

NEW MEXICO 4-H

Aggie Next Step

My Stress Action Plan



Post Secondary Pathways



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My Stress Action Plan

LESSON FOCUS

Stress is something everyone experiences – at school, work, and in everyday life. A little stress can sometimes motivate us, but too much stress can make it hard to think clearly or feel healthy. In this lesson, participants will take a self-care check to see what they are already doing to manage stress. Then, they will create a stress action plan with strategies to use both right now and in the future.

PREPARATION

Review the **Teacher Note** on page 2 of this lesson.

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. Warm-up with this question: *What's one thing you already do to take care of yourself when life feels stressful?* Participants can respond in writing or aloud.

Emphasize: *There are no right or wrong answers – this is about awareness.*

3. Briefly explain: *Stress is a normal response to challenges. Without healthy coping strategies, stress can build up, affecting school, relationships, and overall well-being. Self-care includes small, everyday actions that help us recharge and stay balanced.*

4. Distribute the **Self-Care Assessment**. Allow time to complete independently. Remind participants that this reflection is personal and does not need to be shared in detail.

5. Distribute the **Understanding Stress & Triggers**. Allow time to complete independently.

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Identify** current self-care habits and stress management strategies.
- **Recognize** personal stress triggers and warning signs.
- **Create** a personalized stress action plan with short- and long-term strategies
- **Identify** trusted support systems for managing stress.
- **Reflect** on how self-care impacts academic, social, and personal well-being.



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6. Distribute **Healthy Coping and Wellness Strategies**. Guide participants through completion. Optional: Play calm instrumental music while students work to model a relaxation strategy.
7. Now participants will use what they learned to complete their individualized stress action plan. Distribute **My Personal Stress Action Plan**. Allow time for independent completion.
8. **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.
9. **Have participants complete the Post-Assessment.**

Teacher Note / Sensitive Topic Reminder

Some students may identify personal stressors, emotional struggles, or unhealthy coping patterns during these activities. Remind students that they only need to share what they feel comfortable sharing. Participation in discussions should remain respectful, supportive, and judgment-free.

Be aware that conversations about stress, anxiety, relationships, family situations, or emotional health may bring up sensitive feelings for some students. If a student appears distressed or shares concerns related to safety, mental health, self-harm, substance use, abuse, or overwhelming emotional struggles, follow your school's procedures for student support and referral.

These activities are designed to promote healthy coping skills and self-awareness and are not intended to replace professional mental health care, counseling, or medical advice.

REFLECTION

Managing stress is an essential life skill. The plan you made today is a starting point – and you can keep adding to it as you learn what works best for you.





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EXTENSIONS

Distribute the *Stress Management Tips* handout for additional practice and home reinforcement.

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, coping strategy, self-care, trigger, support system, etc.

Provide sentence starters for reflection:

- "One thing that stresses me out is..."
- "A healthy coping strategy I already use is..."
- One trusted adult I can talk to is..."

Advanced or Early Finishers: Have participants design a stress-management infographic, poster, or presentation for peers.

Challenge participants to create a weekly self-care schedule or goal tracker.



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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.

Choices Magazine Presents: How to Deal with Stress

https://youtu.be/hW7nVYMYaHw?si=yqx_bkP2b8VTDbHb

How to Relieve and Get Rid of Stress – Relaxation Tips for High School and College

<https://youtu.be/jfHicRd9Eq0?si=WFFMMU-9yfxRB3-q>

Relaxation Skills for High School Students: How to Cope with Stress & Anxiety | Child Mind Institute

<https://youtu.be/9lZOond9srU?si=Rko0Yxz23QEM14f2>

NM Standards:

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

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