

Early Years

Virtual Field Trip 3 Stress Management and Coping

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Visualization



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:
• 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: <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. 	As students, we are learning: <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 two 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 **visualization** activities and how this strategy can help us manage stress. It is important to recognize how our body feels, while noticing and acknowledging our feelings. Guided imagery provides an opportunity to shift our focus away from worries and distractions. It can help us relax when we visualize an image that promotes feelings of calm.

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"> • Can your thoughts change how your body feels? • Can the way your body feels change your thoughts? • Can your emotions change how your body feels? • Can the way your body feels change your emotions? <p>Try this Breathing and Noticing video. Notice how you feel physically and mentally before the activity. Check in after the activity to see if there are any changes.</p>	<p>Using the list of activities found in Appendix A, and any ideas of your own, provide students with a variety of opportunities to learn about and/or practice using their five senses. This is a great way to activate thinking before learning about the strategy of visualization. When we visualize, we don't just picture how something will look, we also think about how it might feel, taste, smell and sound.</p> 

ACTION TASK: VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP VIDEO

In the video, an educator and mental health professional will lead two guided visualization activities for you and your students to participate in together. This strategy puts us in touch with our internal thoughts and helps us focus. This in turn can help us recognize sources of stress and help us cope with challenges.

Here are links to the activities that are demonstrated in this video:

- Body scan activity from Ophea combines two activities from the [Brain Blitz resource](#)
- [Visualization video](#) from School Mental Health Ontario

Also, be sure to check out the additional resources in the consolidation section of this lesson for follow-up learning.

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 Now that you have participated in three virtual field trips – (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization), take some time to reflect on which strategies were most effective for you?</p> <p>Are there specific strategies that you would like to practice and incorporate into your daily life?</p> <p>Practice Consider trying this guided body scan activity to practice using visualization as a strategy for yourself.</p> <p>Click here to view</p>	<p>Choose from the following activities:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect and Discuss Re-visit the strategies learned in the <u>first two lessons</u> – (breathing and muscle relaxation). Which was your favourite activity and why? Are you noticing which strategies work best for you? How do you know they are working?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Practice Offer students further opportunities to practise the activities introduced in this field trip, or try one of these complementary activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Mental Health Ontario: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forest Visualization Activity - Imaginary Walk - Visualization and Body Scan • Ophea, Brain Blitz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathing with Awareness - Breathing Good Energy In - Happy Place Meditation
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think it is important to understand and know how to manage your emotions? • Which visualization relaxation activity from today felt most helpful for you? • Were you able to imagine your favourite place with all your senses? Would you like to tell me about your favourite place? <p>For more activities to try at home, check out this set of activity cards from <i>School Mental Health Ontario</i>: https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/EDMH-ParentActivities-FINAL-EN.pdf.</p> <p>You can also access <i>Ophea's</i> 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.</p>	





Appendix A

Using our Senses

Here are three activities to choose from as a **Minds On** activity before the Virtual Field Trip video. Choose the activities that will best suit the needs of your students. If you are face to face with your students, consider setting up a variety of stations or centres in your classroom or outdoors for students to explore. You may have other ideas to add to the list based on the materials you have on hand – story books about senses, water table, play dough, sand box, musical instruments, etc.).

	<h3>Listening Walk</h3> <p>Take students for a walk and have them notice the sounds that they hear. You can give students the checklist found in Appendix B to help guide them in their noticing or make the activity more open ended. You can adapt this activity for a variety of locations – this can be done at home, in the hallways of the school, on the playground, etc. Change the items students are listening for based on the season – sound of walking through snow or leaves, lawnmowers running, etc.</p>
	<h3>Guess the Object</h3> <p>Place an object in a bag or box so that students can't see it. Invite a student to reach in and feel the object and describe only what they can feel. For example – bumpy, round, smooth, rough. Once the student has given 3 descriptive clues, accept guesses from the class, and then a guess from the student providing the description. Remove the item from the bag and then repeat. Use a variety of items – a small stuffed animal, a toy car, or even an ice cube! You might want to model this game before having a student be the leader.</p>
	<h3>I Spy</h3> <p>Play a classic game of I Spy with my little eye. The leader gives the colour of the object as a clue. For example, if the leader chooses an apple, they say, "I spy with my little eye something that is red." Take a few guesses from the class. If no one knows the answer, then the leader adds another detail. For example, "I spy with my little eye something that is red and round." Students take turns guessing. If no one guesses correctly the leader can add another detail, (e.g., red, round, and juicy.), until someone guesses correctly. You might want to model this game before having a student be the leader.</p>



Appendix B

What do you hear?



Check off the things you hear. There is space to draw other sounds you notice.


