

Brief Instructional Sample: Exploring Stress and Stresslr
(based on content from Stresslr.ca)

Stresslr is a free web app to help children ages 9-11 learn about stress and stress management strategies

- 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 promoting mental well-being, for self and others**
- Content – **Practices that promote health and well-being, including those that prevent communicable and non-communicable illnesses**
- Core Competencies:
 - **Critical Thinking: Analyze and Critique**
 - **Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Self-Regulation**
- 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; 2 buckets, bags or jars

Play the Stresslr introduction video at stresslr.ca. Children can follow along with Stresslr, a friendly robot, to understand:

- *What stress is*
- *Types of stress (good vs. bad)*
- *Why it happens*
- *How kids and families can cope with it*

Class Discussion: Have prepared (on post-it notes) 4 examples of age appropriate stressful moments (2 good and 2 bad). Also have 2 buckets/bags/jars – one labeled 'good stress' and the other labeled 'bad stress.' Read out the examples one by one and poll the class to see which bucket the kids think the example should go into. Ask them to explain why.

Post some highlights from the discussion on your class website/blog for parents to see. Encourage kids to tell their families about the activity and perhaps even do a similar activity at home. Let families know about stresslr.ca a helpful resource where families can go to learn more, together about stress.

Additional Information:

Examples of 'good' stress might include things like:

- Learning a new activity (e.g. riding a bike)
- Scoring a goal in soccer
- First day of school
- Taking a test
- Talking in front of a group
- Getting immunizations
- Excited about going on a school field trip or family vacation

Examples of 'bad' stress might include things like:

- Sudden loss of a loved one (family member, pet)
- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Changes to family environment (parent's divorce)

- Homelessness
- Poverty (e.g. parent loses a job)

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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
 - 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

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.

- 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](#).