

**MENTAL HEALTH**  
**AWARENESS WEEK**  
**PACKAGE**

**ANGUS MORRISON**  
**2017**

Day 1: Wellness Trees  
Day 2: Stress Dolls  
Day 3: Bounce Back  
Day 4: Feeling Flowers

Day 1

# WELLNESS TREES

## **Objective:**

The goal of this lesson is to encourage students to think of ways to keep themselves physically and emotionally well. Students will become familiar with strategies and supports that they can use to keep themselves well.

Read the story *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. (click here to view the read aloud on YouTube). After reading, discuss the main ideas of Giving, Love and Happiness that are rooted in the story.

*In the story, the tree gives the boy many gifts.*

- When you give something to someone, do you expect something in return?

*Early in the book, we read that the tree loved the boy.*

- Can you be angry with someone and love them at the same time?

*The tree is not really happy after giving the boy her trunk.*

- Do you need others in order to be happy?

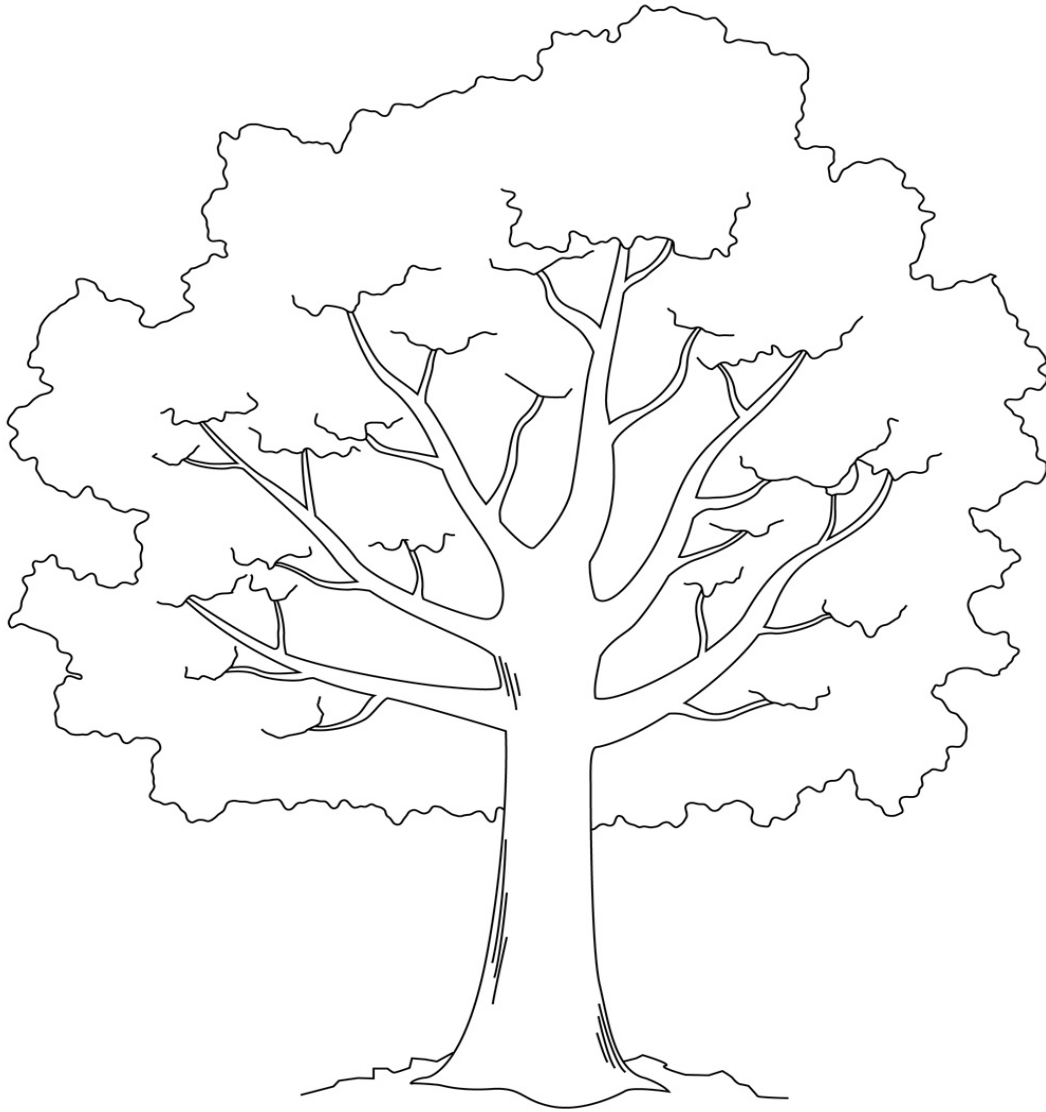
## **Activity**

Hand out the tree template, explain in order for a tree to be healthy it needs specific things to grow; just like us!

Have students fill their tree with things they need to grow, develop and be healthy.

# **WELLNESS TREE**

In the tree below write some examples of things you need to grow, become strong and have a healthy life.



## **STRESSED OUT?!**

### **Objective:**

The goal of this lesson is to help children learn at an early age, that it's important to recognize and manage stress proactively.

### **Key Points:**

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. • Too much stress can have a dramatic effect on learning and social development. Excessive stress interferes with executive functions such as attention, memory, organization, and integration. • Stress-related problems may affect student's performance in school, and many stressors are related directly to the school environment. In order to support student's learning, teachers can address topics of stress and coping through the curriculum as well as daily classroom management practices.

### **Activity:**

Use the Key points provided to introduce the topic of stress before showing the video to your class. • Watch video on Stress. After watching the video, follow up with a group discussion using the prompts provided in the file below. Check out the "How am I" visual with class and discuss common symptoms of stress. [Click on this link to view more great activities on Stress in Children.](#) For older students there is an article on "Stress" and a "What is Stress" word search.

# Stress

Have you ever felt sick to your stomach during a test? Have you had days when you were so loaded down with homework that you had trouble sleeping? Have you ever been so worried about something that you ended up with a terrible headache?



If so, then you know what it's like to feel **stress**. You've probably heard people say, "Wow, I'm really stressed out" or "This is making me totally stressed." Maybe you hear adults say those kinds of things all the time. But kids have lots of things going on in their lives that can cause stress, too.

## What Is Stress?

Stress is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something. This worry in your mind can make your body feel bad. You may feel angry, frustrated, scared, or afraid — which can give you a stomachache or a headache.

When you're stressed you may not feel like sleeping or eating, or you might sleep or eat too much. You also may feel cranky or have trouble paying attention at school and remembering things at home.

## What Causes Stress?

Plenty of things can cause stress in a kid's life, and there are such things as good stress and bad stress. Good or normal stress might show up when you're called on in class or when

you have to give a report. Have you ever gotten butterflies in your stomach or sweaty hands? Those can be signs of good stress —

the kind of stress that can help you to get things done. But bad stress can happen if the stressful feelings keep going over time. You may not feel well if your parents are fighting, if a family member is sick, if you're having problems at school, or if you're going through anything else that makes you upset every day. That kind of stress isn't going to help you, and it can actually make you sick.

Once you recognize that you're feeling stressed, there are several things you can do. You can try talking about what's bothering you with an adult you trust, like a parent or teacher. Bring up what's been on your mind and how it makes you feel.

### **Are You Too Busy?**

If you're feeling tired and stressed because you have too much going on, take a break. Sometimes lots of activities — even if they're all fun — can make you feel stressed by keeping you busy all the time.

Getting enough sleep and eating healthy food are two great ways to help handle stress.

You also can use relaxation exercises to get rid of stress. The easiest one to do is to **inhale** (breathe in) slowly and deeply through your nose, and then **exhale** (breathe out) slowly through your mouth. You can do exercises like this anytime, without anyone noticing.

## **Finding a Balance**

The best way to keep stress away is to have a balanced life. That means making good decisions about how to spend your time. If you're only dealing with school stuff and have no time to play, you can get stressed. Make sure you keep your **SELF** in mind: Sleep, Exercise, Leisure (something fun), and Food.

If you take care of yourself and get enough sleep and food, and if you exercise and leave time for fun stuff, you'll probably be less stressed out!

Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD

Check out the visual below. As a class discuss, some symptoms you feel when anxious and stressed.

# HOW AM I?

**A booklet about stress for kids**

When I feel under a lot of stress and pressure, what happens to me? Which of the following do I notice?

Place a  beside those that happen often.

Place an  beside those that occur only sometimes.

Headaches

Dizziness

Face feels hot, flushed

Loss of appetite

Dry mouth or throat

Neck and shoulders tighten up or ache

Heartburn

Back tightens up or aches

Heart beats faster

Diarrhea

Stomach upset or nausea

Legs get shaky or tighten up

Cramps

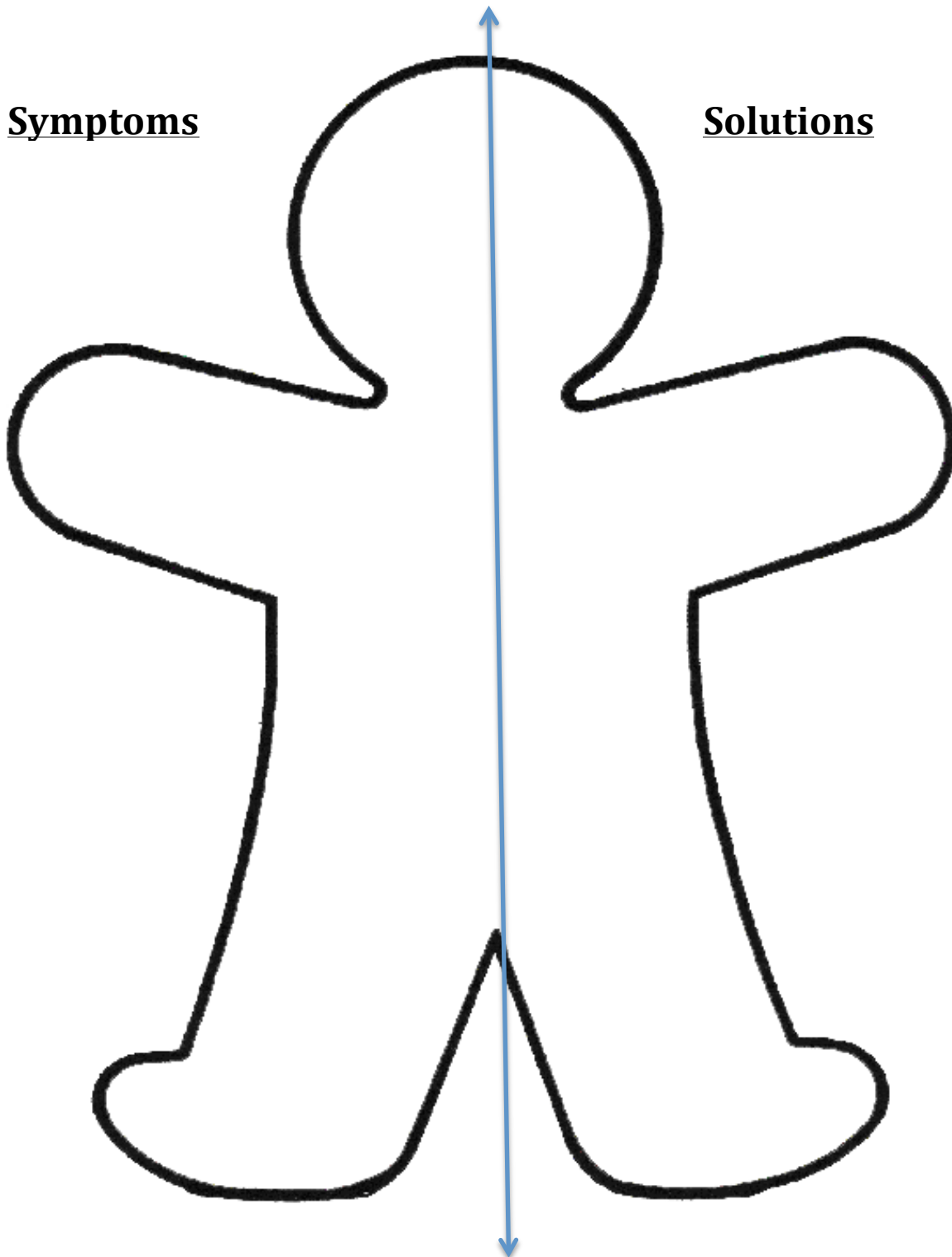
Tapping fingers or feet

Hands or feet feel cold or



# STRESS DOLLS

After discussing with your class common symptoms of stress, identify the symptoms you experience on the **left side** of the person below. On the **right side**, explain the strategies you use to alleviate these symptoms or to make yourself feel better.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Quiz

1. True or false: Stress is always bad.
2. Common physical symptoms of stress might include:
  - a) headache
  - b) stomach ache
  - c) racing heart
  - d) all of the above
3. Things that cause stress are called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. True or false: Doing things like breathing exercises, yoga, or \_\_\_\_\_ can help ease stress.
5. Underline healthy ways to deal with stress:
  - a) talking to a trusted adult
  - b) exercising, going for a walk, or riding a bike
  - c) eating a dozen doughnuts
  - d) listening to music
  - e) throwing your phone out a window
  - f) playing with a pet

#### EXTRA CREDIT:

6. The human body responds to stressors by activating the nervous system and specific hormones. The hormones \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ speed up heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and metabolism.

DAY 3

# HOW DO YOU BOUNCE BACK?

## **Objective:**

Stress is a normal part of everyday life and can help motivate us to do our best.

## **Activity**

Review the concept of stress with students: What is stress? How does it affect us? Have students think about how they have managed stress in the past: What worked? What didn't? As a group, brainstorm a list of other possible stress-relieving activities from the day before.

Distribute "How I Bounced Back" template for students to fill out and share their favourite stress relieving activities. Bounce back sheets can be posted throughout the school as a way of sharing ideas and strategies for coping with stress and "Bouncing Back!"

# **BOUNCE BACK!**

Stress is a normal part of life. Think about a time you were stressed.  
Write about how you bounced back in the space below.

A time I was stressed

A large blue oval containing ten horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the oval.

How I bounced back . . .

A large blue oval, empty, intended for writing the response to the prompt 'How I bounced back . . .'. It is positioned to the right and below the first oval.