

Detailed Instructional Sample: **What's in Your 'Worrybox' and What You Can Do About It**
(based on content from Stresslr.ca)

Rationale/Class Discussion: *We all have experienced feeling stressed or worried at different points in our life and may continue to do so as we grow older. Knowing how to deal with your worries and things that you can do to help yourself feel better is important.*

- Grade/subject: **4, 5 & 6 Physical Health and Education**
- Big Ideas: **Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.**
- Competency – **Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others**
- Content – **Practices that promote health and well-being, including those that prevent communicable and non-communicable illnesses**
- Core Competency: **Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Well-being**
- First People's Principles of Learning: **Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.**

Instructions

Materials: Post-it notes, Kleenex box or brown paper lunch bags

A. Making a Worrybox. If you have worries, don't let them run around in your head. Put them somewhere where you can deal with them, like a worry box.

Invite students to create a worrybox (can be made out of something simple like a Kleenex box; you could also make a 'worrybag' out of a brown paper lunch bag) and personalize it by colouring, painting, adding stickers (make it an art project).

Note: A 'worrybox' can be an actual box or there are virtual/online ones like the one at stresslr.ca

B. Filling your Worrybox. Ask students to write down 1 - 3 worries, big or small. Any thoughts or feelings can be stored safely in the worry box. Invite students to do this once per week at school, and as often as desired at home.

C. How to feel better about it. When you're stressed, it's easy to feel stuck and hard to know what to do about it. But there's always something that can help you feel better.

Choose a worry from the classroom worrybox. The teacher reads it out loud to the students. Ask the students if they had this worry, what would they do to help themselves feel better? Write down examples and post on a classroom board for all to see.

- *End by carrying out a **group relaxation activity** - Relaxing your muscles. Try this [muscle relaxation exercise led by Stresslr](#) (YouTube video)*

Examples of other stress management strategies might include:

- Belly breathing (which helps you relax, focus and concentrate and can be done anywhere) Try this [belly breathing exercise guided by Stresslr](#) (you tube video)
- To stop yourself from thinking about the negatives, make a list of all the positives in your life, like family, friends, things, or talents. It feels good!
- Laughing is a great way to de-stress. Have 10 second laughter sessions in your class where everyone purposefully laughs out loud. Once you start it's hard to stop.
- Try doing something relaxing like reading, drawing, or listening to music
- Try spending time with your family, a friend, or a pet today. It can often be an easy way to feel better.

- Sometimes the best way to feel better is to talk about your worries with a family member or trusted adult. Give it a try.
- Feelings can get pretty intense and overwhelming sometimes. Feeling this way can be hard. Ask for help. Talk to a trusted adult or call the Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868.

Don't let stress stress you out.... See how [Stresslr](#) is here to help kids ages 9-11 deal with... yup, you guessed it ... stress!

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Additional Tips and Information for Teachers

- The concept of “mental health” is often confused with “mental illness”. The Physical and Health Education curriculum focus on “mental well-being” recognizes that everyone falls somewhere on a continuum between optimal mental health and poor mental health, independent of the presence or absence of a mental illness¹. From this perspective, classroom-based and whole-school strategies can be geared to enhancing the positive mental health and well-being of all students, including those with and without identified mental health challenges.
- Teachers have an important role to play in fostering the mental well-being of their students, though they do not require specialized or expert knowledge to do so (ie. they are not expected to play the role of psychologist or counsellor). As a guide, teachers may understand their role to include:
 - supporting students to understand how to foster and maintain positive mental health and well-being, and thereby enhance their readiness to learn;
 - creating a welcoming and safe classroom/school environment;
 - highlighting methods to enhance both physical and mental well-being such as adequate sleep, physical activity, healthy eating and stress management techniques;
 - helping students to recognize the signs of common mental health concerns;
 - guiding students to trustworthy information and resources related to mental health;
 - supporting students to know how to seek assistance when needed; and,
 - challenging common stigmas related to mental health.
- There are a number of simple, everyday practices that teachers can use to supplement their instructional approaches to mental well-being. Examples include:
 - increasing opportunities for physical activity

¹ Consider that “mental health” and “mental illness” can be viewed as two separate but related concepts. From this perspective, someone could have optimal mental health (feeling good about and functioning well in life) while experiencing a mental illness. Conversely, someone without a mental illness could have poor mental health.

- taking students outside, even for a short time, to help them to restore readiness to learn
 - leading a circle check-in, where every student has a chance to voice their perspective
 - intentionally strengthening their relationship with students through personal conversations
- For students who are experiencing a problem related to their mental health, sources of support include:
 - talking to a school counsellor
 - Kids Help Phone #1-800-668-6868 ([KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca))
 - [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#)
 - Teachers are encouraged to think about their own mental well-being, and what strategies may be required to support it. A number of helpful health and wellness resources can be found on the [BC Teachers' Federation website](#).