

Overview

Students can learn to cope effectively with peer conflicts and other stressors by deliberately changing how they think, act, and feel. For example, positive self-talk is a useful strategy for facing and coping with challenges.

**Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Understand that coping means consciously doing something positive to handle stress
- Understand that avoiding dealing with stress can make feelings worse
- Understand how positive self-talk can change your attitude
- Identify coping strategies (calming down, getting support, taking action)

Lesson at a Glance**Part 1**

Video: Real Voices interviews about stress.

Class discussion: Understanding the emotional and physical effects of stress.

Partner activity: Recognizing personal signs of stress.

Video: “The Paper.” A girl does not cope well with stress about having to write a history paper.

Group exchange: Discussing the video.

Part 2

Video: Real Voices teens talking about how they cope with stress.

Class discussion: Coping with stress.

Partner activity: Shifting attitudes.

Class discussion: Learning strategies for coping with stress.

Supplies and Equipment

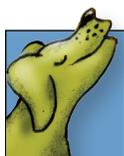
- DVD player and monitor or projector and screen
- Clipboard and Observational Assessment Form if doing the observational assessment

Lesson Materials

- Grade 7 DVD, Lesson 10 segment
- Handout 10A: My Personal Signs of Stress
- Staying in Control poster
- Handout 10B: Shifting Attitudes
- Coping with Stress poster
- Action Steps poster
- Optional: “Don’t Stress!” homework

Lesson Preparation

- Prepare a personal example of a typical stressful situation in your life as a teacher.
- Display the Coping with Stress, Action Steps, and Staying in Control posters at the front the room.
- Copy Handout 10A: My Personal Signs of Stress, one per pair of students.
- Copy Handout 10B: Shifting Attitudes, one per pair of students.
- Optional: Copy the “Don’t Stress!” homework, one per student.



Digital lesson materials!

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Teaching Notes

This is a good time to reassign students to new groups. As before, be aware of group dynamics and make sure all students feel safe in their groups.

Using Lesson Content Every Day

When faced with a stressful situation in the classroom, model coping using strategies from the Coping with Stress poster. For example: “I’m feeling stressed about getting ready for a science project. I don’t have all the background information I need, and I’m not sure where to get it. I will ask the school librarian if he can help me.”

Plan ahead to review these coping strategies in the days or weeks leading up to events such as a big test, a project due date, or student performances.

Encourage students to notice their self-talk in the forethought, performance, and self-reflection phases of any learning task. For example, in the forethought phase of a big project, ask, “What are you saying or thinking to yourselves about this upcoming project?” Help them figure out how to change any negative self-talk to positive self-talk. Go to www.secondstep.org for more information about self-regulated learning.

Why This Lesson Is Important

Stress is not always bad. The challenges students encounter in early adolescence help them grow and mature. The skills and lessons they learn from adapting to new circumstances and coping with new stressors can help prepare them for the future.

Students who cannot cope effectively with stress, however, have difficulty focusing and working in school and are at risk for emotional and behavioral problems. Stress can have a cumulative effect. When students become overwhelmed by stress, their ability to cope deteriorates, rendering them even less effective at handling further challenges.

In this lesson, students learn to view stressful situations as challenges that require coping rather than as harmful threats. This orientation is especially important in interpersonal conflicts, where a constructive perspective can result in problem solving, but a negative perspective can lead to aggression.

Some strategies students use to handle stress make things better, and some make things worse. Students increase their risk of depression and other stress-related problems when they react to stress by blaming themselves or ignoring, denying, worrying about, or trying not to deal with the problem. Effective coping involves positive action to cope with the stressor. Students can cope effectively by doing something concrete to change the situation, using self-talk to change their attitude about the stressor, using skills learned in this program to cope with the emotions caused by a situation, and reaching out to others for support.



Total Time **25 minutes****You will need:**

- Grade 7 DVD, Lesson 10 segment
- Personal example of a typical stressful situation in your life as a teacher
- Staying in Control poster
- Handout 10A: My Personal Signs of Stress, one per student

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>Select the Lesson 10 menu, then select "Begin."</p> <p>10.1</p>  <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 1:45 minutes</p>	<p>Before class starts, display the introductory screen.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1 minute</p> <p>Let's start today by listening to what some students have to say about what stresses them out.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>
<p>10.2</p>  <p>Introduce the lesson topic.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 minute</p> <p>These students talked about some things that stress them out. Raise your hand if some of these things sound familiar to you.</p> <p>Today we will talk about how to deal with stress in a positive and effective way. Dealing with stress in a positive way leaves you better prepared to make good decisions. It can help you feel more in control of your life.</p>

Outline

Script and Instructions

5 minutes

10.3

Stress affects you emotionally and physically.

10.3 Back Menu Next

Discuss the effects of stress and the importance of recognizing one's individual signs of stress.

[Staying in Control poster](#)

Write two headings on the board: "Emotional" and "Physical."
Record students' ideas underneath them.

When you are stressed, what are some of the *emotions* you feel?
(Anxious, overwhelmed, depressed, frustrated.)

In addition to affecting you emotionally, stress affects you *physically*. Your body can send you stress signs that might seem like other physical problems. In fact, you might not even recognize that it is stress that is causing the problems.

What are some examples of physical signs of stress? (Stomach aches, headaches, muscles feeling tight, feeling nauseous/losing appetite.)

Use a personal example of a stressful situation and talk about how the stress affected your body, thoughts, and feelings. Example: There are papers to grade or a school evening event that coincides with a personal commitment. There is just not time for everything. Effects might include: tension headache, scattered thoughts, feeling of anxiety.

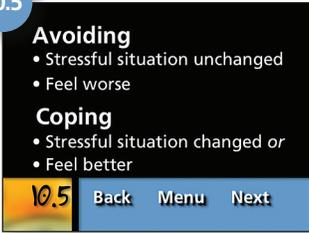
Last time, we discussed the Steps for Staying in Control and learned how they can help us manage our emotions.

Refer to the Staying in Control poster and briefly review the steps. Remind students about the centered breathing technique.

Those steps can also help us deal with the emotional and physical symptoms we feel when we are stressed.

Just as with managing our emotions, dealing with stress begins by knowing and then noticing our individual signs that we are being affected by stress.

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>10.4</p>  <p>Introduce the partner activity about signs of stress.</p> <p>Handout 10A: My Personal Signs of Stress</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">10 minutes</p> <p>Now you will do a partner activity about the signs of stress.</p>  <p>Distribute and read through the instructions on Handout 10A.</p> <p>On your own:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of a recent stressful situation. 2. Think about how the stress affected you emotionally and physically. <p>Together:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Write down at least two emotional and two physical ways that stress affects people. <p>You will have three minutes.</p>
<p>Have students do the partner activity.</p>	 <p>Give students three minutes to complete the activity. Observe and coach as necessary.</p>
<p>Call on students at random to report about the effects of stress.</p>	<p>Now let's add to our list of effects.</p> <p>Call on students at random and add any new ideas to the lists on the board.</p> <p>Other examples might include:</p> <p>Physical: can't sleep, sleep too much, eat too much or can't eat, get jumpy, body feels tense, skin breaks out.</p> <p>Emotional: worried, depressed, desperate, upset, agitated, confused, negative, hopeless.</p>

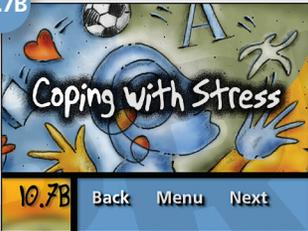
Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>10.5</p>  <p>Introduce the two ways of responding to stress.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 minute</p> <p>Researchers have found that there are two ways people typically respond to stress.</p> <p>One way can be labeled <i>avoiding</i>. Avoiding dealing with stress leaves the stressful situation unchanged and usually makes people feel worse.</p> <p>The other way is <i>coping</i>. Coping involves changing the stressful situation <i>or</i> doing something to feel better and more in control.</p> <p>Note: Young people don't always have the power to change a stressful situation, especially if the situation has to do with adults in their lives.</p> <p>The word <i>coping</i> means doing something positive about the stress. We are going to be learning more about coping.</p>
<p>10.6</p>  <p>Introduce the video and viewing task.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 1:53 minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">2 minutes</p> <p>But first let's learn to recognize what avoiding looks like by watching a story about a girl named Kate who finds herself in a stressful situation. She uses many different ways to avoid dealing with the stress.</p> <p>As you watch, notice all the ways she avoids dealing with the stressful situation or makes herself feel worse. Afterward you will do a one-minute group exchange about what you noticed.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>

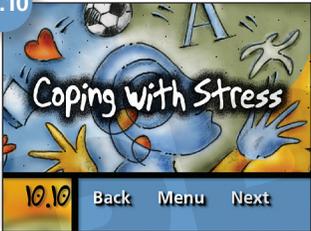
Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>10.7</p>  <p>Introduce the group exchange.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">5 minutes</p> <p>Now do a group exchange about what you noticed in the video.</p> <p>Read the screen aloud.</p> <p>You will have one minute.</p>
<p>Have students do the group exchange.</p>	<p>Give students one minute.</p>
<p>Call on students at random to report what they noticed.</p>	<p>What are some of the ways you noticed Kate avoiding dealing with her stress or making herself feel worse?</p> <p>List student responses on the board.</p> <p>Responses should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracting herself (with TV, calling a friend, talking to friends, reading a magazine) • Using negative self-talk and self-blame (“I can’t remember anything,” “I hate research,” “I bet Misha’s done her report”) • Putting off dealing with the situation • Doing nothing • Considering copying her brother’s report • Pretending it isn’t happening • Daydreaming (“I wish summer were here”)
<p>End of Part 1. Conclude here, or continue on to Part 2.</p>	<p>Today we discussed how stress affects our body, mind, and emotions. We learned that noticing our signs is the first step in dealing with stress. We identified behaviors that are part of avoiding dealing with stress.</p> <p>Review the list of avoiding behaviors on the board.</p> <p>Next time, we will talk more about coping with stress.</p>

Total Time **25 minutes**

You will need:

- Grade 7 DVD, Lesson 10 segment
- Coping with Stress poster displayed
- Handout 10B: Shifting Attitudes, one per pair of students
- Action Steps poster
- Optional: "Don't Stress!" homework, one per student

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>If presenting the lesson in two parts, select the Lesson 10 menu on the Grade 7 DVD, then select "Part 2."</p> 	<p>Last time, we discussed how stress affects our body, mind, and emotions. We learned that noticing our signs is the first step in dealing with stress. We identified behaviors that are part of avoiding dealing with stress.</p>
<p>10.8</p>  <p>Introduce a positive attitude as a key to coping.</p> <p>Introduce the video.</p> <p>Have students watch the video.</p> <p>Video length: 2:15 minutes</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">5 minutes</p> <p>Now we will talk more about coping. Coping means doing something positive to deal with stress.</p> <p>Studies have found that one way to deal with stress is to approach the stressful situation as a challenge or a problem that can be solved rather than a situation that is overwhelming and will never end.</p> <p>If you approach the stressful situation as a challenge or a problem that can be solved, how would it affect you? (You wouldn't feel stuck. You would be more hopeful. You would start thinking of things to do.) If students don't mention it, say: "You would have a more positive attitude."</p> <p>We have learned that having a positive attitude is helpful when problems arise with other people. A positive attitude is also helpful when dealing with stress.</p> <p>Let's watch an interview with some students who have discovered some positive ways to deal with stress.</p> <p>Play the video.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>10.9</p>  <p>Discuss the video.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 minute</p> <p>What are some of the ways these students cope with their stress? (Have a positive attitude. Set goals. Get organized. Tell themselves everything will turn out all right. Realize that they will feel better soon.)</p> <p>Habib mentioned that for him, positive self-talk is the key. What did he say to himself to help him cope? (“I can do it.”)</p>
<p>10.10</p>  <p>Discuss coping with stress using the poster.</p> <p>Coping with Stress poster</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">3 minutes</p> <p>Refer to the poster.</p> <p>Just as we used positive self-talk for managing our emotions, we can also use it to calm ourselves down and help us think clearly when we are stressed. It helps you shift into a positive attitude so you can approach the stressful situation as a challenge.</p> <p>We discussed how Kate, the girl in the video, used a lot of negative self-talk. She could have used <i>positive</i> self-talk to change her attitude. One example would have been simply to say “I can cope.” What are some other examples? (I can figure it out. I know I can do this. Everyone forgets once in a while. It’s not too late. If I work hard, I can write the report in time.)</p> <p>What might be the result of her using positive self-talk? (It would give her confidence. It would boost her spirits. She would see the situation as manageable. She would be able to think more clearly. She might be able to focus on her work.)</p> <p>Once you have made a positive statement that you can cope, you can ask yourself, “What can I do?” This shifts you further into a positive attitude where you approach the stressful situation as a challenge or problem that can be solved.</p> <p>What are some other questions that would work to shift you into a problem-solving attitude? (What is the problem here? What can I learn from this? What positive action can I take?)</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p data-bbox="212 310 266 338">10.11</p>  <p data-bbox="240 594 506 684">Introduce the partner activity and give instructions.</p> <p data-bbox="240 722 513 779">Handout 10B: Shifting Attitudes</p> <p data-bbox="240 863 500 919">Have students do the activity.</p> <p data-bbox="240 1079 521 1169">Call on pairs to tell the class their responses as time allows.</p>	<p data-bbox="1414 281 1523 304">10 minutes</p> <p data-bbox="651 323 1328 380">Now you will do a partner activity about shifting your attitude.</p>  <p data-bbox="784 417 1455 449">Distribute Handout 10B and read through the instructions:</p> <ol data-bbox="784 451 1490 699" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose two of the already filled-in negative attitude boxes. 2. Read the negative self-talk. 3. Brainstorm positive self-talk for the same situations. 4. Write your best ideas in the positive attitude boxes. 5. Fill in the blank negative attitude box with a situation of your own, and write positive self-talk for the same situation.  <p data-bbox="784 858 1398 915">Give students five minutes to complete their handouts. Observe and coach as necessary.</p>
<p data-bbox="212 1241 266 1268">10.12</p>  <p data-bbox="240 1530 540 1587">Continue going through the poster.</p>	<p data-bbox="1414 1205 1523 1228">5 minutes</p> <p data-bbox="651 1251 867 1278">Refer to the poster.</p> <p data-bbox="651 1314 1484 1371">Once you have shifted your attitude, there are three main kinds of coping strategies that help:</p> <ul data-bbox="699 1377 1089 1470" style="list-style-type: none"> • Use calming-down strategies. • Get support. • Use the Action Steps. <p data-bbox="651 1505 1000 1533">Sometimes you do all three.</p> <p data-bbox="651 1568 1344 1596">These are all things we learned about in earlier lessons.</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>Briefly review calming-down strategies.</p>	<p>Who remembers the kinds of calming-down strategies that we talked about last time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing something physically active • Doing something relaxing • Thinking about something else • Using centered breathing • Using positive self-talk <p>Let’s think of a stressful situation one of you might face and discuss how you might use one or more of the calming-down strategies to help cope. (Students offer ideas about a stressful situation and ideas for how to use calming-down strategies to cope. You may do this as a whole class activity or a group exchange, having students report ideas.)</p> <p>It is important once you have calmed yourself down to return to doing something positive about the stress. We saw the girl in the story doing all sorts of relaxing things—not as a way to calm herself down, but as a way to distract herself and avoid the situation.</p> <p>Another way to calm down strong feelings is to talk to someone about them or write about them in a journal. When you write about your feelings, also write down some positive self-talk or identify what else you can do to calm down. It is very important not to bottle up your feelings.</p>
<p>Briefly review getting support.</p>	<p>Refer to the poster.</p> <p>Who can you talk to about your feelings and get support from? (Friends, family, trusted adults, or professionals like doctors and counselors.)</p> <p>Who could the girl in the story have turned to for support? (Her brother, teacher, mom, or a friend.)</p>
<p>Briefly review using the Action Steps.</p> <p>Action Steps poster</p>	<p>Refer to the Action Steps poster.</p> <p>You can use the Action Steps to come up with an action plan for the situation.</p> <p>What actions could the girl in the story have taken? (She could have rearranged her babysitting or asked someone else to do it. She could have asked the librarian to help her with the research. She could have sat down with her brother and had him help her.)</p>

Outline	Script and Instructions
<p>10.13</p> <p>Coping with Stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use calming-down strategies. • Get support. • Use the Action Steps. <p>Sometimes you do all three.</p> <p>10.13 Back Menu</p> <p>Summarize the lesson.</p> <p>Optional: “Don’t Stress!” homework</p> <p>Using Lesson Content Every Day</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 minute</p> <p>In this lesson we learned that coping with stress means doing something positive to deal with the stress.</p> <p>Review the Coping with Stress poster.</p> <p>Knowing how to deal with stress is an important skill for handling situations maturely. It is also an important component of learning how to be in control of your own life and make good decisions.</p>
	<p> Distribute and explain the “Don’t Stress!” homework.</p>
	<p>Remember to incorporate the Using Lesson Content Every Day suggestions into daily academic tasks.</p>