

Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild @HWDSB: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CARE

Module 1: Physical & Mental Health and Safety

Lesson # 5: Strategies for Coping

Learning Goal: To identify effective strategies that have been used and learn other methods of coping that can be incorporated into mental health routines.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Coping** – defined as the thoughts and behaviours used to manage the internal and external demands of stressful situations
- **Intergenerational Trauma** - a cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma.
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** – a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.
- **Racial Trauma** – experiences with racism that can cause symptoms of trauma: negative emotions, physical distress or pain
- **Resilience** - the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress

Educator Pre-Reflection:

Before engaging in this lesson, consider/think about...

- What are unique stressors we have all endured this year? (global pandemic; health and safety worries; isolation protocols; economic uncertainty, new ways of living and engaging in school...)
- What are stressors that may have varying impacts on people in our community? (illness, death, environmental concerns, unemployment, protests [racism, community 'reopening's', equity issues], unemployment, feelings of unpreparedness)
- What are stressors that may impact particular groups or individuals? (racism, police brutality, war, poverty)
- In what ways can these experiences cause or contribute to trauma? (of an individual, family, community or population)

Student Pre-Reflection:

Before you begin, think about...

- What are things you have worried about in the last few months (since March)?
- What are some things you have overcome or managed well?
- What are things that might still feel stressful?

Provocation / Minds-on:

What are things that, as individuals, we can control?

(possible answers: what we eat, what we wear, how much time we spend on our phones...)

What things are out of our control?

Possible answers for things we cannot control - the weather, animals, other people, whether the Internet works...

Learning Task / Activity

Lesson Notes in Blue

Guide the class through the questions below (sections A and B) and moderate discussion that may come up.

Section A

- Try to recall how you felt on that last day of school (March 13th) and over the March Break.
- What are things you and / or people in your household did to pass the time?
- Which of these activities had a more positive outcome (what made it positive?)
- Use one or more of the Graphics below to guide a conversation in class about what students may have witnessed (*advise them not to identify any particular person – it could be a family member or themselves – offer an example of this: “I know someone who spent hours watching the news, as a way of getting through (surviving). It was good to have up to date information, but it became stressful”*).
- What are some things in a person’s day-to-day life that might complicate Survival and Acceptance during the Pandemic even more? (*ex, family stress, missing peers, carrying trauma from before the pandemic, mental health issues like anxiety, racism, abuse in a relationship, substance abuse,)*
- What can you do to help someone who may have trauma or anxiety but you don’t know about it? (*offer kindness, remove judgement...*)

Section B

- Now that we are in a different phase of the pandemic – though it is not over – what is a new strategy you would like to incorporate into your routine or recommend to a loved one? (*To the person in the example above, I would suggest that they limit their media consumption – maybe set a timer or schedule an hour for media after dinner.*)
- What’s something we can try together in this class? (consider incorporating a mental health break or routine – for example, Wellness Wednesdays, listening to Classical / lyric-free music during work time, sharing gratitude on Fridays, or a 2 minute deep breathing exercise halfway through each period – use student voice here to make a decision about what to try – maybe even for just a month.)
- OR Consider connecting to your subject curriculum to create a Classroom Toolbox for Care – what are things you might encourage students to do to make learning more effective for everyone, even when they may be affected by life outside of school?
- Extension Activity: use an app or some form of media to create a visual of the Toolbox or Weekly Connection that can be posted in the physical or electronic classroom.

There are multiple graphics in the Resource section. It is not necessary to use all of them, but you can refer to these various strategies to guide a discussion in response to the questions above as well as future lessons dealing with stress.

- One is more specific to the pandemic (we have passed the initial stage – though there is room for conversation around this)

- One is specific to helping students with anxiety – this is useful to project or post, particularly since not all students with anxiety have been diagnosed, or are aware, or are open about it

Ideas for Follow up / Discussion:

How can we turn our coping into “resilience”? (First see link challenging notions of resilience <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-other-side/201902/the-resilience-paradox-why-we-often-get-resilience-wrong>)

In what ways have you already shown you are resilient?

What can you do if your friend or loved one is struggling with coping?

Educator Post-Reflection:

- How do you feel after discussing these strategies with students?
- Is there anything you would like to know more about so you can empower students, or yourself?
- Is there anything you can display in your classroom or post in your online forum for students to access when they need it?

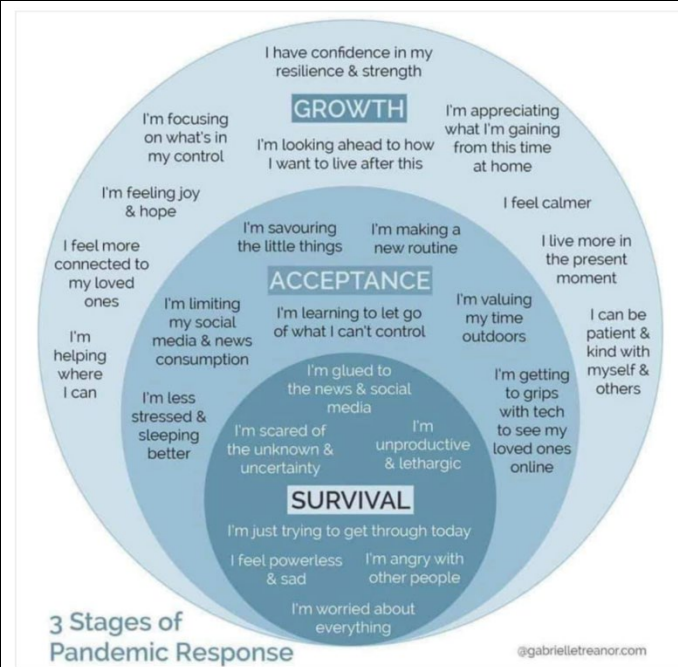
Student Post-Reflection:

- What works for you when you are feeling stressed or anxious?
- What does not work for you and how can you avoid this ineffective strategy? What can you replace it with?
- Who are the people you can trust to help you if you need it at home, at school, in other areas of your life?

Further Resources:

[Racial Trauma is Real - Racial Wellness Toolbox](#)

[Coping Skills for Teens – Infographic and List of Options](#)



Youth Mental Health Canada April 20 at 8:21 AM · Facebook for

AFT

P.A.U.S.E. for Panic – calm your anxiety

- P**
 - Pause
 - As soon as you recognise your anxiety symptoms, immediately stop everything you are doing.
- A**
 - Activity (SSSS)
 - Get out of breath- 1 minute of vigorous movement.
 - Star Jumps, Shaking, Squats, Stamp feet
 - Stop, let the breaths come as they need to.
- U**
 - Understand
 - Look around and remember you are here, now.
 - Tell yourself - this is a symptom of anxiety, I am safe, there is no immediate danger.
- S**
 - Soothe
 - Stroke both your upper arms - feel love for yourself.
 - Slow firm patting over body - heart beat speed.
 - Hands on heart - feel the warmth radiating.
- E**
 - Exhale
 - Three long deep exhales with hands on heart.
 - Sigh to release.

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Youth Mental Health Canada

Mobile Uploads · Yesterday at 6:12 AM · Facebook for Android ·

[Create a Toolbox for Care](#)

Curriculum Connections:

The lessons included in **Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild@HWDSB** align with the [Ontario Curriculum](#) across several subject areas, as articulated within the [Considerations for Program Planning](#) (i.e., front matter) applicable to all curriculum documents, Grades 1 to 12. Educators must consider this information to guide the implementation of curriculum and in creating the environment in which it is taught. These considerations include areas such as Student Well-being and Mental Health; Healthy Relationships; Human Rights, Equity and Inclusive Education. Outlined below is the specific language that has been used to align Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild@HWDSB with the Ontario Curriculum across several secondary subject areas.

<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum#secondary>

The Arts (2010)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND THE ARTS

Healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted. To experience themselves as valued and connected members of an inclusive social environment, students need to be involved in healthy relationships with their peers, teachers, and other members of the school community (p.36).

Canadian and World Studies - (2018/2015)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CANADIAN AND WORLD STUDIES

Every student is entitled to learn in a safe, caring environment, free from violence and harassment. Research has shown that students learn and achieve better in such environments. A safe and supportive social environment in a school is founded on healthy relationships – the relationships between students, between students and adults, and between adults. Healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted. Healthy relationships do not tolerate abusive, controlling, violent, bullying/harassing, or other inappropriate behaviours. To experience themselves as valued and connected members of an inclusive social environment, students need to be involved in healthy relationships with their peers, teachers, and other members of the school community (p.47/p. 53).

Classical Studies and International Languages (2016)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CLASSICAL STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES

Every student is entitled to learn in a safe, caring environment, free from violence and harassment. Research has shown that students learn and achieve better in such environments. A safe and supportive social environment in a school is founded on healthy relationships – the relationships between students, between

students and adults, and between adults. Healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted (p.46).

Cooperative Education (2018)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Every student is entitled to learn in a safe, caring environment, free from violence and harassment. Research has shown that students learn and achieve better in such environments. A safe and supportive social environment in a school is founded on healthy relationships - the relationships between students, between students and adults, and between adults. Healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted (p. 60-61)

French as a Second Language (2014)

SUPPORTING STUDENTS' WELL-BEING AND ABILITY TO LEARN

Educators play an important role in promoting children and youth's well-being by creating, fostering, and sustaining a learning environment that is healthy, caring, safe, inclusive, and accepting. (p.3)

Health and Physical Education (2015)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Mental health concepts are included within all content areas of the Healthy Living strand. The focus in this strand is on promoting and maintaining mental health, building an understanding of mental illness, and reducing stigma and stereotypes. (p. 42).

Social Sciences and Humanities (2013)

SUPPORTING STUDENTS' WELL-BEING AND ABILITY TO LEARN

Educators play an important role in promoting children and youth's well-being by creating, fostering, and sustaining a learning environment that is healthy, caring, safe, inclusive, and accepting. A learning environment of this kind will support not only students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development but also their mental health, their resilience, and their overall state of well-being. All this will help them achieve their full potential in school and in life.

The Role of Mental Health: Mental health touches all components of development. Mental health is much more than the absence of mental illness. Well-being is influenced not only by the absence of problems and risks but by the presence of factors that contribute to healthy growth and development. By nurturing and supporting students' strengths and assets, educators help promote positive mental health in the classroom (p.6).

Technological Education (2009)

Health and Safety in Technological Education

Teachers are responsible for ensuring the safety of students during technology lab, shop, and classroom activities. Health and safety issues must also be addressed when learning involves cooperative education and other workplace experiences (see p. 39). Teachers need to encourage and motivate students to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, and they must help students develop the knowledge and skills needed for safe participation in all technology-related activities. For these reasons,

teachers must model safe practices at all times and communicate safety expectations to students in accordance with school board policies and procedures, Ministry of Education policies, and Ministry of Labour regulations.

DRAFT