



Managing Stress

This lesson is designed to introduce students to this unit on confronting challenges and developing a growth mindset while becoming aware of their initial stress levels.

Essential Question

How can I develop the expertise and mindsets I need to accomplish my most important goals, despite the challenges I face along the way?

Guiding Question

What are some causes of stress?

How can we recognize feelings of stress within ourselves and manage these emotions?

Objectives

- Students will examine what the term *stress* means to them and how it may manifest itself physically.
- Students will brainstorm ways they relieve their own stress and ways schools can help support students experiencing stress.

Advance Preparation

- Display posters with the questions written on them.
- Place Growth Mindset handout next to the posters.
- Make copies of student Self-Regulation Inventory and Experience of Stress questions.

Materials/Resources

- PowerPoint slideshow 2.1 (adapt as necessary)
- 6 posters
- Post-its and markers or pens for students

Student Materials

- Growth Mindset infographic
- Experience of Stress sheet
- Self-regulation Inventory

Vocabulary

- Stress
- Growth mindset

Do Now

3 min.

Share with a partner your thoughts on the following questions:

When you hear the word “stress,” what do you think of? What activities do you like to do when you are feeling stressed?

Introduction (Framing/Overview)

2-3 min.

1. Slide 3: Student Dedication (30-60 seconds)
2. Briefly review the day’s agenda (slide 4).
3. Introduce the second unit (slide 5) by sharing the following:
 - This unit is about confronting challenges and developing a growth mindset.
 - Middle school and high school can be difficult to navigate. In this unit, students will learn about strategies to adopt when things may not be going as they hoped.
 - This unit will guide students in exploring the importance of what is referred to as a Growth Mindset (slide 6).
 - Students will learn about ways the human brain continues to develop over time, and what this means for their capacity to overcome challenges. We, as humans, are constantly growing and developing.

**Direct
Instruction****Activity 1: Gallery Walk and Discussion**

25-30 min.

1. Tell students that before jumping into this unit, they will begin by thinking about the big themes. Students should have 12-15 minutes to walk around and complete the gallery walk (slide 7). The teacher can assign students to groups and allot a certain number of minutes at each station or allow for more fluid movements depending on the needs of the class. The posters display the following questions:
 - a. What is stress?
 - b. How do you know if you are feeling stress?
 - c. What causes stress?
 - d. What do you do to relieve stress?
 - e. What can schools do to help students feel less stressed?
 - f. Look at the Growth Mindset picture. What differences do you notice between a fixed and growth mindset?

**Gallery
Walk**

At each station, students respond to the question(s) by writing on Post-It notes and placing them on or beside the poster.

**Whole
Class
Discussion**

2. Review some of the responses with the class, clicking through slides 8 to 13. A student volunteer can read the messages aloud from each poster. Alternatively, the teacher can read all of the responses to each question, one at a time, and then invite students' comments and reflections.

Activity 2: Experience of Stress & Strategies Inventory 5-10 min.

3. Have students reflect on the Experience of Stress questions. These 8 items measure the extent to which they experience symptoms of stress. (Responses to these questions are personal and are not to be shared with teacher. Students will take survey at the end of the year to understand how providing students with strategies may help them better tackle challenges.)

**Personal
Evaluation**

4. Have students complete the Self-regulation Strategies inventory (slide 14) by checking off the items they currently do, want to try, or are not interested in. Have students keep this inventory in their folders or binders; they will rate themselves again at the end of the unit to identify growth.

**Personal
Inventory**

Closure

5 min.

5. Preview coming lessons in this unit (slide 15). Highlight the next lesson, which identifies some major causes of stress for students.
6. Exit ticket: students respond to the following questions.
 - What are two things you hope to learn about in this unit?
 - How do you know if you are feeling stressed?

Extensions

If you have more time in class, have students share their favorite self-regulation strategies with a partner or their teammates.

Homework: As homework, have students write a journal entry on "The Top Three Stressors in My Life."

Experience of Stress

Below are some questions about how you experience stress. Please take a few minutes and think about what stress may feel like in your body. The goal is to identify what stress may feel like or look like, so you know when it may be time to take a break or relax. You do not have to share your answers with anyone if you prefer not to do so.

In a typical week, how many nights do you have difficulty sleeping?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How often do you..

| | Less than once a month | Once or twice a month | Once a week | Multiple times a week | Multiple times a day |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| get headaches? | | | | | |
| feel sick to your stomach because of stress? | | | | | |
| have difficulty being physically still because of stress? | | | | | |
| feel your heart racing because of stress? | | | | | |
| start arguments because you feel stressed out? | | | | | |

How often do you...

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| ...get annoyed with others because you feel stressed? | | | | | |
| ... have trouble focusing because of everything going on in your life? | | | | | |

Self-Regulation Strategies

Below is a list of strategies that people use when they are very emotionally charged or feeling stressed. These activities can help you calm down or refocus. Check any of the items that you either currently do or would like to try.

| Self-regulation strategy | I do this | I would like to try | Not for me |
|---|-----------|---------------------|------------|
| 1. Deep breathing or meditation | | | |
| 2. Identify and label your feelings | | | |
| 3. Talk about it with someone you trust | | | |
| 4. Call someone you love or care about | | | |
| 5. Do something nice for someone else | | | |
| 6. Write down 5 things you feel grateful for | | | |
| 7. Go for a walk | | | |
| 8. Write in a journal about what is bothering you | | | |
| 9. Squeeze a stress ball | | | |
| 10. Draw or doodle | | | |
| 11. Stretch | | | |
| 12. Read a book | | | |
| 13. Drink water | | | |
| 14. Listen to music | | | |
| 15. Exercise | | | |
| 16. Count to 20 (or 100) | | | |
| 17. Sit in a quiet place | | | |
| 18. Play a game or do a puzzle | | | |
| 19. Give someone a hug | | | |
| 20. Watch a funny video | | | |