



Taking Care of Ourselves: Developing Well-Being Skills

“Ultimately it is the sense of being understood in our experience that is most healing.”

--Viktor Frankl

Purpose:

This lesson plan is all about supporting students as they learn about self-care and how to incorporate wellness practices in their own lives. Students will learn techniques for how to practice self-care, and reflect on what works best for them. This lesson plan also offers a space for students to think about what sets off feelings of grief, stress and anxiety in their lives, to identify the source and then create a plan of action for how to address these stressors as they arise.

Context:

“The issue is that transition always involves loss, no matter how good the next phase will be. Loss always engenders grief and the greater you have loved a situation or place or people, the greater the grief.” --Ruth Van Reken

Students growing up in international communities impacted by mobility have to deal with a lot, which often evoke feelings of anxiety, a state of fatigue, and a sense of loss as they navigate grief time and time again. This lesson is about providing students with strategies for how to take care of themselves and practice wellness. This is not a substitute for proper mental health counseling or guidance in cases where that may be needed.

Objectives:

- Students will reflect on what sets off grief, stress, anxiety and fatigue in their lives.
- Students will learn about strategies to promote wellness and self-care and think about the best ways to take care of themselves.
- Students will identify self-care practices they can implement in their own lives.



Agenda:

Activity 1: What sets off your stress? (15 minutes)

Free-Write: In their journals, ask students to respond to the following prompt as a free-write.

“You will write for 3 minutes without stopping. If you find you have run out of things to say, you should write anything that comes up even if it’s off topic. The act of continuously writing often sparks further ideas and welcomes new thoughts. It can be a challenge to write like this, but keep at it and you’ll be surprised by what comes up for you.

Today, our prompts are: What sets off your stress? What makes you feel anxious? What makes you feel fatigued? What are you doing when you feel your best?

After the 3 minutes, either have students break up into pairs to share their responses or do this as an entire group. Using these guiding questions, have students share:

1. What did it feel like to write for 3 minutes without stopping? What surprised you?
2. What came up for you when you thought about what sets off your stress? Have you thought about this before?
3. When thinking about anxiety, what did you write down? Why do these things make you feel anxious?
4. What thinking about fatigue, what did you write down? What about these things make you feel fatigue?
5. What are the things you do when you’re feeling your best? What prevents you from doing these things on a more regular basis?
6. When you feel things like fatigue, anxiety, etc., what do you do for yourself? Who do you go to? How do you manage these feelings?
7. Do you feel you have a regular self-care practice in your life? If yes, what does it look like? If no, why not? Do you want one? How might one benefit you?
8. What positive role models do you have in your life of people who practice wellness and self-care? What do they do that you admire/like?



Learning Moment: *“These feelings are often messy, and though it may be tempting to run or hide from them, that behavior can be destructive. Avoiding these feelings can lead to becoming emotionally stuck, and that can have long lasting, harmful consequences. Instead, it can be helpful to gently lean into the loss. That being said, this kind of intentionality can be exhausting, and it is important to seek rest from the grieving process by planning for soothing, healthy, and pleasurable activities along the way.”* -<http://denizenmag.com/2010/06/dealing-with-tck-grief-and-depression/>

Activity 2: Strategies for Self-Care and Creating a Plan (15 minutes)

Context/Instructions:

There are so many resources for how to practice better self-care, so we wanted to share with you a comprehensive (although not exhaustive) list of strategies for how to take better care of yourself.

First, take a look at the “Healthy Coping Mechanisms and Tools” lists and circle or mark the strategies that resonate with you. You may see something on the list that you already do that works really well for you. You may notice something that you’ve never thought of doing but want to try. Mark off as many as you want from this list. Take a few minutes to do this independently.

Now that you’ve read through all of the various techniques and tools for coping with stress and practicing self-care, let’s use this worksheet to think about wellness in your own life. (See the next page for the worksheet.)

Complete this worksheet either in your own journal, or on this page, so you can keep it after today’s class. The goal here is to reflect, identify some ways you can manage your stress and start proactively incorporating self-care practices into your life, and make a commitment to implementing these things outside of this class.



Define the “stressor” (thing that sets off your stress/anxiety/fatigue)	Behaviors that make these stressors more intense/make me feel more anxious/stress/fatigued?	Positive Self-Care strategy I am committing to practice to help me manage these feelings
<p>What makes me feel anxious? (Example) <i>The idea of having to move always being an impending possibility. Not knowing when my family may be told we have to move, and I will have to say goodbye to another school, another city, and another set of friends I've worked so hard to develop relationships with.</i></p>	<p>Example: <i>Constantly thinking about the “what ifs” makes me feel really anxious.</i></p> <p><i>Not fully settling into our new home because I don't know when we may have to move again makes me feel like I'm not really “at home” even when I'm physically in our home.</i></p>	<p>Example: <i>I am committing to staying in the moment. I will do this by practicing mindfulness and meditating every morning. I will focus on the here and now, and when I find my mind wandering to the “what if,” I will bring it back to today and what I have in my life at this moment.</i></p> <p><i>I will start a gratitude journal and write down 3 things I'm grateful for every night before I go to sleep.</i></p> <p><i>I will also exercise every day. When I exercise I feel more calm, have a clearer head, and find it easier to stay in the moment.</i></p>
<p>What makes me feel anxious?</p>		
<p>What makes me feel fatigued?</p>		
<p>What makes me feel stressed?</p>		
<p>What makes me feel _____?</p>		

***For the complete lesson plan and more lessons like this, please contact us at**

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