

Lesson 6

Ways to Manage Stress

Overview

This lesson focuses on stress management, with an emphasis on techniques students can use. Students begin by examining ways people cope with stress and distinguish between positive and negative reactions. They review key coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and evaluate which ones they've used before. Then they learn about and practice some specific stress-management techniques to identify those that could work best for them.

Time: 45–60 minutes

Note: If time is limited, the assessment activity sheet may be completed as homework.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Evaluate effective strategies for dealing with stress.
2. Apply stress-management techniques to manage personal stressors.
3. Practice stress-management techniques.

National Health Education Standards

Standard 1: Comprehending Concepts

Performance Indicator

1.12.1: Predict how healthy behaviors can affect health status.

Performance Indicator

1.12.5: Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems.

Standard 7: Practicing Health-Enhancing Behaviors

Performance Indicator

7.12.3: Demonstrate a variety of behaviors that avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

Materials & Preparation

Prepare

- Have **Positive Ways to Cope with Stress** (Slide 8), or make a transparency, if needed.

Copy

- **Time to Talk: Skills for Dealing with Stress** (Master 2) for each student.

Review

- **Stressors & Responses** (*Student Workbook* page 15).
- **How Do I Cope with Stress?** (*Student Workbook* page 16).
- **Stress-Management Techniques** (*Student Workbook* pages 17–18).
- **My Stress-Management Plan** (*Student Workbook* page 19), and Scoring Rubric, page 258.

Health Terms

Review the teaching steps, slide, master and activity sheets for any terms or concepts your students may not know, and be prepared to explain them. Examples:

- deep breathing
- effective
- endorphins
- guided imagery
- progressive muscle relaxation
- resilient
- stressor
- time management

Support for Diverse Learners

To ensure student success with comprehending concepts:

- Pre-teach new concepts and terms. Write new terms on the board. Frequently use verbal checks for comprehension.
- Make copies of the **Positive Ways to Cope with Stress** slide and distribute to students.
- Model the different stress-management techniques for students before they teach and practice them in their small groups.
- Have students practice the stress-management techniques at home and report on how well the different techniques worked for them.
- Review the **Time to Talk: Skills for Dealing With Stress** family sheet with students before sending it home to discuss with a family member or other trusted adult. Discuss the content and answer any questions students may have.

To ensure student success with reading:

- Pair students with stronger reading skills or peer tutors with students who may need help reviewing the **Stressors & Responses** activity sheet and the **Stress-Management Techniques** reading sheet.

To ensure student success with writing:

- Pair students with stronger writing skills or peer tutors with students who may need help completing the **My Stress-Management Plan** activity sheet, or allow students to complete the activity sheet as homework with a parent or guardian.

To extend the learning activities:

- Have students interview family members about how they manage the stress in their lives and find out if they are familiar with the stress-management techniques taught in class.

Introduction

■ Get students ready for learning

Transition

On a piece of paper, identify a stressful situation or particular stressor that's occurred in your life since the last class, or one you anticipate facing in the future, and describe your response. How did or might you feel? What did or might you think? What did or might you do as a result of the stress?

Allow students to focus and work quietly for a minute or two. Call on student volunteers to share what they wrote.

(Note: You don't have to evaluate the quality or effectiveness of the response at this point in the lesson. If students share negative ways of responding to the stress, explain that today they'll be learning some effective and positive ways to respond to stressors like the ones they've described.)

Motivate

What are some examples of situations you've had control over that caused you stress?

What are some examples of situations you've had no control over that caused you stress?

Is there any difference in how you handle the stress in these different types of situations?

Allow students to respond to the questions and discuss their ideas.

When you have some control over a situation, you may be able to take action or change the circumstances to help reduce the stress. You're not able to change situations you have no control over, but you may be able to adjust your attitude, shift how you feel or alter the way you think about the situation to help manage the stress.

You'll be learning more about ways to manage stress today. Some of the same techniques can help you deal with the stress from situations you have no control over, as well as those you do. Although you may not always have control over the changes you experience in life, you always have control over how you choose to respond to these changes.

Teaching Steps

■ Students explore positive and negative reactions to stressors

Ask & Discuss

Do all people react to stressful situations in the same way? Why or why not?

Allow students to respond to the question and discuss their ideas.

Summarize

Stress is not the same for everyone. The reaction to stress often depends on how the person views the situation or event. It can also be influenced by a person’s past experiences and skills in handling stress.

Complete

Direct students to turn to **Stressors & Responses** on page 15 of the Student Workbook.

Here’s a list of some different stressors teens might experience. Work with a partner to suggest both a positive and a negative or less positive way a person might respond to each stressor. A positive response is one that would be *effective* and help the person handle the stress, and a negative response is one that could make the stress worse or cause more problems for the person.

Pair students or allow them to select partners. Allow time for pairs to complete the activity sheet.

Stressors & Responses		
<p>Directions: Give an example of how a person might respond positively and negatively to each stressor. A positive response would help the person handle the stress, and a negative response could make the stress worse or cause other problems for the person.</p>		
Stressor	Positive Response	Negative Response
Having too much homework		
Having a mean teacher about a friend		
Being unprepared for a big exam		
Getting stuck in traffic		
Losing your wallet		
Death of a pet		
Being assigned a task you don't know how to do		
Blending in with a boyfriend or girlfriend		
Disagreeing with parents		
Being bullied at school		

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Ask & Discuss

When pairs have finished, review their responses. Create 2 columns on the board labeled “Negative” and “Positive.”

What are some negative or unhealthy ways people might respond to these stressful situations or events?



Allow students to respond to the question and discuss their ideas. List their responses on the board in the appropriate column. Examples include:

- *Becoming angry or upset*
- *Blaming someone else for the stress*
- *Acting out with physical violence*
- *Ignoring a problem or avoiding a situation*
- *Pretending the stress isn't happening*
- *Lying to avoid responsibility*
- *Using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs*
- *Overeating*
- *Zoning out in front of the TV or computer*
- *Sleeping too much*
- *Staying too busy to leave time to feel emotions or face problems*

What are some positive or healthier ways people might respond to these stressful situations or events?

Allow students to respond to the question and discuss their ideas. List their responses on the board in the appropriate column. Examples include:

- *Get more information about the situation.*
- *Talk about the situation with a friend or trusted adult.*
- *Do something relaxing such as taking a bath or spending time in nature.*
- *Write about your feelings in a journal.*
- *Talk to the other people involved in the situation to try to work things out.*
- *Walk, run, swim or do some other type of physical activity.*
- *Take a break until you calm down.*
- *Figure out what's within your control and what's not.*
- *View the situation as a chance to learn something.*
- *Plan ahead to help avoid this kind of stress in the future.*
- *Decide on one step you can take to handle the situation and act on it.*

Was there a particular stressor for which it was hard to think of a positive response?

Was anyone able to think of a possible positive response to this stressor?

Allow students to respond to the questions and discuss their ideas. Add any new ideas to the list in the Positive column.

Summarize

Sometimes people react to stress by becoming angry or upset, or by blaming someone else for the situation. Or they may feel so overwhelmed that they avoid the stressful situation, pretend it isn't happening, or even try to escape through alcohol or other drug use. These are negative or unhealthy ways to deal with stress that can wind up adding to the pressure the person is feeling and cause more problems over time.

Sometimes stress might push or motivate people to take action to handle the situation that's causing the stress, if it's something over which they have some control. Sometimes people are able to keep a positive outlook and think of good things that could come from the situation. Getting more information, asking for help, doing something to relax, taking a break until you feel calmer, or approaching the problem one step at a time are all positive ways to respond to stress.

Prepare

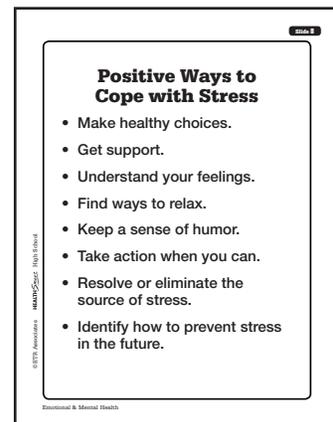
Show the **Positive Ways to Cope with Stress** slide.

Explain

Ask students to compare the list on the slide to the one on the board. Make the link between student suggestions and the examples on the slide. For example, being physically active in response to stress is a way to make healthy choices, while getting more information could be a way to help resolve the source of stress or prevent it in the future.

Positive ways to respond to stress include:

- **Make healthy choices.** Doing something that's healthy for your body or mind when you're feeling stressed can help you feel better. Keeping your body healthy by eating nutritious foods, getting enough



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physical activity and avoiding tobacco, alcohol and other drugs can also lower your overall stress level or help keep stress under control.

- **Get support.** Talking with a friend or a trusted adult can ease troubled feelings and help you figure out solutions. Positive social connections help people maintain their emotional health and experience less stress in their lives.
- **Understand your feelings.** Writing, drawing or some other creative way of expressing what you feel can often help a person work through difficult feelings. Keeping a journal, writing a poem or song, painting a picture or making a collage are some ideas you could try.
- **Find ways to relax.** You've learned about the effects of stress on the body. Doing things to slow your heart rate and breathing and relax tense muscles can help relieve the physical stress response. You can also find ways to relax or refocus your mind on something other than the stressful situation.
- **Keep a sense of humor.** A sense of humor gives you the ability to laugh at a situation rather than at yourself or someone else. Sometimes tension can be eased when you can think of or say something lighthearted in a difficult situation. It's always important to consider the circumstances, however, because humor may not be appropriate in all stressful situations.
- **Take action when you can.** If the stressful situation is one you have some control over, taking action—even if it's just a small step—can help you feel more empowered and capable. And, remember, you always have control over your own choices, even if you can't control the source of the stress.
- **Resolve or eliminate the source of stress.** If you can figure out where the stress is coming from or what's causing it, you may be able to take steps to resolve a situation or change how you respond to it. Identify the stressors in your life and see which ones you can avoid or deal with before they become too stressful.
- **Identify how to prevent stress in the future.** This might mean learning how to manage your time, or thinking ahead about what needs to be accomplished to complete a project or a task to help keep you focused and organized.

■ Students evaluate ways they cope with stress

Complete

Direct students to turn to **How Do I Cope with Stress?** on page 16 of the Student Workbook.

Think about when you might have used some of these ways to help deal with stress. Circle at least 2 coping strategies you've used before, give an example of when you used each one, explain what you did, and rate how well it worked for you in that situation. If you haven't used any of these strategies, choose at least 2 and describe when you might use each strategy in the future, what you could do, and how well you think it would work.

How Do I Cope with Stress?

Directions: Circle at least 2 coping strategies you've used when you were stressed. Give an example of when you used the strategy, explain what you did, and rate how well it worked for you in that situation. If you haven't used any of these strategies, choose at least 2 and describe when you might use the strategy in the future, what you could do, and how well you think it might work.

Make healthy choices. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well	Get support. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well
Understand your feelings. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well	Find ways to relax. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well
Keep a sense of humor. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well	Take action when you can. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well
Remove or eliminate the source of stress. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well	Identify how to prevent stress in the future. When I used this: What I did: How it worked: <input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> not very well <input type="checkbox"/> well <input type="checkbox"/> very well

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Allow time for students to complete the activity sheet.

Share

Call on student volunteers to share examples of when they've used some of these strategies, what they did and how well the strategy worked.

■ Students practice stress-management techniques

Explain

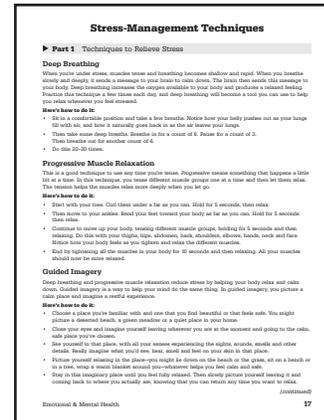
You're going to learn about and then practice some techniques you can use to help you manage stress. Not all of these techniques will work for every person. As you practice, you can decide which ones work best for you. Then you can use them the next time you feel stressed. Some of these techniques will help you relieve stress when you're experiencing it. Others can reduce or help you prevent stress from happening.

Read & Practice

Put students into small groups of 3 and direct them to turn to Part 1 of **Stress-Management Techniques** on page 17 of the Student Workbook. Assign or allow group members to choose 1 of the 3 techniques—deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation or guided imagery—to read about and report on to their groups.

You'll each read about one of these techniques that can help you manage some of the physical and mental/emotional effects of stress. Pay particular attention to the instructions for how to do the technique, because you'll be helping your group practice it in just a little while.

Allow time for group members to read about their assigned techniques.



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Practice

Now that you've all learned about a particular technique, you'll lead a practice session for your group members, using the instructions on how to do it.

Tell groups to begin the practice sessions, starting with deep breathing, then trying progressive muscle relaxation and guided imagery. Circulate as groups are practicing the techniques to offer guidance and corrective feedback, as needed.

Review

If you feel it's needed, lead another practice session with the whole class. Read or have student volunteers read the instructions for each technique and allow time for students to practice it one more time. Answer any questions students may have and provide additional instruction as needed, using the following tips as a guide:

Deep Breathing

- Count out loud as you lead students through the technique.
- Encourage them to take the breath into the lower abdomen rather than the chest.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Call out the muscle groups, such as feet, legs, arms, facial muscles, to guide students as they practice.
- Count to 5 as students tense each muscle group, and then give them the signal to relax again.

Guided Imagery

- Lead a session for students by describing a peaceful place with which your students would be familiar.
- Have students picture themselves leaving the classroom and entering this place. Tell them to notice what they see, hear, smell and feel there.
- Have students practice deep breathing while picturing themselves in the peaceful place.
- Guide students out of the exercise and back to present time slowly.

■ Students read about ways to reduce or prevent stress

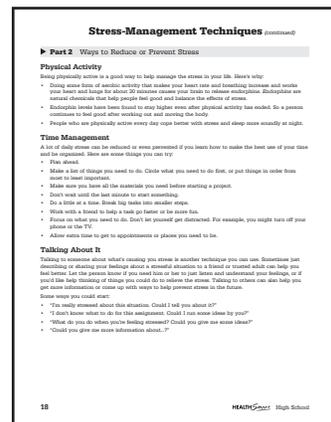
Explain

You can use the techniques you’ve just practiced to help relieve stress when you’re experiencing it. But there are also things you can do to help reduce the level of stress you experience or even prevent some stress from happening in the first place.

Read & Discuss

Have students remain in or return to their small groups of 3 and direct them to turn to Part 2 of **Stress-Management Techniques** on page 18 of the Student Workbook. Again, assign or allow group members to choose one of the 3 techniques—physical activity, time management or talking about it—to read about and report on to their groups.

Again, read about your assigned technique and be prepared to explain it to your group.



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Allow time for group members to read about their assigned techniques and then discuss the techniques in their groups. Circulate to keep groups on task and answer any questions.

Survey

Which stress-management technique do you think might be effective for you?

Why is it important to know how to respond to stressors in positive ways?

Allow students to share their ideas. Use their responses to reinforce the discussion about positive strategies for managing stress.

Summarize

Responding negatively to stressors can hurt your physical and emotional health and can sometimes cause additional problems and more stress. Finding positive ways to deal with stress and knowing some stress-management techniques can help you stay healthy.

Assessment & Closure

Students demonstrate learning

Complete

Direct students to turn to **My Stress-Management Plan** on page 19 of the Student Workbook.

You're now going to have the chance to put what you've learned into practice. Describe 3 stressors you face in your life. You can choose them from the lists you made during the last lesson on the **Stressors in My Life** activity sheet on page 13, or think of additional ones. Then:

- Suggest at least 1 negative response you might have to each stressor and explain why it would *not* be a good way to handle the stress.
- Describe at least 2 positive responses that would help you manage each stressor. Be specific.

My Stress-Management Plan

Directions: Describe 3 stressors you face in your life. Then:

- Suggest at least 1 negative response you might have to each stressor and explain why it would not be an effective way to handle the stress.
- Describe at least 2 positive responses that would help you manage each stressor. Be specific.
- Identify which of the stress-management techniques you learned today would be most effective with each of these stressors and explain why you chose it.
- Star or circle a positive response or stress-management technique you intend to try in response to one of these stressors in the future.

Stressor 1	Stressor 2	Stressor 3
Negative response	Negative response	Negative response
Why it's not effective	Why it's not effective	Why it's not effective
Positive response	Positive response	Positive response
Stress-management technique	Stress-management technique	Stress-management technique
Why it would be effective	Why it would be effective	Why it would be effective

Self-Check

- I described 3 stressors in my life, suggested 1 negative response to each.
- I suggested at least 2 positive responses to each stressor.
- I identified 2 positive responses to each stressor.
- I described which stress-management technique would be most effective in helping me deal with each stressor and explained why.

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- Identify which of the stress-management techniques you learned today would be most effective with each of these stressors and explain why you chose it.
- Star or circle a positive response or stress-management technique you intend to try in response to one of these stressors in the future.

Allow time for students to complete the activity sheet.

■ End the lesson

Send Home

Distribute a **Time to Talk: Skills for Dealing with Stress** family sheet to each student. Explain that they will take this sheet home and talk to a parent or older family member about ways to deal with stress.

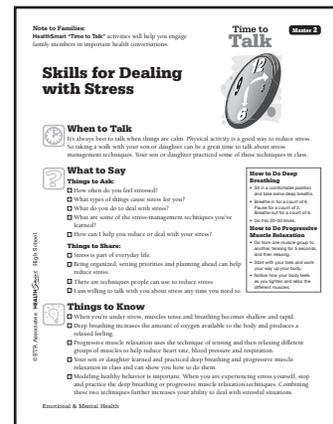
Close

Return to the stressful situation or stressor you wrote about at the beginning of class. Given what you now know about positive ways to respond to and manage stress, how would you evaluate your response to this stressor? What was positive about how you responded? Was there anything negative in your reaction? If so, what might have been a better or more effective way to respond?

Call on student volunteers to share their examples and evaluations with the class.

Assess

Collect students' **My Stress-Management Plan** activity sheets, and evaluate their work for this lesson.



Master 2

Assessment Evidence

Objective 1

Students evaluated effective strategies for dealing with stress by:

- Completing the **My Stress-Management Plan** activity sheet.

Objective 2

Students applied stress-management techniques to manage personal stressors by:

- Completing the **My Stress-Management Plan** activity sheet.

Objective 3

Students practiced stress-management techniques by:

- Practicing the techniques of deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation and guided imagery in class.

(Scoring Rubrics, page 258)

Lesson 6 • Ways to Manage Stress

My Stress-Management Plan Activity Sheet				
Objective	4	3	2	1
1. Effective Strategies for Dealing with Stress	Clearly and correctly describes 1 or more negative responses to 3 different personal stressors and explains why these responses would be ineffective or problematic. AND Clearly and correctly describes 2 or more specific positive ways to respond to each of the 3 identified stressors.	Correctly describes 1 negative response to 2 different personal stressors and explains why these responses would be ineffective or problematic. AND Clearly and correctly explains 2 specific positive ways to deal with 2 of the identified stressors.	Correctly describes 1 negative response to 1 personal stressor and explains why this response would be ineffective or problematic. AND Correctly explains 1 general positive way to deal with 1 or 2 of the identified stressors.	Does not correctly describe negative responses to personal stressor or explain why the responses would be ineffective or problematic. AND Does not correctly explain positive ways to deal with the identified stressors.
2. Applying Stress-Management Techniques to Personal Stressors	Correctly and clearly explains how various stress-management techniques learned in class would help reduce the stress from 3 specific personal stressors.	Correctly explains how stress-management techniques learned in class would help reduce the stress from 2 specific personal stressors.	Vaguely explains how stress-management techniques learned in class would help reduce the stress from 1 or 2 specific personal stressors.	Does not correctly explain how stress-management techniques learned in class would help reduce the stress from personal stressors.
Stress-Management Techniques Practice				
Objective	4	3	2	1
3. Practicing Stress-Management Techniques	Participates willingly and cooperatively in the small group practice for all 3 of the stress-management techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep breathing • Progressive muscle relaxation • Guided imagery AND Clearly and competently leads the group practice session for his/her assigned technique.	Participates willingly in the small group practice for 2 of the stress-management techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep breathing • Progressive muscle relaxation • Guided imagery AND Somewhat clearly and competently leads the group practice session for his/her assigned technique.	Participates unwillingly or uncooperatively in the small group practice for 1 or 2 of the stress-management techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep breathing • Progressive muscle relaxation • Guided imagery AND Vaguely or poorly leads the group practice session for his/her assigned technique.	Does not participate in the small group practice for the stress-management techniques. AND Does not lead the group practice session for his/her assigned technique.