

# Secondary

## Virtual Field Trip 5 Stress Management and Coping

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**Thought-changing**



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



## LEARNING GOALS:

| EDUCATOR  | CLASS   |
|---|---|
| <p>As educators, we are learning to build the confidence and competence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore the connection between our mental and physical health.</li> <li>• discuss the benefits of physical activity for stress management.</li> <li>• practice and model stress management coping skills.</li> </ul> | <p>As students, we are learning to build confidence and competence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore the connection between mental and physical health.</li> <li>• explore thought-changing as a possible strategy to help us cope with stress.</li> </ul> |

## 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:

- ▶ **Assisting students to replace unhelpful negative thoughts with calmer more positive thoughts can lead to better ways of managing challenges. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that when students identify thoughts that reflect difficult realities, we take time to meaningfully acknowledge their lived experience. For instance, from an early age many Black, Indigenous and racialized and marginalized students are inundated with hurtful imagery, stereotypes, and narratives that can result in poor self-concept and negative self-talk. They have little control over how their identities are stigmatized in society, which can result in deeply rooted negative thought patterns. It is critical to listen and to validate a student's experience and never to minimize the impact of societal and relational hurts. Through ongoing validation and compassion, it is possible to support students to adopt positive, identity-affirming thoughts to replace those rooted in systemic oppression, racism, bullying and/or marginalization. This takes time and must occur alongside efforts to meaningfully disrupt oppressive and racist systems and messaging at school, and in the wider society. A good starting place is to acknowledge that societal injustices exist and that in this context it can be helpful to affirm personal, cultural, and/or community strengths as a way to dispute negative self-talk.**

- ▶ 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

Do you ever notice that sometimes you get stuck in thinking negative thoughts or assuming that other people might be thinking or feeling a certain way about you? Do you spend time worrying about the future and what may or may not happen?

We call these “thinking traps” and they can happen to any of us! While these thoughts are often unrealistic or untrue, they can impact how we feel about ourselves and others. This virtual field trip focuses on **thought-changing strategies**. These strategies help us slow down and notice. We can begin to identify thinking traps while developing skills to help us challenge and restructure our thinking in healthy ways. The skills we develop using thought-changing strategies can support self-awareness, self-monitoring, and communication of thoughts and feelings.

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

| EDUCATOR  | CLASS   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Affirmations</b> are positive statements or reminders that we can use to encourage ourselves and others. These simple sentences can provide us with an opportunity to shift our thinking and approach our day or situation with a more positive and confident mindset. As an educator you might find you are affirming students regularly. Often, it is easier for us to affirm others, than it is to affirm ourselves. We need to remember that it is important to encourage ourselves as well. If you'd like to give it a try, here are a few positive affirmations to choose from or you might like to create your own. Consider the following affirmations to think or say to yourself and repeat throughout your day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am doing my best.</li> <li>• I am capable of amazing things.</li> <li>• I choose to focus on what I can change.</li> <li>• I have courage and confidence.</li> <li>• I deserve understanding and compassion.</li> <li>• I am at peace with who I am.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Illusions</b><br/>This activity is designed to inspire flexible thinking and reframing. Start by sharing an illusion image with your class. For example:</p> <div data-bbox="841 831 1049 1075" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>* illusion image from: <a href="https://www.littlepassports.com/science/optical-illusions-art-gallery">https://www.littlepassports.com/science/optical-illusions-art-gallery</a></p> <p><a href="#">Appendix A</a> offers another image for you to use. Ask the class what they see. If students have difficulty seeing the illusion, give them two choices to select from. Usually viewers do not unanimously agree on what they see. <b>The important message is that we can view things in more than one way, it simply depends on the perception.</b></p> |

## ACTION TASK: VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP VIDEO

In this video, students and educators will learn about thought-changing and participate in activities to practice healthy thought habits. The following resources are used in this video:

- [SOS](#)
- [Four Square Breathing](#) (go to link and click on calm breathing)

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 thinking prompts:</p> <p><b>Reflect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on your thought patterns over the past few days. Are there recurring unhelpful or anxious thoughts? Are you stuck on a particular thought that keeps coming back? Try to identify what thoughts keep returning. Every time this unhelpful thought pops back into your brain, replace it with a new and helpful thought. If you struggle to come up with helpful responses to your thoughts, it can help to put yourself in the mindset of a friend. <b>If your friend was having the same unhelpful thoughts, how would you respond?</b></li> <li>Consider <a href="#">re-visiting the five strategies</a> introduced so far, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing), and take some time to think about what works best for you.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Choose from the following activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-visit the <a href="#">Four Square breathing</a> activity shown in the video. (Click the link and then click on Calm breathing to view the activity.)</li> <li>Re-visit <a href="#">previous field trips</a> and explore how those strategies could be used in combination with the thought-changing activities shared in this lesson.</li> <li>Affirmations provide us with an opportunity to shift our thinking and approach our day or situation with a more positive and confident mindset. Consider sharing the affirmations from your Educator Minds On, and/or using this <a href="#">Four Finger affirmation poster for Secondary Students</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Reflect and Discuss</b> <p>Re-visit the strategies learned in the <a href="#">first four lessons</a> (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, and distraction).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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?</li> <li>Are you noticing which strategies, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing) work best for you?</li> <li>How do you know they are working?</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Share</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Download the Thought-changing social media bundle from our site for easy to share images and ideas. <a href="https://smho-smso.ca/blog/new-student-resources-for-anxiety-management-and-mental-health-literacy/">https://smho-smso.ca/blog/new-student-resources-for-anxiety-management-and-mental-health-literacy/</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

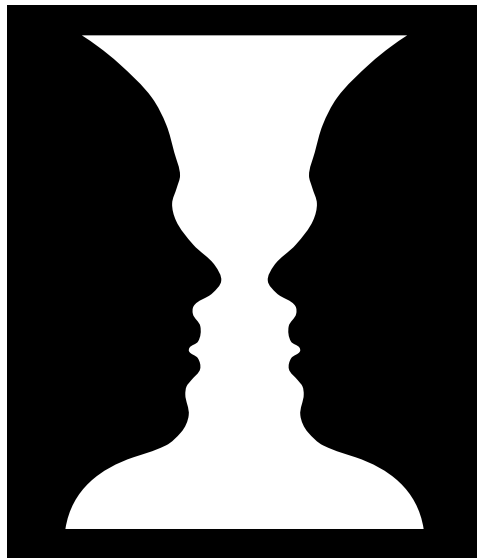




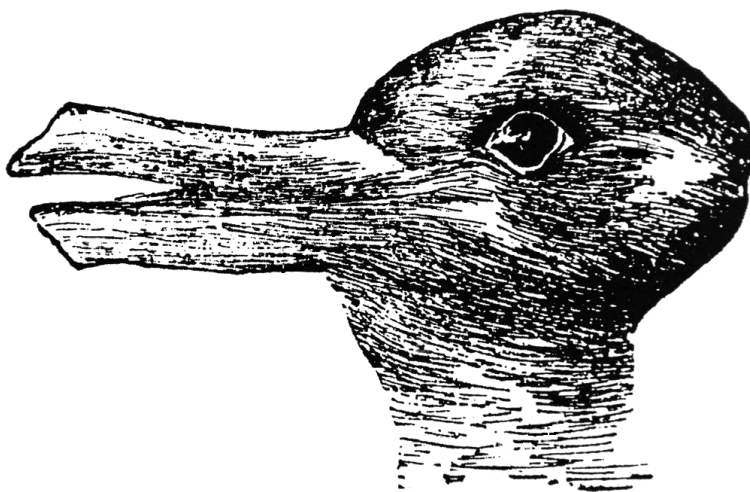
# Appendix A

## Images for Illusions Activity

These images go with the activity outlined in the Minds On section. Choose an illusion, or illusions that best suits your students. You can find a variety of illusions at [The Gallery of Optical Illusion Art](#) or by googling the term 'illusion images' or 'what do you see illusions'. You may wish to re-visit the 'dress illusion' photograph that went viral on the internet in 2015. It sparked a debate over whether a dress was black and blue, or white and gold. Two ready-to-use illusion images are available below.



Source: <https://www.littlepassports.com/science/optical-illusions-art-gallery/>



Duck or Rabbit? This image is a classic optical illusion that has been around for over 100 years. In 1899 American psychologist Joseph Jastrow used it in research he was conducting about perception and mental activity.

Source: <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~jfkhlstrom/JastrowDuck.htm>

