

Early Years

Virtual Field Trip 6 Stress Management and Coping

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Gratitude



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 gratitude 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 five 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 **gratitude**. Gratitude is when we express appreciation and thanks for the good things in our lives. We can be thankful for what we receive, the people who surround us and the fun and interesting things we get to experience and do. Gratitude is a way of thinking, one that you can practice, develop and cultivate. Gratitude also helps you manage stress and can bring more positivity and joy into your life.

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

EDUCATOR	CLASS
<p>Viewing the world and relationships through a lens of gratitude can help us notice and appreciate the positives in life, even when facing a challenge. Use the prompts below to help you notice and acknowledge the things that you are grateful for.</p>	<p>Choose from the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Favourite Things – This activity will get students thinking about what they love and value! There are two options to choose from – Hot Potato Gratitude and Spin the Wheel. See Appendix A for instructions. • Inspirational Snowball Fight – This activity provides a fun way for students to send each other positive affirmations and encourage an optimistic outlook. Adapt this activity to meet the needs of your students. Some may prefer to draw or verbalize their ideas for someone else to write down. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyday Mental Health version (ETFO) - Faith and Wellness version (OECTA)

ACTION TASK: VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP VIDEO

In this video, students and educators will learn **why** gratitude is a useful tool to help us cope with stress, and **how** we can practice gratitude. You will also hear examples of gratitude from students your age.

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>Choose from the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the entire virtual field trip series. Are there strategies that you have adopted or would like to adopt into your everyday life? <input type="checkbox"/> Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider re-visiting all the strategies, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing and gratitude), and take some time to practice the activities that you wish to adopt. • Consider trying the following Gratitude Notes activity as part of your morning routine: <input type="checkbox"/> Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sharing this virtual field trip series with a colleague to use with their class! 	<p>Choose from the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following link will take you to three different activity cards on gratitude that can be used for consolidation. Expressing Gratitude activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyday Mental Health version (ETFO) - Faith and Wellness version (OECTA) • In virtual field trip #5 we learned about affirmations. Affirmations can partner well with gratitude. Re-visit the four-finger affirmation strategy with this new lens of gratitude. • Try the “I Can” Reflection from <i>Ophea’s Open Class – Unit 4: Welcome Back Choice Board</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect and Discuss <p>Re-visit the strategies learned in the first five lessons (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? • Have you noticed which strategies, (breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, distraction, thought-changing) work best for you? • How do you know they are working? <input type="checkbox"/> Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to share their favourite strategy with a classmate, friend, or family member!



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.

We learned that gratitude is a way of thinking, one that you can practice, develop and cultivate. We also learned that practising gratitude can help us manage stress and bring more positivity to our lives. If you would like to continue the learning from today, here are a few prompts to ask your child.

- What can we do to show gratitude?
- What did you find interesting about what you learned?
- What strategies have you learned that you find helpful when you have big feelings or feel overwhelmed?

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 Resources to Support Parents and Caregivers with Health and Physical Education at Home* <https://www.ophea.net/resources-support-parents-and-caregivers-health-and-physical-education-home> and visit *Ophea Open Class* <https://ophea.net/hpe-online-learning/elementary/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

My Favourite Things

These activities are designed to get students thinking about the things that they love and value! Two options are offered to help differentiate for online and in person learning.

1. Spin the Wheel!

Have a student volunteer to share one of their favourite things, and then go to this [link](#) – and spin the wheel. The student shares an answer that matches the category where the wheel stops – Food, Person, Activity/Game, or Toy. You can use the link to the wheel as it is, or edit to meet the needs of your students.

2. Hot Potato Gratitude

Take a cube, or other object (blocks, small boxes or dice would work well) and put a sticky note on each side. Each note will have a different category – Food, Person, Activity/Game, Toy, etc. Select categories that suit the needs of your students. Use this object for a game of ‘Hot Potato’ – students pass it around a circle while music is playing. When the music stops, the child that has the object in their hands will roll it and then name what they are grateful for in that category. For example – If the object shows the word food they might say – “My favourite food is pizza!”

