



## Grade 9 Sample Lesson Plan: So Stressed, Now Stress Less

### SOLs

- Identify signs, symptoms, and sources of stress and anxiety at home, at school, and with peers
- Develop a personal system for coping with distress and stress

### Objectives/Goals

- The student will understand types of stress and its effect on the body
- The student will identify personal stressors
- The student will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks when dealing with stress.

### Materials

- [Stress slideshow](#)
- [Stress Booklet](#) - Assessment (see below)

### Procedure

- Instant Activity - As students walk into class, post on the board or hand them a piece of paper these two questions to get them thinking about the topic of stress. What are five things that stress you out the most? What are some things you try to do to cope with your stress?
- Once students have a chance to think on their own, have students either pair up and discuss or open the conversation to the entire class.
  - Kinesthetic Quick Activity - Ask students to stand up and hold up the number on their hand(s) that corresponds to their stress level right now as a student. 1 = least stressed to 10 = most stressed. This is a fun quick formative assessment that can give you an indicator as to where students are right now. You could ask some students to explain why.
- Then, have students stand and mime one of their go to “more healthy” coping strategies to deal with stress. Have them try to guess what the people around them are miming.
- Functional Knowledge - Ask students if they can think of any “good” types of stress? This is called a *Eustress*. Ask, if they can think of any “bad” types of stress?

This is called a *Distress*.

- Stress is perceived, meaning your mind makes the meaning to what is a threat/stressor or not. Show the pictures in the slideshow (slide 6 and slide 7) and ask students what they see. For slide 6, students either see two faces looking at each other or a vase. In slide 7, they either see an old lady or a young woman looking over her shoulder. The point of these slides are to get students to understand that stress is *perceived* and that what stresses one person, might not stress the next, etc.
- Next, discuss with students the Flight or Fight Response. Teach students briefly about the autonomic nervous system and how much of the stress response is regulated by the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. It is a natural response/reflex that is important to understand. Talk about the stress response system having 3 stages (1. Alarm, 2. Resistance, Exhaustion) (slides 8, 9 , 10).
- Discuss the physical things that happen to the body from the sympathetic nervous system (slide 8) and how that impacts the way we feel emotionally (slide 10). When we feel these things, how does that impact our behavior (slide 11)
  - What do you physically feel when your body is stressed?
  - What do you emotionally feel when your body is stressed?
  - How might one act or behave when stressed?
- Show the graphic (slide 14) about coping (see below a picture of it). Talk about why it is so important to develop positive coping strategies to stress and why negative coping strategies are harmful for our health.
- Have students brainstorm healthy coping strategies that someone can do/practice to effectively cope with stress Next, have students connect coping and resources in your school. Ask: *Can you think of any stress-coping services at our school? In other words, where could you get help if you felt stressed. List some of them.*
- Go over the Stress Reduction Plan for Teens based on the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. (slide 16). From here you could do a variety of things such as practice anyone of the coping strategies mentioned and reinforce these throughout the semester, etc.
- Bonus Activity #1 or Final Takeaway Activity - Carrot, Egg, or Tea Story (see below)
  - A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the

first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and the last she placed tea leaves. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the tea out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and tea," she replied. She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the tea. The daughter smiled as she tasted its wonderful flavor. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, Mother?" Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity--boiling water-- but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The tea leaves were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. "Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or tea leaves?" Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? 2 / 2 Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart? Or am I like the tea leaves? The leaves actually change the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the tea leaves, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest do you elevate to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg, or tea leaves?

- Bonus Activity #2 - Show the [Stress Rap https://youtu.be/otMGyo2fHSI](https://youtu.be/otMGyo2fHSI) by Andy Horne, 2015 National Health Teacher of the Year. This is a good recap in song form for students to review key takeaways. Additionally, you can play the audio to the song and have students focus on the [Stress Rap Lyrics](#) and have them

annotate or highlight parts of the song they find meaningful.

### **Assessment Idea**

[Stress Booklet](#) - Assessment (see below)

### **References**

- *The Mindful Teen* by Dzung Vo, MD
- *Guiding Adolescents to Use Healthy Strategies to Manage Stress*, Ginsburg & Kinsman, MD, American Academy of Pediatrics
- TED Talk - [How to Make Stress Your Friend](#) by Kelly McGonigal
- Andy Horne, M.Ed., New Trier High School

### **Handout**

The next page includes a handout for the lesson. The handout is designed for print use only.

Name: \_

Class:

Date:

### Health Education: Quick Hit Stress Booklet

**Directions:** This mini-stress booklet will be a tool you can use when you find yourself in a stressful situation. Please follow the instructions about making the physical booklet, and then fill in the planning chart below. When you create your final booklet, please follow the page guidelines!

This booklet will be a tool you can use whenever you are feeling stressed out, nervous, or anxious. By making this personal, this tool will be a “foolproof way” to help manage your stress.

Your booklet will include:

- Page 1: Your name and a clever title to remind you what this booklet is for
- Page 2: Identify at least three specific things in your life that cause you stress
- Page 3: Describe how you might feel or what you might be thinking when you begin to get stressed, nervous, anxious (think “warning signs”)
- Page 4: List one strategy you can use to calm yourself down in stressful situations, and describe it with instructions about how to do it
- Page 5: List a second strategy you can use to calm yourself down in stressful situations, and describe it with instructions about how to do it
- Page 6: List a third strategy you can use to calm yourself down in stressful situations, and describe it with instructions about how to do it
- Page 7: List three adults in your life who you can talk to when you are feeling stressed or anxious
- Page 8: Provide a motivational/reassuring/funny quote, including the name of who said it, that could help calm you down

Your grade will be based on the effort you put in towards accomplishing the above objectives, while also adding color and creativity. Watch this video clip to learn how to make the booklet -

<https://goo.gl/ATqqll>

## Planning sheet

**Directions:** Please fill this in before you start creating your booklet. Use this info to create your Stress Booklet. Add color, creativity, etc. to the booklet to “spice it up” a bit.

Page 1: Your name and a clever title to remind you what this booklet is for	
Page 2: Identify at least three specific things in your life that cause you stress	
Page 3: Describe how you might feel or what you might be thinking when you begin to get stressed, nervous, anxious (think “warning signs”)	
Page 4: List one strategy you can use to calm yourself down in stressful situations, and describe it with instructions about how to do it	
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# Stress Rap Lyrics

Written and recorded by Andy Horne  
2015 National Health Teacher of the Year  
[www.youtube.com/ahorne23](http://www.youtube.com/ahorne23)

Yo..Let's talk about some stress today  
It's a Mr. H Scholarly Rap...and I hope you enjoy this fresh hit

Today's lesson, the question, what stresses you out?  
Is it long-term chronic, acute just came about?  
Teens today are under so much stress  
They press, chasing success trying to be their best  
But stress in excess I guess leaves ya' like a mess  
Walk a fine line, foot-by-foot finesse  
Stress is perceived meaning your mind makes the meaning  
Maybe what's real ain't a big deal it's whatcha' believe in  
So chill...take a deep breath you can handle it  
Find time to exercise, prioritize, time-management  
Take a mental poll, how much can you control?  
Let go of certain things so it doesn't take a toll  
On ya' health, hormone released, cortisol  
Adrenaline fills within now it's 4th and goal  
Execute the game plan so your body can win  
Maybe laugh, smile, socialize, jog or swim  
If ya' stuff it inside no chance to survive and thrive  
Let it out let it ride, now feel alive  
No lie, sometimes stress helps us be our best  
A good eustress can help you have success

Stress, oh yes we all have it  
Habits are huge in terms of how we handle it  
Can I get you to understand what's true  
Effects of stress depend upon ya' point of view  
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Now...here's something that I recommend  
Check out the TED Talk on how to make stress ya' friend  
Re-think your stress response as helping you out  
Less stress, less anxious, more confident no doubt  
That pounding heart is preparing you for action  
More oxygen to the brain create chemical reactions  
Oxytocin, primes instincts to be social  
Hard to feel ill-will demeanor be so chill  
Yes the stress response suggests you talk it out  
Surround yourself with loved ones and friends throughout  
No doubt, oxytocin helps heart cells heal

Helping your cardiovascular system for real  
Reach out to others release more oxytocin  
Stress response improves healthier coping  
No joking, I'm hoping you can have success  
Yes, managing your stress, time to re-assess

Stress, oh yes we all have it  
Habits are huge in terms of how we handle it  
Can I get you to understand what's true  
Effects of stress depend upon ya' point of view  
Stress, oh yes we all have it  
Habits are huge in terms of how we handle it  
Can I get you to understand what's true  
Effects of stress depend upon ya' point of view

Just when you thought things might be alright  
Your senses sense a threat, here comes the flight or fight  
Response, ya' body's alarm system, now stop and listen  
Must handle properly or leave unhealthy condition  
Your disposition, hopefully a positive one  
Try to hold your head high when stress feels like a ton  
Fitting in with friends can be tough on teens, peer pressure  
School too, getting good grades but none the lesser  
Cramming for college, ace the ACT  
Stop...now time to breathe  
Running in this fast-paced rat race you will need  
Coping strategies and stress management techniques  
Refraining from complaining keep your focus maintaining  
A positive mind provides a picture worth framing  
Get what I'm saying? Paint pictures optimistic  
Living with pessimism, unhealthy, unrealistic

Stress, oh yes we all have it  
Habits are huge in terms of how we handle it  
Can I get you to understand what's true  
Effects of stress depend upon ya' point of view  
Stress, oh yes we all have it  
Habits are huge in terms of how we handle it  
Can I get you to understand what's true  
Effects of stress depend upon ya' point of view

Stress oh yes, we all have it  
We just gotta' learn how to handle it  
Because you can't go through life without stress  
But it's those who figure out how to handle the stress  
Manage the stress, end up having success  
So I hope this song helps you take the first steps  
to conquering your stress to be your very best