

Sub-Task #1 Stress and Pressures in Relationships with Others

Materials

Access to a gymnasium or open area outside

Handouts: Possible Stressors

One page per student cut into strips - Breathing/Relaxation Activity

Description

Students will: determine situations which are stressful and not stressful; determine factors which help children cope with stress; prepare a role play using a decision-making model to deal with the stressful situation

Expectation Code	Learning Expectation
5p2	Describe physical, emotional and interpersonal changes associated with puberty
5p9	Identify strategies to deal positively with stress and pressures that result from relationships with family and friends
5p10	Identify factors (e.g., trust, honesty, caring) that enhance healthy relationships with friends, family and peers

Assessment Opportunities - Suggestions for Assessing Expectations

Formative Assessment: Personal Communication - Through classroom discussion the teacher will be able to assess whether students can identify strategies to deal positively with stress and pressures that result from relationships with family and friends. *This expectation is a focus of this lesson but will be assessed later on in the Grade 5 Growth and Development Unit.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Definition of Stress

- Ask students to define stress, e.g., Stress is part of our everyday life. Use the lists of stressors (see Appendix A). It is a state of tension, created by demands and pressures that come from school, family, friends and other sources, such as competition, try-outs, etc. It can also come from being too hard on ourselves, pushing ourselves to do well . . . Stress adds up. Facing several stressors at the same time can make the smallest thing difficult to deal with.
- Brainstorm the kinds of things that cause stress for them. Hand out "Possible Stressors" worksheet (see Appendix A). Ask students to organize situations into two groups - Stressful or Not Stressful.

2. Positive Outcomes of Stress

- Ask students if stress can provide positive outcomes. Discuss examples of how stress might be positive, e.g., Stress can be a motivator to take action. It can also cause a person to learn new attitudes and life skills to manage stress more comfortably. Your mother has a baby, which is positive, but it may cause the home environment to be stressful. Or, your family moves because your mom and dad get a new job and you have to change schools...

3. Dealing with Stress

- All people experience stress and it is important that they learn to deal with it. Students look at situations (see Appendix A) to identify ways they can deal more effectively with stress. These coping mechanisms could include: deep breathing, positive thoughts, imagery, talking, physical activity, laughing, rest, visualization, relaxation exercises, positive self-talk, healthy eating, play, massage, playing with a pet, doing things for others, etc.
- Inform students that they are going to try out some things that will help them to manage stress: deep breathing, relaxation, visualization and positive self-talk. Follow the instructions below.

Notes To Teacher

Breathing Relaxation Activity

Some students can be resistant to this exercise. They may giggle, move about, etc. Give students who are uncomfortable permission not to participate. Instruct them to sit quietly with their eyes closed while you are carrying out the activity. On the other hand, some students can become so relaxed that they fall asleep. This can be embarrassing for the student. Tell the student that he/she achieved ultimate relaxation.

- Try to find a location where students can sit comfortably, inside or outside. Students sit with their back supported by the wall. If you are using the classroom, students sit on the floor with their backs supported, if possible. If not, they can sit comfortably at their desks. It should be a quiet environment.
- Ask students to think about the most peaceful place they have ever been or could imagine. Give suggestions, “perhaps you imagine the beach with the waves rolling in,” “a walk in the forest with the birds singing,” “an open meadow with the wind rippling through the grass,” etc.
- Students close their eyes and imagine they are in this peaceful place. Encourage them to paint a vivid, detailed picture in their minds.
- Instruct them to think only of this place. As other thoughts come into their mind, let them float away like bubbles or helium balloons.
- Quiet, relaxing music is a great enhancement to this activity. There are many selections that provide classical music and nature sound (see resource section).

- Students take two to three minutes to visualize a peaceful place. Then, tell them to pay attention to their breathing. Instruct them to take slow, deep relaxing breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth, but only if this is comfortable for the child. A child with a stuffy nose will find this request stressful.
- Instruct the students not to overinhale or hyperventilate, but rather take comfortable, slow deep breaths.
- As they inhale, one or two imagine they are breathing in calmness. Encourage them to let their stomachs expand, not their chests.
- As they exhale, they breathe out all of their tension and stress.
- Allow the students one or two minutes to practice their breathing. Then, they combine breathing and visualization.
- For two to three minutes, play the music, as students to continue to breathe slowly and deeply and to imagine they are in a peaceful place.
- Next, focus on muscle tension. Instruct the students to tense all the muscles in sequence in their body. Mention each body part, e. g., tense your feet, legs, buttocks, abdomen, arms, raise your shoulders, clench your fists and jaw. Hold it, think about how it feels to be tense, and now let all the tension go. Drop your shoulders, relax your jaw, relax your head, your arms, your abdomen, your buttocks, legs and feet.
- Instruct the students to breathe deeply and slowly. Tell them that each time they breathe out, breathe out tension. Let their muscles relax more and more with each breath. They should feel limp as if floating on an air mattress.
- Now that they are relaxed, have them combine their breathing with imagining their quiet, peaceful place for about a minute.
- Then add positive messages. Have the students say to themselves “I am relaxed,” “I am okay,” “I am in control,” “I can do anything I have to do,” etc.
- With their eyes still closed, bring the students back to the present. Say, “In a minute you are going to open your eyes, remember that you are relaxed, you are in control, you can do anything that you have to do.”
- Students open their eyes and stretch to a sitting position. They stand slowly. Do a few more stretches.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

CGE(1) A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith, community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God’s presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living

CGE1(d) Develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic Social teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good

CGE(6) The graduate is expected to be a caring family member who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community

CGE6(a) Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner

Fully Alive

Theme 2, Living in Relationship deals with family relationships and friendships and presents both the joys and challenges of each during everyday situations and at more stressful times of change, separation of parents, unemployment etc. Another time of great stress for families is when death occurs. This is linked in the material for Theme 1, **Created and Loved by God**. There are also links to identifying positive factors in relationships in the Theme 4 **Growing in Commitment** discussion about the qualities of committed people. In Theme 5, **Living in the World** the presentation about the signs of a good community are linked to the qualities of an effective family.

Theme 2: Living in Relationship, Topic 1, Our Families

- recognize that each person in the family contributes to family life
- be encouraged to appreciate family love as a precious human value

TM pp.27-31, SB pp.26-32

Activity Sheet No. 5, My Family TM pp.32-33

Activity Sheet No. 6, My Family Coat of Arms TM p.34

Theme 2: Living in Relationship, Topic 4, Friendship

- recognize that friendship is essential in their lives
- be encouraged to appreciate that friendship cannot be demanded, but is freely given

TM pp.44-47, SB pp.40-46

Theme 2: Living in Relationship, Topic 3, The Family Changes

- recognize family changes evoke feelings in each family member
- be encouraged to appreciate the need for support and co-operation within the family when change occurs

TM pp.40-43, SB pp.35-39.

Appendices

- Unit 4 Appendix A Possible Stressors - Card Master Sheet
- Unit 4 Appendix B Decision Making Model - Overhead Transparency