



LESSON # 3- IS IT STRESS OR ANXIETY

MATERIALS:

- Projector or smart board to display PowerPoint
- Life Promotion Tool Kit (activity)

**** Background information on the following lessons and other mental health information can be found here:

<https://mhlcurriculum.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/final-teacher-knowledge-update.pdf>

1. POWER POINT

- Brainstorm what anxiety is (or skip this exercise)
- Brains – normally respond to stressors in our environment - something happens, and our brains kick in to find solutions (similarly to how our immune system responds when exposed to a virus)
 - Our brains learn from every response – if the response works our brains remember that so that you will do something similar in the future. If the response fails, your brain remembers that and looks for new ways to respond in the future
- Continue through the slides, they are self-explanatory
- Stress Myths slides
 - myth#1 – was explained previously
 - myth #2 - refers to the point that if all a person does is try and avoid stress or decrease stress, there will never be any adaptation and therefore there will not be growth. Example, a student is feeling a lot of stress about an upcoming exam, and chooses to decrease the stress by going out with friends for a while – if they return home and study then this solution may be successful, but if they decrease the stress by going out with friends, but do not study, then when they go to write the exam they will feel extra stressed and will not be prepared to deal with the stressor.



- Show stress video – pause the video and have students practice starfish breathing after it is explained and then pause the video after the description of box breathing and have students’ practice.
 - Make sure students are breathing with their diaphragms – a good analogy is to ask them if they have ever seen a baby breathing – how the baby’s belly rises and falls. Rather than the shallow breathing we do from our lungs. (Band students will already know how to do this well).
 - Go through other methods to decrease stress from the video
 - Seeing stress as helpful vs harmful changes our physiological response to the stress (in a healthier way). If interested watch Kelly McGonigal’s Ted Talk ***How to make stress your friend***
 - https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en
 - Exercise releases feel good chemicals (endorphins), clears thinking and releases excess energy. It also affects the immune system and the cardiovascular system, resulting in improved brain function
 - Sleep – hygiene: Going to bed at the same time and getting up at the same time as often as possible
 - 8-10 hours of sleep
 - avoid screen time for a minimum of a half an hour before bed, but preferably an hour
 - Nutrition – Canada Food Guide
 - lots of fruits and vegetables, 8-10 glasses of water, limit processed foods, take vitamins especially vitamin D
 - Talk to someone – close friend, parent, coach, teacher, school counsellor, community counsellor, whoever you feel comfortable with
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3. INTRODUCE LIFE PROMOTION TOOL KIT – “SELF-CARE PORTFOLIO”

- Display the document on smart board or projector. Read through the introduction
- Emphasize to students that this assignment is for them! They can shape this assignment so that it is useful to them for their own self-care
 - They should choose activities that they enjoy as well as try something new. It is important for students to practice and use coping strategies everyday not just when they are feeling escalated or distressed. This way it becomes a natural reacting/thing to do so it will be easier for them to apply when they are heightened/escalated or in mental distress

***End this lesson with students highlighting/choosing at least 4 (or as many as you prefer) activities that they will complete. They can complete this assignment after the next lesson as a final project.

