Coping with Stress
A Special Addition to Staying Healthy: An English Learner’s Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living

TEACHER’S GUIDE
Coping with Stress

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Teacher’s Guide

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Florida Literacy Coalition
Florida’s Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center

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Staying Healthy: Coping with Stress
Teacher’s Guide

This is an additional component to the Staying Healthy: An English Learner’s Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living curriculum. This unit is an introduction to stress and stress management. It focuses on the effects of stress on thinking, behavior, and health. It discusses different kinds of stressors, and provides suggestions for coping with stress.

Learning Objectives:

• Students will be able to define stress.
• Students will be able to give an example a personal stressor.
• Students will be able to explain the difference between bad stress and good stress.
• Students will be able to explain how stress can affect a person’s body, and what a person thinks or does.
• Students will be able to describe how stress affects health.
• Students will be able to give examples of ways to cope with stress.

Correlation to Florida Adult ESOL Course Standards and CASAS Competencies

Florida Adult ESOL Course Standards:

Foundations

1.05.01 Identify several parts of the body.
1.05.02 Recognize symptoms of common illnesses.

Low Beginning

2.05.01 Describe basic problems/injuries to parts of the body.
2.05.02 Describe symptoms related to common illnesses.

Low Intermediate

4.05.01 Describe symptoms related to illness, injuries, or dental health problems.
4.05.02 Compare healthful and unhealthful behaviors and practices.

Advanced

6.05.02 Discuss consequences of unhealthful habits and identify where to get help in the community.

CASAS Competencies:

3.5.8 Identify practices that help maintain good health, such as regular checkups, exercise, and disease prevention measures.
7.5.4 Identify sources of stress, and resources for stress reduction.
SECTION 1: DISCUSSING & READING ABOUT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Suggestions for Teaching Vocabulary

Key vocabulary words are bolded in the text. Most are listed with some visual clue in vocabulary boxes, and listed again with more detail in the glossary. Help students locate and pronounce the key vocabulary before reading the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEYWORDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight-or-Flight Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Self-Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions for Stress Content

- Before reading, discuss pictures.
- Have students take turns reading some of the paragraphs aloud.
- Discuss vocabulary. Have students use context clues to define words.
- More advanced students may want to underline or highlight new information.
- Ask students to make flash cards. On the front they should write the word. They should divide the back of the card into 4 quadrants. In quadrant 1, they should define the word. In quadrant 2, they should use the word in a sentence. In quadrant 3, they should give an example of the word. In quadrant 4, they should draw a picture that shows what the word means.
- Ask students to make a list of common stressors. Write each one on separate note cards or sticky notes. Ask students to order the stressors from most stressful to least stressful. Help students realize that what is most stressful for one person might not be as stressful for someone else.
- Using the cards/sticky notes from the preceding activity, ask students to categorize how they would cope with the stressor: 1) accept it, 2) avoid it, 3) change it, or 4) change how you think about it. Help students realize that different stressors require different coping skills.
- Role playing: Select a cross section of stressors that have been identified in class. Pair students and assign each pairing with 2-3 stressors. Have one student in each pair role play a negative approach to coping with a particular stressor. The other student then role-plays a positive/constructive way to address the same stressor. Discuss as class.
Issues to Address

What is Stress?

- Focus on how students feel physically when stressed. If possible, present a mildly stressful situation (ex. rearrange chairs, ask questions too rapidly or put on blindfolds). Discuss ways in which students feel the effects of change: muscle tension, faster heart beat and so on.

- Encourage a discussion about various stressors. Allow students to identify common and uncommon stressors in their lives.

Stress: Length of Times and Sources

- Emphasize to your students that stress does not always go away. Certain problems may need more attention or take a long time to address. It is important to identify if stress is acute or chronic, so a proper coping method can be applied.

- Point out that acute stress can turn into a chronic stress. When your car battery dies, it can usually be recharged or replaced rather quickly. This likely causes acute stress while you are dealing with the issue. If your car continues to have mechanical problems, the situation can become chronically stressful.

- Stress can occur in different places for people. Maybe a new baby may not be stressful to someone who has lots of family nearby to help. But a new baby for a couple, whose family lives far away, may make for a tougher transition period.

How Does Stress Affect My Health?

- The effects of stress on the body can be profound. Tell students that stress may contribute to getting sick, how quickly one gets better, and one’s overall ability to cope with chronic diseases like diabetes.
Knowing Your Body

- Coping with stress should be a strong focus of the instruction. It is impossible to avoid stress completely, however, one can learn what coping strategies work best for them. Encourage your students to think about their behavior and identify which coping strategies might work best given the situation.

- Mental health counselors and therapists can help people in tough situations, like when dealing with the death of a family member or a divorce. Primary care doctors may also offer assistance in this area and/or local referral information. Remind students these professionals can be helpful, even in non-emergencies. Most communities have free or reduced cost counseling/mental health services available. Below are some resources on where you can go to access such services.

  Florida Department of Children and Families
  www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/samh/provsearch.shtml

  Florida Council for Community Mental Health
  http://www.fccmh.org

  National Alliance on Mental Illness
  (Provides a directory on local mental health support groups)
  http://www.nami.org

SECTION 2: ACTIVITIES

Pick and use as needed to develop skills.

Pronunciation Activity: Tap the Stress (X = LOUD tap, x = softer tap)

Teaching Steps (Use chart on following page.)

1. **You tap or clap the rhythm or the group being studied.** Tap loudly for the big X and softly for small X. For example, tap the rhythm Xx like this: TAP tap, TAP tap, TAP tap. Once you have set the rhythm, have students join you in tapping the rhythm. Keep tapping without saying anything until everyone is tapping in unison. Then:

2. **You say each word in time to the tapping.** Have students continue the beat as they repeat each word in unison after you. Repeat each word until students’ rhythm and pronunciation are acceptable. Do not drag: Keep up the tempo.
### Grammar Activity: Opposite Meanings

**Worksheet on page 11**

Students should read the chart and then fill in the blanks below.

**Classroom Option:** You may want to have each student read each pair of words and define them aloud to the class. Then, students can read the sentences underneath the chart and choose the right word on their own. This will help students recall the information just spoken aloud and use it appropriately.

### Hands-On Activity: Identifying Stressors

**Worksheet on page 12**

Have students read over the different kinds and examples of stressors. Students should circle stressors that are in their life. Encourage a discussion as to how one stressor can affect another. For example, relationships with family members may be more of an issue during big events like weddings or the holidays.
Math Activity: Count Your Resting Heart Rate

Worksheet on page 13

This activity teaches students to calculate their resting heart rate by counting one's pulse. You will need a watch or clock. Demonstrate to students that the neck and wrist are two easy places to count one's pulse. Once students have found a spot to count their pulse, tell them to “BEGIN” counting. After 20 seconds, tell them to “STOP” counting. Students should multiply their numbers by 3 and then find their resting heart rate on the chart on their worksheets.

Technology Activity: What Kind of Music Relaxes You?

Go to the website http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/music-relaxation-script.html. You will need a cassette or CD player and different kinds of music (e.g., country, rock, classic, gospel and so on). You can also use music from different cultures (Indian, Asian, Latin, etc). Ask students to bring in music that relaxes them when they are stressed.

Play a cross section of music in class and then discuss how the music makes them feel.

Hands-On Activity: Deep Breathing

The instructor will demonstrate how to use deep breathing to relax. Have students practice with you. Start by sitting in a straight-backed chair. Your posture should be erect but relaxed. Place your hands on your lower stomach.

Start by showing students that when you breathe in (inhale), your stomach pushes out. When you breathe out, your stomach pulls in. Practice that movement with students until they feel comfortable with it.

Show students how to control breathing. Count to three at one second intervals as you inhale (Inhale, two, three). Double the count to six as you exhale. (Exhale, two, three, four, five, six) Show students how to combine the breathing and the counting.

Students should close their eyes and focus on the breathing and the counting. You should keep the count aloud and allow students to practice for several minutes. Deep breathing brings more oxygen to the body. It can reduce the stress response. Combining it with counting occupies your mind and may help stop upsetting thoughts.
**Hands-On Activity: Problem Solving**

Some stressors can be anticipated and others happen without notice. It is often beneficial to plan for when we know stress is coming. When stressors seem to happen all of a sudden, it can be helpful to have a regular way of coping with problems. Some people use a routine set of steps that they go through to address problems. A common approach is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Solving Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think of all possible ways to solve the problem. Even if the idea seems impossible or dumb, write it down. Sometimes impossible ideas lead us to something that works. Keep writing until you run out of ideas, and the people you talk to about the problem run out of ideas!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the list from #2 and put the ideas in order from best to worst. It is helpful to make at least 3 different lists, like Easiest, Fastest, and Cheapest. Notice what is the best idea on the Easiest list might be the worst on the Cheapest list!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on your life and the problem at the time, pick the one that has the best chance of working. For example, if you have to get something done by tomorrow you might use the Fastest list instead of the Easiest list. Once you picked an idea, try it out! Set a day and time you want to review how it is going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep the date! Remember to review if the problem is being solved or not. If the problem is not changing, go back to step 4 and choose a different idea. If that does not work, keep trying, you might have to go back to step 3 and create a new list or step 2 and try to think of more things. Sometimes we have to go back to the beginning and re-name the problem because we did not fully understand it or it has changed. It’s important to continue walking up and down the steps until the problem is solved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 3:
DIALOGS

Suggestions for Teaching the Dialog

Help students read the dialog. Then have them practice the roles in pairs. To change the
dialog, substitute other appropriate words for the underlined words. Finally, encourage chain
drills and free conversations on the topic. The dialogs are listed by degree of difficulty.
Beginning ESL students may only be able to do Dialog 1, but they will benefit from listening
to classmates practice the others.

Dialog 1

Person 1: Do people cause you stress?
Person 2: Yes.
Person 1: Who stresses you?
Person 2: My friend stresses me.

Dialog 2

Person 1: I have a lot of stress.
Person 2: What stresses you?
Person 1: My job stresses me.
Person 2: I’m sorry your job stresses you.

Dialog 3

Person 1: I feel stressed. I didn’t get the job I wanted. I’m going to smoke
a cigarette.
Person 2: That is not a good way to handle stress.
Person 1: What else can I do?
Person 2: Exercise is a good way to handle stress.

SECTION 4:
CHECK YOUR LEARNING

Suggestions for Checking Learning: Answer Sheet

Make sure that students understand how to complete an objective test. You might do the first
item with them as an example. Then have each student complete each item individually. Walk
around to assist them on how to complete each item.

See student worksheet on page 14.
1. What makes something a stressor?
   - It involves a demand or change.
   - It involves money
   - It takes time.
   - It causes aches and pains

2. Another name for the stress response is the _________ response.
   - relaxation
   - worried
   - fight or flight
   - upset stomach

3. Which of these is an acute stressor?
   - You get a speeding ticket because you drove too fast
   - You care for an older parent in your home
   - You have been looking for a job for six months
   - You must cook special foods because your child has allergies

4. Which of the following is a good way to cope with stress?
   - drinking a lot of coffee
   - sleeping a lot
   - writing in a journal
   - treating yourself to chips and candy

5. What is a way that stress affects the way your body feels?
   - constant worrying
   - missing work
   - arguing with others
   - sleeping too little

Sharing with Others

Having students share what they’ve learned with others helps them check and reinforce their learning. Students can talk to friends and family members about what they learned about stress. They can help friends and family identify effective ways to cope with stress. This is a good opportunity to talk about how to share information while keeping information confidential. Instead of identifying a specific person (e.g., my son; my friend, John), the students can talk about people in general terms. For example, “I know someone who is stressed by his job. He said he doesn’t like the hours he has to work. Since he needs the job, we talked about ways he can work more exercise into his schedule. He is going to exercise in the morning instead of at night.”
SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Information

Preventing Burnout
http://helpguide.org/mental/burnout_signs_symptoms.htm

Stress Management from Mayo Clinic

Coping with Stress
http://www.holisticonline.com/stress/stress_home.htm

Manage Health

Help for Couples

Activities

Healthy Lifestyle
http://healthylifestyles.upmc.com/StressDefault.htm

Online Relaxation Activities
http://www.allaboutdepression.com/relax

Stress Relievers: Fun and Games for Managing Stress
http://stress.about.com/od/funandgames/Fun_and_Games_for_Managing_Stress.htm

Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief
http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_relief_meditation_yoga_relaxation.htm#response

Guided Imagery

Top 10 Tension Reducing Activities
http://stress.about.com/od/generaltechniques/tp/toptensionacts.htm

Family Activities
http://family.go.com

Free or Low Cost Services

211 Information and Referral Search
http://211.org

Free Suicide and Crisis Hotline
http://suicidehotlines.com/florida.html
Grammar Activity: Opposite Meanings

Read the chart. Then fill in the blanks below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words and Phrases with Opposite Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eating too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleeping too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose the Right Word of Phrase

1. Luis has been sick for a long time. His sickness is (chronic    acute)
2. Tom was laid off from his job. He will have to (lose    find) a new job.
3. Kim has been worried about her children. Kim has lost weight. Kim is (eating too much    eating too little).
4. Another word for result is (cause    effect).
5. A healthy lifestyle should make you feel (worse    better).
6. When you are sick you feel (good    bad).
7. “I’ll never get another good job” is an example of (positive    negative) self-talk.
8. John is very sleepy at work. He is probably (sleeping too much    sleeping too little) at night.
9. The end of life is (birth    death).
10. Having a flat tire is a stressor that is (in your thoughts    real).
## Identify Stressors

Read over the different kinds and examples of stressors. Circle stressors that are in your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
<td>Negative thoughts&lt;br&gt;Wanting to be perfect&lt;br&gt;Expecting too much&lt;br&gt;Important decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Family&lt;br&gt;Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Money</strong></td>
<td>Buying a house&lt;br&gt;Foreclosure&lt;br&gt;Credit debt&lt;br&gt;Bills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Events</strong></td>
<td>Death&lt;br&gt;Marriage&lt;br&gt;Divorce&lt;br&gt;Holidays&lt;br&gt;Moving to a new place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weather</strong></td>
<td>Snow/very cold weather&lt;br&gt;Very hot weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td>Crime&lt;br&gt;Crowding&lt;br&gt;Pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Illness&lt;br&gt;Surgery&lt;br&gt;Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Boredom&lt;br&gt;Too busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work</strong></td>
<td>Low pay&lt;br&gt;No benefits&lt;br&gt;Unfair boss&lt;br&gt;Lack of skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lifestyle</strong></td>
<td>Too little sleep&lt;br&gt;Bad food choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Count Your Resting Heart Rate

Stress can sometimes have a negative effect on the heart. Chronic stress has been shown to increase the heart rate and blood pressure. This can make the heart work harder to produce the blood flow needed for the body.

When we are stressed, our heart rate may be higher than normal. You can calculate your heart rate by counting your pulse. This can be done by placing the pointer and middle fingers at certain points in the body. Two easy places to count one’s pulse are along the neck near the jaw or on the wrist.

Count your pulse for twenty seconds and then multiply by three. This number is approximately how many times your heart beats per minute. Make sure you are as relaxed and calm as possible.

Now find your age and gender in the chart below. What is your resting heart rate? How does it compare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>18 -25</th>
<th>26 -35</th>
<th>36 -45</th>
<th>46 - 55</th>
<th>56 -65</th>
<th>65+</th>
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<tr>
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<td>50-56</td>
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<tr>
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<td>55-61</td>
<td>57-62</td>
<td>58-63</td>
<td>57-61</td>
<td>56-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOVE AVERAGE</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td>66-70</td>
<td>67-70</td>
<td>68-71</td>
<td>68-71</td>
<td>66-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>71-74</td>
<td>71-75</td>
<td>72-76</td>
<td>72-75</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>BELOW AVERAGE</td>
<td>74-81</td>
<td>75-81</td>
<td>76-82</td>
<td>77-83</td>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>74-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>POOR</td>
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<td>84+</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>18 -25</th>
<th>26 -35</th>
<th>36 -45</th>
<th>46 - 55</th>
<th>56 -65</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>60-64</td>
<td>60-64</td>
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<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOVE AVERAGE</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>69-72</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>69-73</td>
<td>69-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
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<td>74-78</td>
<td>74-77</td>
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<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELOW AVERAGE</td>
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<td>79-84</td>
<td>78-83</td>
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<td>77-84</td>
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<tr>
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<td>83+</td>
<td>85+</td>
<td>84+</td>
<td>84+</td>
<td>84+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source for charts: http://www.netfit.co.uk/ty13.htm
CHECK YOUR LEARNING QUIZ

Look at the following questions. Select the best answer, and bubble in the circle in front of it.

1. **What makes something or someone a stressor?**
   - o It involves a demand or change.
   - o It involves money.
   - o It takes time.
   - o It causes aches and pains

2. **Another name for the stress response is the ________ response.**
   - o relaxation
   - o worried
   - o fight or flight
   - o upset stomach

3. **Which of these is an acute stressor?**
   - o You get a speeding ticket because you drove too fast.
   - o You care for an older parent in your home.
   - o You have been looking for a job for six months.
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4. **Which of the following is a good way to cope with stress?**
   - o drinking a lot of coffee
   - o sleeping a lot
   - o writing in a journal
   - o treating yourself to chips and candy

5. **What is a way that stress affects the way your body feels?**
   - o constant worrying
   - o missing work
   - o arguing with others
   - o sleeping too little