



## Stress Busters Unit Grade 4 • Ages 9-11

### TIME FRAME

Preparation: 10 minutes  
Instruction: 30 minutes  
Note: This lesson can be extended to two class periods for more in-depth discussions

### MATERIALS

Clip "What is Stress?" from [www.morethanmedication.ca](http://www.morethanmedication.ca): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s93ywqFa6CM>

Chart Paper

RAK Journals

[Kindness Concept Poster](#) for Self-Care

### LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1, 2

Colorado: Comprehensive Health S.3, GLE.2, EO.a,b,c; Reading, Writing and Communicating S.1, GLE.1, EO.a,b

[Learning standards key](#)

# What is Stress?

Students will be introduced to the basics of stress, what causes it, how it can feel in our bodies and ways to combat it.

## Lesson Background for Teachers

Stress affects all of us in the classroom, our kids, parents and teachers. And stress is contagious! It's critical for everyone's mental health to learn to recognize and manage our stress.

## Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

**STRESS** Something that makes you feel worried or anxious.

**SELF-CARE** Taking care of yourself through kind words, actions and thoughts.

## TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Referencing the Kindness Tool Kit for self-care during the discussion.
- Utilizing an outline of a human body labeled "What Stress Does to the Body." During the class discussion, students could come to the front and label how stress impacts the mind and body in different ways.

## Resources

Free lesson plans on stress and the source of the video: [http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/stress\\_lessons/insiders?educators](http://www.morethanmedication.ca/en/stress_lessons/insiders?educators)

Learn more about stress in the classroom on Edutopia: <http://www.edutopia.org/article/stress-management-resources>

Video on Stress Contagion: <http://www.heartmindonline.org/stress-contagion>

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

The **Share** step in the first lesson of each unit is intended to set the tone for teaching kindness.



## Share (3 mins)

You've all probably heard the word **stress**. It's everywhere. Tell the person next to you what your definition of **stress** is and one thing you do when you're **stressed**.

## Inspire

### What Is Stress? (10 mins)

We are going to watch a clip that explains stress. Before we do that, write the following questions in your RAK journal:

- What is **stress**?
- What causes **stress**?
- How can **stress** impact your mind and body?
- What can you do to manage **stress** and take **care of yourself**?

As you watch, answer the questions on your sheet.

#### Option 1:

Watch "What is **Stress**?" 4 min 40 sec.

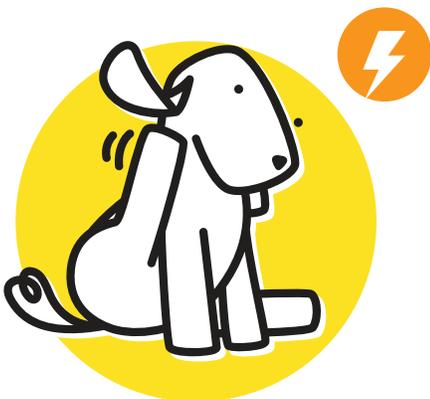
#### Option 2:

If you can't play the clip, read the following instead and have students answer the questions on their sheet while you read. Consider writing key words on the board as you read.

*What is **Stress**? It's something we need a little of, but not too much. Like the strings of an instrument, too much will make us break! **Stress** is a feeling and reaction to something that is happening, which makes us alert and ready to solve a problem. It can feel like butterflies in your stomach or give you a feeling of worry, make you cranky or angry, or make it hard to concentrate. It is in our thoughts, but also in our bodies. The hypothalamus in our brains sends a signal that we need to be alert, which tells our adrenal glands (on top of our kidneys) to give off hormones called adrenaline and cortisol. These make your heart beat faster, raise your blood pressure, give you more energy and release sugars into your blood. It's called the **stress** response. These are helpful if we need to get out of the way of danger. When they are in a milder form, they can even help you perform better at sports, on a test or at a recital. Sometimes, our bodies don't know how to reset after the **stress** response and over time, it can be bad for us. But, if we know what makes us **stressed** and know how to make ourselves feel better, we can make a plan for when **stress** is too much. Things that help are sleep, for letting your body and brain recharge, listening or playing music or laughing, which resets our stress receptors. You can also ask a trusted adult for help, do relaxation exercises, or exercise your body. You will feel better because this lets out hormones that make us feel good. If you can master your **stress** and learn how to relax, you can feel more relaxed, have less headaches or pains, be able to concentrate better and be healthier overall. Experiment and find out what works best for you!*



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.



## Empower

### Stress Discussion (10 mins)

Divide students into small groups. Write any of the following questions on the board or project using a document camera and have students discuss in their small groups.

- Do you think the video/**stress** explanation of stress missed anything? Did you agree with the definition?
- What can cause **stress** for people? (Arguing, bullying, fighting, tests, too much to do, friend problems, etc.)

- What can **stress** feel like? What does it feel like to you? (Butterflies in stomach, worry, grumpy, headache, hard to concentrate, jumpy, heart races, get angry, stutter, get a headache, feel like screaming, bite nails, can't eat, eat too much, feel like fighting, get quiet, grind teeth)
- How does **stress** impact the human body and mind?
- What can you do to manage **stress** as part of your **self-care** plan, so that you keep it under control and in balance? (Sleep, listening or playing music, laughing, asking for help, relaxation, exercise/ stay active, breathe, relax, visualize a safe place, talk to someone, pace, positive thoughts, play with a pet, etc.).
- How can managing **stress** make a difference? (Concentrate better, less stomach aches, tests easier to take, healthier, better mood)
- Can **stress** ever be a positive thing?

Then discuss as a group, and write their responses on the board or on chart paper so they can be used in other activities.

### Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

### Evaluation Questions

- What is **stress**?
- What can we do about it when we feel **stressed**? What is **self-care**?
- How do we feel **stressed**? What are the signs?

### Reflection Questions

- Can we help other people when they are **stressed**? How?
- What do you think is the best thing you can do when you're **stressed**?
- What does **self-care** have to do with **stress**?

### Summary

*Today we learned a lot about **stress**. What it is, where we feel it in our bodies, some reactions we have, but we also learned that we can do things to reduce our **stress**! **Self-care** is an important part of being kind to ourselves.*



### Act (2 mins)

#### Kindness Minute

*Reduce some of your own **stress** by taking a big breathing stretch. Inhale for three counts reaching your arms up to the sky, exhale for five counts bringing your arms down to your toes. Do this three times.*

#### Kindness in Action

Directions: Now that we know what **stress** can feel like in our bodies, the first step to stress reduction is to notice when we're **stressed**! No need to write what caused you **stress**, but write what happened in your body and your thoughts when you felt **stress** this week. Don't forget to try one of our **self-care** exercises when you feel **stressed**. You can do the breathing exercise we just did for our Kindness Minute.

