

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- We often confuse stress with anxiety, and this confusion has led many of us to become afraid of one of the most important and natural states of our physical and mental health, which is our stress response.
- Certain types of stress may not be good for us, but most types of stress can be helpful. Daily stressors can help us build skills and resilience.
- Physical symptoms of stress may include a racing heart, rapid breathing, body tension or not sleeping. The stress response is normal, and it is actually our body's best effort to get us ready to face the challenges that come our way.
- When we experience the stress response, our thoughts can help us work through the challenge or they can make it more difficult. It is important to think about what is causing your stress response in the first place, and what strategies or problem-solving you can use to face the challenge head on, which will reduce the intensity of the stress response.
- The physical sensations of the stress response and anxiety are similar, yet the outcome is very different. The hallmarks of an anxiety disorder are persistent avoidance and withdrawal and where it causes major impairment in your life.
- "The stress response" is normal. It is a motivator, not anxiety or depression.
- Choose a helpful stress management technique such as box breathing, mindfulness, physical exercise. Keep in mind that calming strategies may provide temporary relief until you are able to face the stressor.
- It is important to reach out to a trusted adult if you need support. Your trusted adult might be a parent, a foster parent, an aunt or uncle, a grandparent, a teacher, a principal, or a coach.
- If we understand our stress response, it will be easier to manage.

MORE INFORMATION:

- Teen Mental Health Curriculum Guide
- Teen Mental Health
- Anxiety Canada
- Keltly Mental Health Managing Stress
- Self-Care 101
- Every Day Mental Health Practices

References:

Alberta Government. (2017). *Alberta Education Working Together to Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools.*

STUDENT LEARNING

Students who experience positive mental health are resilient and better able to learn, achieve success, and build healthy relationships (Alberta Government, 2017). Resilience refers to the capacity of individuals to cope successfully with stress-related situations, overcome adversity and adapt positively to change. Students are not born resilient; they build resiliency by learning and practicing social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, problem solving and healthy decision-making strategies.

This video and conversation guide includes content and questions to empower students to evaluate their personal well-being and consider how their choices affect their ability to manage stress, communicate, and connect with others to successfully navigate challenging situations. These social-emotional competencies are applicable in any context - writing tests, meeting new people, asking for help, speaking in front of their peers or interviewing for a job. Social-emotional skills are foundational for success for our students in school and life.

TEACHER CLASSROOM CONVERSATION GUIDE

Students will be able to define stress, identify their own stressors, understand how stress affects their feelings & behavior, the difference between anxiety disorder and stress, and explain healthy ways of dealing with stress.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Senior High Focus

WATCH NOW



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is stress?
- What are some of the physical symptoms of stress?
- What are some situations that cause you stress?
- What is a Stress Response? How can it be a motivator for you?
- How is an anxiety disorder different from experiencing stress?
- What are some strategies or problem-solving you can use to deal with stress?

CONCLUSION

We have discussed:

- The difference between stress and anxiety
- Most stress is normal and it can be a motivator for you
- What are common stressors
- How stress affects our bodies
- How our thinking affects our stress response and our emotions
- Some healthy strategies for dealing with stress
- Facing stress takes courage and the more you face your stresses the easier it will be to manage



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