

PART III

DEVELOPING RELATED SKILLS

MANAGING PERSONAL RESOURCES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART III: DEVELOPING RELATED SKILLS

Managing Personal Resources

1. Developing a Positive Attitude **3**
2. Being Accountable **11**
3. Handling Stress **18**
4. Managing Your Time **26**
5. Taking the Initiative **35**

DEVELOPING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE



AGENDA

- Starter
- Attitude Power
- Positive versus Negative
- Make a Plan
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the power of their attitudes by participating in a demonstration.

Students will identify positive and negative attitudes and their consequences.

Students will analyze the effects of positive and negative environments.

Materials Needed

- Pencils and paper (Part I)
- Poster paper, markers/crayons, and various art supplies (e.g., glitter, glue, stickers) (Part III)

Starter (5 minutes)

Begin class differently by welcoming students with a series of negative, complaining statements like the following:

You know, it took me almost twice as long as usual to get here today. The traffic was so slow that I barely made it on time. And then people kept stopping me to ask questions! You guys just have no idea what I go through to get here every day. Well, I guess we should get started. I'm really not prepared because my dog ate my lesson plan, but it doesn't really matter anyway. You might not even notice if I have a plan or not.

Ask students to describe how they feel about what you said. Encourage them to describe the messages sent by your body language and tone of voice, and the effect your words had on their image of you and their expectations for today's class.

Say, "See how attitude affects things? A negative attitude can ruin your day! We're going to talk about attitude today because attitude affects everything you do and all of the people around you."

Part I Attitude Power (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students create positive and negative environments in order to become aware of the power of their attitudes.

1. Students prepare for the activity.

Explain to students that they are going to experience how their attitudes can affect their ability to succeed. To begin, ask two volunteers to wait outside the classroom. Then, divide the class into two teams—the "Cans" and the "Cannots."

Remind students that attitude is a state of mind. Explain that each team is going to create an atmosphere that will affect someone's state of mind. Tell students that the two volunteers will be given one minute to write all of the words they can think of that begin with the letter "B."

2. Students create positive and negative environments.

Tell the "Cans" that their task is to create a positive environment in order to create a positive attitude in one of the volunteers. Ask if anyone can explain how this might be done. (Students might respond: making supportive, encouraging comments such as, "You can do it! Lots of words begin with B! Good word!" They will speak with enthusiasm, sincerity, and energy.)

Tell the “Cannots” that their task is to create a negative environment in order to create a negative attitude in the other volunteer. Ask if anyone can suggest how this might be done. (Students might respond: making discouraging comments such as, “B is a hard letter! There are hardly any words that begin with B! This is impossible!” They will speak in whiny, complaining tones of voice.) Tell the “Cannots” that they should not use insults during the activity; they should instead focus on making the task seem difficult.

Ask the volunteers to come into the room. Give each a pencil and a sheet of paper, and have each sit with one of the teams. Explain that the volunteers have one minute to write as many words as possible that begin with the letter B.

3. Students reflect on their experiences.

Guide students to draw conclusions after completing this exercise by asking questions such as the following:

- How many words did each team produce?
- Which team was more successful? Why do you think that team was more successful?
- Volunteers, how did your teammates affect your thinking and your ability to succeed?

Part II Positive versus Negative (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify positive and negative attitudes and their consequences.

1. Students explore the concepts of positive and negative attitudes.

Explain to students that an attitude is a way of acting or behaving that shows what someone is thinking or feeling. It is a state of mind. Write the word and its definitions on the board. (Merriam-Webster defines “attitude” as a “state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to an object, concept, or situation.”)

Prompt students with questions and comments to explore the idea that in addition to genuine attitudes, people can sometimes “affect” or “put on” different attitudes. Ask students why they think people might do this. (Students might respond: to make others think a certain way about them, to pretend to be something they are not.)

2. Students identify attitudes.

Ask students to give examples of different attitudes that people can have. Invite volunteers to write ideas on the board. Monitor the list. Through questions and comments, guide students to make observations about the kinds of attitudes that are listed. If the list reflects mostly negative attitudes, invite students to add some positive ones. Your list might include such words as “friendly,” “unfriendly,” “bored,” “enthusiastic,” “tough,” “cool,” “superior,” or “fun.”

Go back over the list and have students decide whether each attitude is either positive or negative. Place a plus or minus sign after each word to reflect students' responses. If students disagree on whether an attitude is positive or negative, allow them to support their positions with reasons or examples.

3. Students identify the consequences of positive and negative attitudes.

To focus the discussion on the consequences of positive attitudes, ask questions such as the following:

- How do you think the volunteer assigned to the “Cans” group felt? (Students might respond: good, successful, powerful, assertive.)
- Was the volunteer's attitude positive or negative at this point? (Students should respond that it was positive.)
- What do you think enabled the volunteer to have and project a positive attitude? (Students might respond: focusing on their strengths, having confidence in their ability to succeed, feeling energetic and upbeat.)
- How do you usually react to people who have positive attitudes? (Students might respond: like them more, have more confidence in them.)
- How do you think people react to you when you have a positive attitude?

Repeat the questions, this time focusing on the consequences of negative attitudes.

Conclude the discussion by explaining that attitudes are powerful; they make things happen. Tell students that a positive attitude motivates people and increases their ability to succeed.

Lead students to the understanding that in order to keep a positive attitude, they should focus on their strengths and have confidence in their ability to succeed.

Part III Make a Plan (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students create plans for transforming their negative attitudes.

1. Students brainstorm ways to positively respond to situations.

Draw a three-column chart on the board.

As a class, brainstorm situations in which students might exhibit a negative attitude. (Students might respond: while studying for a test, after losing a game, after being scolded by a parent.) Write their suggestions in the first column on the board. Then, have students identify the negative attitudes they might have toward these situations. Write these suggestions in the second column.

Discuss the situations students listed. Explain to students that, more often than not, it's a negative response to a stressful situation that brings about the most harm. Have students identify how having a negative attitude can make the situations they identified worse. (Students might respond: having a negative attitude while studying for a test might affect their ability to retain the knowledge, having a negative attitude after losing a game might cause them to avoid playing the game in the future.)

Tell students that it is important to maintain a positive attitude. As a class, brainstorm techniques for developing a positive attitude. Be sure to include the following:

- Make encouraging affirmations, like “I can handle this” or “I’m ready for this test.”
- Write down the things for which you are grateful.
- Focus on the first step you have to take, instead of worrying about the larger goal.
- Share your fears with someone you trust, and ask them for reassurance.
- Listen to positive music.

Have students identify ways they can respond more positively to the situations in the first column. Write their suggestions in the last column on the board.

2. Students create their own plans for positively responding to situations.

Distribute poster paper, markers/crayons, and art supplies to each student. Have students draw three columns on the poster paper, and then write in the first column five situations in which they exhibit a negative attitude. In the second column, they should write the negative responses they currently have to these situations. Finally, in the third column, they should write techniques for changing these negative attitudes into positive ones.

When they have finished writing, have students decorate their posters and share them with the class.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to explain how attitude can affect a person's actions. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Attitudes are powerful; they influence outcomes by affecting our actions.
- A positive attitude motivates people and increases their ability to succeed.
- To keep a positive attitude, focus on your strengths and have confidence in your ability to succeed.

Student Assessment

1. Describe what someone with a negative attitude looks and sounds like. Then, describe what someone with a positive attitude looks and sounds like.
2. Why is it important to have a positive attitude?
3. What can you do to keep a positive attitude?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.”

—Abraham Lincoln

Discuss the quote as a class. Have students brainstorm some of their goals. Then, have them draw pictures illustrating how having a positive attitude can affect these goals.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students listen to “When We Were Kings,” as performed by Brian McKnight and Diana King on the sound track of the 1996 Muhammad Ali documentary of the same name. Discuss the positive images the song invokes.

Have students share current music with similar themes, and/or write lyrics to their own inspiring songs.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about an incident that felt discouraging when it was happening. Then, have them write a second paragraph, examining the incident from a more positive perspective.

Have volunteers share their stories with the class.

Using Technology

Show *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the story of a young girl hidden from the Nazis during World War II. Despite her circumstances, Anne Frank never stopped dreaming of a better future. The viewing of this movie should be part of a larger discussion on the history of the Holocaust, and may lead to discussions about other times in history when inner courage helped people struggling to survive.

Homework

Have students write down, for one week, comments from family and friends that reflect positive or negative attitudes.

Have students share their comments with the class. As a class, decide which comments should be banned from use in the classroom.

Additional Resources

Have students read stories about optimism and pessimism from *Speaker's Sourcebook II* by Glenn Van Ekeren.

Have students draw cartoons showing how two characters view the same situation differently.

BEING ACCOUNTABLE



AGENDA

- Starter
- The Blame Game
- Me, Myself, and I
- Owning Up to It
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of accountability in their lives.

Students will define “accountability.”

Students will explore the positive consequences of being accountable for their actions.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of accountability.

Materials Needed

- Dictionary (Part II)
- Deck of playing cards (Part III)

Starter (5 minutes)

Ask for a show of hands from students who have maintained good attendance records in school so far. Congratulate these students, and thank them for their quick response. Then, ask for a show of hands from students who have pretended to be sick at some point this year in order to avoid going to school.

Pause briefly, and then acknowledge that few of us have a problem owning up to actions that are praiseworthy, but it's often more difficult to own up to actions that are not commendable or are mistakes. Explain that taking responsibility for our actions is the topic for today.

Part I The Blame Game (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of accountability in their lives.

1. Students consider a dilemma.

Ask students to think about what they would do in this situation:

You and a few friends cut through some yards on your way home from playing football in the park. You start tossing a ball back and forth to each other. Suddenly, the ball goes sailing through a neighbor's window. What do you do?

2. Students brainstorm actions and their consequences.

Invite students to speculate on what they could do next. Write their responses on the board. If necessary, prompt students to think beyond the impulse to run away. As students suggest options, follow up with questions in order to elicit the consequences of each one, as well as options that haven't been considered. For example, ask such questions as the following:

- If you did that, what would happen next?
- Would that result in a positive or a negative outcome for you?
- What if the neighbor saw what happened?
- What if someone who was there tells a different story?

Continue writing responses. Draw arrows to connect courses of action to their respective consequences. For courses of action that do not involve taking responsibility, draw convoluted paths whose courses aren't very clear.

If students do not mention taking responsibility for their actions in some way, guide them to consider and discuss such options now. Your paths for these options should be shorter, more direct, and easier to follow than the convoluted paths.

3. Students evaluate their responses.

Invite students to compare and contrast the paths of action on the board and to draw conclusions about them. Students should recognize that admitting a mistake, or taking responsibility for their actions, is a more direct and honest approach that is more likely to result in positive consequences.

Ask students to identify options listed that could be considered excuses in some way. Then, ask if students would agree that excuses are just ways to deflect blame onto something or someone else, usually to avoid admitting a mistake or taking responsibility for one's own actions.

Point out that it's easy to start playing the "blame game." Tell students to avoid this trap because it destroys motivation and can become a goal in itself—a goal that produces negative results.

Part II Me, Myself, and I (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students define "accountability" and explore positive consequences of being accountable for their actions.

1. Students define "accountability."

Write the word "accountable" on the board, and ask students to explain what they think it means. Prompt ideas by asking students if they think it would be a compliment to be described as accountable.

Through questions, prompts, and the use of a dictionary (if necessary), guide students to conclude that "accountable" can be defined as "being responsible for one's actions or work." Point out that the words "accountable" and "responsible" are synonyms, or words that have similar meanings.

2. Students explore the consequences of accountability.

Say, "If you are accountable for your actions, people will think that you are trustworthy." Write the word "trustworthy" on the board. Ask students to explain what this word means. If necessary, have a student look up this word in the dictionary. Then, guide students to understand that "trustworthy" means "being reliable."

Challenge students to identify and discuss other consequences of being accountable, responsible, and trustworthy. Invite a student to write responses on the board. Through questions and comments, prompt students to generate a list that includes consequences at home, at school, and in their relationships with peers.

3. Students draw conclusions.

Focus attention on the list, and ask questions such as the following to help students draw conclusions about the consequences of being accountable for their actions:

- Of the consequences listed, which would you say are negative? (There should not be any. If students identify some as being negative, challenge them to explain their answers, and ask if any other students support this thinking.)
- If the consequences are all positive, is choosing to be accountable a good or bad decision? (Students should respond that the decision is a good one.)
- Do you think it is difficult for people to be accountable for their actions? Why?

Tell students that whenever they are in a situation in which they must account for their actions, they should ask themselves, “Who is responsible for my actions?” The answer should always be, “I am.”

Part III Owing Up to It (20 minutes)

Purpose: In order to express an understanding of accountability, students create and act out solutions to dilemmas.

1. Students prepare for the activity.

Divide the class into four groups by having students each draw one card from a deck of playing cards. Stack the deck so that the groups are evenly divided. Have groups form in the corners of the room by card suit (i.e., all the hearts in one corner, all the diamonds in another, and so on).

Explain that each group will be given a dilemma to solve. As a group, students are to discuss possible solutions, and then choose a solution to act out for the class. Suggest that groups create characters and a short script to follow. Tell them that each group will have two minutes for its performances.

2. Students create solutions to their dilemmas.

Explain that the “red” groups—the hearts and the diamonds—will each work on the following scenario:

You borrowed a laptop and headphones from a friend. While you were eating, you spilled soda all over the laptop. While you were trying to clean up the mess, you sat on the headphones and broke them. Now, your friend wants everything back. What will you do?

The hearts will work on excuses, or responses, in which they are not accountable for their actions. The diamonds will work on responses that show accountability.

Have the “black” groups—the clubs and the spades—work on the following scenario:

You have a big project due tomorrow. The assignment was given two weeks ago, and your teacher has been checking every other day to make sure that everyone is working on it. You've reported that you've chosen your topic and have begun to work on it, but you really haven't. This project will count toward most of your grade, and there's no way you can finish it in one night. What will you do?

Tell the clubs to work on excuses. Have the spades work on responses that show accountability.

3. Students act out their solutions.

Invite the clubs to perform their solution, followed by the spades. Then, do the same for the hearts, followed by the diamonds. If time permits, prompt a brief discussion of the performances by asking questions such as the following:

- How did you feel when the performers gave excuses?
- How did you feel when the performers were accountable for their actions?
- Which responses did you find to be more reliable?

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to explain why being accountable is a strength. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Being accountable for your actions means taking responsibility for them, whether the actions are positive or negative. After all, your actions belong to you.
- Being accountable and reliable shows that you are a mature person, worthy of trust and respect.

Student Assessment

1. Define what it means to be accountable for your actions.
2. In what ways can being accountable be difficult? What are some ways you can overcome these difficulties?
3. List three benefits of being accountable for your actions.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“He who upsets something should know how to put it back again.” —Sierra Leonean proverb

Discuss how this proverb relates to everyday life. Have students draw cartoons showing responsible and irresponsible ways to handle situations (such as the “Goofus and Gallant” feature in *Highlights* magazine).

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Ask, “How are players kept accountable in team sports?” Divide the class into small groups. Have each group research rules and the penalties for breaking rules in a sport of their choosing.

Have groups present this information to the class, using charts, illustrations, or demonstrations to highlight key points.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students describe a situation in which they got into trouble and tried unsuccessfully to explain their way out of it. Have them describe how owning up to their mistakes would have affected the outcome. Students may also write about a time when they were accountable for their actions and how that made them feel.

Have students share their work in small groups.

Using Technology

Have students research greeting card sites on the internet. Have them look for examples of apology cards, and then design their own for situations in their own lives.

Have students keep the cards on hand for use as needed. Discuss how apologizing for our mistakes is a form of accountability.

Homework

Lack of accountability is a big theme in sitcoms; small deceptions often turn into major disasters. Have students watch their favorite sitcom and write a paragraph that includes the main plot, whether the main characters were accountable for their actions, and the consequences the characters faced.

Have students report their findings in class. Make a list of the sitcoms' problems and how they were resolved. Discuss the behavior observed.

Additional Resources

Facilitate the “Yo, Dude! What’s Up?” and “What Did I Do?” activities on pages 143–148 of *Help Me Decide! Learning to Make Good Choices* by Anne A. Boyd and James R. Boyd.

Have students discuss the importance of being mindful of and accountable for their actions.

HANDLING STRESS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Where Does Stress Come From?
- What Does It Look Like?
- Putting Stress to Rest
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify sources of stress in their lives.

Students will identify behavioral and emotional signs of stress.

Students will identify methods for managing or eliminating stress.

Materials Needed

- One sheet of drawing paper for each student, drawing supplies (Starter, Part I)
- One copy of the “Stress Factors” activity sheet for each student (Part III)

Starter (5 minutes)

Announce that you will start today's class with a pop quiz. Ask students to take out a sheet of paper and a pencil. In fairly quick succession, ask the following three questions:

- In what year did the Civil War begin?
- What is the distance between the earth and the sun?
- You have just entered a room full of people and dogs. There are a total of 72 legs in the room. How many people and how many dogs are in the room?

After telling students that time is up, ask if they feel stressed after this experience. Assure them that the quiz was not real. Explain that situations like a surprise quiz can make a person feel nervous, scared, tense, upset, and even angry. These feelings are signs of stress. Explain to students that today they are going to talk about how to recognize and handle stress.

Part I Where Does Stress Come From? (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students draw pictures that illustrate stress and identify its source in their lives.

1. Students draw representations of stress.

Ask students to think about what stress feels like. Distribute sheets of drawing paper, and give students a few minutes to draw a picture of stress.

After a minute or two, ask students if they have drawn their pictures in a setting. If they haven't, suggest that they add to their drawings to show where the stress is taking place.

2. Students identify sources of stress.

Focus students' attention on what they have drawn. Direct them to choose a word that describes their pictures of stress and write it down. Have them label where their drawings take place, and write one or two words that tell what causes the stress.

Explain that stress is tension, or feelings of pressure or anxiety. Point out that stress can happen when people, events, or situations make us feel powerless or out of control. Say, "Let's take a look at your examples."

Draw three columns on the board, and label them "Feelings," "Places," "Causes." Ask students to share the words they wrote to describe their pictures. Write responses under the "Feelings" column on the board. Then, ask students to name where their pictures take place. Write these responses in the "Places" column. Proceed in a similar manner with the causes of stress that students have identified.

3. Students make observations.

Have students review the list and identify major sources of stress common in all their lives. Write their responses on the board. Through questions and comments, guide students to identify such sources as the following:

- School (homework, tests, and grades)
- Parents (expectations for behavior and achievement)
- Friends and peers (pressures for behavior, relationships, and conformity)

Point out that many of these things are not stressful in themselves, but they become sources of stress because of how we perceive them. Tests, for example, are usually stressful when we are not prepared for them. If we are prepared, we might feel a little nervous, but we would probably not feel stressed about it.

Explain to students that if they can identify what causes them to feel stress, then they can learn how to deal with it, and even turn it into something positive rather than negative.

Part II What Does It Look Like? (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify behavioral and emotional signs of stress.

1. Students identify behavioral signs of stress.

Point out that in their pictures, students drew what stress feels like. Challenge students to analyze their pictures and describe how these feelings might reflect on their outward appearance. (Students might respond: hyperactivity, fidgeting, nail biting, laughing or talking too loudly, becoming pushy and aggressive, becoming very quiet and withdrawn, cracking knuckles, doodling instead of paying attention.)

Explain that these behaviors are all physical signs of stress. Make the observation that everyone reacts differently to stress, both physically and emotionally.

2. Students identify emotional signs of stress.

Direct students' attention to the "Feelings" list on the board, and explain that emotional signs of stress cannot be seen so easily. Challenge students to add other emotional signs of stress if the list is not inclusive. Your list should reflect such signs as feeling angry, nervous, worried, afraid, troubled, pressured, tense, anxious, upset, powerless, frustrated, and so on.

Explain that certain behaviors and feelings are clues to stressful situations. Tell students that these clues will tell them when a stressful situation is occurring. Once they recognize this, they can begin to deal with the stress. Explain that there are things they can do to reduce or relieve feelings of stress in these situations.

Part III Putting Stress to Rest (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn about and choose methods for managing or eliminating stress.

1. Students identify personal stress factors.

Hand out copies of the “Stress Factors” activity sheet. Direct students’ attention to the “Stress Creators” column, and ask students to check the factors that apply to them. Have them add other factors that cause them to feel stress at the bottom of the column.

After a few minutes, point out the “Signs of Stress” column. Ask students to check behaviors that apply to them and list other personal reactions to stress at the bottom of the column.

2. Students brainstorm ways to handle stress.

Prompt students to think about ways to keep from feeling stressed. Through questions and comments, guide students to review what they have learned about the importance of health and physical fitness and how it relates to their general well-being. (Students might respond: the food you eat affects your energy level. If you are eating poorly, you will not be able to deal with everyday pressures and problems very well. The amount of sleep you get affects your mood, energy level, and performance. If you do not get enough sleep, you’re probably getting stressed out more often than you should be. Exercise increases your energy, makes you physically and emotionally stronger, and relieves tension and stress. More exercise equals less stress.)

Ask students to brainstorm relaxation techniques that can help them gain control of themselves in stressful situations. (Students might respond: count slowly backward from five. Take three deep breaths as you bend over to tie a shoe or pull up a sock. Take one step backward. Stretch. Take a moment to gather yourself, think, and regain your calm. Call up a friend and vent. Talk about the situation with someone you trust and ask for advice. Read a poem, a favorite book, or a magazine. Make an action plan to avoid the stress—plan to study for your tests, for example.)

Remind students that stress comes from our reactions to a situation, not from the situation itself. Therefore, we should always recognize stressful situations and be prepared to deal with them.

3. Students choose ways to handle stress.

Draw attention back to the “Stress Factors” activity sheet and give students time to fill in the center column. Emphasize that students should choose things that they can and will do. Suggest that they keep this activity sheet in their folders and refer to it occasionally. Also, suggest that students update the sheet periodically.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students if stressful situations are unusual. Ask them to identify ways to deal with stress. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Recognizing what causes stress is the first step in dealing with it.
- Our behaviors and feelings are clues to stressful events or situations. It is important to listen to them.
- You have the power to reduce or relieve stress in your life.

Student Assessment

1. List some of the physical and emotional signs that someone is under stress. List as many of each as you can.
2. List three things that you can do to relieve stress.
3. Describe something in your life that causes you stress and three things that you can do to help reduce this stress.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.” —Charles Swindoll

Have students brainstorm a list of stressful events that have occurred today. Have students assign a stress level to each event (from one to 10, with 10 being the most stressful), and share their answers with the class. Discuss the idea that the same event can trigger different reactions in people.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students read pages 347–348 of *Speaker’s Sourcebook II* by Glenn Van Ekeren for 10 suggestions for reducing stress. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the techniques. Have the groups prepare and present a role play in which middle schoolers put their techniques into action.

Have students rehearse their role plays and share them with the class.

Writing in Your Journal

Discuss writing as an opportunity to vent frustrations and clarify problems. Have students use their journals for this purpose at least once during the week.

Have students share their work with a partner or teacher if they wish.

Using Technology

Have students search the internet for sayings that help them manage stress.

Have students design posters that incorporate their chosen quotes or proverbs. Display the posters around the classroom.

Homework

For one week, have students keep a list of situations that made them feel stressed and what they did to relax (e.g., they got into trouble, and then called a friend to let off steam).

Have the class create a graph of the most frequently used stress relievers and discuss what works best.

Additional Resources

Invite a guest speaker (e.g., a gym teacher, school psychologist, aerobics instructor) to demonstrate stress-reducing exercises and answer questions about handling stress.

Have students make a list of steps they can take to reduce their stress.

STRESS FACTORS

Stress Creators

- tests
 - trouble in the family
 - secret activities
 - fear of danger
 - arguments
 - confrontations
 - divorce
 - friendships
 - personal values
 - problems at school
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Can Lead To ...

Ways to Reduce or Relieve Stress

Signs of Stress

- headaches
 - anger
 - eating or sleeping too little
 - eating or sleeping too much
 - lack of energy and interest
 - intolerance
 - frustration
 - isolation
 - poor concentration
 - tension
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

MANAGING YOUR TIME



AGENDA

- Starter
- Work It Out
- Priorities
- Time's on Your Side
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the ability to manage time by creating to-do lists.

Students will recognize the importance of prioritizing activities in order to manage their time.

Students will apply time-management skills to their own lives.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Sam’s Schedule” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “Your Schedule” activity sheet for each student (Part III)

Starter (5 minutes)

Prompt students to begin thinking about the concept of time by commenting on how many minutes have passed since class began. Say, “One minute doesn’t sound like much time, does it? But a lot can happen in a minute. Do you know that light can travel 11,160,000 miles in a minute?” (The speed of light is 186,000 miles/second.)

Ask students to imagine that they will be paid one dime for every minute they are in your class. Ask how much each student would have at the end of the day. (Students should say \$5.00 if your class is 50 minutes long). Then, ask how much each student would have at the end of the school year. (Students should say \$900 if your school calendar covers 180 days.)

Lead students to the realization that minutes can really add up. Tell students that they’ll learn how to manage their time so that those minutes add up in their favor.

Part I Work It Out (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the ability to manage time by creating to-do lists.

1. Students read a story.

Distribute copies of the “Sam’s Schedule” activity sheet. Ask one or two students to read aloud the paragraphs about Sam at the top of the page.

Point out that Sam has a lot to do this weekend and that he values his promises. Tell students they’re going to help Sam manage his time, and they are going to find out if he can get everything done.

2. Students organize a to-do list.

Direct attention to the list of directions at the side of Sam’s list. Read them aloud, giving additional information about each one:

- Under “Things to Do” on Sam’s list, write down all the tasks Sam wants to complete this weekend.
- Under “Priority,” assign each task a rating of one if it absolutely must be done this weekend. Assign the task a rating of two if it’s important, but could be done at another time, if necessary. Assign the task a rating of three if it really does not need to be done this weekend.
- List the tasks that Sam could do each day that would allow him to keep his promises and get things done.
- Be sure to put a star by the tasks that have been assigned a number one for most important.

Give students time to complete the activity sheet. If students are having difficulty setting priorities, remind them that Sam values his promises.

3. Students share their lists.

Ask students to name the tasks that they listed in Sam's "Things to Do" column. Write their responses on the board. There should be eight tasks listed on the board: cut three lawns, go to the movies, clean his room, clean the bathroom, wash his father's car, babysit, shop for a present, and make changes on his paper for school.

Invite students to share their ratings for each task. Encourage students to explain the reasoning behind each rating. Try to reach a general consensus on the ratings. They should recognize, however, that cutting the lawns and completing the schoolwork are most important, followed by helping his father. They should also identify the shopping task as one that could be done some other time.

Ask students to share the schedules they worked out for Sam, identifying the priority-one tasks that they marked with a star. Ask students if they think that it is possible for Sam to do everything he wants to do this weekend.

Part II Priorities (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of prioritizing activities in order to manage their time effectively.

1. Students define "time management."

Tell students that they should now have a good idea of what time management is. Ask students to define "time management." (Students might respond: identifying tasks that need to be done, identifying the most important tasks, arranging tasks in a manner that allows them to be completed by a certain time.)

Explain that in Sam's case, students reduced Sam's level of stress. By making a to-do list, they helped him manage his time and accomplish everything he wanted to get done.

2. Students define "priorities."

Point out to students that when they identified the most important things that Sam had to do, they were identifying his priorities. On the board, write, "A priority is something that is more important to you than something else."

Ask students to decide, from among the following pairs of tasks, which they would do first and why:

- Work on a project that's due next week, or work on an assignment that's due tomorrow
- Invite a friend to spend the night, or talk to a parent about inviting the friend to spend the night
- Keep a promise to take a younger brother or sister to the park, or talk to a friend on the phone

Tell students that identifying priorities may seem like a difficult thing to do, but will be easier if they take the time to think about their values and tasks.

Part III Time's on Your Side (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply time-management skills to their own lives.

1. Students work in pairs to identify their tasks.

Hand out copies of the “Your Schedule” activity sheet. Explain that students are going to do for themselves what they did for Sam.

Ask students to work with partners to tell each other what they need to do tomorrow. Tell them to think about everything, including such things as eating breakfast, going to school, doing chores, spending time with family or friends, going to practices, watching a favorite TV show, or studying for a test.

Explain that as students tell about their days, their partners will write their answers on the activity sheet. Give students about five minutes to complete this step. Alert them when it's time for them to change roles.

2. Students prioritize their tasks.

Ask students to work independently to prioritize their tasks and make their own to-do lists, using what their partners wrote on the “Your Schedule” activity sheet. Before they begin, ask students to recall the rating system that they used for Sam. If necessary, write brief summaries of the ratings on the board.

3. Students schedule their time.

As students complete their prioritizing, tell them to fill out a schedule of events for the next day. Remind them to star the number-one priority tasks on their schedules.

When they have finished, ask students if they think that they can accomplish everything they want to do. Point out that if they cannot, they should be able to identify those tasks that can be done another day. (These are the number three priorities.) Suggest that students place a question mark after these tasks on their schedules as reminders that they are the least important.

Emphasize that it's not important how many tasks students have to do, or how quickly they do them, but rather that they complete them in a way that makes them feel proud.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to explain the benefits of effectively managing their time. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- In order to manage your time well, think about and identify the tasks that you want to complete.
- When you have a lot of things to do, make a to-do list and identify your priorities.

Student Assessment

1. List three of the steps toward good time management.
2. Make and prioritize your to-do list for the upcoming weekend.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Time is the scarcest resource and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed.” –Peter Drucker

Have students discuss why Drucker calls time a “resource.” Have them brainstorm other things they might be able to manage once they have a handle on their use of time.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Distribute paper, markers/crayons, and other art supplies to students. Have students draw their ideas of a perfect cell phone. They should include functions that will help them manage their time and organize their days.

Have students share their drawings in small groups.

Writing in Your Journal

Share the following quote with your students: "It's not enough to be busy. The question is: what are we busy with?"

Have students write about how they spend their time and how they could use it more efficiently.

Using Technology

Have students bring in songs with time as a theme. You might play “Turn! Turn! Turn!” by the Byrds or “Time Is on My Side” by the Rolling Stones.

Have students compare the lyrics to these songs. Have them consider why time was important to the writer of each song. Create a playlist of the class’s favorites or have students make up lyrics of their own.

Homework

For one week, have students estimate the amount of time they need to complete their homework, and then record how long it actually took them to complete each assignment.

Have students report the accuracy of their estimates. Discuss their work styles (e.g., working while watching TV) and remind the class that people work at different paces. Explain the importance of these estimates in budgeting time.

Additional Resources

Have students read *See You Later, Procrastinator! (Get It Done)* by Pamela Espeland. Discuss how procrastination can affect time management.

Have students create weekly calendars on construction paper. Have them write their schedules on the calendars, and then block off time for studying.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE



AGENDA

- Starter
- Different Views
- Self-Start
- Listen Up!
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will discover the benefits of seeking assistance from others.

Students will recognize that initiative affects the ability to seek assistance and gather information.

Students will listen to a guest speaker and consider how initiative makes a difference in life.

Materials Needed

- An assortment of about 20 small objects, such as pencils, chalk, paper clips, rubber bands, erasers, socks, toy or puzzle parts, doll clothes, yo-yos, nails, keys, shoelaces, old jewelry, and other common items that are easily identified (Part I)
- A sheet or length of material to cover the objects on display (Part I)
- A guest speaker who will spend 10 to 15 minutes talking to students about the importance of initiative and how it has helped them. (If possible, bring in a high school student who can talk to your class about how they became involved in a school activity, project, or sport and what has happened as a result.) (Part III)

Starter (5 minutes)

Ask students if they know why Orville and Wilbur Wright are famous. (Students should say that they are the brothers who designed and flew the first engine-driven airplanes in 1903.) Tell students that before that time, all airplanes were gliders, or planes that flew without engines. Explain that people thought the Wright brothers were a little crazy. In fact, the Wright brothers were not successful in their first four years of attempts.

Ask students what might have happened if the brothers had gotten frustrated and shelved their ideas. After a few students respond, tell students that they're going to see how important it is for them to find ways to make what they want happen, no matter the obstacles.

Part I Different Views (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students discover the benefits of seeking assistance from others.

1. Students prepare for the activity.

Before class begins, display the assorted objects you have gathered on a table at the back of the room. Be sure that each item is clearly visible. Cover the objects with a sheet or piece of material so that students are not able to see them as they arrive for class.

2. Students view the objects.

Begin the activity by giving the following directions:

- You will have one minute to view the objects at the back of the room.
- You cannot bring anything with you when you go to view the objects.
- After you have observed the objects, you are to sit down and make a list of everything you saw on the table.
- You must be seated and facing front when you are not viewing the objects.
- You cannot talk to anyone or share notes.

Send small groups of students, one group at a time, to the back of the room to view the objects. Be sure that groups are small enough so that students can easily look at all the objects. Monitor the time, keeping students quiet and moving at one-minute intervals.

3. Students reflect on their experiences.

Invite students to compare notes with each other, adding to their lists of objects. Then, begin a general discussion by asking questions such as the following:

- How many total objects do you think are on the table?
- How many of you were able to list all of the objects the first time?
- How many additional items did you add after talking with a few classmates?
- Do you think that you now have all the objects listed? Why or why not?
- What conclusions can you draw from this experience?

Guide students to the understanding that everyone observes things differently. Explain that people often remember different things about the same experience. Point out that we can always benefit from the assistance of others. We can learn from each other and work together to get the information we need.

Part II Self-Start (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize that initiative affects the ability to seek assistance and gather information.

1. Students define “initiative.”

Ask students how they would feel if someone were to tell them that they were a person with initiative. Encourage students to explain their feelings.

Write the word “initiative” on the board. Through questions and comments, guide students to understand that initiative is the ability to get tasks started or done without needing to be told to do so. Point out that the verb “initiate” means “to start or to begin to do.”

2. Students explore the concept of initiative.

Prompt students to think about the importance of initiative by asking questions such as the following:

- Do you think the Wright brothers made an effort to talk to other people who knew about airplanes and engines? Why?
- Were you more successful in remembering and listing the objects in the back of the room when you worked alone or after talking with classmates? Why?
- Would you have taken the initiative to talk with others about what they remembered if I hadn't told you that you couldn't talk to each other?

Remind students that only they know when information or assistance could help them. In order to get it, they need to take the initiative. Explain that they need to make the effort and ask questions. Tell students that sometimes they may not ask the right person or they may not ask the right question. When this happens, they need to try again.

Part III Listen Up! (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students listen to a guest speaker and consider how initiative can make a difference in life.

1. Prepare your guest speaker.

Prior to class, talk with your speaker and explain what students will be learning in this lesson. Be sure that the speaker understands the purpose of their visit and the time limit.

Explain that you will invite students to ask questions when the speaker has finished their presentation. Suggest that the speaker give some personal information before getting into the body of the presentation, and describe any long-term goals that may be involved in the topic of the presentation.

2. Students listen to the presentation.

Introduce your speaker to the class. Tell students that they will be able to ask questions or make comments after the speaker has finished. Suggest that as the speaker is talking, they write down any questions that they may want to ask.

3. Students respond to the speaker.

Invite students to ask any questions they may have. If students seem reluctant, prompt their participation by asking a question yourself or by making an observation about a specific action that was taken that illustrated initiative on the speaker's part. You might also ask students to speculate about how the speaker's life might be different if they had not taken a specific action.

Be sure to thank your speaker for sharing their time and experiences with your class. If time permits, encourage students to share their thoughts about the speaker's presentation after the speaker has left.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to define “initiative.” Ask students how having initiative is helpful in achieving goals. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Initiative is the ability to get started or to finish something on your own.
- Take the initiative to ask questions when you want or need information or assistance.

Student Assessment

1. In Part I of this lesson, did your partner remember any information that you did not remember? What information? What did this show you about working with others?
2. How might a lack of initiative hurt you?
3. Why is taking initiative important in achieving your goals?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Originality is unexplored territory. You get there by carrying a canoe—you can’t take a taxi.” —Alan Alda

Have students draw cartoons of people taking initiative. Have them explain their drawings in small groups.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students research and write brief biographies about scientists and inventors. (For suggestions, see *Black Pioneers of Science and Invention* by Louis Haber and *Extraordinary Women Scientists* by Darlene R. Stille.)

Have students create a list that demonstrates what we owe to the initiative of the scientists and inventors discussed.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write a note seeking support with a tough assignment or a problem that’s been worrying them. Have students share their work in small groups and discuss how it feels to ask for help.

Using Technology

Have students use the internet to research the lives of their favorite authors. Have them identify the authors’ struggles and the initiative the authors took to overcome those struggles and begin their careers.

Afterward, have students share what they found by writing “press releases” about the authors they chose, by creating posters highlighting their careers and initiative, or by dressing up as characters from their favorite books and discussing the authors who “gave them life.”

Homework

Have students describe needs they have outside of school. Have them write a few paragraphs identifying how they can take the initiative to meet those needs.

Additional Resources

Have students read “Out on a Limb” from *Speaker’s Sourcebook II* by Glenn Van Ekeren. It tells the stories of the less-than-auspicious beginnings of the inventors of the disposable razor, Mary Kay cosmetics, and the large screen video monitor.

Have students find examples of other successful people who went “out on a limb.”