have been trying to teach it to my sixth grade students. Costuming, lights, make-up, and extravagant scenery aren’t necessary to ensure an entertaining and worthwhile production.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Schroeder</td>
<td>Third Grade Teacher, Riley Elementary</td>
<td>This was amazing!! Quite possibly the best assembly I've ever been to in my almost 10 years of teaching! It was so well done, meaningful and relevant!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Nielson</td>
<td>Teacher, Blanding Elementary</td>
<td>Fantastic! Great Job! Bring more!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristina Begaye</td>
<td>Fourth Grade Teacher, Blanding Elementary</td>
<td>I really liked the script. It connected to a lot of kids through their gaming connections to help discuss a real-life topic. The actresses sure made believers of us about them being in a gaming world. Thanks for attacking this common issue in an understandable way.</td>
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Plan-B Theatre Company’s Sixth Annual Free Elementary School Tour: ZOMBIE THOUGHTS
a world premiere by Jennifer A. Kokai & Oliver Kokai-Means
created specifically for grades 4-6 but accessible to select K-3
running time 35 minutes
planbtheatre.org/zombiethoughts

Contact Sharah Meservy, Education Coordinator, at sharah@planbtheatre.org or 801.297.4200
to bring this FREE assembly to your school in October/November 2018
(booking preference given to Title I schools)
presented in Davis County by Davis Arts Council’s Active Stages Program
Last fall, Plan-B Theatre Company’s Free Elementary School Tour helped 8,000 elementary students navigate grief through RIVER.SWAMP.CAVE.MOUNTAIN. In 2016, body image was the focus of THE EDIBLE COMPLEX. In 2015 and 2014, differences were celebrated and affirmed through RUFF! and DIFFERENT=AMAZING.

This year’s Free Elementary School Tour, ZOMBIE THOUGHTS by Jennifer A. Kokai and her 11-year-old son Oliver Kokai-Means, is inspired by Oliver’s experience living with General Anxiety Disorder (GAD). Constructed like a video game, the play is interactive, inviting students to make choices throughout the play to help Sam (who has anxiety) and Pig (who is punny) progress through the game-within-the-play. The only path to victory is if students make a series of choices that help Sam and Pig learn empathy for each other. Oh…and it’s really, really funny.

Why ZOMBIE THOUGHTS?

According to Wasatch Mental Health, Utah has the highest rate of mental illness nationwide. This includes GAD and other anxiety disorders, which the Anxiety and Depression Association of America estimates affects 1 in 8 children in the United States. By dispelling misunderstandings surrounding anxiety for the students, teachers and administrators experiencing ZOMBIE THOUGHTS, our hope is to help your school become a safer space for each of its students.

Recent Harvard research (Jones, Brush, Bailey, Brion-Meisels, McIntyre, Kahn, Nelson & Stickle, 2017) shows that social and emotional learning (SEL) is comprised of three skills areas:

Cognitive
- managing and shifting attention
- controlling impulses
- planning and goal setting
- critical thinking

Emotional
- recognizing and expressing emotions
- regulating emotions and behavior
- empathy

Social
- understanding social cues
- prosocial behavior
- conflict resolution
- problem solving

SEL skills, essential for student success, work in tandem with beliefs, character, values and personality. They are malleable and sensitive to outside stimuli from infancy through adolescence. When we only focus on cognitive issues without attention to the other components of SEL, major aspects of students’ social-emotional development go unsupported. Thus it is crucial to incorporate SEL into classroom activities.

Will ZOMBIE THOUGHTS make a difference?

SEL interventions impact both social-emotional skills and academic outcomes (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). They have short and a long-term effects on a child’s academic progress, behavioral adjustment and emotional health and well-being.

ZOMBIE THOUGHTS addresses the topic of childhood anxiety and depression, two internalizing behaviors that often go unrecognized in schools. While externalizing behaviors are more noticeable because they are more likely to lead to school and classroom disruptions, internalizing behaviors are just as serious and are easily overlooked if educators aren’t primed to look for, recognize and intervene.

A school environment where SEL learning is a focus both formally (in the relationships between adults and children) and informally (in the overall climate and culture of the building) will better equip our students for dealing with life’s stressors.

Where does ZOMBIE THOUGHTS fit in my Core?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) lists self-management, which includes stress management, as one of the core competencies. The Utah State Board of Education’s Health Education Core identifies SEL is an important component for grades 3-6. Below are some of the Core standards and objectives addressed by and through ZOMBIE THOUGHTS:

Grade 3

Standard 1: Students will learn ways to improve mental health and manage stress.
Objective 1: Demonstrate responsibility for self and actions.
  a. Identify personal responsibilities.
  b. Predict the consequences of neglecting responsibilities, such as increased stress, grades, punishment, no sense of accomplishment, impact on other people.
  c. Report the outcomes (sense of accomplishment, feeling good, contribution to cause, less stress) of completing responsibilities.
  d. Determine how positive decision making can help complete responsibilities.
Grade 4
Standard 1: Students will learn ways to improve mental health and manage stress.
Objective 4: Explore positive options for managing stress.
   a. Define stress.
   b. Identify behaviors or situations that may cause conflict or stress.
   c. Create a personal stress management plan.

Grade 5
Standard 1: Students will learn ways to improve mental health and manage stress.
Objective 1: Summarize how communicating with others can help improve overall health.
   a. Compare the benefits of social interaction and time alone.
   b. Communicate the need for social interaction and time alone.
   c. Adopt behaviors to help maintain mental health, such as reading, exercise, lifelong learning, abstaining from substance abuse.
Objective 4: Demonstrate constructive ways of managing stress.
   a. Explain how both positive and negative events can cause stress.
   b. Identify physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to stress.
   c. Predict how neglecting personal responsibilities may increase stress.
   d. Develop and apply a personal stress management plan.

Grade 6
Standard 1: The students will learn ways to improve mental health and manage stress.
Objective 1: Develop strategies for appropriately and safely expressing emotions.
   a. Recognize the range of emotions, including extremes.
   b. List situations that elicit strong emotions; e.g., winning or losing a competition, losing a friend, family changes.
   c. Predict the effect of substance use on emotions and the ability to appropriately manage them.
Objective 4: Demonstrate positive strategies for managing stress.
   a. Identify situations or circumstances that cause stress.
   b. Recognize personal reaction or response to stressful situations.
   c. Design a personal plan that includes options for managing stress and stressful situations.

ZOMBIE THOUGHTS Classroom Activities

Vocabulary
Define anxiety. List synonyms and antonyms for anxiety. Create a concept web with anxiety in the center. Repeat the process with the word stress.

Drawing
Have students draw a picture of something that makes them anxious, then share those drawings in partnerships and possibly the entire class.

Writing & Family Engagement
Write about a time you felt anxious. What did you do? How did it feel?

Extension: Have students interview someone (a classmate, a friend, a community or family member) about an anxious experience or event and record it in writing. SEL work is strengthened through out-of-school partnerships such as family engagement.

Book/Story
Read one of these books aloud and discuss it.
• What To Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid’s Guide to Overcoming Anxiety by Dawn Huebner
• Don’t Think About Elephants by Susanne Merritt
• Wilma Jean the Worry Machine by Julia Cook

Discussion & Role Play
Pose a scenario and ask students to think about how they would react to the stressor. Then invite them to discuss or act out a response with a partner. Finally, invite them to share their ideas or perform their role play for the class. Suggested scenarios:
• You forgot to do a homework assignment and it is due today.
• You have the end-of-year test coming up and your stomach hurts every time you think about it.
• Your brother or sister keeps getting into your things. You are nervous about leaving your room unattended because you are afraid things will be missing or misplaced.
• You wake up with an anxious, worried feeling nearly every day and feel like you don’t want to go to school.
Do's & Don'ts

• Do understand there is a difference between feeling stressed and/or anxious and an anxiety disorder.
• Do understand these children want to fit in, have friends and meet classroom expectations but their disorder may prevent them from doing so.
• Do see a child with an anxiety disorder as more than their disability or mistakes.
• Do understand that anxious children want you to like them; they become paralyzed by fear that you won't.
• Do take a moment to see and recognize strengths, not just weaknesses.
• Do provide accommodations that will help a child with an anxiety disorder succeed: give them a safe place to go or a cue to remember to breathe when they start to become irritable, frustrated, or upset.
• Do understand that a child with an anxiety disorder is a child without the executive function to overcome or cure their disorder.
• Don't tell anxious children their fears are stupid or irrational. Their brain tells them otherwise.

Post-Show Discussion

Following the play, have a discussion about what happens to Sam and Pig and how this relates to students in the class:

• What were some of Sam’s characteristics? What were some of Pig’s characteristics? How were they similar? How were they different?
• What are some of your characteristics? How are you like Sam or Pig?
• How did Sam deal with his anxiety? What did he learn from going through all of the game’s levels?
• Is there something that worked for Sam, that he learned, that you could also use to help when you feel anxious?
• What are zombie thoughts? Connect this to the topic of metaphors: Zombie Thoughts are irrational thoughts and worries that are scary, but (like Zombies) not real.

Problem Box

Set up a problem box to collect class problems for future discussion. Tie some of the problems to ZOMBIE THOUGHTS and discuss how we can manage our thinking about certain situations to reduce the associated anxiety.

Stress Management Plan


Breathing Exercises

Sam uses breathing to help him deal with the effects of anxiety. Try one of the following breathing exercises with your class (see Mindful Schools, following page):

• Close your eyes and take three breaths. Feel your feet on the floor.
• Feel the anchor of your breath. Now open your eyes and scan the room without speaking. What did you notice after doing this? How did your body react? How did things look after you re-opened your eyes?
• Have students use their hands as an object of focus. Each student should stretch out their hand and then trace each outstretched finger with the index finger of the other hand, breathing as they do so. This is great for a transition during class time.
• Sphere breathing allows children to pretend they are holding a balloon in their hands. As they breathe in, their fingers slowly move apart to indicate the blowing up of a balloon. As they exhale, the fingers gradually and slowly come back together.

REFERENCES


ZOMBIE THOUGHTS Online Resources

Anxiety and Depression Association of America
https://adaa.org
An international nonprofit membership organization and leader in education, training, and research for anxiety, depression and related disorders.
• Understanding the difference between anxiety and an anxiety disorder
• A booklet on anxiety disorders and treatment options for children

KQED.org | 20 Tips to Help De-escalate Interactions with Anxious or Defiant Students
Classroom strategies from Jessica Minahan, a certified behavior analyst and special educator.
https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2016/04/21/20-tips-to-help-de-escalate-interactions-with-anxious-or-defiant-students/

Child Mind Institute
https://childmind.org/
An independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families living with mental health and learning disorders.
• “Anxiety in the Classroom: What It Looks Like, And Why It’s Often Mistaken for Something Else”
• “Tips for Beating Test Anxiety”
  https://childmind.org/article/tips-for-beating-test-anxiety/
• “How to Help Kids Who Are Too Hard on Themselves”

The Calm Schools Initiative
https://www.calm.com/schools
Offering educators free subscriptions to guided meditations and mindfulness exercises.

Pure Edge
https://pureedgeinc.org
Education resources, curricula, and training options supporting the philosophy that all educators and students deserve to be taught strategies to help combat stress to support the development of social, emotional, and academic learning competencies with an open heart and an open mind.

Mindful Schools
http://www.mindfulschools.org/
Courses and curricula designed for under-resourced public schools facing high turnover rates and toxic stress; offering educators practical skills for self-care, facilitation, and connecting with youth, providing simple, effective mindfulness practices easily integrated into the school day and adaptable for diverse environments. (requires paid subscription)

Plan-B Theatre Company’s Sixth Annual Free Elementary School Tour: ZOMBIE THOUGHTS
a world premiere by Jennifer A. Kokai & Oliver Kokai-Means
created specifically for grades 4-6 but accessible to select K-3
running time 35 minutes
planbtheatre.org/zombiethoughts

Contact Sharah Meservy, Education Coordinator, at sharah@planbtheatre.org or 801.297.4200 to bring this FREE assembly to your school in October/November 2018 (booking preference given to Title I schools) presented in Davis County by Davis Arts Council’s Active Stages Program

FREE PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AT THE SALT LAKE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY
Saturday, October 13: Main Branch at 11am, Chapman Branch at 1pm
Thursday, October 25: Glendale Branch at 4:30pm