

14 STRESS AND FEELING SAD (11-13)

OBJECTIVES:

- To identify symptoms of stress and learn techniques on how to manage this.
- To experience ways of releasing tension and stress.

MATERIALS:

Stress management techniques cut outs, stickers, balloons *(Note: prepare in advance by putting all of the cut outs in to balloons and also some balloons without tips in them and blow them all up)*, Assessment tool.



ICEBREAKER (10 minutes)



REVIEW OF PREVIOUS SESSION



ASSESSMENT TOOL

Fill the assessment tool with the girls, to capture their progress at the mid way point.

ACTIVITY 1:

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS (20 minutes)



ASK:

What do you understand by the word 'stress'? (if they need clarification explain when we are stressed, we feel mental or emotional tension, usually because of challenges we face)



EXPLAIN:

Sometimes when people experience change or difficult circumstances, their body can react in a physical, mental or emotional way. Normally they feel tense, anxious or under pressure. When they are under stress they may experience different feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and physical symptoms.



ASK:

- What are some of the symptoms of stress? (give them a sticker for each symptom they identify)
- Why is it important to know the symptoms of stress?

do Go through the symptoms of stress below if they miss any:

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- Difficulty concentrating
- Embarrassment
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty making decisions
- Crying
- Difficulty speaking
- Yelling at friends/family
- Fear
- Moodiness
- Dry mouth
- Breathing fast
- Pounding heart
- Headaches
- Cold or sweaty hands
- Tight muscles
- Stomach aches

ACTIVITY 2: MANAGING STRESS (30 minutes)

- do**
- Split the girls into groups of four and ask them to draw a girl, identifying all the places on her body where she might feel physical symptoms of stress and also the types of emotional or mental stress she may experience.
 - Ask them also to think about the different things that the girl can do to manage some of this stress.
 - Ask them to present this back to the wider group

- ?**
- ASK:**
- Were all of the techniques you identified positive?
 - What were some of the techniques identified that were less constructive?
 - What positive techniques can we use to replace these?

“

SAY: There are many different ways to manage unhealthy stress, and everyone needs to find ways that work best for them.

do

DO: Take out the balloons (the empty ones and the ones with the tips inside).

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SAY: After 3, you will burst the balloons, some of them will be empty and some will have a stress management technique inside. If you have a technique in your balloon, hold on to it so you can read it to the group.

**DO:**

Once the girls finish bursting all of the balloons, ask the girls with the techniques to read them out to the group.

**ASK:**

Of all the techniques we identified, which ones do you think will be the most useful for you?

STRESS MANAGMENT TECHNIQUES

● Take a Deep Breath:

Stress often causes us to breathe shallowly, and this can cause more stress! Try taking a minute to slow down and breathe deeply.

● Talk It Out:

Keeping feelings inside can increase stress. Sharing your feelings with a friend, family member, teacher or caseworker can help you see your problem in a new way.

Writing down thoughts and feelings can also help clarify the situation and give you a new perspective.

● Take a 'Minute' Vacation:

Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable. Notice all the details of your chosen place, including pleasant sounds, smells and temperature.

● Get Physical:

Release the pressure through exercise or physical activity. This can be anything from playing a game with friends to doing some regular physical sport that you like doing.

● Laugh:

Maintain your sense of humor, including the ability to laugh at yourself. Share jokes and funny stories with your friends. Laughter is good for you!

● Have a Good Cry:

A good cry during stressful times can be a healthy way to bring relieve to your stress. However, crying daily can be a sign of depression.

● Look for the Good Things Around You:

It is easy to see only the negative when you are stressed. So commit yourself to actively noticing five good things around you, like positive or enjoyable moments.



BREAK / GAME (15 minutes)

ACTIVITY 3: RELAXATION!

do Ask the girls to stand in a circle. Tell them that you are going to do some breathing and relaxation exercises with them to help them to relieve stress.

SAY: Let's relax right now. First, let your body relax a bit. Reach up, high above your head, stretching your arms... stretching your body very tall. Now let your arms relax. Place them at your sides, loosely.

Do the same thing again, but this time, breathe in as you reach up. Stretch.... and now breathe out as you relax and place your arms at your sides.

One more stretch, arms up, breathing in... and relax, arms down, breathing out.

Just stand now, letting your arms rest at your sides.

See how your breathing can relax you by taking slow, deep breaths. Breathe in.... hold your breath.... and now breathe out, slowly. Breathe in.... and out.

Keep breathing deeply and slowly.

Repeat the above two more times

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Feel both of your hands moving up and out as you breathe in and down as you breathe out. Feel your hands moving with your chest and stomach, gently moving in and out with each breath.

Now rest your hands at your sides as you notice the ways you can breathe.

Do this again two more times

Imagine that there is a candle in front of you. You can even hold up one finger in front of your mouth and pretend it is a candle. As you breathe out, blow the air out through your mouth very slowly. Feel the air on your finger. Imagine that you are blowing enough air to make the flame of the candle flicker, but not enough to blow it out. You will need to blow very softly.

When you breathe in, imagine that the flame of the candle flickers and leans toward you. As you breathe out, the flame flickers and leans away.

Imagine the flame of the candle moving in and out with each breath you take.

Repeat this two more times

Another way your breathing can relax you is to breathe like different animals. Do you know how a dog pants? Breathe in.... and now as you breathe out, pant, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. Breathe in.... pant, ha ha ha ha ha. Breathe in... pant.

Imagine that you are like a cat purring. Breathe in.... and as you breathe out, purr. Breathe in.... purr.

Now as you breathe, you can sigh, and relax. Breathe in.... and sigh as you breathe out. Breathe in.... sigh. Breathe in.... sigh.

Just relax now for a moment, feeling your body relax. Your arms and legs are very loose and relaxed. Take deep breaths in and out 3 times.

Now you can imagine that your body is like a balloon filling up as you breathe in, and emptying as you breathe out. Let your ribs expand out to the sides, like a balloon, expanding... and then let the air out, like a balloon that is emptying. The balloon expands.... and then the air goes out.

You can even imagine that you are blowing up a balloon.

Imagine that you breathe air into your lungs, and then when you breathe out through your mouth, imagine that you are blowing up a balloon. Each breath you blow out makes the balloon get even bigger. Imagine filling the balloon as it gets bigger and bigger with each breath out. Breathe in and then blow up the balloon even more. Bigger... bigger.... bigger. Imagine letting go of the balloon, so it flies around the room as the air escapes. Feel your body relaxing just like a limp, empty balloon.

And now, see how slowly you can breathe out. First breathe in.... and now breathe out very slowly.. out... out.... out. When you can't breathe out any more air, breathe in again, and then very slowly breathe out.

For the next few moments, just relax, resting. It feels good to relax. Enjoy this calm feeling. Stretch your muscles and let your body wake up. When you are totally awake, you can get back to the rest of your day.



ASK:
How do you feel after doing that exercise?



Girl Chat:
How you can incorporate the things you learnt today into your everyday life?



CLOSING ACTIVITY