

Stress

Influencing, Responding, and Managing

Learning Objectives

- I can identify potential positive and negative responses to stress and criticism (6.1t)
- I can analyze internal factors, such as responses to criticism or stress, which influence emotional and social health (6.2t)
- I can create a plan to manage stress (6.3t)

Teacher Notes

This lesson will include many pauses that will involve student response or time to design. Please pause the video as instructed for as long as needed.

- Key Terms: Internal Stressors, External Stressors, Eustress (positive stress), and distress (negative Stress)
- Teacher prep [What is Mindfulness?](#)
- Mason jar (or clear jar), glitter, water (or snow globe).
- Paper, pencils, Pencils of color, markers, or a computer for drawing.

Lesson Steps: Video/Resource/Outline

[Google Slides STRESS: Responses, Influences, and Management](#)

Step 1 Introduction

Set the mindfulness mood within the classroom as students walk in the health classroom. Suggestions might be dimmed lights, soft, [Peaceful music](#) playing--create a quiet calm. On the smart board write the following: "Please do not talk. You may sit and observe the classroom quietly or close your eyes." This should last for 5 -8 minutes.

- What is the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear the word "stress?"
- In your own words, how would you define "Stress?"
- **The Mindful Jar:**
This activity can teach children how strong emotions can take hold, and how to find peace when these strong emotions feel overwhelming.
- First, get a clear jar (like a Mason jar) and fill it almost all the way with water. Next, add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Put the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.
- **Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you're stressed, mad or upset. See how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly?**



That's why it's so easy to make silly decisions when you're upset – because you're not thinking clearly. Don't worry this is normal and it happens in all of us (yep, grownups too).

[Now put the jar down in front of them until the end of class.]

- Think of a time when you were stressed. You may remember your heart racing, palms sweating, shoulders tensing up. These reactions are part of the body's natural stress response. When the brain perceives a situation to be threatening, it triggers a surge of hormones that prepare the body for the challenge. Known as *"fight or flight,"* the stress response evolved to help us survive. But it is also triggered by events that aren't life-threatening. This can include academic and relationship pressures, or even stress from being over-connected to technology and social media.
- The glitter should have settled by now and the water clears.
- Your mind works the same way. When you're calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you start to see things much clearer. Deep breaths during this calming process can help us settle when we feel a lot of emotions" (Karen Young, 2017).
- This exercise not only helps students learn about how their emotions can cloud their thoughts, but it also facilitates the practice of mindfulness while focusing on the swirling glitter in the jar.
- Try having the kids focus on one emotion at a time, such as anger, and discuss how the shaken verse settling glitter is like that emotion.

Step 2 Activities

Activity 1. [Stress Test Questions](#)

- Instruct students to complete the Stress Test either as a print out, or on a separate sheet of paper by choosing a number between 1 and 4 to indicate how often they encounter each experience. Ask them to think about the past 2-3 weeks, rather than the entire year so far.
 - Have students add up the numbers on the Stress Test, then show the following scoring: Under 20 **Under 20— Low Stress**, 21 to 30 — **Medium Stress**, 31 and up — **High Stress**
 - Let students know that stress is a normal reaction to the demands of life; when your brain perceives a threat, your body releases a burst of hormones to fuel your fight/flight/freeze response; and when the threat is gone, your body returns to normal.
 - Let students know that their stress score will change often, depending on life circumstances. Encourage them to continue taking the test in the future to assess their scores at different times, and notice how it fluctuates.
- ★ *This would also be a good time to discuss Fight, Flight, or Freeze which often occurs when a person is in a stressful situation or state of mind.*

Activity 2: Effects of Stress

- When we experience stress, changes occur in our thoughts and feelings, body, behaviors that can affect how we interact with family and friends. Example: When I experience distress I do not sleep well making me very tired and I lose weight.



- Complete [Effects of Stress Worksheet](#)
- Why is identifying our stressors important?
- Do you think ALL stress is bad for you? Explain.
 - This is a good time to differentiate between Eustress and distress.

Activity 3: Managing Stress

Mindfulness “STOP” Skill

- Mindfulness practice (beginning of class exercise) has numerous benefits: Improved attention, increased emotion regulation, reduced anxiety and depression, and even improved immune function. There are numerous mindfulness practices, some more well-researched than others, and the diversity of teachers and systems can be overwhelming. Jon Kabat-Zinn, a prominent mindfulness researcher, has developed a relatively simple skill you can practice whenever, wherever— without the need for a formal sitting meditation practice. It is called the **STOP skill, or STOP Acronym**. Check out the video below to jumpstart your mindfulness practice today using the STOP acronym.

- [The Stop Practice](#)

The **STOP** acronym stands for:

S: Stop. Whatever you’re doing, just pause momentarily.

T: Take a breath. Reconnect with your breath. The breath is an anchor to the present moment.

O: Observe. Notice what is happening. What is happening inside you, and outside of you? Where has your mind gone? What do you feel? What are you doing?

P: Proceed. Continue doing what you were doing. Or don’t: Use the information gained during this check-in to change course. Whatever you do, do it mindfully.

- By occasionally reminding yourself to stop during your day, you can increase your awareness of what is going on around you and inside you. You may stop and notice you are engaging in a lot of negative self-judgments. Using **STOP** may help you recognize when your body is becoming tense, and allow you to correct it before you are in pain. You might find that you’re hungry, or that a break might be helpful. The more you **STOP** during the day, the more you re-engage with reality, and disengage from the habitual busyness of your mind.
- Other than practicing mindfulness, what are other ways to manage stress? (Exercise, hobbies, meaningful conversations with teachers, parents, friends, journaling, being proactive, sticking to a routine, etc. (See Stress Buster BINGO in lesson extensions.)

Activity 4: [Red light, Green Light Yoga](#)

- Much like the classic version, this game involves one person (the Caller) standing at one end of a room, and all other students at the opposite end. The Caller instructs the students when to move by saying Red Light (Stop), Green Light (walk) or Yellow Light (slowly tip-toe). The Yoga-Style comes from the stopping. When the Caller gives the instructions, they are faced away from the group – green and yellow mean go, but once Red Light is called, each student must get into



a Yoga pose and hold it. The Caller will then turn around, and if they see someone moving that person must return to the far wall. The Caller will try to keep their job, and the other students are trying to race to tap the Caller. Whoever taps the caller without getting caught, gets to take their place.

- See *Extension* section for the Mindful [Heartbeat Exercise](#) for another movement option.

Step 3 Closure

Post-Assessment:

- Revisit The Mindful Jar
- Revisit Questions posed throughout the lesson.
- *Create a Plan to Manage Stress* [Healthy Coping Worksheet](#)
 - Students should be very reflective about how they manage stress presently and how they can improve those moments of stress using STOP or other strategies.
 - Small group discussion to share solutions and ideas.
 - Whole group discussion
 - Extension connections/activities
 - Healthy Coping Worksheet

Assessments

- Pre: Anticipatory Set
 - Set the stage
 - Questions will introduce topic
 - Access prior knowledge
 - Key Terms
 - The Mindful Jar
- Post: *Create a Plan to Manage Stress* [Healthy Coping Worksheet](#)
 - Students should be very reflective about how they manage stress presently and how they can improve those moments of stress using STOP or other strategies.
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Extensions/Connections/Applications

Draw a picture & Mindful practice

- Watch and stop the video to participate. [Mindful Exercise: Still, Quiet Place](#)
 - Stop the video and have students in class to draw their happy place (just like the character in the video). (5-10 minutes) * Draw with computers or on paper.



Sample Lesson Plan
Virginia 2021 SOL Edition
Created by: Catherine Showalter Lineburg
**Stress: Influences, Responding, &
Managing**
GR6-SE-7
6th Grade: 6.1t, 6.2t, 6.3t

- Restart the video. Stop video when and close your eyes and “picture yourself” in your happy place. (3-5 minutes)
 - Finish watching the video.
 - How did you feel picturing yourself in this happy place? Was it difficult to “quiet” your thoughts?
 - Remind students that it takes consistent practice to be able to focus and still their minds.
- [Stress Buster Bingo](#)
 - [Heartbeat Exercise](#)

Resources/References

- ★ *Lesson activities are credits to the awesome resource links below that have been borrowed and copied to ensure the lesson supports student learning.*
- [Health Smart](#)
- [Kids Health](#)
- [What is mindfulness?](#)
- [Mindfulness Activities](#)
- [Mindfulness STOP SKill](#)
- [STRESSED OUT!](#)
- [Youth Smart Stress Workbook](#)
- [Yoga Games](#)