



KidsHealth.org/classroom

Teacher's Guide

This guide includes:

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Standards

This guide correlates with the following National Health Education Standards:

Students will:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Your state's school health policies:
nasbe.org/HealthySchools/States/State_Policy.asp

You're late for school, the photocopies you need for your first class aren't made, and you spill coffee on your shirt in the car. Let's face it, you're stressed! Your students feel stress, too, about their lives at school and at home. The following discussion questions and activities can help them to learn more about what stress is, and how to effectively manage it.

Related KidsHealth Links

Articles for Kids:

The Story on Stress

KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/stress.html

Five Steps for Fighting Stress

KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/5_steps.html

Talking About Your Feelings

KidsHealth.org/kid/feeling/thought/talk_feelings.html

What Kids Say About: Handling Stress

KidsHealth.org/kid/talk/kidssay/poll_stress.html

Articles for Teens:

Stress

KidsHealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/stress.html

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

KidsHealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/ptsd.html

All About Anxiety

KidsHealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/anxiety.html

Discussion Questions

Note: The following questions are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

1. A big test, an annoying little brother, and a bad haircut can all add up to a lot of stress! Discuss what stresses you out. How do you feel when you're stressed?
2. Everyone deals with stress differently. How do you deal with it? Do some stress management techniques work better for you than others? Why do you think some strategies are more effective in reducing your stress level?
3. Discuss why some stress is considered to be good stress. Give an example of a situation in which stress could be helpful. When does stress become a problem?



Activities for Students

Note: The following activities are written in language appropriate for sharing with your students.

You Have Stress Mail!

Objectives:

Students will:

- Learn to identify common stressors
- Explore strategies for managing stress

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- Stress Mail handout (available at: KidsHealth.org/classroom/6to8/problems/emotions/stress_handout1.pdf)

Class Time:

20 minutes

Activity:

Everyone you know is stressed about something - homework, the big game, an argument with a parent. You decide to reduce the stress level in people's lives by creating a new Internet service called Stress Mail. A stressed-out person can write you an email, and you'll respond by providing suggestions for dealing with the stress. Start by reading the emails provided on the Stress Mail handout. Select one and write a response, using the information that you find in KidsHealth articles. In your response, make sure to:

- Identify what's causing the person's stress
- Provide at least two ways for reducing stress
- Offer at least one suggestion for avoiding stress in the future

Extensions:

1. Now that you've helped others to manage stress, it's your turn to help yourself! Create your own plan for stress management. In your plan, include the following items:
 - Factors that make you feel stressed
 - Strategies for managing stress that might work for you
 - Changes you could make in your life to help avoid stress
2. Do you eat chocolate or run a mile when you are stressed? Take a poll of students at your school, and get the lowdown on how they handle stress. Analyze the results. What patterns and trends do you notice about stress management strategies? Do older and younger students deal with stress differently? How about girls and guys? Why do you think you got the results you did?



Introducing Mr. Stress!

Objectives:

Students will:

- Learn about the physical effects of stress on the body
- Explore the signs of stress overload

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access
- Plain, unlined paper
- Art supplies (colored pencils, markers, crayons)

Class Time:

45 minutes

Activity:

Stress-o-matic Toy Company has hired you to design the newest action figure to hit the toy store shelves - Mr. Stress! Mr. Stress will be the first action figure to show the effects of stress on the body. To get started, read some KidsHealth articles to learn more about how stress affects the body. Using this information, design the Mr. Stress action figure. Your action figure should have two different modes of play: initial stress response and stress overload. For each mode of play, identify individual body parts and how they respond to stress. As you design Mr. Stress, keep the following questions in mind:

- What happens to Mr. Stress' body when he first responds to a stressor?
- What happens to Mr. Stress' body once he experiences stress overload?

Extensions:

1. After approving your design for the action figure, Stress-o-matic decides that Mr. Stress should come with a kit for fighting stress. What do you think the kit should contain? Describe why these items will help Mr. Stress to manage his stress.
2. Illustrate a comic strip of Mr. Stress at yoga class, in a soapy bath, or at some other serene location. Identify what happens to Mr. Stress' body as he manages his stress and relaxes.

Reproducible Materials

Handout: Stress Mail

KidsHealth.org/classroom/6to8/problems/emotions/stress_handout1.pdf



Name: _____

Date: _____

Stress Mail

Instructions: Select one of the emails below and do some research on KidsHealth. Then, write your response, making sure to:

- Identify what you think is causing the person's stress
- Provide at least two ways for reducing stress
- Offer at least one suggestion for avoiding stress in the future

From: kate@stressfulschedule.com
To: Stress Mail
Subject: Stress on the go

I am so stressed! I barely have a minute to relax all day long. Before school, I go to swim practice, and after school, I work on the school newspaper and have piano lessons. On Saturday mornings, I volunteer at the local hospital. Then the rest of the weekend, I try to catch up on the schoolwork that I didn't have time for all week. I never see my friends, and I always eat on the run. I'm starting to have headaches and stomachaches. What should I do?

From: nicholas@numericallystressed.com
To: Stress Mail
Subject: Math stress

I can't remember the last time I got a good night's sleep. I keep waking up because I'm so stressed about my math class. I just toss and turn, thinking out about the next question I'll get wrong when the teacher calls on me. When the alarm goes off, I'm exhausted, and by the time math class rolls around, I can barely keep my eyes open. Help!

From: will@woefullystressed.com

To: Stress Mail

Subject: Stuck in bed

ARGH! Everything is going wrong. I have a science fair project due at the end of the month and it will take me forever to do because I'm lousy when it comes to science. To make things worse, we're playing basketball in P.E. next week and I've never even dribbled a ball. With so much stress, there are some days I just don't want to get out of bed.

From: sam@stressedandlonely.com
To: Stress Mail
Subject: Stress in the family

My parents are getting a divorce, and I'm really stressed out about it. I can't stop thinking about what's going to happen to my family. I don't feel like hanging out with any of my friends, and I don't think there's anyone I can talk to who will understand what I'm going through. When someone does try to talk to me, I snap at them and tell them to leave me alone. I don't know what to do to get this knot out of my stomach.