

Facilitator Guide: Stress Management

Overview

This guide is made for high school teachers, counselors, and parents who want to help young people handle stress better. This guide helps high school students learn about their body's stress signals and ways to handle stress better.

Episode

Young people need to learn how to manage stress because they face many new stressful situations often. Before engaging in the activities below, listen to the following podcast episode either individually or with your high schooler(s): [Stress Management](#) from the podcast *This Teenage Life*.

Activities

Select 1-4 activities about stress management to do with your student(s). *Note: adapt and modify activities based on the specific needs of your students and resources available to you.*

Group Check-In: Lead a 5-10 minute check-in to help students evaluate their current emotional state. You can use one of the following prompts to start your check-in:

- **What's Good Today:** Encourage students to discuss some of the good things about today. These can be very small things, like enjoying the taste of your breakfast or shuffling your music and then hearing your favorite song. Share a good thing from your day first, then have students share their good things.
- **How Are You Feeling:** Have students come up with an emotion to describe how they are currently feeling. Be sure to validate all feelings. To encourage honesty, share both a 'positive' and 'negative' feeling of your own to start the discussion (for example, you might feel *relieved* that you got to school on time, but *frustrated* at a driver you were stuck behind on the road).

Creative Expression: Have students spend 10-15 minutes creatively representing how their bodies react to stress. Does your heart start racing? Does your stomach hurt? Do you get a headache? What sensations do you feel in your body? Here are some ideas for students to creatively show how they respond to stress:

- Create art that visualizes your stress response.
- Create a playlist of songs that represents how your stress response feels.
- Draw a diagram of where in your body you feel stress.
- Create a digital moodboard or collage of images to visualize your stress response.

- Find a short scene with a character from a TV show or movie that acts like how you feel when you're stressed

Acute Stress Management: Have students form groups of 2-3 and spend 10-15 minutes talking about how they deal with acute stress such as an exam, upcoming deadline, or conflict with a friend. What stress management strategies feel like they work for you? What might work for you that you haven't tried yet? You can suggest the following stress management strategies for students to discuss:

- Listening to music
- Going outside/into nature
- Venting to a trusted person
- Journaling
- Eating a comfort snack/meal
- Breathing exercises

Create Your Own Stress Reduction Technique: Have students form groups of 2-3 and spend 15-20 minutes creating their own stress reduction technique. Encourage students to think outside of the box and be as wacky and creative as they want. Allow students to use any resources available to them. You can offer the following suggestions for creative stress reduction techniques:

- Create a shared playlist with songs that make you smile/laugh
- Virtually grocery shop for snacks you want to keep with you that help lower your stress
- Choreograph a dance or secret handshake with a friend
- Design a coloring page that relaxes you
- Make a fun slideshow about something unrelated to stress

Additional Resources

[This Teenage Life](#): visit the podcast's website for additional episodes and resources for educators.

[The Magic of Mindfulness series](#): a publicly available 3-part lecture by ASU Professor Jamie Valderrama (this episode's special guest).