



Grade 7 • Ages 12-14

## Coping with Stress

Students learn about stress- what it is and how it affects them; and identify their own personal ways of coping with stress.

### Unit Objective

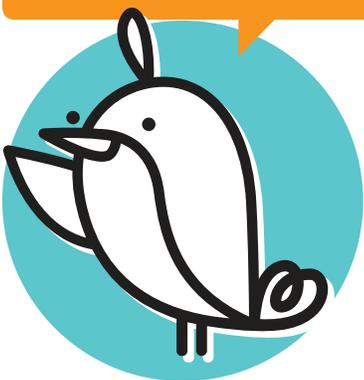
Students will define stress and identify personal stressors, compare and contrast positive and negative ways of dealing with stress, identify and explain the body's physical and psychological responses to stressful situations, develop personal strategies to deal with stressors, practice techniques such as physical activity, relaxation, journaling and talking with someone to reduce stress and describe the difference between caring and "over-caring" and realize the role it can play in stress.

### Introducing This Unit To Your Students

*For the next few days, we are going to talk about stress and how it can impact us physically and emotionally. With a partner, discuss what causes you to feel stressed and what you do when you are stressed.*

Allow time for students to respond and discuss. You can also use this time to introduce the key Kindness Concepts (responsibility, self-care, self-discipline) and create community definitions for these concepts or share the definitions listed below. Consider using the [Kindness Concept Posters](#) for responsibility, self-care and self-discipline as a way to reinforce learning.

**Kindness is an intrinsic quality of the heart expressed through an act of benevolence reflecting care and good will for self and others.**



These lesson plans were created by The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. For more information, please visit [randomactsofkindness.org](http://randomactsofkindness.org)

If you have questions or comments, please email us at [teacherhelp@randomactsofkindness.org](mailto:teacherhelp@randomactsofkindness.org)

# Kindness Concepts

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

**RESPONSIBILITY** Being reliable to do the things that are expected or required in your life, home, community and environment.

**SELF-CARE** Caring for yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and socially through your words, actions and thoughts.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE** Controlling one's actions and words for the benefit of self and others.

## Unit Lessons

There are four lessons in this unit plus an optional lesson if you have time.

LESSON TITLE	LESSON GOALS	LESSON MATERIALS
Lesson 1: Stressed Out	Students will be introduced to stress; how it can be both beneficial and overwhelming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large space for activity, desks moved in classroom or gym/outdoor space</li><li>• 20-30 balloons, enough for each student to have at least one; don't blow up the balloons before class (Alternatively, use paper they can ball up)</li><li>• Masking tape</li><li>• Markers, one for each team of five students</li><li>• RAK Journals</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Responsibility, Self-Care, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Lesson 2: Personal Stressors	Students will explore how stress affects people differently and examine their personal stressors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (5 min 37 sec): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALiCToVg24g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALiCToVg24g</a></li><li>• Activity Sheet, one for each student</li><li>• RAK Journals</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Responsibility, Self-Care, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Lesson 3: Reducing your Stress	Students will learn about what stress looks like and feels like in their own bodies and explore techniques to dissipate stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How Stressed are You? and Ways to Reduce Stress activity sheets, one for each student</li><li>• Scrap paper students can crumple into a ball</li><li>• Optional: Stress balls, Tennis Balls or DIY Flour and Balloon Stress Balls instructions at: <a href="http://www.instructables.com/id/Easy-flour-stress-ball/">http://www.instructables.com/id/Easy-flour-stress-ball/</a></li><li>• RAK Journals</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Responsibility, Self-Care, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Lesson 4: Care Vs. "Over" Care Activity	Students will learn the difference between taking care of themselves and making things more difficult on themselves by thinking too much and creating more stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video: Types and Cause of Stress by Dr. John Kenworthy (5 min 37 sec): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALiCToVg24g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALiCToVg24g</a></li><li>• Activity Sheet, one for each student</li><li>• RAK Journals</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Responsibility, Self-Care, Self-Discipline</li></ul>
Stress Research Project: Health and Wellness	Students will research the effects of stress on the body and prepare a report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Materials for research, including websites. (see lesson plan for links to websites)</li><li>• <a href="#">Kindness Concept Posters</a>: Responsibility, Self-Care, Self-Discipline</li></ul>

## Unit Notes

Trigger warning: Talking about emotions and situations where strong emotions arise can lead to students revealing personal information that might require follow-up by yourself or a school counselor. If a student reveals any worrisome information or reaction, please know your school protocol for providing support and resources.

Before class, find out the school policy about reporting a concern about a student's mental health to a school counselor or administrator.

Activity sheets adapted with permission from materials created by Colorado UpLift, Denver.

The activities in this lesson focus on a central theme and connect to different academic curriculum areas.

The lessons are intended to be easy to teach and fun to use while helping to develop social and emotional skills.

Lesson activities use a variety of modalities to address different learning styles and build on each other.

Each lesson includes choice of evaluation or reflection questions, which can be written, discussed or used as journal entries. Consider writing these on the board before the lesson begins.

The activities also incorporate key Kindness Concepts, which can be introduced before teaching the lesson or as the concepts are discussed in the lesson. Consider displaying the [Kindness Concept Posters](#) during the unit. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) and [Building Trust in the Classroom](#) for information about using Kindness Concepts to create a healthy classroom environment and help students develop pro-social behaviors.

Each activity includes tips for how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners.

[The Kindness Tool Kit](#) is another way to meet the needs of diverse learners. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) for how to create and use this tool kit.

RAK also has developed [Focusing Strategies](#) and [Problem-Solving Strategies](#) to help students better regulate their emotions, think through challenging situations, and build healthy relationships, friendships and community. See the [RAK Educator Guide](#) for more information about incorporating those strategies into the unit.

Establishing kindness as the norm in your classroom positively influences classroom culture. By setting kindness as the expected behavior and having everyone agree to that norm, your students gain responsibility for maintaining an environment that is kind to everyone

Revisiting the topics or questions raised during discussions regularly will expand student understanding of the concepts. Scripted explanations are provided, but feel free to use language that feels natural for you.

The Common Core, 21st Century, SEL and Colorado P-12 Academic Standards met in this unit are listed at the start of each lesson. A [Learning Standards Key](#) is provided on the website for your reference.

