



**Parentshop**  
lifelong behaviour change

# The Anxiety Project

**A WHOLE-SCHOOL COMMUNITY APPROACH TO MANAGING ANXIETY AND BUILDING RESILIENCE IN AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

## PHASES OF THE PROJECT>



### EOI and School Clustering



In the process of collecting EOIs for participating in The Anxiety Project, NSWPPA will better understand the school context and will structure the programs to support schools in similar demographics to implement the program in local clusters.



### School Leader Training



Through the provision of professional learning for school leaders, we can help them to design protocols within schools aimed at helping children build resilience.



### Implementation Coaches (ICs)



ICs will support teachers (through providing training, in-class mentoring) and parents (through the provision of parent education groups).



### All Staff Training



All School Staff will participate in professional learning to counter anxiety habits in children, as they arise in the school environment.



### Student Lessons



Students take part in lessons that are aligned to the PDHPE curriculum.



### Parents



By providing family management training for parents, we can equip parents to better deal with a child's mild-level anxiety at home.



### Evaluation & Feedback



Throughout the project, the ICs will capture data, support school implementation, collaborate with schools in their local cluster, and share success milestones through the program manager.



### Research Collection



Multiple measures of student, teacher and parent data collected over a two-year window. Provision of school report. Intervention Impact Report for Individual Schools



#### PRICING ALL STATES AND SECTORS (EXCEPT NSW PUBLIC) SCHOOL SIZE:

SCHOOL ENROLMENT UP TO 25 STUDENTS:	\$ 8,030 + GST
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 26-112 STUDENTS:	\$10,780 + GST
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 113-300 STUDENTS:	\$16,225 + GST
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 301+:	\$24,915 + GST

#### PRICING NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL SIZE:

SCHOOL ENROLMENT UP TO 25 STUDENTS:	\$ 7,300 + GST
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 26-112 STUDENTS:	\$ 9,800 + GST
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 113-300 STUDENTS:	\$14,750 + GST
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 301+:	\$22,650 + GST

The above pricing is for two year participation in the project support and research and may be split into two payments.

The data is now flowing in regarding the impact of The Anxiety Project in participating schools. In April the researchers provided an update to the project leadership team. Project data analysis is now showing consistent reduction in anxious behaviours amongst students, growth in confidence of school staff to recognise the various forms of anxiety and knowing what to do next, and reductions in the number of unhelpful accommodations by parents.

2024-25 Teacher Report results (shows reducing presentation of anxious behaviours by students over time):

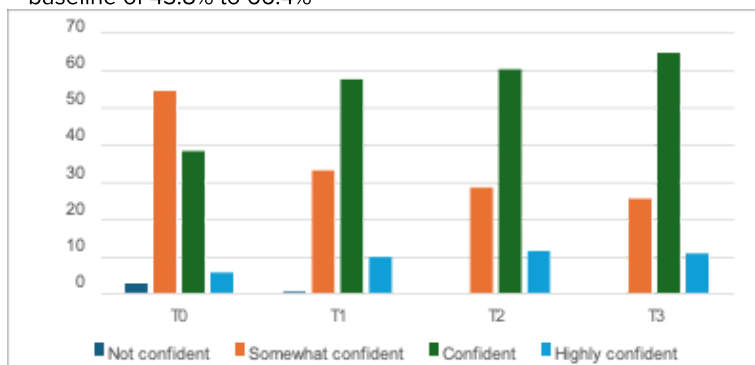
School Name	T0 (Baseline prior to training)			T1 (6 months from T0)			T2 (12 months from T0)		
Total SAS-TR Scale	School	SSG	Cohort	School	SSG	Cohort	School	SSG	Cohort
School 1	19.37	13.19	12.35	13.98	11.23	10.07	11.85	10.18	9.92
School 2	19.78	13.86	12.39	13.07	11.69	11.11	10.53	10.1	9.94
School 3	13.91	11.24	12.44	12.3	10.58	11.13	8.81	9.63	9.97
School 4	10.64	11.39	12.52	No data	10.69	11.17	6.61	8.28	9.98
School 5	14.65	13.75	12.45	11.31	11.51	11.16	10.2	10.28	9.94
School 6	12.97	13.66	12.47	10.01	11.66	11.2	10.02	10.37	9.94
School 7	14.04	13.63	12.47	11.92	11.46	11.16	11.35	11.62	9.93
School 8	10.91	13.72	12.5	9.7	11.61	11.19	9.57	10.35	9.95
School 9	9.01	11.52	12.6	7.73	11.17	11.41	6.34	9.97	10.19
School 10	11.02	11.38	12.52	8.26	No data	11.33	6.93	9.8	10.09
School 11	14.69	13.47	12.46	No data	11.53	11.17	12.64	11.21	9.9
School 12	13.67	13.61	12.45	13.33	11.31	11.1	9.11	10.37	9.96
School 13	13.58	13.62	12.46	11.36	11.52	11.16	8.32	10.49	9.98
School 14	11.29	13.94	12.52	11.04	11.58	11.17	9.67	10.37	9.96
School 15	18.63	11.2	12.41	No data	10.69	11.17	10.56	9.56	9.93

Source: Hilton Education Consulting, Anxiety Project 2024-25 Intervention Impact Reports (individual schools)

Of interest is how many of these schools have closed the gap between their scores and that of their SSG and the cohort as a whole.

## STAFF

2023-24 cohort Teacher Response data shows **teacher confidence and competence** to help children manage their anxiety increased from a baseline of 43.8% to 66.4%



Percentage responses to the item: How confident are you to recognise child anxiety?

Source: Hilton Education Consulting, Anxiety Project 2023-24 T2-T3 Summary Report for Steering Committee, October 2024

*"A child's anxiety will not usually fix itself. Unless something changes, it will tend to worsen. However, the good news is that seemingly-modest interventions delivered by significant adults can make a difference and turn that progression around."*



Michael Hawton  
MAPS  
Psychologist

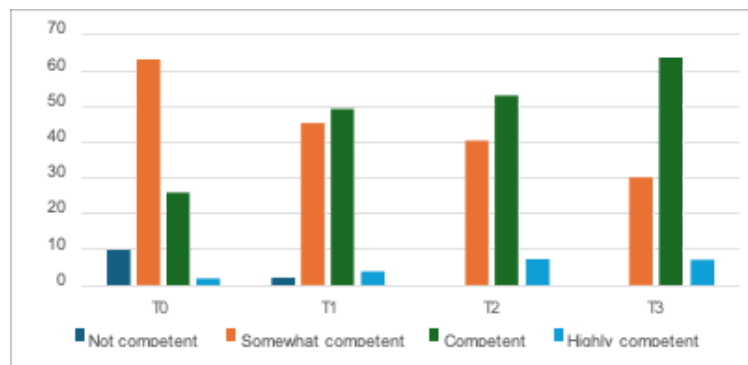
## PARENTS

Data captured through the 2023-24 Parent measure is showing a reduction in unhelpful accommodations by parents from T0 to T1.

Paired sample t-tests indicated that the total accommodation mean score was significantly lower at T1 than at T0, ( $p < .05$ ), with a small effect size. This indicates a reduction in parent accommodation of children since the beginning of the project.

Scale	Cohort (N = 40)	
	Mean (standard deviation) for T0 and T1	
Participation in Symptom-Related	8.58 (4.49)	7.33 (4.71)
Modification of Functioning	4.43 (4.13)	3.65 (4.02)
Distress & Consequences	5.15 (3.77)	4.93 (4.12)
Total Score	13.00 (7.90)	10.98 (8.28)

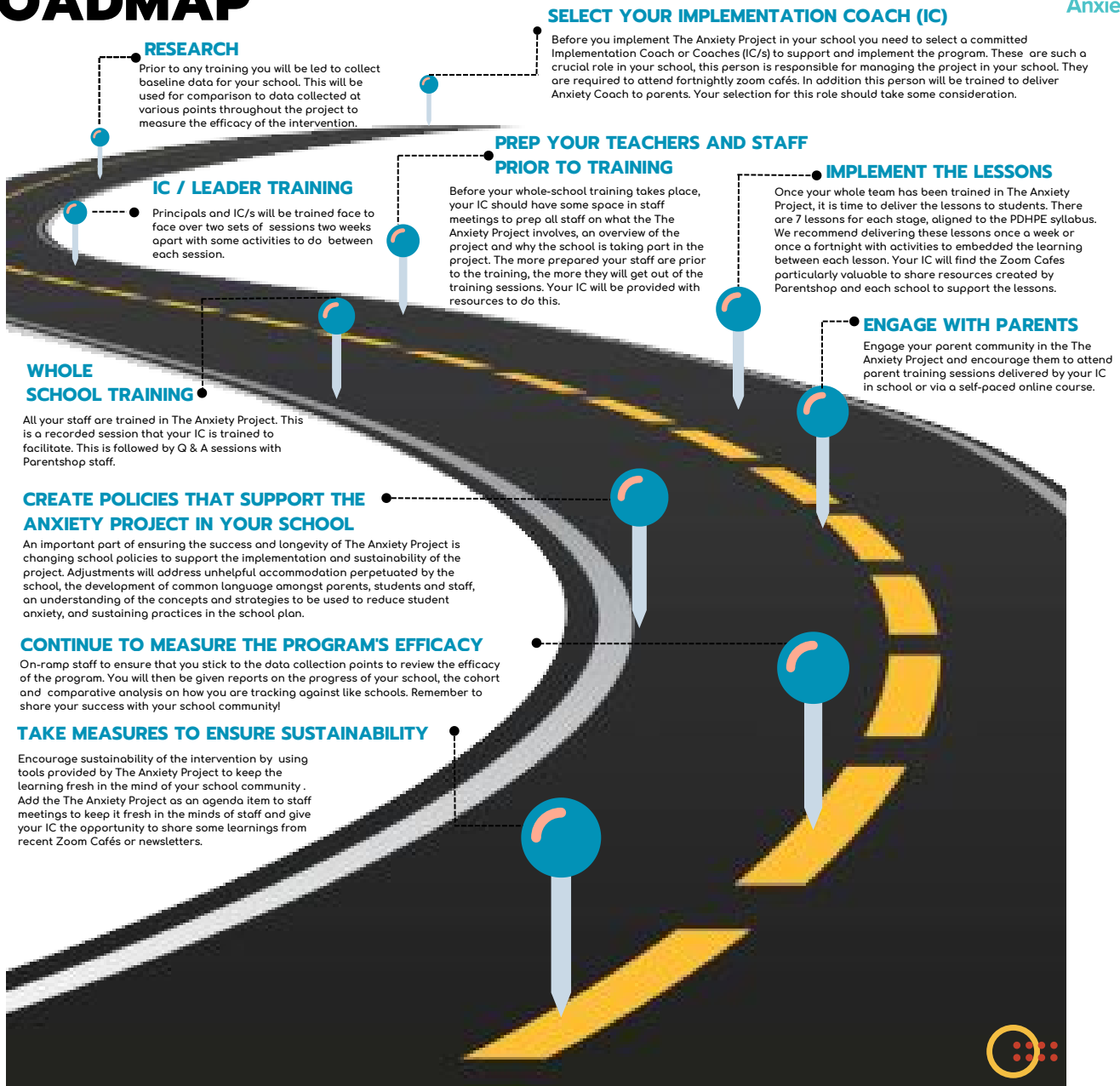
Source: Hilton Education Consulting, Anxiety Project 2023-24 T4 Summary Report for Steering Committee, January 2025



Percentage responses to the item: Rate your skills / understanding (efficacy) for addressing child anxiety.

Source: Hilton Education Consulting, Anxiety Project 2023-24 T2-T3 Summary Report for Steering Committee, October 2024

# ROADMAP



## COMMUNITY APPROACH>

## PARENTS

Teachers can't be expected to tackle their students' anxiety on their own. There are a range of significant adults, such as parents, who play an important role in shaping a child's thoughts and behaviours. It is important for these adults to equip themselves with the necessary tools to scaffold resilient thinking through serve and return conversation techniques.

As part of The Anxiety Project, schools will engage with parents and carers to make a long-term difference to their children's anxiety. Specialist Implementation Coaches will train parents in Anxiety Coach and schools will also receive free vouchers for Anxiety Coach for Parents; self-paced online course to learn these essential skills. The benefit to this is to create a community around children that help them to

challenge their anxious thoughts and behaviours and build resilient young people ready to take on the inevitable ups and downs of life.

*"Thanks so much! [The course] was very articulate in teaching us of the special characteristics and nuances around adolescence and how best to guide our youngsters through it. Whilst remaining open minded to the specifics of our individual situations where tailored approaches were discussed."*

**Jim - Parent**



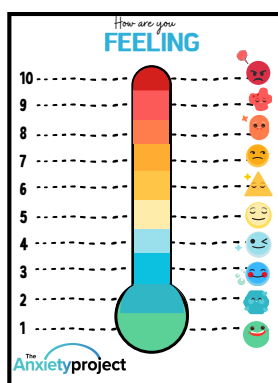


## COMMUNITY

Tackling student anxiety is a big job with many challenges. To help schools and their Implementation Coaches in this journey, we have created a support network. Implementation Coaches can connect with the wider Anxiety Project community through our Zoom Cafes and communication platform. The fortnightly check-ins have provided an opportunity to share how schools have carried out the program in their school as well as success stories, challenges, tips and tricks and further recourses.

The learning platform also provides a space for The Anxiety Project Implementation Coaches to access shared resources and on-going support from program management. An example of these resources is pictured adjacent.

### ABOUT THE CONTENT>



### PODCAST>

## LISTEN

Psychologist and The Anxiety Project developer Michael Hawton, describes the project on the Professional the project on the Professional Learnings Podcast with The NSW Primary Principals Association.

"If [teachers] know how to respond and they repeat those responses over time, not only should you see a reduction in child anxiety over time, you'll also develop children's resilience." Michael Hawton MAPS



### VIDEO>

## FROM THE NSW PPA

Hear from Rob Walker, Trish Peters and Robyn Evans from the NSWPPA on why it was important for the PPA to offer The Anxiety Project to their members. You will also hear an outline of commitments required from schools to participate in The Anxiety Project.

## FROM THE PROJECT PSYCHOLOGIST

Michael Hawton, psychologist and trained teacher, offers insight into the key components of the project.

There is a rising issue of anxiety in children and it is impacting on school absenteeism. The project developed with the NSWPPA emphasizes the need to coach children in facing anxiety rather than accommodating it. The project is tailored to the needs of school students and delivered as a whole school community approach.

For teachers, handling anxiety in the classroom can be challenging. Effective training in identifying and managing anxiety becomes crucial. Parentsop has partnered with NSW Primary Principals Association to train teachers in handling anxious moments through 'serve and return' conversations and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) strategies. The goal

is to help children develop mental strength and resilience skills which can be taught during both emotional (hot) moments and non-emotional (cold) moments in the classroom. The Anxiety Project also shows schools how they can support parents to challenge anxious behaviours at home.

Parents tend to unintentionally worsen the problem by allowing a pattern of avoidance to develop when they let their anxious children stay home from school.

Participation in the project will help parents support their children to manage their emotional responses and prevent patterns of avoidance. By doing this students will sustain better school attendance and lead to improved academic and wellbeing outcomes.

## NEXT STEPS

IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION OR A PRESENTATION TO YOUR EXECUTIVE CONTACT PROGRAM MANAGER, HAYLEY 0404 011 135.

## SUBMIT AN EOI

SCAN THE QR CODE & FILL OUT THE EOI TO HAVE MORE INFORMATION SENT TO YOU.

