

Can You Feel It?

Session #1

Session #1 has been designed to address the first two of the four key messages, which are:

- *Change is constant.*
- *Recognize the stressors in your life.*

Our goal is to have participants embrace the underlying messages, recognizing that stress comes and goes, both the good and the bad, and that they have control over how they react and deal with the stress affecting them.

Overview:

Each activity has an abbreviation beside the title to indicate the link to the Health and Physical Education curriculum (Strands, Subgroups, and Living Skills). They are:

- *PS: Personal Skills*
- *IS: Interpersonal Skills*
- *CT: Critical Thinking*

Introduction – Icebreaker: Snowball Activity (PS, CT) 10 minutes
Activity #1: View the Can You Feel It? Video (CT) 20 minutes
Activity #2: Discussion of the Can You Feel It? Video with the PowerPoint Presentation (CT) 15 minutes
Activity #3: Beach Ball Resiliency Simulation (PS, CT) 5 minutes
Activity #4: What’s Your Tangle? Reflection Activity (PS, CT) 10 minutes
Activity #5: Can You Feel It? Stress and the Body: Reflection Activity (PS, IS, CT) 15 minutes
Total Class Time 1h 15minutes

Materials:

- *Can You Feel It? Video (CD in resource bag)*
- *Can You Feel It? PowerPoint Presentation (Appendix I and CD in resource bag)*
- *Can You Feel It? My Life Design Student Workbook (Appendix II and in workshop materials envelope) (***) if you find it more appropriate for your students, you may choose to use the Self Quest self evaluation tool found on the Kids Help Phone website instead of the workbook)*
- *Laptop/ LCD projector or TV/ DVD player or Smart Board*
- *Recycled paper for Snowball activity*
- *Markers/pens or pencils for students*
- *Flipchart or blackboard*
- *Beach ball (in workshop materials envelope)*
- *Body outline poster for alternative activity (in kit, dry erase set in side pocket)*

Objectives:

1. Students will identify common stressors that effect youth today (physical, mental, emotional, and social).
2. Students will identify the various stressors in their own lives.
3. Students will define what “stress” is (feeling in the pit of the stomach, etc.).
4. Students will recognize the effects of stress on the mind and body (physical, mental, emotional, and social) and how it can impact one’s life.

Introduction:
Icebreaker Snowball Activity (PS, CT)

10 minutes

Instructions:

1. Distribute one piece of recycled paper to each student
2. Have each student write down one thing on their piece of paper that causes them stress (i.e. too much homework, work, responsibilities at home, etc.).
3. Tell the students that what they write down will be shared with the class in an anonymous manner.
4. Have the students crumple up their piece of paper.
5. With their paper in hand, have the students form a circle or two lines.
6. Have the students use their crumpled paper as their snowball. Let students have a snowball fight for 1 to 2 minutes. (You may want to review a few basic safety rules with students; for example, no snowballs in the face).
7. When the snowball fight is over, have each student pick up one paper snowball.
8. Have each student open up the snowball and read out loud the stressor that is written inside.
9. Make a list of the students' stressors on a flipchart or blackboard.
10. Inform students that the list generated during this activity will be revisited later in this session.

Activity #1:**View the Can You Feel It? Video (CT)****20 minutes****Instructions:**

- Have students view the 20-minute *Can You Feel It?* Video.

Activity #2:**Discussion of the Can You Feel It? Video facilitated with the Can You Feel It? PowerPoint Presentation (CT)****15 minutes****Instructions:**

- Use the PowerPoint presentation and accompanying teacher's notes to guide the discussion with the students.

Activity #3:
Beach Ball Resiliency Simulation (PS, CT)

5 minutes

Instructions:

- By using a beach ball, you will demonstrate that too much unhealthy/unmanaged stress in everyday life can affect our ability to “adapt and/or bounce back from life’s changes and challenges.”
- Show class a fully inflated beach ball. Tell students that the beach ball represents someone who is resilient (i.e. has good self-esteem, is able to cope with their stress, has a positive attitude, etc.). In other words, someone who has the ability to “bounce back”.
- Have a student bounce the fully inflated beach ball. Notice how well it is able to “bounce back”.

Teacher Prompt:

“Name examples of stressors that Alex identifies in the video.”

Student:

“Missing the bus, working, home and family issues (dad sharing his stress, mom maxed out, financial problems), girlfriend dumped him, school is complicated, teachers brutal, friends are needy or unavailable.”

- As each stressor is named, take a little air out of the beach ball. Limit the amount of air for each stressor. You want to end up with $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the air left in the ball.
- Drop the “deflated” ball (i.e. Alex), to demonstrate that it’s lost its ability to “bounce back”.

Teacher Prompt:

“So, if the beach ball represents Alex, how can Alex learn how to bounce back?”

Student:

“Alex can gain the ability to “bounce back” by : identifying what causes him stress, learning about the how his body reacts to stress and learning healthy ways to better cope with his stress . ”

Activity #4:
What's Your Tangle? Reflection Activity (PS, CT)

10 minutes

Instructions:

- Using the list of stressors generated during the snowball activity, review what stresses the students.
- Tell students that for this next activity you want them to be more specific in their description of what causes them stress.
- Hand out the *Can You Feel It?* My Life Design Student Workbook.
- Have students complete the "What Stresses Me Out" section (p.4). Students will be listing three of their stressors.

Teacher Prompt:

"It is important for individuals to know what their stressors are so that they can better deal with, control, and understand them. Once you have identified exactly what an unhealthy stressor is for you, you can then start trying to deal with it."

"The first step in coping is to know yourself." Heart and Stroke – Coping with Stress pamphlet

"If you have listed *school* as a stressor, what in particular about *school* causes you to be stressed?"

Student:

"Tests, bullying, workload, difficulty in a particular subject, parent expectations, peer pressure. . ."

Teacher Prompt:

"If you have listed *friends* as a stressor, what in particular about *friends* causes you to be stressed?"

Student:

"Fitting in, when my friends talk to me about their problems, when my friends are not there for me, when I tell a friend something in confidence and they tell someone else, not having any friends . . ."

Activity #5:

Can You Feel It? Stress and the Body: Reflection Activity (PS, IS, CT)

15 minutes

Part I

Instructions:

- List the symptoms of stress that Alex identifies in the video (ball of tension in stomach, freaking out, agitated, etc.)
- Have students sit in a comfortable seated position.
- Inform students that you will be asking them a series of questions to help them reflect on a stressful event that occurred in their past.
- Ask students to close their eyes and think of a time when they were very stressed. It can be something that happened recently or something that happened to them in the past.
- Using a calm, soothing voice, ask the students the following questions, pausing for a few seconds between each question.

Teacher Prompt:

"Where are you? (PAUSE) Who are you with? (PAUSE) What are you doing? (PAUSE) What are you seeing? (PAUSE) What are you hearing?"

- Pause for a few seconds between each question to allow students to reflect in silence. Pause for 30 seconds before asking the next set of questions. Remind students to keep their eyes closed.

Teacher Prompt:

"Now that you have brought yourself back to a place where you felt very stressed, let's reflect on the following questions."

- Using a calm, soothing voice and pausing for a few seconds between each question, ask the students the following questions.
- Remind students to keep their eyes closed.

Teacher Prompt:

"What are you *thinking*? (PAUSE) What are you *feeling*? (PAUSE) How are you *behaving*?"

- Pause for a few seconds between each question to allow students to reflect in silence.
- Pause for 60 seconds.
- Ask students to slowly open their eyes and write down their responses in their *Can You Feel It? My Life Design Student Workbook* (p. 5).
- Generate a list of the signs and symptoms by asking students to share what they have on their worksheet.

***Alternative activity:** You may also have students, in groups, draw or write their signs and symptoms of stress on the large laminated body outline poster provided in the kits.

Part II

Instructions:

- Refer back to the list of signs and symptoms the students have generated in Part I, Activity #4.
- Ask students to identify which signs and symptoms are physical and have a student volunteer circle them on the list.
- Ask students to write these down in their *Can You Feel It? My Life Design Student Workbook* (p. 6).
- Ask students to identify which signs and symptoms are emotional/behavioural and have a student volunteer underline them on the list.
- Ask students to write these down in their *Can You Feel It? My Life Design Student Workbook* (p.6).

Teacher Prompt:

"Your body's response to stress can either be physical or emotional/behavioral."

Student: Physical:

- stomach aches
- perspiration
- flushed skin
- headaches
- muscle tension (e.g. jaw, face, neck, and back)
- difficulty sleeping
- lack of energy
- appetite changes (poor appetite, overeating, eating extra comfort or junk foods)
- getting sick more often
- acne/rashes
- teeth grinding
- increased heart rate
- rapid breathing
- constipation
- diarrhea
- indigestion
- general aches and pains
- cold sweaty hands
- dry mouth
- facial tics
- trembling

Emotional/ Behavioural:

- mood swings
- irritability
- trouble focusing
- frustration
- confusion
- forgetfulness
- anger (lashing out, overreacting to a situation)
- crying easily or feeling like crying
- sadness
- depression
- social withdrawal
- breakdown in relationships
- feeling overwhelmed
- difficulty making decisions
- avoidance
- panic
- fear
- anxiety
- low self-esteem (feeling worthless, not good enough, hopeless)
- negative self-talk
- blaming
- impatience
- nervousness
- pessimistic attitude

Teacher Prompt:

"Now that we have a better understanding of what stress is, and how it affects us, next time we will learn how to cope with our stress in a healthier way".