Stressed Out?

A look at STRESS and YOU…

It is important to recognize that everyone feels stressed out sometimes. It is also important to recognize what stresses you and how you can manage that stress.

Discussion Questions:
1. What does it mean to be “stressed out”?
2. What does stress feel like for you?
3. When do you experience stress?
4. What causes you stress?

Stress can make our body really tense. It is important to find ways to calm our bodies so that we can calm our feelings. We can’t always make what is stressing us go away, but we can find ways to feel better when we’re stressed. Here is a simple way…

ACTIVITY: Progressive Relaxation through Muscle Relaxation Exercises
If you have a STRESS BALL (or even wad of paper) to use:
1. Place a stress ball in your left hand
2. Squeeze it hard for 3 seconds.
3. Now release your grip.
4. Feel anything? Can you tell your hand is more relaxed now?

“Tense-and-release” Exercises can be done with or without a stress ball. You can practice these exercises anywhere! Here are some ideas:

TOES:
Pretend that you are barefoot and standing in the mud. Now squish your toes deep into the mud for 5 seconds and then relax your toes.

JAW:
Pretend that you have a giant piece of bubble gum in your mouth. Bite down on it hard, then relax and let your jaw hang loose.

ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:
*The lessons and activities are adapted from the larger Strong Minds stations which are available to any school from SOSC’s website or Inclusive Health Guide.
STRETCHING:
People often think of stretching only before or after exercise. Many people also stretch to warm up their muscles before a sports practice.

Stress and tension held in our bodies can be released by doing some simple stretches. This is a strategy that can be down anywhere!

ACTIVITY: Research stretches for relaxation and pick 3 stretches to try.

YOGA:
Yoga is a type of exercise that utilizes poses to stretch and strengthen muscles. Yoga is also used as a method for calming your body and mind.

Music can enhance your experience stretching or performing yoga poses.

ACTIVITY: Research YOGA poses and pick 2 poses to try. Pick something that you are comfortable with trying. Play some calming music while trying out the 2 poses. Take your time and concentrate on your slow and steady breathing.

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Teamwork

Strong Supporting & Teamwork

Social support, on both the receiving and the giving end, is good for our health. Kindness has health benefits and makes the world a less stressful place. Did you know that supporting other people that you care about helps reduce YOUR stress? Scientists have found that when we help other people, our immune systems get stronger, and sometimes we feel calmer. That means kindness is good for your health! Social support and kindness are definitely embraced by the activities and culture of Unified Champion Schools.

Let’s think about examples of being supportive to someone and then being supported by someone else.

Discussion Questions:
1. Can you think of an example of a time when you helped another person? Or maybe you simply cheered them on?
2. How do you think it helped the other person? How did that experience make YOU feel?
3. Now, take a moment to think about who it is that you can rely on to be supportive. Who can you go to for support if you’re feeling nervous or stressed out?

ACTIVITY: On a sheet of paper, list who it is that is on your support team. It can be made up of teachers, teammates, friends and family members. You can even draw a picture to represent your support system of friends and family.

*Remember that these people are there to support you when you are feeling stressed, nervous or discouraged.

ACTIVITY: Pick at least one person in your support system and write a thank-you note or draw a picture to show you appreciate their support.

*Remember that supporting and thanking your friends, family, teachers and teammates is also an act of kindness, and acts of kindness are also good for your health!

My support team members:

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

I will write a thank you note to:

________________________________________

ACTIVITY CARD NOTES:
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
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