

Essential Standard	Clarifying Objective
<p style="text-align: center;">9.MEH.1</p> <p>Create positive stress management strategies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">9.MEH.1.1</p> <p>Identify the body's physical and psychological responses to stressful situations and positive coping methods.</p>

Materials Needed:

PowerPoint: Responses to Stressful Situations and Positive Coping

Appendix 1 – Slide #1 and 2 of PowerPoint or copies of Volcano Model of Stress Management

Appendix 2 – Slide #6 or copies of Fight or Flight Response

Appendix 3 – copies of Warning Signs of Stress

Appendix 4 – copies of Stress Checklist

Appendix 5 – copies of Controlling My Stressors

Focus:

Show slide # 1 and share copies of Volcano Model of Stress Management (Appendix 1, reprinted with permission) as a guide for facilitating this activity: Draw a picture of a volcano on the board.

Ask students:

- *When under stress, how does a person feel?* (scared, frustrated, mad, guilty)

As students answer, write their response inside the volcano.

- *What do those feelings sometimes cause people to do?* (argue, cry, fight, use alcohol or drugs, have suicidal thoughts)

As students answer, write their responses coming out of the top of the volcano. *When these strong emotions build up we feel like we are going to explode or erupt like this volcano and cause negative behaviors.*

Ask students:

- *What are some healthy ways to deal with stressors?* (exercise, write in a journal, talk to someone)

As students answer, write their responses along the side of the volcano. You can draw vents or cracks, like the Volcano Model of Stress Management (Appendix 1) to show the release of the “built-up” tensions as you write the healthy ways to deal with stressors. *When we are able to relieve part of our stress through these actions or behaviors we are venting or releasing the built up feelings and we are less likely to erupt or explode like this volcano.*

Review:

Provide each student with a blank sheet of paper. Ask them to draw an outline of themselves in the center of the page. Using crayons or colored pencils, instruct students to shade in the parts of their bodies where they most often feel the effects of stress. For example, cold or sweaty hands, neck pain, stomachache. Make a transparency with your own shape to illustrate.

Ask students the following questions:

- *What is a stressor? (a person, place, event or situation that places a demand on the mind or the body.)*

I want you to think about things in the present and in the past that have caused you to feel stressed.

- *Are all stressors bad?* Remind students that stressors can be both positive (eustress) and negative (distress).

Have students draw a vertical line down the middle of their pages. Designate the left for positive stressors and the right for negative stressors. Point out that they may discover that some stressors go on both sides! Tell students that they should be more specific than parents, school, or homework when they list their stressors. Leave some space between the items they write. Under the feet of their figures, instruct them to draw a horizontal line and put examples from the past here: stressors with which they have already dealt and have put behind them.

Statement of Objectives:

Today we are going to be discussing the importance of recognizing the stressors in your life and how the body responds: physically and mentally. By the end of the lesson you should be able to determine which stressors are within your control and identify a variety of strategies to cope with the stress in your life.

Teacher Input:

This may be the most significant skill area in this manual because stress is so closely tied to nearly all the risk behaviors for youth. By becoming aware of what is causing stress and how it affects their bodies, students will begin to devise productive ways to reduce their own stress.

Stress, as defined by Hans Selye, a pioneer in the study of stress, is "the body's nonspecific response to any demand put on it." Regardless of the source or cause of stress, the body goes through a patterned response. G. A. S. is the General Adaptation Syndrome, the stages the body goes through when it responds to stress.

Stage 1. Alarm stage – The hormone adrenaline is released in to the bloodstream, which causes many physical changes in the body. The body's response to stress is also known as the "fight or flight" response. Some of the physiological responses include increased heart rate and respiration, sweating, digestion slows down or stops, muscles tense, and pupils dilate. (See Fight or Flight Response, Appendix 2, for a more thorough list of bodily responses.)

Stage 2. Resistance stage - Energy reserves try to return the body's internal activity to normal.

Stage 3. Exhaustion stage -The energy is depleted. If the stress is removed, the body is able to return to normal. If the stress continues, the body keeps going back into the Alarm stage. The constant gearing up of the body to respond puts a lot of extra work on the vital organs. Over

time, physical and/or emotional disease can develop. Some of the "stress-related diseases or conditions" include gastrointestinal disorders, skin disorders, cancer, cardiovascular disorders, and menstrual irregularities.

Though physical threats are a reality for some youth and no doubt a source of stress, mental/emotional stressors are probably more common. This stress is often created in a person's own thoughts or perceptions of a situation. What young people should realize is that the body responds the same. When stress is not managed, general responses in youth will show up as headaches, stomach problems, mood swings, and difficulty paying attention. More serious reactions include depression, mental illness, and suicide.

Since the mind is largely responsible for determining what is considered to be a source of stress, young people need to examine stressors that they have some control over and which stressors are out of their control. Positive coping skills need to be used to deal with both types of stressors.

Provide copies of Fight or Flight Response (Appendix 2) and show slide #6. Review the changes that take place inside the body when we are faced with a stressor. *These changes happen every time we are faced with a stressor, even if it is a good stressor. These changes go back to normal when we either 1) recognize that it is a good stressor, 2) we do something to make the stressor less stressful, or 3) we adopt a positive coping strategy to help us deal with the stressor. If the stressor we are dealing with is a serious situation, for example death of a family member or divorce or separation of our parents, these changes may go on day after day. A person can do a stress management technique, such as progressive muscular relaxation, visualization, deep breathing, or exercise. Doing these stress management techniques on a regular basis during times of serious stress will cause the body to relax and those physical changes will go back to normal. Long-term stress can cause stress-related illnesses/conditions if we do not adopt a positive coping strategy.*

Continue PowerPoint presentation through the end (slide #14) to illustrate how stress and coping strategies have changed through the years.

Share copies of Warning Signs of Stress (Appendix 3). Discuss the emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical signs to look for to help us determine if we are under stress. *It is important for you to recognize the signs that you exhibit when you are faced with a stressor. You will not experience all of these signs and with practice you will recognize the way that you respond to the stress in your life. Once you are able to recognize these signs, you can determine the cause of your stress and begin to develop positive coping strategies to help you deal with that stressor.*

Guided Practice:

Give each student a copy of The Stress Checklist (Appendix 4). Tell students to check off all of the items that happened to them in the last 6 months. They will not report these items to the class or to you, as many are sensitive and confidential. Once students are finished, ask them the numbers of the stressors over which they have control. (These may be other than the ones they have checked off.) *An example of a stressor within your control would be a test. Divorce is a stressor that you cannot control.*

Discuss with the class which stressors an individual has control over. Select one of these stressors and ask students to brainstorm positive coping strategies for that stressor (difficulty with a school subject: ask questions in class, get extra help from the teacher or a good student, spend extra time on this subject, study for tests).

Place students in groups of three or four. Assign each group 2 stressors from the handout – one stressor they have control over and one stressor they do not have control over. Each group will discuss and list ways to cope with the stressor. Once the groups are finished, have each group share their lists with the class.

As each group reports, write the positive coping strategies on the board. Once all the groups are finished reporting, ask students the following questions:

- *Why is it important to develop positive coping strategies to deal with the stressors in their lives?*
- *Which stressors (within their control vs. not in their control) were the easiest to develop strategies for?*

Reinforce the coping skills that they can use to deal with the stressors in their lives. Review the stress management techniques, such as visualization, progressive muscular relaxation, etc that they learned in middle school. Emphasize that these relaxation techniques can be useful when we are dealing with a serious stressor in our life. *There are many positive ways to deal with the stressors in our lives. It is important to recognize that when you can do something to make a stressor less stressful it makes it easier to deal with that stressor.*

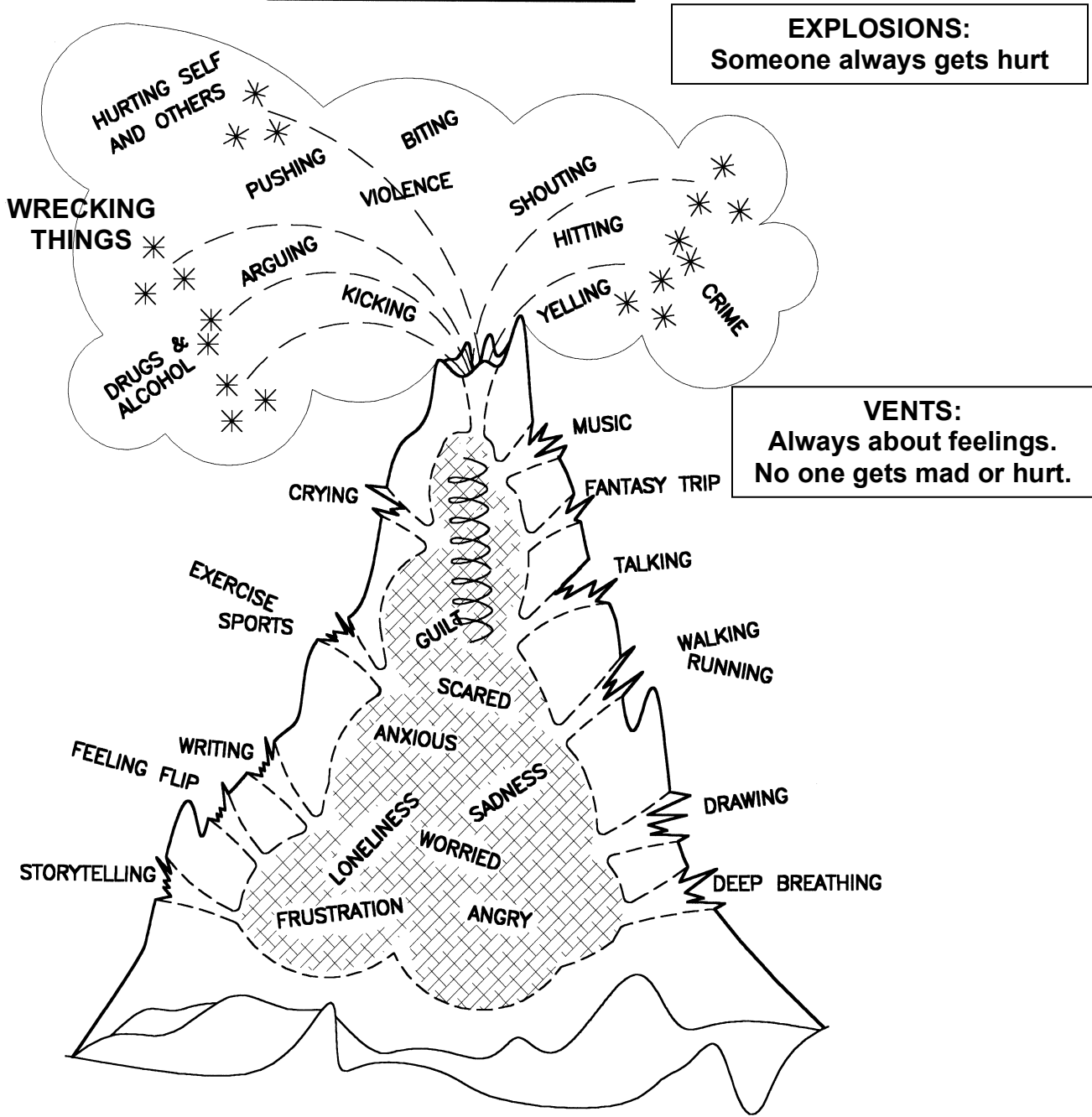
Independent Practice:

Give each student a copy of Controlling My Stressors (Appendix 5). Discuss the example with the class. They need to select stressors with which they are currently dealing. For each one of these stressors they need to write ways that they can cope. This may be turned in if time permits or completed as a homework assignment.

Closure:

You have done a good job identifying the stressors over which you have control and the ones that are not within your control. Each of you should now be able to recognize this in your own life and develop strategies for all the stressors that you face.

THE VOLCANO MODEL OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND FEELING RELEASE



EXPLOSIONS:
Someone always gets hurt

VENTS:
Always about feelings.
No one gets mad or hurt.

Changes and losses that can cause these feelings: new babies
brothers or sisters leaving home, death, divorce, separation,
moving, illness, growing up, parent's job loss

(Children)
Created by Ann Sparling White, M.S.
Art work by Fred Roberts
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RESTS:
Ways to take a break from feelings



Fight or Flight Response

- Muscles become tense.
- Heart rate increases.
- Blood pressure increases.
- Breathing increases.
- Pupils dilate.
- Digestion slows down or stops.
- Hearing becomes better.
- Sweating increases.
- Skin temperature decreases.
- Immune system slows down.
- More blood is sent to the muscles for quick movement.
- Liver releases sugar for quick energy.
- Amount of stomach acid increases.



Warning Signs of Stress

Physical Signs of Stress

- *Headache*
- *Increased sweating*
- *Sweaty palms*
- *Tightness of chest*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Nervous stomach*
- *Slumped posture*
- *Inability to fall asleep*
- *Dry mouth*
- *Increase in crying*
- *Fatigue*
- *Neck or backache*

Emotional/ Mental Signs of Stress

- *Irritability*
- *Angry outburst*
- *Impatience*
- *Nightmares*
- *Loss of interest*
- *Anxiety / nervousness*
- *Negative thinking*
- *Jealousy*
- *Forgetfulness*
- *Lowered self-esteem*
- *Inability to concentrate*
- *Focusing on the past*
- *Resistant to change*
- *Preoccupation*

Behavioral Signs of Stress

- *Restlessness*
- *Fidgeting*
- *Carelessness*
- *Loss of appetite or overeating*
- *Unable to sleep*
- *Chronic fatigue*
- *Decreased productivity*
- *Increase in alcohol/drug use*
- *Increase in risk taking*
- *Withdrawing from relationships*



Stress Checklist

The stress checklist is a list of events and situations that are known to cause stress for young people. Many of these are sources of distress (bad stress). Some are positive things that are still a source of stress.

Directions: Check off all the items that have happened to you in the last six months.

1. A parent died.
2. Your parents get separated.
3. You abused alcohol or drugs.
4. You went to a summer camp.
5. A friend or relative attempted to commit suicide.
6. Someone you love died of natural causes.
7. You became pregnant.
8. You had difficulty with school work.
9. Something violent occurred at your school.
10. You moved to a new city.
11. You started at a new school.
12. You were assigned a new teacher.
13. A family member became ill or injured.
14. Your mother went to work full-time.
15. You fought with your brother or sister.
16. Your pet died or was lost.
17. Your sleeping habits changed.
18. Violence happened in your neighborhood.
19. Your TV watching increased.
20. The family celebrated a birthday or holiday.
21. Parents got divorced.
22. A friend or relative committed suicide.
23. You broke up with a boyfriend/girlfriend.
24. You won an award.
25. Your family went on vacation.
26. A family member abused drugs or alcohol.
27. You suffered a major illness or injury.
28. You got a new job.
29. You learned that your girlfriend is pregnant.
30. You had difficulty with your friends.
31. A new baby sister or brother arrived.
32. A parent was fired or lost a job.
33. You applied to college.
34. Your family had money problems.
35. You started a new sport or activity.
36. Family members moved away.
37. Your home was burned or robbed.

Controlling My Stressors

Directions: Identify five stressors that you are currently facing. For each of these stressors, list three positive coping strategies. These coping strategies may include ways to avoid the stressor, ways to minimize the stressor, or ways to deal with the stressor.

<p>1. <i>I got a speeding ticket and my parents grounded me.</i></p>	<p><i>I could avoid the situation by obeying the law and driving the speed limit.</i> <i>I could attend a Defensive Driving class and have the ticket reduced.</i> <i>From now on I will allow plenty of driving time so I will not be rushed and tempted to drive fast.</i></p>
<p>2.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	