

Intermediate

Virtual Field Trip Stress Management and Coping

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School
Mental Health
Ontario

Santé mentale
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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 their educator teams 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 7 – 8

Lesson Plan

This is the first 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, students 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 7 – 8**.

Mental Health Literacy topic	D1 Understanding Health Concepts	D2 Making Healthy Choices	D3 Making Connections for Healthy Living
Grade 7	D1.6 Mental health, mental illness		
Grade 8		D2.4 Routines and habits for mental health	

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:
<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

For a more detailed overview please see the [2019 HPE Curriculum](#).

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 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. • practice breathing strategies as a possible tool to help us cope with stress.



SUCCESS CRITERIA:

Co-develop 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?”

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.



MINDS ON:

The Minds On is to be completed BEFORE the virtual field trip.

EDUCATOR	CLASS
<p>What is social-emotional learning?</p> <p>Watch this 5 minute video for helpful background information: What is social-emotional learning?</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of emotions do you experience throughout your day before, during and after school? • Describe some reasons why it would be important to understand and know how to manage your emotions. • How do you think social-emotional learning skills help you as an educator? • How do you think social-emotional learning skills strengthen the relationships with your students and others around you? 	<p>Learning about Stress Management and Coping</p> <p>Watch the Skills for students: Managing the stress we feel with your students.</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of emotions do you experience throughout your day at school? • Why is it important to understand and know how to manage your emotions? • How do you know when you are feeling stress? • What are some strategies you currently use to help manage feelings of stress?

ACTION TASK – VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP:

This pre-recorded session is facilitated by an Ophea Educator ambassador and a clinician from School Mental Health Ontario. This session focuses on breathing strategies and how they can help us cope with stress. Guided breathing exercises are an effective and useful tool to help us check-in with ourselves and manage our emotions. These types of interventions can help decrease how our body physically reacts to stress, and helps us calm our mind. In the video, the educator and mental health professional lead a variety of breathing exercises for you and your students to participate in together.

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 to offer families to share information and share opportunities for follow-up learning.

EDUCATOR	CLASS	FAMILIES
<p>Support your own mental health with these self-care tips:</p> <p>SMH-ON Personal Resiliency Tips for helpers who Support Students</p>	<p>Choose from the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Discussion Revisit some of the guiding questions in the minds-on and compare ideas from pre and post field trip. ▣ Offer students further opportunities to practise the strategies introduced, or try new strategies from School Mental Health Ontario and Ophea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Mental Health Ontario: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyday Mental Health Resource (contains some of the activities used in the virtual field trip) - Breathing and Noticing - Circular Breathing Exercise • Ophea, Brain Blitz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathing with Awareness - Breathing Good Energy In - Happy Place Meditation 	<p>Letter to share with caregivers</p>





Dear 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.

- Which strategy/strategies from today felt most helpful for you?
- Do you have other strategies of your own that you find helpful? What are they?
- Why do you think it is important to understand and know how to manage your emotions?

Your child was also introduced to the [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#).

We explored some of the many resources designed to support youth, including a package of visuals about breathing exercises.

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 H&PE curriculum connected content appropriate for online delivery at home at: ophea.net/hpeathome 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.

