

Potential Integration:

ELA

Health
4.MEH.1.1 Summarize effective coping strategies to manage stress.
4.MEH.1.2 Implement healthy strategies for handling stress, including asking for assistance.

### Materials Needed:

- List of idioms
- Cards or construction paper
- Art supplies for illustrating.
- Computer access for reading CDC articles and interactive game or copies of the article
- Several picture books for small group reading or read aloud
- Index cards for personal coping plan

### Focus:

Tell students they will be learning about what causes stress and positive ways to handle the stress, but we will start the lesson by learning some interesting ways people describe stress and how they feel. In our language, we have some interesting phrases called idioms. An idiom is a phrase that means something different than the actual definition of the words in the phrase. For instance, when someone is stressed they might say, “I’m getting ready to blow a fuse!” Discuss what the idiom means and brainstorm a list of other idioms used to describe stressful situations. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group one of the idioms to illustrate. Ask students to write the meaning and list some situations that may cause someone to feel this way on the poster.

Idioms often used to describe stress: blow a fuse, swimming upstream, between a rock and a hard place, fish out of water, in a pickle, have too much on my plate, hard row to hoe, back against the wall, snowed under, up a creek without a paddle, torn out of the frame

### Statement of Objectives:

In our lessons, you are going to learn what causes stress and some positive ways to cope with stress. You will work with partners discussing and writing about the key facts you learn about stress from reading informational text and literature.

### Teacher Input:

1. Sharing the idiom cards will lead to a discussion of stressors, signs of stress and common stressors.

Explain that a stressor is a person, place, event or situation that places a demand on the mind or body. A stressor can be pleasant or unpleasant and everyone experiences stress on a daily basis.

The physical signs of stress may include: headache, neck or backache, increased sweating, tightness of chest, nervous stomach, inability to fall asleep, dry mouth and fatigue. The emotional or behavioral signs of stress may include: anxiety, impatience, irritability, forgetfulness, negative thinking, inability to concentrate, loss of interest, restlessness, inability to sleep, loss of appetite or overeating, and withdrawing from relationships.

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There are some common stressors that young people encounter. This may include: quizzes/tests, relationships with friends, arguing with a sibling, being bullied at school, worrying about one's appearance, getting glasses or braces, getting in trouble with parents or at school, homework, competitive events like sports or contests, performances or homework. People may respond differently to the same stressor. One person may perceive the stressor as positive while another person may see the stressor as negative. It is important for an individual to identify his or her stressors and be able to determine the appropriate coping strategy to deal with the stressor.

There are many different effective coping strategies to manage stress. Common positive coping strategies include: talking with a trusted adult, parent/guardian, teacher, counselor; time management skills; deep breathing; exercise; writing in a journal; visualizing oneself doing well; mental rehearsal; and counting to ten before reacting.

2. Following the discussion, students read informational text about stress from the CDC. Use the first section of the article to model writing a one -sentence summary, explaining that this sentence is the main idea or point. With a partner, students should read a section, discuss and write a one -sentence summary.

Example: We all experience stress and our bodies can handle it.

<http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/butterflies.html>

[http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/butterflies\\_game.html](http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/butterflies_game.html)

3. Use the summary sentences as a follow up discussion tool before reading the next article. "Feeling Frazzled" gives 10 tips for handling stress. As students read each tip, ask them to give specific examples that would help them.

Example: 1. Put your body in motion. I would go outside and shoot baskets.

<http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/frazzled.html>

### **Assessment:**

Give students a chance to identify how some characters in literature handle stress. Read aloud or have students buddy read some of the books listed.

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak, Kitten's First Full Moon by K. Henkes, A Boy and a Bear by Lori Lite, The Goodnight Caterpillar by Lori Lite, Bear Feels Sick by K. Wilson, Giraffes Can't Dance by G. Andrea, What Are You So Grumpy About by T. Lichtenheld, When Dad's at Sea by M.L. Pelton, The Recess Queen by A. O'Neill, How to Make Friends with a Giant by G. Choldenko

Give students a small card for making a personal coping plan.

The card should list any of the many positive ways they would use to handle stress. The card should be kept in a safe but accessible place so students can refer to the list as needed in during the school day.

### **Closure:**

Everyone experiences stress every day. It is important to use some of the positive ways we have learned to handle stress, which keeps you healthier and our classroom a happier place!