

Don't Let Stress Get You All Wet

Summary

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to: identify situations that trigger stress; distinguish between eustress and distress; describe the stress response and how it influences performance; and develop strategies for managing or reducing stress.

Main Core Tie

Health Education I (7-8)

[Strand 2: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH \(MEH\) Standard HI.MEH.1:](#)

Materials

- [Posters:](#)

"Distinguishing Between No Stress, Distress and Eustress," "Positive Ways to Manage Stress" (pdf)

Worksheets: ["Stressors, Yours, Mine, and Ours,"](#) (pdf) ["Don't Let Stress Get You All Wet,"](#) (pdf) ["Biodot Log Sheet"](#) (pdf)

Biodot for each student (To order, call 1-800-272-2340)

A glass and a pitcher of water

Intended Learning Outcomes

Identify situations that trigger stress.

Distinguish between eustress and distress.

Describe the stress response and how it influences performance.

Develop strategies for managing or reducing stress.

Instructional Procedures

Lesson at a Glance

Define "stress," "stressors," "eustress" and "distress."

Complete water pitcher activity.

Discuss the fight/flight response.

Discuss positive stress management strategies.

Complete worksheet, "Don't Let Stress Get You All Wet."

New Vocabulary

stress

stressors

distress

fight/flight

eustress

stress response

Introduction (Setting Focus)

Define and discuss "stress" (a normal part of living; the body's response to change, demand and pressure); "stressors" (triggers of stress); "eustress" (positive stress); and "distress" (negative stress). Show poster "Distinguishing Between 'Eustress' and 'Distress'."

Discuss the following:

People react differently to the same situation.

Stressors or triggers to stress are individual to each person.

The body reacts differently to different situations and not all people respond the same way.

Every event in life is a potential stressor.

Eustress and distress create various bodily reactions and feelings.

List possible stressors or triggers that affect students and the reactions and feelings that result.

Body (Strategies/Activities)

Students complete one of the following activities to help them become more aware of their stressors.

In groups of four students complete the "Yours, Mine, and Ours" worksheet. Students take turns telling their group something that is stressful for them and then discuss who else in the group is also affected by that specific stressor. The student write his/her stressor under the heading "One person," "Two people," "Three people," or "All of us" depending on the response of the group. Each group shares some of their stressors with the class.

Explain how biodots work (use the information guide that comes with the biodots). Provide a biodot for each student. Have students determine their stress level. Encourage the students to wear their biodots for the next 24 hours and to monitor any changes that take place. Keep a log of changes and the situations surrounding the changes. Discuss what they learned from the experience.

Divide students into groups and complete the "Youth Stressor" worksheet. Each group shares their ideas with the class. Discuss which stressors are most common among all or most of the groups.

Discuss the [fight/ flight](#) response.

The alarm goes off in your mind.

The alarm triggers the release of hormones.

The hormones cause changes.

Changes prepare the individual for fight or flight.

The body tries to adapt.

The threat is resolved.

Fatigue or exhaustion results.

A recovery period follows.

The body returns to normal.

Discuss the following:

When is the stress response harmful? (When caused by inaccurate perception, continued or unresolved stressor)

What are the effects of extreme unresolved stressors? (Weakening body, decreased immune system, slower thinking, death)

When is the stress response helpful? (When there is a need for changes, to better perform, to protect)

Using an empty glass (person) and a pitcher of water (stress), demonstrate the following:

Hold the empty glass upside down and ask the class what happens when someone has too little stress (little or no growth, boredom, lowered performance).

Fill the glass half full and review "eustress" (alert, healthy, better performance, excited, challenged by an event, desire to work towards and accomplish goals).

Review distress and various associated stressors and add a bit more water each time an example is mentioned. Continue until the glass is full and overflowing.

Discuss the glass and water demonstration using the following prompts:

Have you ever "had it right up to here" or known of someone else who has? (Refer to the full glass.)

What did they do? How do we "lose it" or "dump on" others?

What problems are associated with distress stress? Discuss problems associated with "losing it" and "dumping on" others: headaches, ulcers, increased illness, problems getting

along, lowered school and athletic performance, physical outbursts, fatigue, depression, feelings of hopelessness and despair, fighting, arguing, sleep disorders, and/or withdrawal. How does it feel to be "stressed out"?

How is it to be around someone who is negatively stressed? (Walk around spilling a little bit of the water here and there.)

If you realize someone's glass is full (a teacher, parent, or a classmate), what could you do to help avoid getting dumped on?

What are some of the things or situations that cause your glass to overflow?

What are some of the choices people make, especially while under stress, that actually create more stress and make the problem bigger? (Truancy, eating too much, use of alcohol, tobacco or other harmful chemicals, fighting, running away from home, violence. (Add more water to the glass for each negative solution that is mentioned.)

What are some positive things we can do to keep from "overflowing," dumping on others, and to keep us from losing it? (Pour a little water into the pitcher with each positive suggestion.) Some suggestions might include: Talk it out, exercise, problem solve, take a break, utilize a positive physical outlet, plan better, get things done, go for a walk, listen to music, read a book, use deep breathing, take a hot bath, keep a journal, spend some time in a peaceful place, exercise, eat right, drink plenty of water, laugh, smile, get enough sleep, and relax daily.

Closure (Wrap-Up and Extension)

Discuss how regular practice of positive stress management strategies can help keep stress at a healthy and productive level and reduce the risk of potential problems.

Review the "Positive Ways to Manage Stress" poster and complete the "Don't Let Stress Get You All Wet" worksheet. Check back with students throughout the week to see how they are doing and then discuss what they learn or experience after completion of the assignment.

Note: This activity could also be completed at the conclusion of the "Don't Worry" lesson, which focuses on additional stress management strategies.

Authors

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