

Secondary

Virtual Field Trip 6 Stress Management and Coping

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Gratitude



School
Mental Health
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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 that includes resources to share with secondary students to further support skill development in this area.

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 9 – 12

Lesson Plan

This is the sixth and final lesson in this series 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.

FOCUS OF LEARNING:

We develop social-emotional learning skills throughout our lives. 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. Both elementary and secondary curriculum contain connections to social-emotional learning. Social-emotional learning aligns with the *transferable skills*, the learning skills, and work habits (refer to *Growing Success, 2010*) which are addressed as part of all curriculums. Here is an outline of the six skill categories of social-emotional learning. The two highlighted skills will be the focus of this lesson series. Integrating opportunities for students to practice and discuss stress management and coping strategies will benefit learning in all subject areas.

Students will learn skills to:	So they can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and manage emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> express their feelings and understand the feelings of others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize sources of stress and cope with challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop personal resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain positive motivation and perseverance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> foster a sense of optimism and hope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> build relationships and communicate effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support healthy relationships and respect diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop self-awareness and sense of identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a sense of identity and belonging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> think critically and creatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make informed decisions and solve problems



LEARNING GOALS:

EDUCATOR	CLASS
<p>As educators, we are learning to build the confidence and competence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>As students, we are learning to build confidence and competence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the connection between mental and physical health. • explore gratitude as a possible strategy 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 [the previous 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.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ This virtual field trip lesson is intended to be embedded as part of your school day, as part of a lesson during instructional time, whenever it is apparent that students may be struggling and feeling challenged, and/or during times of the year when students may face additional stressors (e.g., exam period, year-end transitions etc.).
- ▶ 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 **gratitude**. Gratitude is when we express appreciation and thanks for the good things in our lives. We can be thankful for what we receive, the people who surround us and the fun and interesting things we get to experience and do. Gratitude is a way of thinking, one that you can practice, develop and cultivate. Gratitude also helps you manage stress and can bring more positivity and joy into your life.

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

Note: all the visuals shown below can be downloaded for your use by clicking [here](#).

EDUCATOR	CLASS
Viewing the world and relationships through a lens of gratitude can help us notice and appreciate the positives in life, even when facing a challenge. Use the visual below to help you notice and acknowledge the things that you are grateful for.	<p>Choose from the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirmations The use of positive affirmations was introduced in the previous virtual field trip as a Minds On activity for educators and as an option for consolidation for students. Creating a personal, positive affirmation pairs well with practicing an attitude of gratitude. Viewing the world and relationships through a lens of gratitude can help us notice and appreciate the positives in life, even when facing a challenge. Having students create their own affirmations could provide them with a reminder that there is always something to be thankful for. This Four Finger Affirmations poster and the following Gratitude Reminders visual can be used to help your students create their own affirmation. KWL Chart Use <i>Ophea's Student Resource</i>: Recordable Learning Tool, KWL Chart to find out what students know and what they want to know.

ACTION TASK: VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP VIDEO

In this video, students and educators will learn **why** gratitude is a useful tool to help us cope with stress, **how** we can practice gratitude, and you'll hear thoughts about gratitude from students.

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.

EDUCATOR	CLASS
<p>Choose from the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>❑ Reflect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the entire virtual field trip series. Are there strategies that you have adopted or would like to adopt into your everyday life? <p>❑ Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider re-visiting all the strategies, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing and gratitude), and take some time to practice the activities that you wish to adopt. • Consider trying the following Gratitude Notes activity as part of your morning routine: <p>❑ Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sharing this virtual field trip series with a colleague to use with their class! 	<p>Choose from the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>❑ Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit this link to download a set of gratitude visuals and use some of the suggestions to provide students with opportunities to practice an attitude of gratitude. • Review, discuss and give students time to look closer at the four steps to practice gratitude introduced in the video: <i>Noticing, Reflecting, Feeling, Doing</i>. Have students reflect on each question that was asked in the video. Appendix A has a handout to support this. <p>❑ Reflect and Discuss</p> <p>If you used Ophea's KWL chart in the Minds On section, re-visit the tool here to record any new information that students learned.</p> <p>Re-visit the strategies learned in the first five lessons (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an activity from one of the field trips that you have started using regularly? If so, which one and why do you use it? • Have you noticed which strategies, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing) work best for you? • How do you know they are working? <p>❑ Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to share their favourite strategy with a friend, or family member.





Appendix A • Practising Gratitude



Noticing – Pause and become aware of a person, place or thing that you want to appreciate. Did you receive an act of kindness? Are you noticing something simple in your life that brings you joy?



Reflecting – Think about why you've received this act of kindness or what you appreciate about whatever it is you are grateful for? What are some reasons why you are thankful for this person or thing?



Feeling – What emotions are you feeling? When you think about this special person or special thing that you are grateful for, how do you feel? Happy, excited, calm, proud...?



Doing – This is the **action** that you take to express your appreciation! What can you **do** to express your gratitude for this person, place or thing?

