

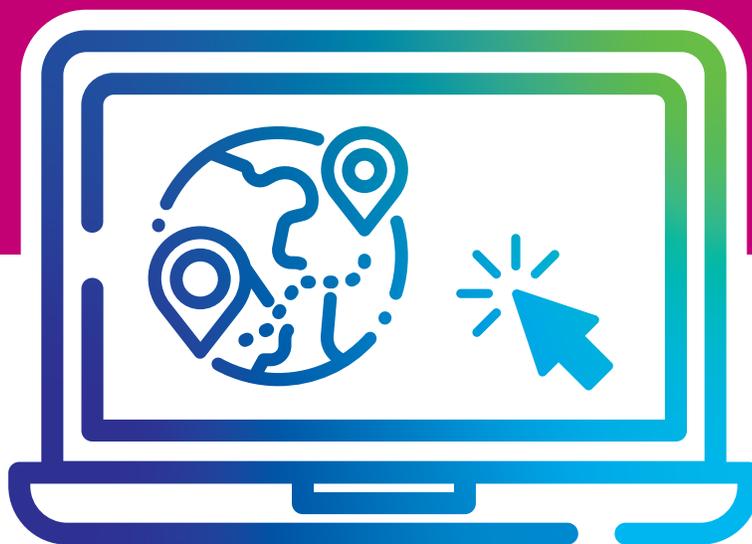
Early Years

Virtual Field Trip 4 Stress Management and Coping

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Distraction



School
Mental Health
Ontario

Santé mentale
en milieu scolaire
Ontario





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 early years educator teams.

Each lesson will provide:

- A **minds on activity** for both early years educator teams 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.

If students are learning virtually, parents/caregivers are encouraged to participate in the virtual field trip!





Lesson Plan

The learning experiences in this lesson series will complement the learning expectations found in the Self-Regulation and Well-Being Frame of the Kindergarten Program. Social-Emotional Learning skills help students develop the skills to foster overall health and well-being, positive mental health, and the ability to learn, build resilience and thrive.

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:

Self-Regulation and Well-Being Frame

OE2

As children progress through the Kindergarten program, they: demonstrate independence, self-regulation, and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other endeavours.

Conceptual Understandings

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are responsible for our own choices and decisions. Everyone wants to be calm, focused, and alert. We each need different strategies, environments, and support to be calm, focused, and alert. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to learn about strategies and environmental factors that can help us self-regulate. We can learn how to adapt our behaviour to suit a variety of social circumstances, including the customs of different groups of people. |
|---|--|



This chart below provides an “at-a-glance” summary of Social Emotional Learning (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.

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 [Appendix A of 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that everyone wants to be calm, focused, and alert • that we each need different strategies, environments, and supports to be calm, focused and alert • to practice muscle relaxation strategies that help us self-regulate

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?

Re-visit the success criteria you created from [the first three virtual field trips](#). What opportunities are there to extend the learning?

For example:

- With help, I can recognize when I am calm and when I am not calm.
- With help, I can find ways to calm down when I am overwhelmed.



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
<p>Reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? 	<p>Play a simple game of “Would you Rather?” with your students to get them thinking about activities that they enjoy. This game is designed to get students thinking about their preferences. You can create your own questions or use the ideas found in the chart below.</p> <p>Consider providing visuals when asking students their preference. For example, if asking – “Would you rather play with Lego/blocks inside or jump rope outside?” – you could act out each activity or hold up blocks in one hand and a skipping rope in the other. Students could share their preference by raising the hand or thumb, (or alternate object) on the side that matches their choice.</p> <p>Students are encouraged, but not required to share their preference visibly in this activity. It is intended as a spark to get students thinking about what they enjoy doing. You can create your own questions or use the ideas found in Appendix A. Consider adding activities that are of interest or currently relevant for your class.</p>

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
<p>Reflect</p> <p>Now that you have participated in four virtual field trips, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction), take some time and reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? 	<p>Choose from the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>□ Make a list</p> <p>Ask students to name the activities suggested in the video. Make a list of these ‘distraction activities’ that can be viewed by students and have students suggest additions to the list. This list could be referenced when students may need a distraction activity.</p> <p>□ Reflect and Discuss</p> <p>Reflect on the Minds On and the video –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After playing “Would you Rather?” and then watching the video about distraction, do you have any new ideas for activities to use to distract your thoughts when you have big feelings?” <p>Re-visit the strategies learned in the first three lessons – (breathing, muscle relaxation, and visualization).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which was your favourite activity and why? • Are you noticing which strategies work best for you? • How do you know they are working? <p>□ Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 big feelings?

For more activities to try at home, check out this set of activity cards from *School Mental Health Ontario*: <https://smho-smsso.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

Would You Rather?

This game is designed to get students thinking about their preferences. You can create your own questions or use the ideas found in the chart below. Click below to download slides of these images:

[Google Slides](#)
[PowerPoint](#)

Would you rather....		
build with blocks inside	OR	jump rope outside?
sing along to your favourite song		dance?
snuggle with a stuffed animal		take a dog for a walk?
build a snowman		build a sandcastle?
climb on the playground equipment		swing on the swings?
read a book by yourself		play a card game with a friend?
draw a picture		have a bubble bath?
jump in a pile of Fall leaves		go swimming on a hot day?

