

# Allergies and Allegories



START

TUTORIAL

ABOUT

# Food Allergies

- Food allergies are estimated to affect up to 6% of children (Branum AM, Lukacs SL.; Sampson HA.).
  - They are the cause of an estimated 150-200 deaths per year in the United States (Sampson HA.; Bock SA et. al.) and 15-20 deaths per year in Canada (Hawaleshka D.).
  - Food-allergic children in Ontario report being excluded, teased, and bullied due to their allergies, leading to elevated levels of stress and anxiety (Fenton et. al.).
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There is a pressing need for non-food-allergic persons to appreciate not only the seriousness of food allergies, but their own role in constituting the well-being and safety of food-allergic children. A serious game aimed at the public could translate this scholarship into intuitive, actionable information.

# Allergies & Allegories

*Allergies & Allegories* is a knowledge translation game. It focuses on Mia, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student who is allergic to peanuts. The player's objective is to maximize Mia's well-being by balancing three factors that contribute to her well-being: safety, community, and support. In the game, each factor is represented by a coloured die:



Safety



Community



Support

These dice determine the odds of Mia improving her well-being and mitigating feelings of fear, exclusion, and unhappiness.



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# Safety

- Safety - i.e. risk assessment, adapting to various environments.
- Testimony: “You are out on the safari by yourself. You go down to the cafeteria. You listen. That is the biggest thing. You look and listen” (180, qtd. in “Illustrating Risk” Fenton et al).

# Community

- Community - i.e. participating in group activities, building friendships, feeling welcome.
- Testimony: “Like what I said about the parties, they won’t invite me, or they won’t hang around me, because they have something [that could cause a reaction], but they are kind of like protecting me, because I won’t go near it. I kind of got a bit more anxiety and stuff and I was more careful with everything that I did” (179 qtd. in “Illustrating Risk” Fenton et al).

# Support

- Support - i.e. a network of understanding and mutual trust from students, teachers, friends, & family.
- Testimony: “There are some (teachers) that I trust, and some (teachers) that I don’t trust. I don’t trust my Math teacher. I don’t trust my French teacher. I trust my English teacher, and I am pretty sure I trust my Geography teacher, because her daughter has the exact same allergy” (178, qtd. in “Illustrating Risk” Fenton et al).

Well-being: The concept of well-being reflects Mia's condition. It is related to her sense of safety, community, & support. The objective is to maximize Mia's well-being.



Bonus Points: Each die represents one of the three factors that influence Mia's well-being. The number on each die is added to any roll of a corresponding colour.





Example: Here is a standard dialogue pop-up. Mia is eating lunch at a new school for the first time and she must decide whether she feels safe and welcome to eat lunch with some of her new classmates.



Example: Here the player rolls the dice related to safety & community. If the minimum number is met, this reflects that Mia feels confident enough to accept the invitation.



Allergies & Allegories is composed of numerous scenarios designed to reflect the role safety, community, and support that plays in the lives of children like Mia.

