

Take Five

This lesson gives students a working definition of stress and allows them to distinguish between negative and positive stress. It also gives students an opportunity to identify five practical stress-relieving strategies they can use when they find themselves in stressful situations. The aim is to give students real-time self-care strategies so they can minimize bad stress and maximize self-respect.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

25-30 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ White or colored paper - ideally cardstock - for students to trace their hands
- ☐ Markers

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Compare/contrast good and bad stress.
- Identify strategies to help manage stress and improve self-respect.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

What do you do for YOU each day? Choose something just for you today. Take a hot shower. Turn on your favorite song on the drive home. You matter.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Be sensitive to students who suffer from medically-diagnosed stress disorders or depression; we are not talking about that level of stress in this lesson, but it may trigger students to share their experiences.
- Allow students with limited language or writing capabilities to draw pictures of their “Take Five” strategies.



Share

3-5 minutes

Have the class gather in the middle of the classroom. Label one side of the classroom as Morning and the other as Night. Ask students to go to either side to identify WHEN they prefer to perform each self-care task:

- Brush your hair
- Make your bed
- Pick out your outfit for school
- Shower/Bathe

Caring for others cannot happen if we do not first care for ourselves. **Caring** is defined as *feeling and showing concern for others*. In this unit, we'll talk about how we care - or show feeling and concern - for ourselves and for others. Let's begin with ourselves.



Inspire

15-20 minutes

Something that can make us forget to treat ourselves with care is stress. Can someone share their definition of stress?

Invite student responses

Good! Stress to me is _____. I feel stressed when _____
(offer personal definition and example).

Turn to your neighbor now and share one thing that makes you feel stressed.

Read the following book about stress and how to cope with it:

Read Aloud: “Transforming Anxiety” by Lauren Mosback

Read Aloud Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkZdkk10Ui0> (13 min)

After reading the book, ask students to share an example of ways that Ben was able to feel less stressed and work through his anxiety.

- What did he do with his thoughts?
- What did he do with his breath?
- What was the Grounding Technique? (5 things I see, 4 I hear, etc.)



Empower

10-15 minutes

Because our first job should be to respect and care for ourselves, we need to be on the lookout for things that make us feel worried, anxious, or upset. The things that make us forget to treat ourselves with the respect and kindness we deserve. These are the types of stress that can be bad for us. Some stress - like the excitement or adrenaline we feel when we are going to compete in a game or play an instrument at a recital or take a test or perform in a play - can be really good for us. But even that type of stress and excitement needs to be managed or we'll start feeling overwhelmed by it. Knowing how to manage all forms of stress is important for our self-care!

So, now you are going to identify five things that you can do to help manage or relieve your stress. It's called "Take Five" and you are going to write these strategies on an outline of your hand. The trick will be that we can use only one or two words for your stress-reliever so they can fit on your hand and so they are easy to remember. Before you can do this, you might first think about some of the things that bring stress in your life.

Here is an example:

Stressor: *I feel anxious when I have to go to another person's house.*

Stress-Reliever: *Breathe!*

What I will do on my hand outline is write BREATHE on one of the fingers or my thumb (do this as an example).

What are some other one-word stress relievers that you can think of?

Examples could include:

- Exercise
- Move
- Sing
- Squeeze
- Pray
- Talk
- Dance
- Relax (this is okay, but isn't very specific)
- Count

Ok! Take this piece of paper (handout paper or, better, cardstock) and trace one of your hands. Write all of your stress-relieving strategies; remember, use only five and put one on each finger and your thumb.

Decorate your hand and cut these out. I want you to choose a location to tape it down so you can remind yourself of what you can do when you need to "Take 5" and de-stress like Ben did. Inside a locker/cubby, on a desk, or inside a notebook is a good place to store it.



Reflect

5 minutes

Invite students to share their strategies by showing their hands. Show your own example first and display it where they can see it.

Give students one minute to place their hand cut-out in a spot where they might need stress-management strategies the most.



Extension Ideas

- Invite parents to make a Family Take 5 to post at home for the household to help manage stress.
- Have students work on a classroom "handbook" on self-care, self-respect, and stress management. It could serve as a future "weekly feature" where you highlight one new stress management technique each week and encourage students to use it that week when they feel overwhelmed. Or, lead students collectively in a stress-management activity before a big test or project.
- Have students make (either in school or at home) stress balls: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/homemade-stress-balls>



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AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
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Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

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