Junior

Virtual Field Trip 4
Stress Management and Coping

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School Mental Health Ontario

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Introduction

Every day, educators and students are exposed to big and small challenges that can contribute to feelings of stress. This year educators and students have risen to the challenge in innovative and creative ways, connecting and building meaningful relationships with students and families. As the impact of the pandemic continues to evolve, providing opportunities for explicit skill development will continue to be an essential part of bolstering positive student mental health. As an educator, it is equally important to prioritize your own well-being.

School Mental Health Ontario, in partnership with *Ophea*, is offering a series of lessons to support the development of stress management and healthy coping skills. The activities in these lessons provide an opportunity for skill development and modelling for both students and educators.

Each lesson will provide:

- A **minds on activity** for both educators and students.
- An **action** – through a video, classes will participate in a **'virtual field trip'** that provides opportunities for students and educators to learn, practice and develop skills to cope with and manage stress.
- A **consolidation** activity for follow up after the virtual field trip.

In this series of six lessons we will:

- Explore the connection between mental and physical health.
- Discuss the benefits of physical activity for stress management.
- Practice stress management coping skills.

Grades 4 – 6

Lesson Plan

This is the fourth lesson in a series of six lessons to support the development of **stress management** and **healthy coping skills**.

By demonstrating a range of stress management strategies, both students and educators will have more options and ideas for staying mentally well during difficult times. It is important to note that different strategies work for different individuals. Sharing a range of strategies over time will allow students the opportunity to try them out and determine what works for them.

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS:

Strand D, Healthy Living

This chart provides a brief summary of the mental health literacy topic learning, that this lesson will address, for **grades 4 – 6**.

Mental Health Literacy topic	D1 Understanding Health Concepts	D2 Making Healthy Choices	D3 Making Connections for Healthy Living
Grade 4		D2.5 Healthy choices to support Mental Health	D3.3 Stress Management (cognitive, behavioural)
Grade 5		D2.6 How to help others, when to seek help	D3.4 Stigma awareness
Grade 6	D1.4 Seeking help-professional helpers D1.5 Connecting thoughts, emotions and actions		

Strand A, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills

The chart below provides an "at-a-glance" summary of SEL skills. SEL has been shown to support student emotional wellness, when offered in the context of a caring, inclusive, equity-minded classroom setting. When student identity is affirmed, and skills are introduced in a developmentally-appropriate and sequenced manner, students can select and adopt social-emotional strategies that build on their strengths. The highlighted skills will be the focus of this lesson series. Learning related to SEL skills are woven throughout the health and physical education curriculum for all grades.

Students will learn skills to:	So they can:
• **identify and manage emotions**	• express their feelings and understand the feelings of others
• **recognize sources of stress and cope with challenges**	• develop personal resilience
• maintain positive motivation and perseverance	• foster a sense of optimism and hope
• build relationships and communicate effectively	• support healthy relationships and respect diversity
• develop self-awareness and sense of identity	• develop a sense of identity and belonging
• think critically and creatively	• make informed decisions and solve problems

For a more detailed overview please see Appendix A of the 2019 HPE Curriculum.

LEARNING GOALS:

EDUCATOR	CLASS
As educators, we are learning to build the confidence and competence to: • explore the connection between our mental and physical health. • discuss the benefits of physical activity for stress management. • practice and model stress management coping skills.	As students, we are learning to build confidence and competence to: • explore the connection between mental and physical health. • explore distraction activities as a possible tool to help us cope with stress.

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

Co-create success criteria with your students using the following questions:

- How will we know we are achieving our learning goals?
- What will it look like/sound like?

Re-visit the success criteria you created from the previous virtual field trips. What opportunities are there to extend the learning?

For example:

- I can recognize that stress is a part of life and that it can be managed.
- I can learn ways to respond to stressful challenges.
- I can practice, observe, and apply strategies to help manage my stress.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Approaches to all instruction, including Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, must be mediated through respectful conversations about students' lived realities, inequity, bias, discrimination and harassment. Starting with self-reflection about yourself, the classroom and the situations individual students in your class may be coping with is key. It is important to remember that our students face a range of challenges that are relative to their personal, social, and cultural lived experience. They also have existing ways of coping. Be sure to consider sources of stress and examine and address structures that reinforce inequitable conditions that add stress to you, your students and entire communities. Through instruction and modelling, we can help students practise new and bolster existing coping strategies.

- This virtual field trip lesson is intended to be embedded as part of your school day. Our collective learning takes place on many different traditional Indigenous territories all across Ontario. We are grateful to be able to work and learn locally on these lands. As a school in Ontario we understand morning routines, including a land acknowledgement specific to your location, will have taken place prior to this field trip.

- The focus on emotions may be difficult for some students. Be prepared to connect students to additional supports if needed. Refer to the ONE-CALL Desk Reference for more information, and take time to consider your school and board circle of support and service pathways. Know what to do, and who to connect with, if a student seems like they might be struggling with their mental health.

- An effort has been made to include different options for each of the activities. Please feel free to offer further modifications and accommodations based on the individual student need(s) in your classroom. Also, note that all videos have subtitles. You can choose to have captions by clicking the small 'CC' button at the bottom right of the video screen.

MINDS ON

This virtual field trip focuses on **distraction** activities and how this strategy can help us manage stress. From time to time all of us can feel overwhelmed with feelings and situations that cause us stress. Distraction is one strategy that can help give us some space from those feelings and an opportunity to settle our mind and emotions. There are many activities that can help us refocus our mind and each of us is different in what works best for us.

Often the activity we choose to distract ourselves with reflects our interests or our strengths. Understanding what we value, acknowledging our strengths, and knowing the kinds of activities we find fun can help us choose a suitable distraction.

Please complete this Minds On activity before participating in the virtual field trip.

EDUCATOR	CLASS
Reflect on the following questions: • What distractions am I currently using to cope with stress? Are they effective? • What are five activities or actions that bring a smile to my face? Could any of these activities be an effective distraction? 	**The I in Image** The I in Image activity provides students an opportunity to choose an image that they connect with and then share why they chose it. This activity will shine a light on the strengths and interests of students. It also allows for students to hear and learn about the views of their peers. You can customize this activity for the age and interests of your students through the images you select to use. The linked cards below provide instructions for face-to-face learning. This activity can be adapted for virtual learning by inserting images on a document or in a slide deck. Visit Appendix A for a table of images that may be helpful. • The I in Image – ETFO version • The I in Image – OECTA version

ACTION TASK: VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP VIDEO

In this video, a mental health professional will explain the strategy of distraction. Students and educators will share the activities they use to distract themselves. Distraction can help give some space from feelings of stress and provide an opportunity to settle our mind and emotions. There are many activities that can help us refocus our mind – each of us is different in what works best for us.

Links to view virtual field trip: Click here to view on **YouTube** Click here to view on **Vimeo**

CONSOLIDATION

These activities and resources are designed to provide opportunities for consolidation of learning for both the educator and the students. Also provided is a letter for parents/caregivers that shares information and possible opportunities for follow-up learning.

EDUCATOR	CLASS
Reflect Now that you have participated in four virtual field trips, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction), take some time and reflect on the following questions: • Which strategies (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction) do you use most often? • Which strategies (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction) work best for you? • Which specific activities do you find most effective? (for example – five-finger breathing, my favourite place, etc.) • Are there new activities that you would like to practice and incorporate into your daily life?	**Choose from the following activities:** ☐ **Celebrate and Acknowledge** Consider setting up a shared space where students can contribute activities or accomplishments that are important to them. If learning in a virtual environment, students could contribute to a digital space. A shared slide deck or JamBoard could work. For a more detailed explanation view the SMH-ON 'What's New?' activity card: • What's New? – ETFO version • What's New? – OECTA version ☐ **Make a list** Ask students to name activities from the video that resonated with them. Make a list of these 'distraction activities' that are preferred by your class. Ask: "Are there other activities that you would like to add to the list?" ☐ **Reflect and Discuss** Re-visit the strategies learned in the first three lessons – (breathing, muscle relaxation, and visualization). Which was your favourite activity and why? Are you noticing which strategies work best for you? How do you know they are working? ☐ **Practice** • Offer students opportunities to explore distraction activities of their choice. • Provide opportunities for students to practise the strategies introduced in previous field trips. • Try one of these physical activities from Ophea: https://ophea.net/ideas-action/physical-activity

PARENT/CAREGIVER

Today our class participated in a virtual field trip to learn more about coping with stress, recognizing that stress is a part of life, and that there are strategies to help us cope. If you would like to continue the learning from today, here are a few prompts to ask your child.

- Why do you think it is important to understand and know how to manage your emotions?
- What activities do you use to distract yourself when you are feeling stress?

For more activities to try at home, check out this set of activity cards from *School Mental Health Ontario*: https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/EDMH-ParentActivities-FINAL-EN.pdf.

You can also access *Ophea's* Resources to Support Parents and Caregivers with Health and Physical Education at Home and visit Ophea Open Class for recorded instructional videos and lessons with guiding reflection questions related to social-emotional learning to support learners at home.

Appendix A

Minds On: Images for 'I in Image'

Look through the images and choose one that you relate to, or that you are interested in. Take note of what the image number is, then in the class discussion share your answer about what your choice was and why you chose that image. Click below to download slides of these images:

Google Slides | PowerPoint

Image Source: Pixabay

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