

Secondary

Virtual Field Trip 4 Stress Management and Coping

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Distraction





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 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.

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 distraction activities 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 **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>The I in Image –</p> <p>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. This activity can be customized for the age and interest of your students through the images you select to use.</p> <p>Instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share a variety of images with students. (You can use the images found in Appendix A, or customize your own.) 2. Ask students to choose one image that resonates with them. Have them take note of the number of the image. 3. Have a class discussion where each student shares the image they selected and why they chose it. |



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.

| 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>□ Reflect and Discuss</p> <p>Re-visit the strategies learned in the first three lessons – (breathing, muscle relaxation, and visualization), plus the strategy discussed today (distraction).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of the four strategies introduced is your favourite and why? • Are you noticing which activities work best for you? How do you know they are working? • Are there new activities that you would like to practice and incorporate into your daily life? <p>□ Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>□ Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download the Distraction social media bundle from our site for easy to share images and active ideas for distraction activities https://smho-smso.ca/blog/new-student-resources-for-anxiety-management-and-mental-health-literacy/ |





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:

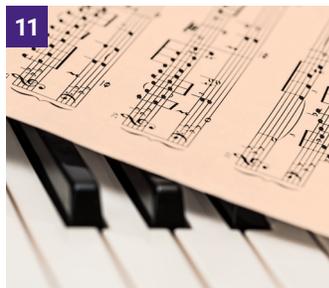
[Google Slides](#)
[PowerPoint](#)


Image Source: Pixabay

