

# Stress and Anxiety Management

## INTRODUCTION LESSON

There's no way around it. Stress and anxiety are now a part of our lives in ways we could never have predicted.

What's going on with the Corona Virus is real, and there's a ton of uncertainty about how this will all play out.

And in the meantime, we're all at home, with family members, trying to figure out what to do and how we're feeling.

In the simplest terms... stress is our immediate reaction to a situation, event, or threat. Anxiety is the feeling and the thoughts that come after the stressful situation. Anxiety can come in waves and it can stick with us for a while.

When we first found out about how serious the Corona Virus could be... this was stressful. And what most of us have been feeling since, in our bodies and in our thoughts, is the anxiety.

So what do we do? How can we manage the stress and anxiety? The good news is that there are a lot of things we can do to get through this period of time.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE STUDENTS

- What are some things that have happened in your past that have caused you stress?
- When you felt anxious in the past, how did it make you feel physically?
- When you felt anxious in the past, what were some of the thoughts you had?
- If you've ever felt stressed when you first found out about an upcoming test, or about something you had to do, what did you do in response?
- In the past, when you've felt anxious, what activities did you do that helped you feel less anxious?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Talk about your thoughts and feelings to people who care about you
- Listen to music

- Be creative... write, draw, paint, make music, write lyrics
- Meditate... learn to slow your thoughts and focus on your breath
- Get physical... exercise releases “feel good” chemicals in your brain
- Research... when we’re anxious because we don’t understand something, research can inform us, and may help put us at ease
- Set routines... getting into healthy habits can reduce stress and anxiety
- Do for others... being generous, caring and supportive to others can take our minds off of our own stress and anxiety
- Fix something that’s broken
- Do chores to music
- Throw yourself into your education and prepare for your future

## **SEL LESSON SUMMARY**

Emotions are NOT our enemies. Anything we feel is completely normal and healthy and every human, at some time or another, experiences all of the same emotions.

It’s how we react to our feelings and thoughts that can be either healthy or unhealthy.

With this new reality of being at home, not going to school, and perhaps worrying about the bad stuff that could happen... it’s more important than ever to learn what works FOR YOU when you want to feel calm and relaxed.

It’s also important to remember that some activities that can “take our minds” off of our stress and anxiety... simply AREN’T HEALTHY, and they can actually add a lot of stress. Some of these activities include drugs, alcohol, aggression, and gossiping.

The bottom line is this. It’s perfectly normal to have felt stressed when we first realized how real all this virus stuff is... and it’s perfectly normal to be feeling waves of anxiety.

Just remind yourself, often, that you’re perfectly capable of coming out of this period of time, stronger, smarter and ready to go when it’s all over.

The secret is doing things every day that are healthy, and that help you find moments of peace and calm.

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