

PROTOTYPE

This is my initial prototype of my S.U.P.E.R. Shirt. I almost didn't take this route because I figured it would be too challenging and I didn't know if I could follow through with it in the manner in which I wanted to. I began to doubt myself and was looking for other ways to solve my problem that would be simpler but this shirt stayed in the back of my mind. The idea behind this shirt came from the "Thunder Shirt," (<http://www.thundershirt.com/>) that is made for dogs when they are experiencing high anxiety due to thunderstorms, car rides, etc. While I did take an idea from another source and try and recreate a different version to help students, I chose this route because it was one that could be useful and not reliant on medications. Medications are hard on people with anxiety illnesses, they can wreak havoc on your body and your mind, and often do more harm than good. This is why the S.U.P.E.R. Shirt seemed so perfect. I think POV videos are a great idea and I think raising awareness is also a really good idea but they just weren't hitting home for me. Sorry about the rambling, now I will get to explaining exactly what I hope this shirt would do for students.

The "Thunder Shirt" applies constant pressure to the torso of a dog to help relieve anxiety. According to the "Thunder Shirt" Website "Using pressure to relieve anxiety has been a common practice for years. Prior to ThunderShirt, there just wasn't an easy and safe way to do so for our dogs and cats. It is believed by many experts that this type of pressure works in a similar manner to swaddling an infant or people with autism using pressure to reduce persistent anxiety" (http://www.thundershirt.com/faq?gclid=Cj0KEQjwi-moBRDL4Omf9d_LndMBEiQAQtFf8-cVnP_01hGR_6YyWxMZHAU3Hx2xZsqFVHy6gXXtL2QaAuy8P8HAQ#faq1).

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I knew I didn't want the pressure of the shirt to be constant because the anxiety isn't constant. Panic attacks are said to last for around 15 minutes, so for there to be constant pressure on the child's torso seemed to be unnecessary. So I felt it would be best for the child to be able to increase the pressure when they needed to and then decrease it when they were feeling better. I thought of a blood pressure cuff when brainstorming about this prototype and felt that if a torso cuff could be attached to the inside of the shirt and wouldn't apply as much pressure as a blood pressure cuff, but enough to help calm the child, then it just might work. I wanted the shirt to be something that looked like a regular shirt, wasn't bulking, and didn't draw attention to the student when it was being used. I also really liked the idea of superhero logos being on the front of the shirts. A lot of children who have illnesses feel different and not in a good way. Wearing the logo of a superhero just made me think that they could draw inspiration from the hero.