



LESSON PLAN B

Thoughts & Feelings

Time Frame: Four 40-minute sessions

Learning Objectives:

- Define the terms “mental health” and “emotional wellness” and “stress.”
- Demonstrate how stress affects the body through thoughts, feelings, actions and activities.
- Develop strategies to deal with stress and how to express emotions involving stress.
- Analyze the importance that family, peers, media and societal impacts have on personal health.
- Reflect on how decision-making skills can positively or negatively impact health.

Materials for Lesson Plan:

- Book for read-aloud (see recommended titles in Activity A)
- Poster paper or construction paper
- Poster-making art supplies
- Computer with Internet access and projector (optional)
- Copies of “Make Your Own Emojis” worksheet
- Copies of Cootie Catcher worksheet
- Pencils and erasers
- Colored markers and colored pencils
- Writing paper
- Class camera (optional)
- Old magazines
- Book: Listening to My Body (optional)
- Photos (bring in from home in advance for Activity C)

Overview:

We can promote good physical health through exercise, diet and sleep. How do we promote mental health and wellness? We can teach key social and emotional skills that have a positive effect on mental health. These social and emotional competencies include our self-esteem, relationship skills, and coping skills or self-regulation (to manage our emotions).

Part A. Don't Mess with Stress

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Lesson Plan:

- Book for read-aloud (see recommended titles below)
- Poster paper or construction paper
- Markers and poster-making art supplies
- Computer with Internet access and projector (optional)

Focus: Mental & Emotional Skills

Use books, a video, an art project, and discussion questions to familiarize students with the effects of stress on wellness. These resources and activities help give students the language and strategies to learn how to cope and when to ask for help.

Part 1. Read-Aloud Story and Discussion

Read a recommended book that deals with stress and different ways to cope with stressful situations. Here are some good choices to get kids thinking and talking:

[*Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress*](#) by Laurie Grossman

A unique and empowering book written for kids by kids (in a 5th grade class), with cool illustrations and tips that show you how to be confident, get focused, stay calm, and tap into your own inner strength so that you can be your own superhero—no matter what life throws your way! (Grade Level: K–5)

[*Angry Octopus: An Anger Management Story*](#) by Lori Lite

Teaches children how to use progressive muscle relaxation and breathing techniques to calm down, lower stress, and control anger. (Grade Level: K–6)

[*David and the Worry Beast: Helping Children Cope with Anxiety*](#) by Anne Marie Guanci Learning to deal with anxiety is an important step in a child's healthy emotional growth. Conquering fears, and not avoiding them, is the lesson imparted in this story. (Grade Level: Pre-K–4)

What is "stress"? Raise your hand if you can help us come up with a definition.

- Stress is what happens when you're feeling worried or anxious about something. Stress can cause powerful feelings.

How does the character in this book feel when he/she/it is worried?

What are some physical symptoms of stress?

- You might get a stomachache or headache, have trouble sleeping (or sleep too much), or feel your heart racing. Stress can be a powerful emotion.

How does the character in the book deal with stress? What are some things you can do to help relieve stress?

- Get enough sleep, eat healthy food, do more physical activity, do deep breathing exercises, count to 10, talk about your feelings.

Part 2. Stress Busters Poster

Make a “Stress Busters” flyer, poster or brochure. Imagine you are creating it for a community health center, for employees at a local business, a gym or fitness center, or for a school bulletin board. Your audience can be students or adults. Write tips and strategies for relieving stress. Make a “before and after” picture of someone who follows your tips.

Extension: “Stanley Stress” Video

Watch this short video with your class. “Stanley Stress” may seem silly at first, but the key messages in its catchy refrain sticks with you. If you don’t have a computer with Internet access, you can still read the lyrics below — poem style! — and engage students in a conversation using the Discussion Points below.

Video: [Stanley Stress / PBS Learning Video](#)

(Click on the link above. You may watch online or download from this link to watch later.)



Stanley Stress Video

Lyrics:

*Stanley Stress rolls into town when you’ve got too much to do
When your head is full, when your head is tired he comes to follow you
He doesn’t tell you when he’s coming or how long he’s going to stay
But here’s some things to do to help send Stanley on his way:*

1. Talk about whatever you are feeling
2. Make lists of important things to do
3. Unwind, breathe deeply and rest easy (you’ll feel so much better when you’re through)



Stanley Stress Video

*When Stanley comes a knocking he can make us overwhelmed
New emotions taking over, and we’ve got to let them out
Find someone you can talk to, so you can process what’s on your mind
Life can get so busy, there’s so many things you can’t forget
Setting goals and making plans will leave you more time for fun
Curl up on the couch and find a book that you like
Take a deep breath and take a ride on your bike
Learn from your mistakes and you’ll do better next time*



Stanley Stress Video

Discussion Questions:

The video recommends we do three things when we’re feeling stressed. What’s the first thing?

- Talk about your feelings.

What’s another thing?

- Make a list of important things to do. (Breaking down the tasks can make you feel less overwhelmed.)

What’s the third thing?

- Relax and take deep breaths.

What else did the girl in the video do to relax?

- She curled up on the couch with a book that she likes.
- She went for a bike ride.

Can you think of some examples of how physical activity can help alleviate stress?
What about examples of social activity?

What are some things that YOU like to do to relax and calm down?

Part B. Make-Your-Own Emojis

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Lesson Plan:

- Copies of Make-Your-Own Emojis worksheet
- Pencils and erasers
- Colored markers and colored pencils
- Writing paper
- Class camera (optional)
- Book: *Listening to My Body* (optional)

Focus: Emotional Skills

Life is complicated. Kids need well developed emotional skills to navigate the world around them. **Self-awareness** and **self-management skills** are good places to start.

Self-awareness is about knowing yourself: your strengths and weaknesses, your hopes and dreams, your values and emotions and how they affect your behavior. Self-management is about learning skills to manage and cope with your feelings in healthy ways. This activity helps develop both of these key skills.

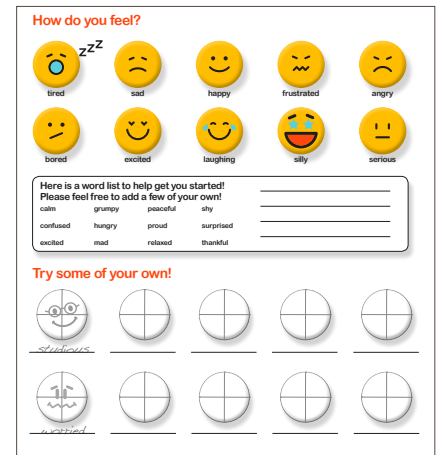
Brainstorm a list of “feelings” words

- Do you ever get tired of seeing the same old emojis? Do you ever wish you could create some of your own? In this activity you’ll do just that – with a simple pencil and paper.
- First we need to come up with a list of different emotions we can express with our emojis. Let’s brainstorm and see how many of these words we can come up with. Raise your hand if you have an example.

[Make a list of words on your classroom blackboard, white board or easel. Start with simple ones and prompt students to use more descriptive terms. Use the following list to offer some ideas if students need prompting. Ask students to offer synonyms for words like “happy” and “sad.”] You can also go through the alphabet and see if anything comes to mind. For example:

- Angry Bored Brave Calm Cheerful Confused Curious Disappointed Drowsy Embarrassed Excited Fantastic Friendly Frustrated Generous Happy Hungry Ignored Impatient Interested Jealous
- Lonely Lucky Mixed-Up Nervous Peaceful Proud Over-excited Overwhelmed Relieved Scared Shy Silly Stubborn Surprised Tense Tired
- Uncomfortable Worried

[Now pass out copies of the Make-Your-Own Emojis worksheet.]



Make-Your-Own Emojis

Instructions:**Part 1. Make-Your-Own Emojis**

1. Draw a set of emojis to describe a range of different feelings. Use the samples of different emojis on the worksheet as a guide to create your own unique images.
2. When you finish, color them in and create more detail with markers or colored pencils.
3. Take pictures of your favorites with a class camera or your own [optional: teacher's discretion].

Part 2. Write and Reflect

1. Are you good at handling your emotions? Which ones give you the most trouble? Choose three of these emotions to explore more in-depth.
2. On a separate piece of paper, write the three emotions (or draw the emoji if you prefer) and then make a list of strategies under each one.
3. Begin with this phrase: When I feel _____, I can...

Example: When I feel sad, I can...

- Write in my journal
- Play with my cat/dog
- Talk to a friend or family member
- Listen to upbeat music
- Go for a walk
- Watch a funny TV show
- Dance, jump rope or jog in place

When I feel angry, frustrated or upset, I can...

- Count to 5 (or count to 10)
- Close my eyes and take 3 deep breaths
- Stop and think before I speak
- Walk away from the situation
- Ask for help
- Get a drink of water
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Go for a run
- Dribble a basketball

Extension:

Read the following book to the class, before or after they work on their emojis.

[*Listening to My Body: A guide to helping kids understand the connection between their sensations \(what the heck are those?\) and feelings so that they can get better at figuring out what they need*](#) by Gabi Garcia (Grade Level: K-5)

Part C. “Inside-Out Selfie” Activity

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Lesson Plan:

- Old magazines
- Photos (bring in from home in advance)
- Pictures printed from the Internet
- Construction paper
- Glue sticks
- Markers

Focus: Emotional Skills – Self-Knowledge, Self-Esteem

Activities like this one encourage students to explore their inner selves. Self-awareness is a source of strength. It helps you know your own mind, determine your core values, and make healthy decisions. With a strong sense of self, you’ll have more confidence to make friends, set smart goals, and make healthy choices.

Instructions:

1. Create a two-page “Inside-Out Selfie” collage of words and pictures. Provide a glimpse of your likes, dislikes, and what you’re really like on the inside.
2. You may include drawings, photos and Post-Its; words, phrases, lists, bullet points or complete paragraphs (your choice). The point is to explore your own self.
3. Now create a title for your collage. It can be something like, “My World, All About Me, The World According to ____ (your name),” or anything you like!
4. List two things you’re good at and two things you like about yourself. List one thing you’d like to improve. Include your dreams for the future.

Extension:

Watch this empowering video with your class: [TedED Talk: 3 Tips to Boost Your Confidence](#)

Here’s a “Recipe for Confidence” from the video:

- Take the belief that you are valuable, worthwhile and capable — also known as self-esteem.
- Add in the optimism that comes when you are certain of your abilities.
- And then, empowered by these, have the courage to face a challenge head-on.
- This is confidence. It turns thoughts into action.

Family Connection:

Start a “Feelings Journal” at home for writing and drawing.

Part D. Compliment & Connect

Time Frame: 40 minutes

Materials for Activity:

- Copies of Cootie Catcher template
- Plain white paper (for making extras after students have learned how to make them)
- Pencils, markers, colored pencils
- Whiteboard, blackboard or chart paper for teacher

Focus: Social Skills, Social Wellness

Social skills, empathy and kindness can all be nurtured in the classroom through thoughtfully planned activities. Social awareness, which is about respecting others from diverse backgrounds, can be fostered through team-building exercises and by choosing books and resources that open children’s eyes to the wider world around them.

Part 1. Read-Aloud Story

Begin by reading an inspiring book about kindness and empathy to the class. Choose from the recommendations at the end of this lesson. Encourage questions and discussion.

Part 2. Make a Cootie Catcher!

Distribute copies of the downloadable “Cootie Catcher” worksheet and template. Model how to fold and make this craft activity, following the instructions on the template, as you explain the instructions to your students.

Instructions:

1. Follow the example on the Cootie Catcher worksheet to see which parts go where. Color each of your 4 flaps with a different color.
2. Write the numbers 1–8 in the triangles shown on the sample.
3. Then choose your compliments or fortunes, using the list here for inspiration.
4. Fold your Cootie Catcher, following the instructions on the worksheet. Fill in the blanks with tips or clues and extra messages. If you finish early and see someone who needs help, please offer to lend a hand.
5. When you’re finished, find someone who shares the same birthday month as you and ask them to play. Then find someone who has the same first letter of their first or last name as you.

Here’s how to play:

1. Get ready to exercise your pincer grasp! (This means using your index fingers and thumbs like a crab or lobster.) Slide your thumb and finger from each hand under the four corner flaps.
2. Pinch your fingers and thumbs together and push them toward the center. Practice moving the flaps in and out.
3. Find a partner to play with and ask them to choose one of the four colors on the top flaps.
4. Now you have to spell out the name of that color while moving the flaps in and out and side to side in time with the letters. Say the letters out loud to make it easier (e.g., “O-r-a-n-g-e”).
5. Stop on the last letter and open to see the numbers. Your partner chooses a number, and then you count out the number (for instance, “1-2-3-4” for the number 4) while opening and closing the flaps — just like in the last step.
6. Then pick another number and do the same thing again. But this time, on the last count open up the flap to reveal your partner’s compliment or fortune.

Extensions:**Skip the Template**

After using this premade template, encourage students to use the instructions to make another cootie catcher, this time without a template. Suggest different themes like “positive messages” to boost self-esteem, encourage kindness and facilitate friendships. All you need is a piece of paper and a pencil!

Conversation Starters

Make another cootie catcher with conversation starters like:

What is your favorite...

- Food
- School lunch
- Type of music
- Book
- Animal
- Sport
- Recess activity
- Band or Singer
- Subject
- Song
- Fruit
- Vegetable

Connect with a Friend

Encourage students to extend this activity after school with a friend. Suggest they use their creative skills to make cootie catchers of their own and then play them with each other. It's also a good way to connect and make a new friend.

Offer this suggestion: “See someone sitting alone at lunch or recess? Go say hello and ask them to point to one of the four corners on your cootie catcher to get started.”

Interview a Classmate

Then write a paragraph or two about them and share with your teacher or read to the class. Sample questions:

- In which month were you born?
- Who's your hero?
- Do you have a favorite sport or activity?
- Do you have a pet?
- Where were you born?
- What's your favorite food?
- What food do you hate?
- If you could visit anyplace in the world, where would it be?
- If you had an invisible friend, what would you name it?
- What's your favorite book?
- What's your favorite TV show, movie or video game?
- Do you have a favorite band or type of music?
- Which song could you listen to over and over?
- What song drives you crazy?
- Ten years from now, where do you want to be?

Other Recommended Books:

[*Listening with My Heart: A story of kindness and self-compassion*](#) by Gabi Garcia

In today's hypercompetitive world, kids often internalize the message that their worth is attached to their accomplishments and that messing up is something to be ashamed of, rather than a normal part of life, which can lead to critical self-talk. **Listening with My Heart** reminds us of the other golden rule—to treat ourselves like we would treat a friend. When we do this, we are practicing self-compassion. (Grades K–5)

[*Kid President's Guide to Being Awesome*](#) by Robby Novak

The 11-year-old YouTube star presents stories of kids changing the world, along with a step-by-step guide to making a difference. Older elementary students will relate to his humorous words and messages from celebrities. (Grades 3–6)

Family Connection: Take your cootie catcher home and play with your family members. Practice making them at home in your free time.

Additional Resources | “Thoughts & Feelings” Lesson Plan:

What Every Child Needs For Good Mental Health | Mental Health America

www.mentalhealthamerica.net/every-child-needs

Standards Alignment | Students will:

National Health Education Standards

Standard 1. Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Standard 5. Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Standard 7. Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

SHAPE America, National Physical Education Standards

Standard 3. The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.

Standard 5. The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction.

Common Core Standards

English Language Arts Standards > Speaking & Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1 - Comprehension and collaboration: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2 - Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2 - Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and orally.

English Language Arts > Reading > Literature

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 - Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Worksheets & Downloads:

Make-Your-Own Emojis Worksheet

How do you feel?



tired



sad



happy



frustrated



angry



bored



excited



laughing



silly

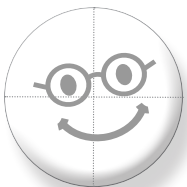


serious

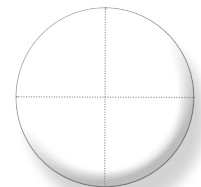
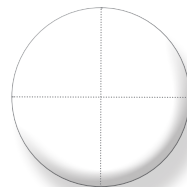
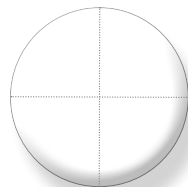
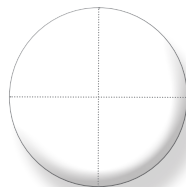
Here is a word list to help get you started!
Please feel free to add a few of your own!

- | | | | |
|----------|--------|----------|-----------|
| calm | grumpy | peaceful | shy |
| confused | hungry | proud | surprised |
| excited | mad | relaxed | thankful |

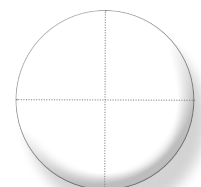
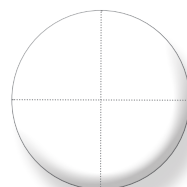
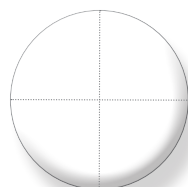
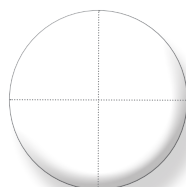
Try some of your own!



studious



worried



Make Your Own Cootie Catcher



Use the template on the next page to make your own cootie catcher, then choose some messages from the options below and write them in the blank spots.

Compliments / Positive Messages

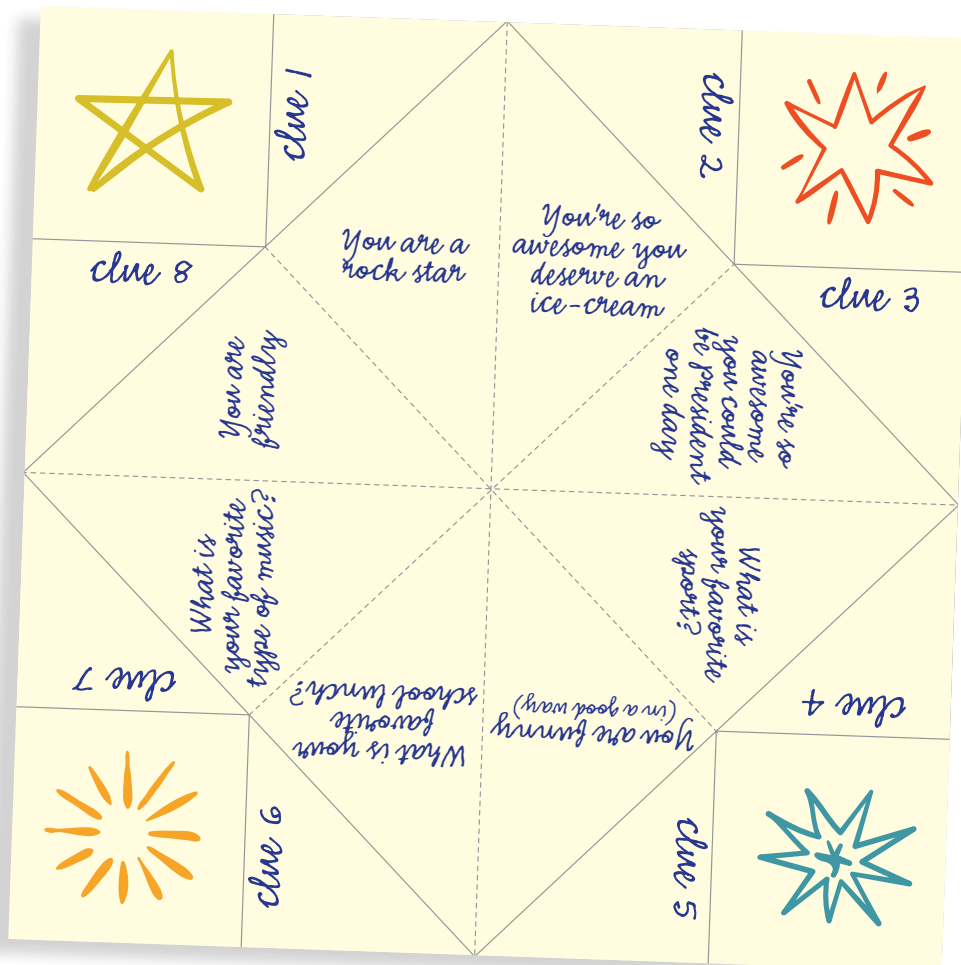
- You are friendly
- You are funny (in a good way)
- You are a hard worker
- You are kind to animals
- You are a good sport
- You are strong
- You are never mean
- You are a rock star

You're so awesome you...

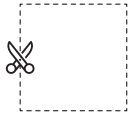
- Deserve an ice-cream
- Have a great smile
- Are nice to new students
- Could be President one day
- Can do anything
- Should write a book

Conversation Starters

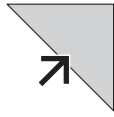
- What is your favorite...
- Food
- School lunch
- Type of music
- Book
- Animal
- Sport



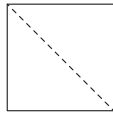
Make Your Own Cootie Catcher



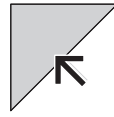
1. CUT OUT



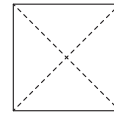
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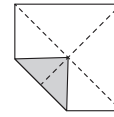
3. UNFOLD



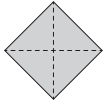
4. FOLD OVER



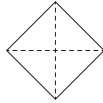
5. UNFOLD



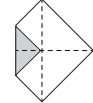
6. FOLD ALL FOUR CORNERS



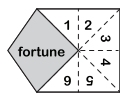
7. LOOKS LIKE THIS



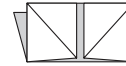
8. KEEP FOLDS TOGETHER. TURN IT OVER



9. FOLD IT OVER



10. LOOKS LIKE THIS



11. FOLD IN HALF. PUSH CORNERS IN



12. OPEN FOLDS INTO POCKETS

