

Coping with Stress & Anxiety

Our schools are a place where students participate in active learning, engage with their school community, and build meaningful relationships. We know that it takes time to adjust to new classes and routines. Some students may be feeling: scared, anxious, worried, overwhelmed or uncertain. Take time to create and ensure shared understanding when teaching or discussing anxiety or stress.

The language or words we use are influenced by our cultural and contextual biases and often assume shared meaning. Avoid re-traumatizing students, trauma informed practices support all students whether they have experienced trauma or not.

There is both healthy stress and unhealthy stress. Healthy stress tends to help students excel and succeed and build resilience. Unhealthy stress and anxiety can contribute to symptoms of physical ailments and can sometimes lead to increased mental health challenges. This video resource provides some tools for students on how they can manage their stress and/or seek help if they need it.

Before Video

Prior to students watching the video, it may be helpful to engage them in a discussion about healthy and unhealthy stress.

For younger students, emotions and feeling are foundational to social emotional learning and the more practice they have in developing their understanding of WHAT they are feeling, WHY they are having that emotion and HOW to make it better will help with their development of positive coping skills. For this video, helping students identify thoughts and feelings associated with health and unhealthy stress normalizes that all people experience stress.

Some guiding questions:

1. *What do you think stress is?*
2. *What are some examples of feelings with healthy stress and unhealthy stress?*
3. *When is stress helpful? When can stress be too much?*

After Video

After watching the video, you may wish to follow up with your students and allow for some reflection and discussion about the video. This may spark dialogue and questions about the information and new strategies learned. It is a quick, yet informative resource, so reviewing the information with your students may lead to a broader discussion. You can prompt your students by asking questions such as:

1. *When you have too much stress or worry how does your body feel?*
2. *When you have too much stress or worry what does your brain or mind think?*
3. *What are some healthy ways to cope with stressor worry?*

Students may also engage in a collaborative activity with peers. One such activity could be:

4. *Share with a partner/small group, some strategies for dealing with/experiencing stress or anxiety.*
5. *Brainstorm collectively other ways to maintain positive mental health when facing stress.*
6. *Identify individuals and supports to help when things feel like they are becoming overwhelming.*

Resources

Here are some additional resources that you can share with your students:

1. *For immediate support, reach out to school staff such as your teacher or school counsellor*
2. **Fraser Health Crisis Line:** 604.951.8855 or 1.877.820.7444
3. **Kids Help Line:** 1.800.668.6868 or text **CONNECT** to 686868
4. <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/mental-health-and-substance-use/child-and-youth-mental-health>
5. Visit www.erase.gov.bc.ca
6. <https://foundrybc.ca>
7. <https://www.surreyschools.ca/mentalhealth>