

RING A BELL for Kids' Mental Health! Lesson Plan (6-8)

Managing Stress

- Description:** Students will learn more about what constitutes stress, what causes stress, and how stress manifests in our body and mind.
- Date:** Sometime in the week prior to the Dots for Kids Day - *Ring a Bell* event to be held on first Friday in December
- Time:** 45 - 60 minutes
- Topic:** **Stress Management**
- Learning outcomes:** In this lesson students will learn:
1. What constitutes stress
 2. To identify symptoms of stress
 3. Coping strategies to effectively manage stress
- Resources:** [*Growing Up Stressed*](#)
[*Stress Management Bingo*](#)
- Teacher Background:** Stress is a normal part of everyday life. Limited amounts of stress can have a positive influence on motivation and creativity, but excessive stress has an overwhelming and debilitating effect. One of the critical ingredients that makes stress tolerable rather than toxic is the presence of supportive adults who can help students to develop effective techniques to manage stress.
- Stress is the body's response to anything that makes an individual feel threatened or pressured. It is caused by any demand that requires a person to adapt, adjust or respond. It is the body's automatic way of reacting to change, challenge or demand.

Introduction

- Engage students in a discussion about stress. You may wish to ask questions such as:
 - What is stress?
 - What causes stress?
 - What are the physical, emotional and behavioural symptoms of stress?
- Invite students to explore their own experiences with stress by completing the *Growing Up Stressed* checklist. Students may wish to share their experiences in a small or large group discussion. Assure students that they will not be required to disclose their written responses if they are not comfortable doing so.

Suggested Activities

- There are many ways to effectively manage stress. Provide a *Stress Management Bingo* card to each student. Invite them to find a classmate who uses one of the coping strategies on the card and have him or her sign it in the appropriate box.
- Engage students in a conversation about stress management and how many people cope with stress in a similar manner. You may wish to ask questions such as:
 - Did you learn any new ways to manage stress?
 - Do your classmates cope with stress in the same ways you do?

Extension Activity

- Invite students to create a *Coping Kit* and fill it with items that help them cope with stress in their everyday lives (common items include stress balls, colouring pages, a journal, tissues, calming jar, etc.).
- Encourage students to share the kit they've developed with their parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or classmates.