



MENTAL WELL-BEING & STRESS MANAGEMENT

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MENTAL WELL-BEING & STRESS MANAGEMENT



This chapter was created through funding support from Farm Credit, as well as a grant from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH).



Learning Objectives

After completing this station, participants should be able to:

1. Define stress.
2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify various types of emotions.
4. Identify the importance of taking a mental health break.
5. Explain how using coping strategies help to deal with stress and stressful situations.
6. Adopt and use coping strategies to deal with stress and stressful situations.



Safety Requirements

1. The primary goal of this chapter is to help children learn to understand stress and how to better manage stress, in an effort to take care of their mental and emotional well-being. At any time during the Safety Day presentation, instructors should not try to evaluate or diagnose participants with any disorders or illnesses. We ask that you also refrain from:
 - a. Labeling language or negative terms like crazy, psycho, etc.
 - b. Downplaying the emotion.
 - c. Negative sign language or dismissive body language. Instead, we prefer that you reflect on the child's answers given and use "I hear" statements, acknowledge by nodding your head when participant is speaking.
 - d. "At least" statements (Example: I know your parents are too busy on the farm to get you to practice, but at least you have a roof over your head and food on your table).
 - e. Discussions on suicide.
2. Understand that this can be a sensitive topic for some participants. Since we have limited time with the subject matter, our approach was to make hands-on activities and demonstrations relatable, light, and fun. If you are wanting to offer this material through a different activity or demonstration, please contact the Progressive Agriculture Foundation prior to the Safety Day for approval (888-257-3529). Instructors are encouraged to:
 - a. Offer empathy, not sympathy.
 - b. Create a safe space (you never know what someone in the audience is experiencing or has experienced or what they may share).



- c. Provide acknowledgement and validation of comments.
3. During some of the activities, we call for the use of balloons. Please ensure participants do not have a latex allergy or opt for using latex-free balloons.

4+ Age-Appropriateness

This lesson is appropriate for participants of all ages. The depth of content and the discussion needs to be tailored to the level of understanding of the group. Refer to the “Teaching Tips” and “Childhood Growth and Development” located in the Teaching Kids section of the Planning Manual.



Suggested Instructors

For this chapter, we highly recommend using an instructor from one of the groups listed below with background and training in the subject matter. Give instructors all the material in this section. Instructors may include: School Counselors, Public Healthcare Worker, Social Worker, Mental Health Professionals, or someone with a similar background in this field, or someone experienced and trained in Mental Health First Aid. You may also pursue someone with experience or an appreciation for this subject matter, that fully understands the importance of confidentiality.



Activity and Demonstration Ideas

Choose a hands-on activity or demonstration listed below or create your own. Develop your discussion points around the activity or demonstration chosen. If time allows, you may choose more than one activity and/or demo as part of your safety presentation.

- ▶ 1. **Creating A Stress Ball** – During this activity, participants will create their own stress ball and understand its use as a coping strategy for stressful situations.
- ▶ 2. **Juggling Stressors** – During this activity, participants will try juggling balloons labeled as stressors. They will learn what it is like to reach their limit and the importance of seeking help.
3. **Sinking Ship** – During this activity, participants will see how adding too many stressors can weigh us down and ultimately sink our ship.
4. **Count, Clap, Stomp, Snap** – During this activity, participants will be asked to do a sequence of actions to understand how stress can change your rhythm or routine.
5. **Under Pressure** - During this activity, participants will be given an important task and be asked to plan this task on a time crunch. Participants will also use a straw to simulate what it is like if you bottle up your emotions or you do not deal with your stressors.
6. **Rotten Tomatoes** – During this activity, participants will write down a stressor or something bothering them and toss it away.
7. **The Pursuit of Happiness** – During this activity, participants will experience different emotions and learn that their happiness can be found in the happiness of others.

8. **Insert a Mental Health Break** – During this demonstration, participants will identify why we need to recharge our batteries, especially during stressful time, to keep our flame burning strong.



Activity Outline

The following section contains information that can be molded to your chosen activity(ies) and/or demonstration(s). This is only *suggested* content. Choose the discussion points that best meets your objectives and correlates with activity/demo you have chosen.

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce yourself and tell about your experiences working with mental well-being/health and stress management.
- B. Start with a story or personal experience associated with the topic (look for a story with a positive outcome).
- C. Find out about your audience. Ask questions: How many of you know what stress is? How many of you feel stress on different occasions? Is stress good, bad or both and why? How do you deal with stressful situations? Did you know your mental and emotional well-being is as important as your physical health?

II. Discussion Points

- A. Define common terms:
 1. **Stress:** A feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. There are two (2) main types:
 - a. **Acute stress.** This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another. You may feel this type of stress, when you have to use your bicycle's brakes to stop quickly, you have an argument with a friend, or ski down a steep slope.
 - b. **Chronic stress.** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you do not realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. You may feel this type of stress, if you are struggling with a subject in school or have trouble adjusting to a new routine or changes.
 2. **Emotions:** A natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Robert Plutchik's theory identifies eight (8) basic emotions:
 - a. Joy/Happiness
 - b. Sadness
 - c. Anger
 - d. Anticipation
 - e. Fear
 - f. Disgust
 - g. Surprise/Unprepared
 - h. Trust/Admiration



3. **Mental Health:** Refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It can determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life starting in childhood.

B. Why is Mental Health important?

1. Mental health is important because it can affect our physical health. We need to treat our mental health with the same care and concern as our physical health.

Example: If you are feeling physically ill with a stomachache and continue to eat junk food it will likely make the problem worse. The same is true for our mental health. If we are stressed or feeling sad, adding more stressors or sadness, will make us feel worse.

2. Mental Health is important because it helps you:
 - a. Cope with the stresses of life.
 - b. Be physically healthy.
 - c. Have good relationships.
 - d. Make meaningful contributions to your community.
 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.
3. Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when “I” is replaced with “WE” it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Activity and/or Demonstration

IV. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity or demonstration.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

The Progressive Agriculture Foundation’s coordinator webpage may have additional resources on this safety topic including links, videos, take-home bag items and other materials under the *Lessons and Topic Specific Resources* section.

CREATING A STRESS BALL



This chapter was created through funding support from Farm Credit, as well as a grant from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH).



Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, participants should be able to:

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2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify various types of emotions.
4. Explain how using coping strategies help to deal with stress and stressful situations.
5. Adopt and use coping strategies to deal with stress and stressful situations.



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 - b. Create a safe space (you never know what someone in the audience is experiencing or has experienced or what they may share).



- c. Provide acknowledgement and validation of comments.
3. During some of the activities, we call for the use of balloons. Please ensure participants do not have a latex allergy or opt for using latex-free balloons.

4+ Age-Appropriateness

This lesson is appropriate for participants of all ages. The depth of content and the discussion needs to be tailored to the level of understanding of the group. Refer to the “Teaching Tips” and “Childhood Growth and Development” located in the Teaching Kids section of the Planning Manual.



Suggested Instructors

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What You Need:

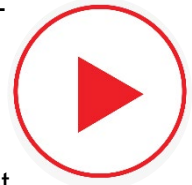
- Balloons – we recommend two (2) for each participant. One balloon will be filled, and the other balloon will be to overlap stress ball to provide extra protection in the event of rip or tear.
- Rice (1/2 to 1 cup for each stress ball). Optional: Other products that can be used as fillers include water polymer balls, toothpaste, flour, and cornstarch and water mixture; however, rice is less messy and easy to clean-up.
- Measuring Cups – to measure out rice or filler. Optional: To save time, you can have each participant’s rice pre-measured in a Ziplock baggie.
- Funnel – you can create this using a plastic water bottle by cutting off the top two-inches near the cap. You will want to have this done ahead of time.
- Pen, pencil, plastic knife, chopstick, or something to poke and push rice through the funnel if it gets stuck.
- Scissors to cut neck and lip off of extra balloon.
- Table for the children to stand around.
- Extra volunteers and helpers to assist participants in filling and tying their balloons.
- Broom, dustpan, and other supplies to clean-up after each session.
- Optional: Markers, yarn, etc. to decorate the stress balls.



Activity Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce yourself and tell about your experiences working with mental well-being/health and stress management.
- B. Start with a story or personal experience associated with the topic (look for a story with a positive outcome).
- C. Find out about your audience. Ask questions: How many of you know what stress is? How many of you feel stress on different occasions? Is stress good, bad or both and why? How do you deal with stressful situations? Did you know your mental and emotional well-being is as important as your physical health?



Click Play

II. Discussion Points

- A. Define common terms:
 1. **Stress:** A feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. There are two (2) main types:
 - a. **Acute stress.** This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another. You may feel this type of stress, when you have to use your bicycle's brakes to stop quickly, you have an argument with a friend, or ski down a steep slope.
 - b. **Chronic stress.** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you do not realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. You may feel this type of stress, if you are struggling with a subject in school or have trouble adjusting to a new routine or changes.
 2. **Emotions:** A natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Robert Plutchik's theory identifies eight (8) basic emotions:
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 3. **Mental Health:** Refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It can determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life starting in childhood.



B. Why is Mental Health important?

1. Mental health is important because it can affect our physical health. We need to treat our mental health with the same care and concern as our physical health.

Example: If you are feeling physically ill with a stomachache and continue to eat junk food it will likely make the problem worse. The same is true for our mental health. If we are stressed or feeling sad, adding more stressors or sadness, will make us feel worse.

2. Mental Health is important because it helps you:
 - a. Cope with the stresses of life.
 - b. Be physically healthy.
 - c. Have good relationships.
 - d. Make meaningful contributions to your community.
 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.
3. Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when “I” is replaced with “WE” it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Pre-Activity Discussion

- A. After ensuring the audience knows what stress is, start by asking the participants to give an example of common stressors they face on a day-to-day basis. Example: School, homework/grades, arguments among friends, getting chores done, having to make a decision or having to choose between two things (friend’s birthday party or sporting event), etc.
- B. Highlight some of the emotions listed previously. Ask them what makes them feel joy/happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, etc. To add a relatability factor, you may want to review and reference Disney’s 2015 movie, *Inside Out*.
- C. Ask participants if they have a coping strategy in place or something they like to do to help calm/alleviate stress or deal with their emotions. Example: Take a walk, ride a bike, play a game, read a book, breathing exercises, etc.
- D. Introduce stress balls. You may want to bring a few to reference and ask the participants if they know what they are. Tell participants that repeatedly squeezing a stress ball can release tension and in turn, helps to relieve stress.

[Click Here](#)



IV. Activity

- A. Start by demonstrating the correct way to create the stress ball.
 1. Stretch out the balloon and blow into it slightly to expand.
 2. When you have a little air inside, twist balloon and pinch off top neck/lip area to avoid too much air escaping.
 3. Wrap the lip of the balloon over the funnel.
 4. Pour in the rice (or other contents). If it gets stuck or is slow going in, use one of the items mentioned above to push it down into the balloon.
 5. When all the contents are in the balloon, pinch it at the top and tie it in a knot.

6. Take the extra balloon and cut off the neck and lip portion off. Use the body of this balloon to wrap and cover the stress ball balloon for increased durability.
- B. Give each participant the supplies needed and have them start making their stress ball with assistance from volunteers. If time permits and you have resources for participants to decorate their stress ball, you can do so at this time.
- C. Remind participants to use this as a coping strategy to avoid or alleviate stress. Encourage participants to share this concept with their parents, grandparents, and siblings.

V. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

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FARM CREDIT

This chapter was created through funding support from Farm Credit, as well as a grant from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH).



Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, participants should be able to:

1. Define stress.
2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify various types of emotions.
4. Discover how naming your emotions can better help cope with stress.
5. Identify the importance of taking a mental health break.
6. Explain how using coping strategies help to deal with stress and stressful situations.
7. Adopt and use coping strategies to deal with stress and stressful situations.



Safety Requirements

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 - d. "At least" statements (Example: I know your parents are too busy on the farm to get you to practice, but at least you have a roof over your head and food on your table).
 - e. Discussions on suicide.
2. Understand that this can be a sensitive topic for some participants. Since we have limited time with the subject matter, our approach was to make hands-on activities and demonstrations relatable, light, and fun. If you are wanting to offer this material through a different activity or demonstration, please contact the Progressive Agriculture Foundation prior to the Safety Day for approval (888-257-3529). Instructors are encouraged to:
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What You Need:

- Balloons – you will need several, have at least a few bags on-hand and account for some popping, etc. Look for strong, durable balloons.
- Markers



Activity Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce yourself and tell about your experiences working with mental well-being/health and stress management.
- B. Start with a story or personal experience associated with the topic (look for a story with a positive outcome).
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Click Play



II. Discussion Points

A. Define common terms:

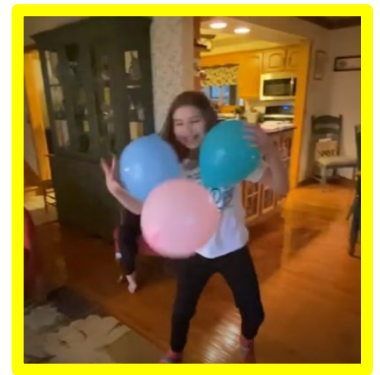
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III. Discussion

- A. After ensuring the audience knows what stress is, start by asking the participants to give an example of common stressors they face on a day-to-day basis. Examples: School, homework/grades, arguments among friends, getting chores done, having to make a decision, or having to choose between two things (friend’s birthday party or sporting event), etc.
- B. As the participants are sharing their stressors, have a volunteer label the balloons.

IV. Activity

- A. Start by asking the participants, “how many balloons (stressors) do you think you can juggle (keep airborne) at one time?”
- B. Call upon a participant to start the activity by balancing one of the balloons, labeled as a stressor (Example: Homework). Toss the balloon (stressor) to the participant and after a few seconds of successfully balancing, toss in another and so on until they begin to struggle. Then ask another participant to help in balancing the balloons and keep adding new balloons (stressors) in. When it becomes a challenge ask another participant to help out. Do this in either small groups or until each participant has a chance to experience the activity.
- C. When the activity is concluded, regroup to discuss the activity. Remind participants that when they feel overwhelmed, they need to let someone know and ask for help.

V. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
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Resources

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Learning Objectives

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What You Need:

- Large, clear Sterlite or Rubbermaid container (a non-glass fish aquarium could work as well). Look for something large enough for the entire group to see the demonstration.
- For the boat, you can use something light weight that floats, like a plastic hot dog boat and/or clam-shell/hinged plastic take-out container.
- Light-weight items to add to your ship: feathers, paper clips, rubber bands, pennies, dimes, marbles, etc.
- Medium-weight items to add to your ship: Nickels, quarters, erasers, pens or pencils, nuts & bolts, etc.
- Heavier items to add to your ship: Apple or orange slices, golf ball, screwdriver, wrench, rocks, etc.



Activity Outline

I. Introduction

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3. **Mental Health**: Refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It can determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life starting in childhood.

B. Why is Mental Health important?

1. Mental health is important because it can affect our physical health. We need to treat our mental health with the same care and concern as our physical health.

Example: If you are feeling physically ill with a stomachache and continue to eat junk food it will likely make the problem worse. The same is true for our mental health. If we are stressed or feeling sad, adding more stressors or sadness, will make us feel worse.

2. Mental Health is important because it helps you:
 - a. Cope with the stresses of life.
 - b. Be physically healthy.
 - c. Have good relationships.
 - d. Make meaningful contributions to your community.
 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.



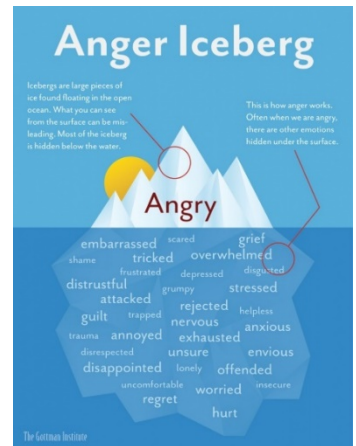
- Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when “I” is replaced with “WE” it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Pre-Activity Discussion

- After ensuring the audience knows what stress is, talk to them about what it feels like when stressors keep piling up on top of one another. A little stress is normal and ok, but too much can be bad for your physical health, emotional well-being, and weigh you down.
- Share with participants the story of the Titanic. On the evening of April 14, 1912, the Titanic, a ship that was made to be strong and unsinkable, hit an iceberg. The iceberg did not sink the ship immediately, but the damage caused the water entering the ship to put stress on the entire ship. This caused the ship to break in two and eventually sink to the bottom of the North Atlantic Ocean at 2:20 a.m. on the morning of April 15. If we think of ourselves as a ship, how can we avoid stressors that may cause us to sink?



- Looking at an iceberg, the part of the iceberg above the surface of the water is the image we project to others and what others may see. This can be how we look, what we wear, how we talk, who we associate with and how we live out our daily life in words and actions. However, 90% of most icebergs lie below the surface and it is what people do not always see. To reinforce this concept via a demonstration, add ice to a glass of water (use a clear plastic cup so all participants can observe). The participants will note a majority of the ice is below the surface of the water, similar to an iceberg.



Examples:

Above the surface:

- Receives an A on a math test
- Makes the soccer team
- Purchases a new tablet or video game
- Gets the lead in the school play

Below the Surface:

- Worked with a tutor for 3 weeks
- Practices an hour each day after school
- Saved money for the last 6 months
- Tried out last year and didn't get a part, so worked harder to memorizing script

- Pushing down emotions can create intense feelings of fear, doubt, confusion, insecurity etc. Think about a big beach-ball trying to be held under the surface of the water in a swimming pool. The deeper you push the ball down, the more buoyancy tries to pull it to the surface. It takes a lot of energy to cover up the reality of who we really are. Therefore, talk to others to help bring those to the surface. True friends will like you for who you really are.

Examples:

Above the surface:

- Seems more irritated lately
- Seems quiet, more withdrawn lately
- Is disgusted with going to school
- Not eating, seems picky about food

Below the Surface:

- Has had trouble sleeping since moving into a new home
- Found out a close family member is very ill
- Is having trouble with schoolwork
- Feeling bullied at school and worried about gossip and rumors



IV. Hands-on Activity

- A. Start by showing the selected item being used as the ship. Tell the participants, the ship represents a person, just like them.
- B. Then show them some of the items representing common stressors. Ask the participants, “how many items do you think it will take the sink to ship?” Then record the guesses.
- C. Start labeling the various items as common stressors. Light-weight items are daily stressors, whereas heavier items focus of bigger stressors. Here are some examples:
 1. Having a lot of homework
 2. Studying for an exam
 3. Getting an unfavorable grade
 4. Lack of planning time
 5. Giving a speech
 6. Busy schedule – balancing chores, sports, activities, etc.
 7. Making a tough decision
 8. Lack of sleep
 9. Peer Pressure
 10. Moving to a new community
 11. Starting a new school
 12. Being bullied
 13. Divorce of parents
 14. Death of a pet
 15. Death of a loved one

- D. Add the ship (hot dog boat or plastic container) to the water in the plastic tote (the tote should be filled about half-way full with water). As you add each item (see list of suggestions from Equipment/Supplies needed), try and share an analogy or story of what the items represent.

Example: A screwdriver can be used to fix your bicycle or assemble a toy; however, it cannot fix stressors as you can see when added to the boat. For this activity, the screwdriver represents starting a new school or being bullied.

- E. When the ship sinks, determine how many items (stressors) were added to cause it to sink. Start removing some of the items (stressors) and talk about some coping strategies that may help alleviate them, so you do not become overwhelmed and overloaded. Examples include:

1. Keeping a journal
2. Staying organized/time management
3. Adopting better study habits
4. Taking a walk or riding a bike
5. Breathing exercises
6. Yoga or meditation
7. Talking to a friend
8. Exercise
9. Reading a book
10. Watching a movie
11. Find a hobby
12. Adopt better sleep habits



13. Unplug or take a break from technology

- F. In closing, tell participants ships don't sink because of the water around them, they sink because of the water they allow to get in. Remember, don't let what happens around you to get in and weigh you down.

V. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

The Progressive Agriculture Foundation's coordinator webpage may have additional resources on this safety topic including links, videos, take-home bag items and other materials under the Lessons and Topic Specific Resources section.

COUNT, CLAP, STOMP, SNAP



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Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, participants should be able to:

1. Define stress.
2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify various types of emotions.
4. Identify the importance of taking a mental health break.



Safety Requirements

1. The primary goal of this chapter is to help children learn to understand stress and how to better manage stress, in an effort to take care of their mental and emotional well-being. At any time during the Safety Day presentation, instructors should not try to evaluate or diagnose participants with any disorders or illnesses. We ask that you also refrain from:
 - a. Labeling language or negative terms like crazy, psycho, etc.
 - b. Downplaying the emotion.
 - c. Negative sign language or dismissive body language. Instead, we prefer that you reflect on the child's answers given and use "I hear" statements, acknowledge by nodding your head when participant is speaking.
 - d. "At least" statements (Example: I know your parents are too busy on the farm to get you to practice, but at least you have a roof over your head and food on your table).
 - e. Discussions on suicide.
2. Understand that this can be a sensitive topic for some participants. Since we have limited time with the subject matter, our approach was to make hands-on activities and demonstrations relatable, light, and fun. If you are wanting to offer this material through a different activity or demonstration, please contact the Progressive Agriculture Foundation prior to the Safety Day for approval (888-257-3529). Instructors are encouraged to:
 - a. Offer empathy, not sympathy.
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 - c. Provide acknowledgement and validation of comments.





Age-Appropriateness

This lesson is appropriate for participants of all ages. The depth of content and the discussion needs to be tailored to the level of understanding of the group. Refer to the “Teaching Tips” and “Childhood Growth and Development” located in the Teaching Kids section of the Planning Manual.



Suggested Instructors

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What You Need:

No equipment or supplies are needed for this activity.



Activity Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce yourself and tell about your experiences working with mental well-being/health and stress management.
- B. Start with a story or personal experience associated with the topic (look for a story with a positive outcome).
- C. Find out about your audience. Ask questions: How many of you know what stress is? How many of you feel stress on different occasions? Is stress good, bad or both and why? How do you deal with stressful situations? Did you know your mental and emotional well-being is as important as your physical health?

II. Discussion Points

- A. Define common terms:
 1. **Stress:** A feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. There are two (2) main types:
 - a. **Acute stress.** This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another. You may feel this type of stress, when you have to use your bicycle's brakes to stop quickly, you have an argument with a friend, or ski down a steep slope.
 - b. **Chronic stress.** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you do not realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. You may feel this type of stress,



if you are struggling with a subject in school or have trouble adjusting to a new routine or changes.

2. **Emotions:** A natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Robert Plutchik's theory identifies eight (8) basic emotions:
 - a. Joy/Happiness
 - b. Sadness
 - c. Anger
 - d. Anticipation
 - e. Fear
 - f. Disgust
 - g. Surprise/Unprepared
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3. **Mental Health:** Refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It can determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life starting in childhood.

B. Why is Mental Health important?

1. Mental health is important because it can affect our physical health. We need to treat our mental health with the same care and concern as our physical health.

Example: If you are feeling physically ill with a stomachache and continue to eat junk food it will likely make the problem worse. The same is true for our mental health. If we are stressed or feeling sad, adding more stressors or sadness, will make us feel worse.
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 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.
3. Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when "I" is replaced with "WE" it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Activity

- A. This activity allows participants to understand what stress may feel like and how to work through stressful situations.
- B. **Optional:** To increase the level of difficulty, add a reward component for each round for the team that can go longest without making a mistake or going out of sequence (this could be a small prize, piece of candy, etc.). This will add a little extra pressure and competition factor to reinforce what stress can really feel like. Give participants examples of stressors when you are competing against the clock (Example: time management, planning, taking a test, etc.), competing against others (Example: sporting event), or dealing with changes (Example: Changes in daily routine, moving, starting a new school, etc.).



Round 1

- Start by counting off by two's or pairing each participant with another. Note: Have the partners face each other during each of the four rounds.
- Explain that pairs will count to three (1, 2, 3) and repeat the sequence over and over again, with partners alternating saying the next number in the sequence.
- Before starting the activity, model slowly with a partner.
- Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, use your attention signal to bring that round to a close.
- Regroup and ask participants about their experience. Ask questions like: *"Did anyone make a mistake?" "If so, how many times?" "What did you do when you made a mistake?" "Was this difficult or easy?"*
- Now time to move onto round 2 and select a new partner.

Round 2

- Explain that in this round, the pairs should replace the number "1" with a clap and then continue the number sequence "2 – 3" counted out loud. Example: Clap-2-3, Clap-2-3, etc.
- Model slowly with a partner. During the modeling, purposefully make a mistake such as saying "1" instead of clapping after "3."
- Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close. Ask questions like: *"Was this round more difficult than the first one?" "Ask for a show of hands of those who made a mistake. Looking at the hands in the air, was anyone glad that they weren't the only one making a mistake?"*
- Now time to move onto round 3 and select a new partner.

Round 3

- Explain that in this round, pairs should clap for "1," replace the number "2" with a foot stomp and say "3." Example: Clap, Stomp, 3, Clap, Stomp, 3, etc.
- Model this with a partner and purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "2" instead of stomping.
- Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close.
- Ask questions like: *"Was this round even more difficult than the first one?" "Do you feel more stress and pressure to remember the sequence?"*
- Now time to move onto round 4.

Round 4

- Explain that in the fourth and final round, all numbers will now be replaced with actions. Pairs should clap for "1," replace the number "2" with a foot stomp and replace "3" with a finger snap Example: Clap, Stomp, Snap, Clap, Stomp, Snap, etc.
- Model this with a partner and purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "3" instead of snapping.
- Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close.



- Ask questions like: “*Did this make it easier or more difficult than the previous round?*” “*Do you feel more stressed and pressure to remember the sequence?*” “*Was switching partners a challenge?*”

IV. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to reflect about this activity and tell them that this is an example of how stress can feel. Juggling a lot of things at once, changes in routine can all affect our mental well-being. Would that have been easier if you could have slowed down? That’s what we need to remember to do when dealing with stress by inserting a mental health break.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

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UNDER PRESSURE



This chapter was created through funding support from Farm Credit, as well as a grant from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH).



Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, participants should be able to:

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2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify various types of emotions.
4. Identify the importance of taking a mental health break.



Safety Requirements

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 - d. "At least" statements (Example: I know your parents are too busy on the farm to get you to practice, but at least you have a roof over your head and food on your table).
 - e. Discussions on suicide.
2. Understand that this can be a sensitive topic for some participants. Since we have limited time with the subject matter, our approach was to make hands-on activities and demonstrations relatable, light, and fun. If you are wanting to offer this material through a different activity or demonstration, please contact the Progressive Agriculture Foundation prior to the Safety Day for approval (888-257-3529). Instructors are encouraged to:
 - a. Offer empathy, not sympathy.
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 - c. Provide acknowledgement and validation of comments.
3. During some of the activities, we call for the use of balloons. Please ensure participants do not have a latex allergy or opt for using latex-free balloons.





Age-Appropriateness

This lesson is appropriate for participants of all ages. The depth of content and the discussion needs to be tailored to the level of understanding of the group. Refer to the “Teaching Tips” and “Childhood Growth and Development” located in the Teaching Kids section of the Planning Manual.



Suggested Instructors

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What You Need:

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Activity Outline

I. Introduction

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- B. Start with a story or personal experience associated with the topic (look for a story with a positive outcome).
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- A. Define common terms:
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- b. **Chronic stress.** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you do not realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. You may feel this type of stress, if you are struggling with a subject in school or have trouble adjusting to a new routine or changes.
2. **Emotions:** A natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Robert Plutchik's theory identifies eight (8) basic emotions:
 - a. Joy/Happiness
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 - d. Anticipation
 - e. Fear
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3. **Mental Health:** Refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It can determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life starting in childhood.

B. Why is Mental Health important?

1. Mental health is important because it can affect our physical health. We need to treat our mental health with the same care and concern as our physical health.

Example: If you are feeling physically ill with a stomachache and continue to eat junk food it will likely make the problem worse. The same is true for our mental health. If we are stressed or feeling sad, adding more stressors or sadness, will make us feel worse.

2. Mental Health is important because it helps you:
 - a. Cope with the stresses of life.
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 - d. Make meaningful contributions to your community.
 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.
3. Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when "I" is replaced with "WE" it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Activity

- A. This activity helps participants grasp what stress might look like to their families.
- B. Start by asking the children for a show of hands, "how many of you have had or been to a birthday party recently?" All participants should likely raise their hand.



- C. Follow-up by asking the participants, “what goes in to planning a birthday party?” Record their answers on a flip chart. Optional: Show them an image of a birthday party so they can get ideas for responses. Here are some common responses (or ones you help them identify if they are struggling):
1. Deciding on a party theme
 2. Ordering decorations
 3. Selecting a date
 4. Finding a location to hold the party
 5. Get a present
 6. Inviting guests
 7. Selecting, ordering, or making a birthday cake (or cupcakes)
 8. Ordering or planning food or drinks
 9. Getting plates, napkins, cups, silverware
 10. Others?
- D. Ask the participants, “did you realize how much planning and work goes into an event like this?” “Did you ever notice parents may be a little stressed, as they want it to be perfect, but some things might happen along the way?”
- E. Have a variety of potentially stressful scenarios written down on slips of paper and placed in a jar or hat. In pairs or small groups, have participants select a scenario at random. These can include:
1. You ordered all the party decorations 2 weeks ago, but it is the day before the party and they never arrived yet.
 2. Your party will be outside at the local park, but the weather forecast is calling for severe thunderstorms.
 3. You made the birthday boy or girl’s favorite, chocolate peanut butter cupcakes, but just discovered two party attendees have severe peanut allergies.
 4. Many of your friends were unable to make it due to a sporting event, but at the last minute it gets cancelled. Now they are all coming to the party.
 5. You arrive to your party, only to find the location accidentally double booked the facility and another party is scheduled for someone else at the same time.
 6. The facility calls and realizes they did double book two events and asked if you can move your party up a week, but this only gives you a few days to plan.
 7. Others?
- F. Ask the participants to talk through these scenarios and determine why these would cause stress?
- G. When each group or pair has had a chance to share their scenario or feedback. Ask participants for other events that require planning that could be similar to this exercise and what potential stressors could happen. Ask participants: “did you realize how much work goes into planning a birthday party?” “Do you have a better appreciation for the amount stress someone may have while planning an event?”
- H. To reinforce what it can feel like to be under pressure and a lot of stress. Give each participant a durable straw. Ask participants to hold the straw at both ends and clasp tightly with their fingers. Then begin twisting the straw so ends keep overlapping until an air bubble forms in the center. Ask a volunteer to flick the straw using their thumb and pointer or middle finger. This will cause the bubble to burst and create a lot of noise in the pop.

Remind participants that human beings are like straws at times, bottling up stress and tension, which we consider a normal part of our lives and daily routine. We become fragile over a period of time and the slightest “tick” will burst.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Ask a group, reflect on the activities. Therefore, its healthy to admit we are stressed and recognize our triggers or signs of being over stressed. Whether planning a party/event or feeling overwhelmed with too much going on, remember it is okay to ask for help. We also need to seek ways to de-stress like finding a coping strategy or taking a mental health break.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

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ROTTEN TOMATOES



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Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, participants should be able to:

1. Define stress.
2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify the six types of emotions.
4. Discover how naming your emotions can better help cope with stress.
5. Identify the importance of taking a mental health break.
6. Explain how using coping strategies help to deal with stress and stressful situations.
7. Adopt and use coping strategies to deal with stress and stressful situations.



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4+

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What You Need:

- Pens or markers
- Red paper – use 8 ½ x 11 and cut into 4 equal parts



Activity Outline

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 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.
3. Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when "I" is replaced with "WE" it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Pre-Activity Discussion

- A. Sometimes negative thoughts or stressors appear without warning and when you least expect it. This can make us feel overwhelmed with emotion.
- B. If you think you can change what is stressing or bothering you, make a plan and move forward (Example: You are having a disagreement with a friend, you may want to reach out, tell them the importance of their friendship, and apologize).



- C. If you think you cannot change it, think about ways you can change (Example: You do not like math class and have been receiving low grades on homework and exams. You can ask the teacher, a friend, or family member for help and set a goal of bringing up your grade on the next exam or assignment).

IV. Activity

- A. After ensuring the audience knows what stress is, ask the participants to think about one thing that has been bothering them or stressing them out. They do not need to share their stressor with the group, just think about it.
- B. Give each participant a piece of the red paper, along with a pen or marker and ask them to write it down. Remind them that they do not need to share it or read it out loud, but review and reflect after it is written down.
- C. After a few minutes or when all the participants have something written down, ask them to roll the paper into a ball to make it look like a small, cherry tomato. (*Why a tomato? In early theater, throwing tomatoes was a form of expression. Rotten tomatoes were thrown at bad performers*).
- D. Have the children stand in a row and on the count of three, have them toss their tomato (stressor) as far as it will go.
- E. Regroup and ask participants, “how did it feel to write down your negative thoughts or stressors and toss them away?” Allow participants to share responses. Remind participants that they should write down their negative thoughts and throw them in the trash. This method can also work in reverse for positive thoughts, plans or goals. By writing positive thoughts down, keeping them, and reflecting on them, it can help motivate you.
- F. Discuss the importance of keeping a journal as a coping strategy and great way to communicate without having to say a word.

V. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.
- E. Optional: As the group leaves the session and you collect their tomatoes/papers, consider keeping them to record the answers anonymously. This could be used as evaluation data and a way to identify common stressors among the age group.



Resources

The Progressive Agriculture Foundation’s coordinator webpage may have additional resources on this safety topic including links, videos, take-home bag items and other materials under the *Lessons and Topic Specific Resources* section.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS



This chapter was created through funding support from Farm Credit, as well as a grant from the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH).



Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, participants should be able to:

1. Define stress.
2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Identify and classify various types of emotions.



Safety Requirements

1. The primary goal of this chapter is to help children learn to understand stress and how to better manage stress, in an effort to take care of their mental and emotional well-being. At any time during the Safety Day presentation, instructors should not try to evaluate or diagnose participants with any disorders or illnesses. We ask that you also refrain from:
 - a. Labeling language or negative terms like crazy, psycho, etc.
 - b. Downplaying the emotion.
 - c. Negative sign language or dismissive body language. Instead, we prefer that you reflect on the child's answers given and use "I hear" statements, acknowledge by nodding your head when participant is speaking.
 - d. "At least" statements (Example: I know your parents are too busy on the farm to get you to practice, but at least you have a roof over your head and food on your table).
 - e. Discussions on suicide.
2. Understand that this can be a sensitive topic for some participants. Since we have limited time with the subject matter, our approach was to make hands-on activities and demonstrations relatable, light, and fun. If you are wanting to offer this material through a different activity or demonstration, please contact the Progressive Agriculture Foundation prior to the Safety Day for approval (888-257-3529). Instructors are encouraged to:
 - a. Offer empathy, not sympathy.
 - b. Create a safe space (you never know what someone in the audience is experiencing or has experienced or what they may share).
 - c. Provide acknowledgement and validation of comments.
3. During some of the activities, we call for the use of balloons. Please ensure participants do not have a latex allergy or opt for using latex-free balloons.





Age-Appropriateness

This lesson is appropriate for participants of all ages. The depth of content and the discussion needs to be tailored to the level of understanding of the group. Refer to the “Teaching Tips” and “Childhood Growth and Development” located in the Teaching Kids section of the Planning Manual.



Suggested Instructors

For this chapter, we highly recommend using an instructor from one of the groups listed below with background and training in the subject matter. Give instructors all the material in this section. Instructors may include: School Counselors, Public Healthcare Worker, Social Worker, A mental health professional or someone with a similar background in this field, or someone experienced and trained in First Aid Mental Health. You may also pursue someone with experience or an appreciation for this subject matter, that fully understands the importance of confidentiality.



What You Need:

- Paper Plates (you can also use balloons, see alternative play options in the activity description below)
- Markers
- Candy or small prizes
- Extra volunteers to assist the presenter



Activity Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce yourself and tell about your experiences working with mental well-being/health and stress management.
- B. Start with a story or personal experience associated with the topic (look for a story with a positive outcome).
- C. Find out about your audience. Ask questions: How many of you know what stress is? How many of you feel stress on different occasions? Is stress good, bad or both and why? How do you deal with stressful situations? Did you know your mental and emotional well-being is as important as your physical health?

II. Discussion Points

- A. Define common terms:
 1. **Stress:** A feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. There are two (2) main types:
 - a. **Acute stress.** This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another. You may feel this



type of stress, when you have to use your bicycle's brakes to stop quickly, you have an argument with a friend, or ski down a steep slope.

- b. **Chronic stress.** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you do not realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. You may feel this type of stress, if you are struggling with a subject in school or have trouble adjusting to a new routine or changes.
2. **Emotions:** A natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Robert Plutchik's theory identifies eight (8) basic emotions:
 - a. Joy/Happiness
 - b. Sadness
 - c. Anger
 - d. Anticipation
 - e. Fear
 - f. Disgust
 - g. Surprise/Unprepared
 - h. Trust/Admiration
3. **Mental Health:** Refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It can determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life starting in childhood.

B. Why is Mental Health important?

1. Mental health is important because it can affect our physical health. We need to treat our mental health with the same care and concern as our physical health.

Example: If you are feeling physically ill with a stomachache and continue to eat junk food it will likely make the problem worse. The same is true for our mental health. If we are stressed or feeling sad, adding more stressors or sadness, will make us feel worse.
2. Mental Health is important because it helps you:
 - a. Cope with the stresses of life.
 - b. Be physically healthy.
 - c. Have good relationships.
 - d. Make meaningful contributions to your community.
 - e. Work productively.
 - f. Realize your full potential.
3. Never give up on your mental health or the mental health of others. In the word ILLNESS, when "I" is replaced with "WE" it becomes WELLNESS!

III. Activity

- A. Start by talking about the types of emotions and situations where the participants may feel different emotions. Hand each participant a paper plate and various colored markers. Using only the top, front side of the plate, have each participant write their name on the plate and decorate it. Give them a few minutes to complete this task.



- B. When completed, have a volunteer collect each plate from the participants. While the instructor is talking to the participants about stress and their emotions, the volunteer will take the plates and lay them out on the floor upside down, so only the back, blank side of the plate is shown. The volunteers should spread them out and mix them up as best they can.
- C. When you are ready to complete the exercise, tell the participants that on the count of three they should go to the pile of plates and stand next to the plate that they think is the one they created. Mention you will be offering a small prize if they successfully locate their plate (this will add an extra layer of stress or pressure for the participants). Be sure to inform the participants that they are not permitted to flip them over to look at them until they are given permission.
- D. After each participant has stood near or located a paper plate they feel is their original plate, have them pick up the plate to see if they located the corrected one (chances are none or only a few will be able to correctly do this, as it is all up to chance). Reward any participants that correctly locates their original plate.
- E. As you notice a lot of disappointment among the participants, ask them how they feel about finding/not finding their plate. Then go around the room and ask them to share the plate they found and then reunite it with the correct participant. When they do, reward them with a small prize.
- F. After all the plates are back with the original owner and correct participant, regroup and ask the participants about their experience: *“How did you feel when you noticed the plate you found was not yours?” “Did you feel pressure/stress to find your own plate with a reward on the line?” “What different emotions did you feel throughout this activity from creating your plate to reuniting with it?” “How did it feel to reunite the plate with the person who it belonged to?”*
- G. Tell the participants that the plates represent happiness. We may not always find it if we are always just searching for our own, but if we care about bringing happiness to someone else, it will ultimately help us find our own.

Alternate Play Options (if time permits, you can add a second activity or change component of the original activity as follows):

- H. If you have an older audience, complete all steps, but instead of using the plates the participants just created, have the volunteer secretly switch the plates with others that have been previously created. Some of the plates can be blank, while other plates have different names or words (they could even be the names of different emotions). On the count of three, allow participants 30 seconds or so to sort through the pile and try to find their name and mention whoever finds it first will get a prize. This will add an additional layer of pressure or stress with being timed and having a prize on the line. When time is up, the participants will have experienced a variety of emotions. Regroup and ask the participants about their experience with their activity: *“How did you feel when you could not locate your plate?” “Did you feel pressure/stress to find your own quickly with a reward on the line?” “What emotions did you feel during this activity?”* As they share, give them a small prize.
- I. If you have space, you can try this activity using balloons instead of plates. Include balloons with the name of each participant, but also have some blank. Give them 15-20 seconds to find their balloon. When time is up, have them grab the balloon with a name on it that is closest to them. If the balloon is not theirs, have them reunite it with the



participant it belongs to. Do this until everyone has their own balloon. Again, emphasize that we may not always find happiness if we are always searching for our own, but if we care about bringing happiness to someone else, it will ultimately help us find our own.

- a. If using balloons, be sure to consider what may happen if someone's balloon pops during this activity. Be prepared and ready to use this situation as a teachable moment. Ask the participant, "how does this makes you feel?"
- J. Following this activity, please keep paper plates and/or balloons at your station. Do not send them with the participants to their next station, as they may be distracting to other presenters and participants.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity. Ask them about other situations or experiences where they could feel the same variation of emotions.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

The Progressive Agriculture Foundation's coordinator webpage may have additional resources on this safety topic including links, videos, take-home bag items and other materials under the ***Lessons and Topic Specific Resources*** section.

INSERT A MENTAL HEALTH BREAK

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Learning Objectives

After completing this demonstration, participants should be able to:

1. Define stress.
2. Discuss how stress can affect your body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
3. Explain how using coping strategies help to deal with stress and stressful situations.
4. Adopt and use coping strategies to deal with stress and stressful situations.



Safety Requirements

1. The primary goal of this chapter is to help children learn to understand stress and how to better manage stress, in an effort to take care of their mental and emotional well-being. At any time during the Safety Day presentation, instructors should not try to evaluate or diagnose participants with any disorders or illnesses. We ask that you also refrain from:
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2. Understand that this can be a sensitive topic for some participants. Since we have limited time with the subject matter, our approach was to make hands-on activities and demonstrations relatable, light, and fun. If you are wanting to offer this material through a different activity or demonstration, please contact the Progressive Agriculture Foundation prior to the Safety Day for approval (888-257-3529). Instructors are encouraged to:
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Age-Appropriateness

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What You Need:

- Flip chart or dry erase board and markers.
- Candle (Tea light or votive candles work well because they do not tip over easily). Be sure candles are not taller than a birthday candle and ensure that they are secured to a plate or holder. You can also use a lantern with a dimmer.
- Lighter or matches.
- Clear glass canning jar (Mason jar, jelly jar, etc.) Be sure that the glass is not cracked or broken.
- Optional: Make this demonstration hands-on by purchasing battery-operated vigil candles. You will want enough for each participant in the group and ensure you have extra batteries. *See demonstration below for more details.*



Demonstration Outline

I. Introduction

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II. Discussion Points

- A. Define common terms:



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 - a. **Acute stress**. This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another. You may feel this type of stress, when you have to use your bicycle's brakes to stop quickly, you have an argument with a friend, or ski down a steep slope.
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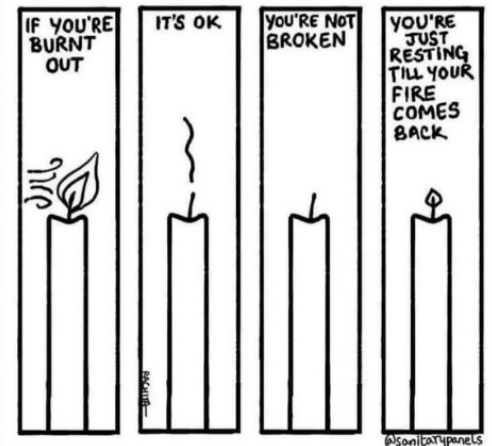


III. Pre-Demonstration Discussion

- A. Ask participants, “Who has an iPad or tablet, iPhone or smartphone, computer, or other electronics?” Then ask, “How do you feel when your battery starts to diminish or die?” A low battery, may cause us all a little stress, right? When this happens, you look for the cord/charger, find an outlet, and plug it in, correct? Doing this helps energize the device and brings it back to life.
- B. We do this all the time with various tech devices, but what do we do if WE feel stressed, unmotivated, or need to charge our batteries? What is our outlet? This is when we need to insert a mental health break?
- C. For humans, it is not always as easy as plugging in a device. Everyone may have a different form of coping strategy. Look for things that makes you happy. Let’s hear what some of yours are? Use a flip chart or dry erase board to record some of the answers. Examples: Taking a nap, keeping a journal, play a game, get organized, taking a walk or riding a bike, breathing exercises, yoga, or meditation, talking to a friend, exercise, reading a book or watching a movie, favorite hobby, or activity, etc.

IV. Demonstration

- A. Start by showing the participant a candle. Tell participants, “this candle represents you.”
- B. Light the candle and tell the participants this is you when you are feeling good, energized. Try to blow the candle out lightly and mention stress may try to take away their flame.
- C. Blow the candle out completely or place a glass jar over the candle and watch the flame go out. Tell participants, this is what happens when your flame burns out and you are overwhelmed.
- D. Ask participants, “are you broken?” Ask, “what can you do to bring back your flame?” Discuss the importance of a mental health break and remind them of the coping strategies they mentioned previously.
- E. As the participants start to share some of the coping strategies they discussed earlier, relight the candle. Tell participants they are not broken when they feel this way, they just need to rest or reset so their flame/fire comes back.
- F. Optional: You can also offer this demonstration using a lantern that dims. You can also make this demonstration more hands-on and use battery-operated vigil candles. Give one to each participant, but take the batteries out of some of them, so they do not all work. Ask the participants who cannot get their candle to light to name something that may cause them to be stressed and diminish their flame and what they will do to help alleviate that stress (a coping strategy). As they answer, give them the batteries to add to their candle and watch it glow. Reinforce the concept that when this happens, we are not broken, but need to charge our batteries to work effectively.



V. Conclusion

- A. Ask the group to share their experience about the selected hands-on activity or demonstration.
- B. Review the learning objectives and discussion points for this lesson.
- C. Ask participants if they have questions.
- D. If time permits, survey participants to evaluate success in achieving desired lesson goals and objectives.



Resources

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