

LESSON 4

Coping with Stress Unit Grade 7 • Ages 12-14

TIME FRAME

Preparation: 10 minutes
Instruction: 30 minutes

MATERIALS

Chart paper sheets, one for each group of three or four students

RAK Journals

[Kindness Concept Posters:](#)
Responsibility, Self-Care, Self-Discipline

LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1, 1b, 2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4
Colorado: Comprehensive Health S.3, GLE.2, EO.a-f; Reading, Writing and Communicating S.1, GLE.2, EO.b,c; S.3, GLE.2, EO.b

SEL: Self-awareness, Social awareness, Self-management

[Learning standards key](#)

Care vs. 'Over' Care Activity

Students will learn the difference between taking care of themselves and making things more difficult on themselves by thinking too much and creating more stress.

Lesson Background for Teachers

Trigger warning: Talking about emotions and situations where strong emotions arise can lead to students revealing personal information that might require follow-up by yourself or a school counselor. If a student reveals any worrisome information or reaction, please know your school protocol for providing support and resources. Before class, find out the school policy about reporting a concern about a student's mental health to a school counselor or administrator.

Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

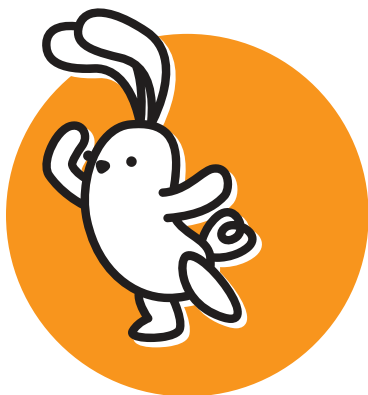
RESPONSIBILITY	Being reliable to do the things that are expected or required in your life, home, community and environment.
SELF-CARE	Caring for yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and socially through your words, actions and thoughts.
SELF-DISCIPLINE	Controlling one's actions and words for the benefit of self and others.
STRESS	Something that makes you feel worried or anxious.
OVER-CARING	Caring and thinking about something so much that it creates more stress



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

However, each lesson starts with the **Share** step to reinforce learning from previous lessons.



TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Drawing what they care or “over” care about in their RAK journals. On one page, they can draw themselves caring about something in a healthy way. On another page, have them draw themselves “over” caring, how they feel when they care too much and visually describe the areas where they “over” care. If time, they can discuss their drawings.
- Taking deep calming breaths during the visualization.

Resources

Activity adapted from Teaching Children to Love by Doc Lew Childress (Planetary Publications, Boulder Creek, CA: 1996). For information about this book and other Heart Math materials: <http://store.heartmath.org/store/children-teens/teaching-children-to-love>

4th Grade: Stress Busters Unit

Article: Teens and Stress: How to Keep Stress in Check <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-teens.aspx>

Share (3 mins)

We can spend a lot of time thinking of the worst possible thing that can happen. That's stressful! What if someone gave you \$100 dollars to spend any way you like. Tell the person next to you your plan for spending that money.

Inspire

Caring and Over-caring (5 mins)

This activity will help us to think about an area that can cause stress for some people... when we “over” care. What do you think “over” caring means?

Over-caring means caring in a way that isn't healthy for you and can be a source of anxiety and stress for some people. For example, wanting to do well on a test is great. But what can happen if you care too much? (Studying so much that you don't sleep, worrying so much that your heart races, beating yourself up inside because you think you won't do well.)

Empower

Over-caring activity and discussion (15 mins)

Divide students into groups of three or four. Hand each group a large sheet of chart paper and a marker. Have the students make two columns and write “Care” in one column and “Over Care” in another column. Have the students write or draw the areas they care about in one column and the areas of “over” care in another column.

Have one person from each group share with the larger groups.

I want you to look at the lists that you've created and pick one way that you “over” care so that you feel worried, anxious or stressed. Now close your eyes. Pay attention to how you are feeling when you “over” care. Now, push those feelings of “over” care away from your mind and heart.

Have students open their eyes, take out their RAK journals and write their response to the following questions:

- Were you able to push away those feelings of “over” care? Why or why not? How did you feel?
- Can you remember why you cared about this person or issue?
- What do you think caused you to “over” care?
- Do you think it is healthy to “over” care? Why or why not?
- Was this activity a helpful way to help you understand caring and “over” caring?
- Do you think that talking to a friend or an adult you trust can help?
- Do you think “over” caring is bad for your self-care and kindness?

Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

Evaluation Questions

- What does it mean to “over” care?
- What might the effects of “over” caring be?
- How can you avoid “over” caring and be kind to yourself?

Reflection Questions

- Do you ever see other people “over” caring?
Is it easier to see in other people or yourself? Why?
- How do you think you can decrease the amount you “over” care?
- How do you think self-discipline can help you stop “over” caring?

Summary

It's good to care about things and to try our best, but sometimes we do it to a degree that can stop helping and start hurting us! Kindness is knowing when you've tried enough and you need to let what will be, be.



Act (2 mins)

Kindness Minute

People are not the only ones to experience stress. We put a lot of stress on the planet by over using natural resources. Let's do our best to try and relive some of that stress by using less electricity. You can use no lights or one set of lights on a bright day in your classroom for the rest of the year.

Kindness in Action

Give yourself a break this week from putting too much pressure on yourself and causing more stress. Write one thing below that you are going to let go of worrying about. Every time you find yourself worrying about it, use self talk to tell yourself, “It's OK to let that go.”

