



Mental health & emotional well-being

L Lower

- Lesson 1: Talking about worries
- Lesson 2: Easing stress
- Lesson 3: The Worry Dolls of Guatemala

LU Lower/Upper

- Lesson 4: A healthy mind
- Lesson 5: Rap your way to happiness

U Upper


- Lesson 6: Mental health and mental illness

Addiction

U Upper

- Lesson 7: What is addiction?
- Lesson 8: Eating disorders
- Lesson 9: Alcohol and alcohol abuse
- Lesson 10: Smoking – bad for our health?
- Lesson 11: Drugs – their use and their effects
- Lesson 12: Drug use and abuse
- Lesson 13: Volatile substance abuse

Lesson 4: A healthy mind

LU  30-45 mins

Aim

To explain the nature and causes of stress and to examine different ways of coping with it.

Learning outcomes

Children should be taught:

- to talk and write about their opinions ... ;
- to ... discuss ... topical issues, problems ... ;
- to reflect on ... social ... issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences;
- what makes a healthy lifestyle, including the benefits of exercise ... what affects mental health, and how to make informed choices;
- where individuals, families and groups can get help and support.

Resources

- **Resource sheet MHEW4a:** *What is stress?*
- **Activity sheet MHEW4b:** *Stressbusters*
- Writing materials to record the groups' feedback

Activity

Explain that in this, and the following lesson, the class is going to focus on stress. Ask:

Key Questions ?

What do you understand by stress?
What sort of things do you think cause stress?

Discuss the suggestions made about the nature of stress, leading the class to something along the lines of 'mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from difficult or demanding circumstances'.

Point out that:

- we usually think of stress as being either: brought about by an outside event or threat which makes us feel anxious (e.g. physical danger) or some inner feeling that we experience when we feel under pressure (e.g. something happening to us which we see as a cause for worry and which is difficult to handle, as when a teacher or parent gives us too many tasks to do, someone has

criticised us on social media or when there is concern about the health of a member of our family or one of our pets).

- stress is the body's way of responding to any kind of demand, which can be caused by both good and bad experiences. When people feel stressed by something going on around them, their bodies react by releasing chemicals into the blood. These chemicals give people more energy and strength, which can be a good thing if their stress is caused by physical danger. But this can also be a bad thing, if their stress is in response to something emotional, and there is no outlet for this extra energy and strength.

Explain that:

- stress is a natural part of everyday life.
- not all stress is associated with bad things; different people find different things stressful. We might be looking forward to an event which involves a lot of preparation and organisation; this may cause stress which can be exciting – good stress called eustress. In fact, what is exciting to one person may be a cause of horror or dread to another – e.g. a fairground ride, a swimming race, a times tables test, a hospital visit, etc. Talk about why someone might find each of these a challenge which they enjoy, while other children might be stressed, and why.
- apart from sometimes causing us excitement, stress can be a good thing for a more basic reason. It can help us be on the alert to danger and so help us to escape and keep safe (survival stress).
- some short-term stress is common to most of us, so that we may have butterflies in the stomach or sweaty hands before speaking in an assembly or taking an important exam; this may fire us up to cope better and give us the extra energy we need to perform at our best. But long-term stress – constant worry – may actually drain away our energy and undermine our ability to do well.
- some forms of stress are bad and cause us distress,

for instance when we have arguments or when we have to cope with too much change in our lives which we cannot control. Sometimes things around us cause stress, such as noise or crowds, e.g. when you leave a crowded event like a concert or a football match. This is environmental stress.

Ask:

Key Questions ?

Can you think of any times when you have experienced good stress (eustress)?

Can you think of occasions when you have been distressed, felt worried about something?

How did you cope with your distress or worry?

Respond to the answers given. Make the points that:

- when we are stressed, we need to find ways of coping and managing our stress;
- sometimes we can help ourselves to cope by doing some physical activity like jogging, running or cycling, or we can get busy with some other enjoyable physical activities;
- sometimes, doing something relaxing and calming is the answer;
- both, at various times, can help us to manage stress and be mentally healthy and happy.

Distribute **Resource sheet MHEW4a: What is stress?** and discuss the labels around the pictures, as a means of reinforcing some of the issues already covered.

Divide the children into mixed-ability groups of five to six and give each group a copy of **Activity sheet MHEW4b: Stressbusters**. Ask for a volunteer in each group to read out the speech bubbles. The group should discuss each person's advice. Tell the children to be prepared to report back their group's opinions for dealing with unpleasant stress as set out on the **Stressbusters** sheet.

At the end of the lesson, invite children to report back on whether they agree or not with the stress-busting ideas. Have they got any better ideas of their own they would like to share?

Differentiation

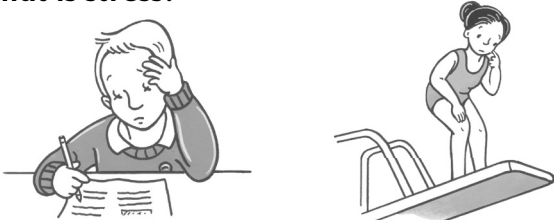
Generally, by outcome.

SEN: Children may need adult support to help them with reading.

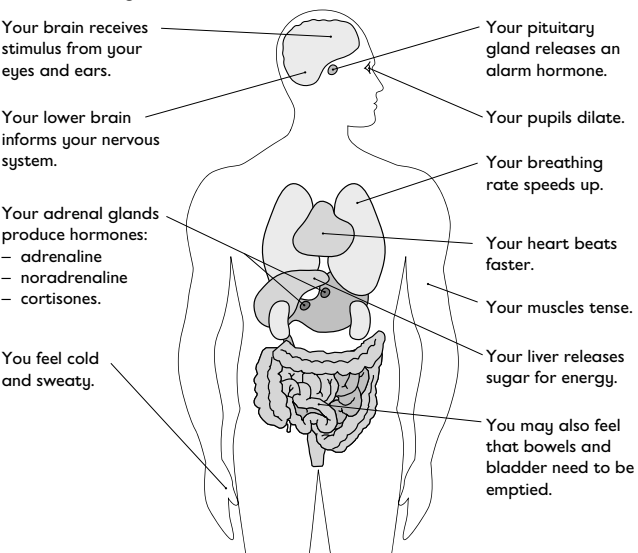
Mental health and emotional well-being
Resource sheet MHEW4a

Key Stage 2
Part 1

What is stress?



How the body reacts to stress



- Your brain receives stimulus from your eyes and ears.
- Your lower brain informs your nervous system.
- Your adrenal glands produce hormones:
 - adrenaline
 - noradrenaline
 - cortisones.
- You feel cold and sweaty.
- Your pituitary gland releases an alarm hormone.
- Your pupils dilate.
- Your breathing rate speeds up.
- Your heart beats faster.
- Your muscles tense.
- Your liver releases sugar for energy.
- You may also feel that bowels and bladder need to be emptied.

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PSHE Resource File Key Stage 2 Part 1
www.LCP.co.uk / PSHE Resource Files

Name: _____

Date: _____

Stressbusters

Read through the advice given by these young people and then talk about how you feel about it in your group.

This is Jessica's advice.

If you feel stressed, talk to someone and explain why you are stressed. Tell a trusted adult or friend your worries.

If you are stressed after an argument, try to discuss your differences. Listen to the other person's point of view and try to understand why others think as they do. Ask them to listen to your views in the same way.



Is this a good suggestion? _____

Is it hard to do and, if so, why? _____

Here is Ali's advice.

If you are stressed, plan ahead. Sometimes you know there will be stressful times ahead. Try to prepare for those times, e.g. revise for an exam, plan and practise your speech, etc.



Is this a good suggestion? _____

Is it hard to do what Ali says? _____

What might stop us from following this suggestion? _____

This is Matt's advice.

If you are stressed, remember to feel proud of yourself. Remind yourself of all the things that you are good at and imagine yourself doing the thing that you fear really calmly and well. Be prepared to stand up for what you believe in – you don't have to follow the crowd.



Do you like Matt's ideas? _____

Tell the group what you like about yourself. _____

Is it a good idea to remind yourself what your talents are? _____

Would reminding yourself help you to feel less stressed? _____

Here is Joshua's advice.

If you feel stressed, take exercise. As soon as you feel stressed, be energetic. Walk briskly, jog or run. Take up a regular sport that is fun and that you can do with good friends who make you happy.



Is this a good suggestion? _____

Have you ever felt worried or cross and then felt better after exercise? _____

This is the advice Olivia's Mum gives her.

If you feel stressed, relax. Stay cool! Ask yourself whether you will feel so upset about your problems

- next week;
- next month;
- next year?

Try to get your life in proportion.

- Exercise in the daytime so that you are naturally tired.
- Go to bed at a sensible time.
- Listen to music.
- Learn a new skill or hobby.
- Do interesting things that take your mind off your worries.
- Find out about mindfulness and other relaxation exercises.



Are these good suggestions? Have they ever worked for you? _____

Tell the group what you think is the best 'stressbuster' and try to explain why. _____