

NEW MEXICO 4-H

Aggie Next Step

Managing Stress Causes & Effects



Post Secondary Pathways



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Managing Stress: Causes & Effects

LESSON FOCUS

Stress is something we all experience, whether from school, work, family, or everyday responsibilities. In this lesson, participants will explore the common causes of stress and learn how it affects both the body and mind. Understanding these foundations is the first step toward recognizing stress in your own life and developing strategies to manage it effectively.

PREPARATION

Review lesson materials and determine which worksheets and handouts you will use for the lesson. Print enough pre/post assessments, worksheets, and handouts for each participant.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have participants complete the **Pre-Assessment**.
2. Use Think-Pair-Share to assess where participants' knowledge levels and attitudes around stress currently exist. Ask: *What is Stress?*
Think – Participants first individually brainstorm ideas that come to mind when they think about stress.
Pair – Participants find a partner or small group and discuss their ideas.
Share – Finish with a class discussion about what they brainstormed. (*Optional: Create a brainstorming web on the board with the word "STRESS" in the center. Write student ideas around the web.)
3. Define stress: *Stress is the body's physical, mental, or emotional response to a challenging event or demand. It can be both positive and negative.*
4. Distribute the **Stressors/Types of Stress** handout. Read and discuss. Allow time for participants to list their most common stressors and sources of stress in the center of each page.

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Recognize** common stressors and types of stress.
- **Understand** how stress can affect the body, mind, and behavior.
- **Identify** personal stressors and their impact.
- **Identify** strategies to help manage stress in real-world scenarios.



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5. Distribute **Effects of Stress**. Explain to participants that when we are under stress (positive or negative), we typically experience changes in four different areas: emotions, body, thoughts, and behaviors. Allow participants time to complete the handout.
6. Introduce the **Stress Management Scenarios** activity. Say: *We've talked about what stress is, what causes it, and its effects. Now, let's look at some real-life situations where people experience stress. Your job will be to figure out what stressors are present, how stress might affect the person, and what healthy strategies they could use to cope.*
7. Divide participants into small groups (3-4) and assign or let groups choose a scenario. Instruct groups to discuss the following questions:
 - Q: What are the main stressors in this situation?*
 - Q: What effects might the person experience (emotional, physical, cognitive, or behavioral)?*
 - Q: What are 2-3 healthy coping strategies the person could try?*
8. After 5-7 minutes of discussion, have each group briefly present their scenario and responses. Encourage participants to compare similarities and differences between groups' strategies.
9. If time allows, wrap up with these discussion questions:
 - Q: Which stressors felt most familiar to you?*
 - Q: Did any groups suggest unhealthy coping ideas (like skipping meals, staying up late, or ignoring the problem)? What makes them unhealthy?*
 - Q: Which healthy strategies do you think would work best for you?*
10. **Exit Ticket** – depending on time, this can be done as a class discussion, or students can complete the worksheet in class, as homework, or in the following class.
11. **Have participants complete the Post-Assessment.**

REFLECTION

Stress is a natural part of life, but it doesn't have to control you. By understanding what causes stress and how it affects us, you are taking the first steps to feel more balanced, focused, and in control. Take a moment to think about one stress trigger you want to manage or one strategy you will try this week to help reduce stress in your daily life.





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EXTENSIONS

Encourage them to research additional stress-management techniques and evaluate which are most effective for teenagers. Then, ask participants to design a "Stress Survival Guide" poster, infographic, or presentation for teenagers

Practice mindfulness or breathing exercises as a class. Here are some ideas to help you start: <https://plt4m.com/blog/mindfulness-breathing-exercises-for-students/>

DIFFERENTIATION

Content Support: Break each worksheet into smaller parts and require students to check in before continuing.

Allow participants to complete sections verbally with a partner, counselor, or teacher.

English Language Learners: Pair students with a supportive peer for discussion.

Pre-teach key vocabulary: stress, stressor, emotional, physical, behavioral, etc.

Provide sentence starters for reflection:

- "One stressor I experience is..."
- "This strategy might help because..."

Visual Support: Display sample stressors and coping strategies on the board during discussions.

Social-Emotional Support: Allow participants to skip sharing personal stressors if they are uncomfortable.

Provide access to calming tools, movement breaks, or quiet workspaces if discussions become overwhelming.

Advanced or Early Finishers: Have participants create their own stress-management scenario cards for classmates to analyze.



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RESOURCES

Optional Videos:

Note: Please preview all videos before showing them to students to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant, and aligned with your classroom needs.

Y2Y Teens Discuss Stress, Anxiety and Mental Health

<https://youtu.be/BgZhHxUwIIU?si=4NeS3OBBR84XNPve>

Speaking Up on Teen Stress

<https://youtu.be/I-qmaC1bVHI?si=DrUjGjUFuMta-xRm>

High Schoolers Talk About Anxiety and Stress

<https://youtu.be/WIq-78ceWmc?si=rzt8kEy61ASE5uwl>

Stress: Understanding its Impact on Your Body and Mind

https://youtu.be/3UmLIkckZqg?si=v_5BMNRf9T9IHbb8

NM Standards:

NM PED Standards: Career and Technical Education (CTE):

CTE 2.1.9: Listen to and speak with diverse individuals to enhance communication skills

CTE 3.1.1: Employ critical thinking skills in teams to solve problems

CTE 6.2.1: Understand health and safety standards and concepts

Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) Standards: Career Ready Practices (CRP):

CRP-3: Attend to personal health and financial well-being

CRP-8: Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them

Optional ELA Alignment (Grades 6-12):

SL1: Participate in a range of conversations

SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence