

Stress and Relationships

Grade
7

Alberta Education Health & Life Skills Programs of Studies Outcomes

The students will...

- R - 7.3 Identify sources of stress in relationships, and describe positive methods of dealing with such stressors, e.g., change, loss, discrimination, rejection.

Teacher Background

Two common sources of stress are change and loss. Common experiences of students include moving, divorce, breaking up with boyfriends or girlfriends, changes in peer group and death of a grandparent. Reactions to loss are individual and can vary for many reasons. Finding ways to cope and adjust to the changes and losses are critical for students. Teachers can help normalize these feelings and behaviours through discussion, everyday interaction and finding ways to help develop an understanding of the student's experience.



Objectives

- To help students reflect on their experiences with change, loss, discrimination and rejection.
- Students will be able to identify symptoms of stress, and learn coping strategies used by themselves and their peers.

Materials

- Handout: *Stress Bingo*
- Handout: *Survival Kit*
- Sample of your own Survival Kit
- For optional activity: copy of the book *Scaredy Squirrel* by Melanie Watt

Get Ready

- Distribute *Stress Bingo* Handout
- Ask students to define stress:
Stress is the body’s response to anything that makes us feel threatened or pressured. It is caused by any kind of demand to which we must adapt, adjust, or respond. It is the body’s automatic way of reacting to changes, challenges, and demands placed on us.
- Ask students: Has anyone experienced stress?

Activity 1: Stress Bingo

- Have students walk around and find someone who participates in one of the activities listed on the Bingo.
- The student will then ask the person to sign their name in the appropriate box.
- Try to find a different person for each activity.
- Debrief: Students may realise that most people cope with stress similarly.

Activity 2: Building Your Own Survival Kit to Cope with Stress

- Reviewing the student responses to the *Stress Bingo*, discuss how people deal with stress differently.

Optional: read the book *Scaredy Squirrel*. Ask your students “While I am reading the book I want you to think about how this Squirrel deals with stress in his life.”

After reading the book discuss with the class the importance of the Squirrels Survival Kit. Why did he have the survival kit? Why was he so structured in his everyday routines?

- Introduce the *Survival Kit* activity. The students will be making their own survival kits at home that will help cope with stress within their everyday lives. Show them your survival kit and what you have inside it. Talk about why you put certain things into your kit and how it helps you cope with stress.
- Give out the *Survival Kit* handout and go over the activity with the students. This will be an activity that they will then take home and then bring back to you on an assigned date.

Conclusion

Stress in relationships is a universal experience. Understanding your own experience and learning healthy ways to cope with stress is important. This allows growth and development of self and proper stress management.

Take Home Activity & Follow-up Classroom Discussion

Survival Kit will be brought back to school with the written component.

Share survival kits with the class (optional: you may or may not want to do this, it will depend on your class).

Assessment Strategy

- Students will identify what stress is and symptoms of stress.
- Students will identify ways in which he/she can cope with stress in his/her life by making a survival kit and by learning other coping techniques that their peers use when dealing with stress.

Reference

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). (2011). *Coping with stress bingo*. Personal communication. Copied with permission.

Coping with Stress Bingo

Find someone who regularly participates in one of these activities.
Ask them to sign their name in the appropriate box.

Find a different person for each activity until you get 2 in a row.

B I N G O

Listens to music	Keeps a journal or a diary	Plays a musical instrument	Makes "to do" lists	Has hiked to the top of a mountain
Eats breakfast	Enjoys baking cookies	Plays DS/Wii/Playstation/X-Box etc.	Likes to laugh and does so a lot	Has a fish tank
Plays outside after school	Talks to family about problems	Your favourite activity FREE	Enjoys nature	Sleeps 9-11 hours a night
Goes for walks/bike riding	Volunteers	Practices a martial art	Daydreams	Does yoga or pilates
Enjoys going for a drive	Goes window shopping	Works out at a gym/at home	Skis, Skateboards or Snowboards	Rented a movie on the weekend

Survival Kit

Activity/Assignment

1. Choose 3 objects or symbols to include in your kit.

2. You can make the symbols.

3. You can use words or pictures.

4. You can bring an object from home.

5. Think about how the symbol helps you when you are dealing with stress and stressful situations.

6. Write a paragraph for each symbol or object in your kit and how it helps you cope with stress in your everyday life.

7. Sharing a part of your kit with peers may be a follow up activity.

