

STUDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

DAVID HOMER
and
STEVE EDDY

Illustrated by
NEIL CROSSLEY



ISBN 1 873562 86 1

INTRODUCTION

The pack *Student Stress Management* looks at the nature of stress, how we can tell that we or others are suffering from stress, what effects it has, and how students can cope with stress individually as well as helping each other to cope.

Student suitability You can use the sheets across a broad range of ability at Key Stages 3 and 4, although some pages, such as 'Depression', 'Exams' and 'Coping with Parents' might be more appropriate to Key Stage 4. It is designed for PSE classes, but could also be used in Science and English.

Using the pack We suggest you use the sheets as appropriate with individual classes, particularly tutor groups, but also as part of a whole-school approach to stress. Some pages could be used in Inset training, with the added advantage of preparing those teachers involved for using them in the classroom. The Teachers' Notes provided opposite each worksheet give the page's aims, preparation needed, classroom management advice, differentiation possibilities, answers and extension activities. We presume that you have access to pen, paper and chalkboard, and that students are used to working both individually and in small and large discussion groups. If you have a query about how best to use the pack, we are happy to help; please write to us at the address below.

The people involved David Homer, the consultant for this pack, teaches in a comprehensive school, with special responsibility for PSE. The writer of this pack, Steve Eddy, is a journalist, editor and part-time teacher. The pack was illustrated by Neil Crossley and the cover and series design was by Michael Lopategui. Alan Shorter was the editorial co-ordinator, Ros Maher typed in the manuscript and Domini James was the copy editor and layout artist.

Photocopy laws The text and pictures in this pack belong to *The Chalkface Project*. However, you may photocopy the sheets, provided you do so only for use within your own institution. If you wish to photocopy for any other use, you must write to us for permission, for which we may charge a fee.

How to contact us The Chalkface Project, PO Box 111, Milton Keynes MK11 1XN
Tel: 0800 781 8858 Fax: 0845 458 5344

Student Stress Management © The Chalkface Project 1994
ISBN: 1 873562 86 1
Last revised: 24/11/94

CONTENTS

1	STRESS IS ...
3	THE STRESSED BODY
5	SYMPTOMS OF STRESS
7	STRESS AT SCHOOL
9	FIND SOMEONE WHO ...
11	IT MAKES ME MAD
13	FEARS AND PHOBIAS
15	DEPRESSION
17	FIELD OF FEELINGS
19	ONE MAN'S MEAT
21	CAUSES OF STRESS
23	TURN AND FACE IT
25	INDECISION
27	DIVIDED LOYALTIES
29	NEW KID ON THE BLOCK
31	CULTURE CLASH
33	EXAMS
35	BIG TROUBLE
37	YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT
39	IT'S ABOUT TIME
41	THINK POSITIVE
43	SECURITY ZONES
45	COPING WITH PARENTS
47	RELAXATION
49	SOAPS
51	IT'S A GOAL!
53	ROLLERCOASTER
55	THE BEST MEDICINE
57	IF AT FIRST
59	HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY MIND
61	WHO CAN I TURN TO?
63	A FRIEND IN NEED
65	STRESS ACTION PLAN

Lesson-specific Teachers'
Notes are to be found on the
page facing each worksheet.

— General Teachers' Notes —

This pack is designed to be used flexibly to meet the needs of each class being taught. Therefore the specific set of approaches used on each page will vary according to the student group involved, their age and ability range, and the particular skills that need to be addressed or practised.

The Teachers' Notes opposite each page support the use of each specific page as required. These more general Teachers' Notes provide basic guidelines for using the whole pack. They offer suggestions on preparation, running the lesson and follow-up work, and could form the basis of in-service training prior to using the pack.

Preparing for the lesson

In order to get the best out of the pack it would be useful to read through both the worksheet and the appropriate page-by-page Teachers' Notes before each lesson.

The majority of pages are written to take up a 35-40 minute single lesson; if not, this is indicated in the *Timing* section of the page-by-page Teachers' Notes. It is also often possible to link pages to make a double lesson: linkable pages are indicated in the page-by-page Teachers' Notes under the heading *Links*.

You will always need to have copies of the worksheet, pens, pencils and a chalkboard or equivalent. Further specific preparation requirements are indicated in the *Preparation* section of the page-by-page Teachers' Notes.

It would be advisable for you to find out before teaching a particular lesson whether any students are undergoing a personal crisis linked to a topic covered by that lesson. Sensitive topics are indicated in the page-by-page Teachers' Notes under the heading *Sensitivities*. If there is a problem, you will have to decide whether this is a golden opportunity to tackle the subject in a safe setting, or whether it would be better to choose another topic.

Any possible Classroom Management challenges are indicated in the page-by-page Teachers' Notes under the heading *Points To Be Aware Of*.

The lesson

Pages are generally worded so that you can choose how to manage each in the classroom. However, as a general guideline, we suggest that you plan to move from 'introductory chat' to individual activity, through to paired or small group discussion, then to pooling ideas in class. Most sheets also contain a final 'fast-finisher' thought-starter or activity that can be done by individuals who need extra work before the end of a lesson. Where a specific classroom management approach differs from these guidelines, this is indicated in the page-by-page Teachers' Notes under the heading *Approach*.

Each sheet then contains a number of activities. These fall into several basic formats.

- **Thought starters**

These introduce or focus attention on the topic and allow individual thinking time.

- **Reading**

Students can read each page, silently or aloud. Different students can take it in turns to read the words spoken by different characters if these are included on a page.

For younger pupils or pupils with poor literacy skills, it may be useful to allow them to work in pairs when reading. Pupils who will not read aloud in class may read aloud to a friendly peer.

- **Oral work**

Students can use each worksheet as a stimulus for paired or group oral work. Some possible directions discussions might take are indicated in the *Aims* section of the Teachers' Notes. Students could also use stimulus questions as the basis for a debate.

—General Teachers' Notes—

- **Brainstorming**

This activity is based on the concept that allowing ideas to be mentioned, without criticism or censure, is a way to allow creativity to develop. It also enhances group trust. Students should be encouraged to allow any idea to surface unchecked, only later testing these ideas for practicality.

- **Research**

Where opportunities for research are included, to guide students towards knowing the facts, and to provide opportunities for group activity which will help them learn to work together, you will want to decide before each lesson whether you will provide the research material in class, or give students the opportunity to visit a library.

- **Working in role or 'imagine' exercises**

Students could work in role around the people and situations portrayed on the worksheets, imagining they are the characters and then carrying out various spoken or written activities whilst staying in role. Such activities open the door to students' beginning to empathize with others who are in tricky situations, and developing the skills of listening and supporting. By careful management, you can organise the activity to include the degree of risk and involvement that you feel is appropriate.

Least risky is to ask students to work alone, thinking and writing about the situation described as if they were a character in it.

To slightly increase the risk, students could talk about an imaginary situation in pairs, as if they were the characters, but using discussion rather than acting out.

Next, students could write a script, in pairs or small groups, then act it out. This would provide an extra, more demanding degree of realism, but also an element of control because of the existence of a script.

The next most risky activity would be to turn the imaginary situation into a roleplay in pairs or groups. Here, students imagine themselves into each character involved, then improvise a scene allowing their knowledge of the character to inform what they say and do. Roleplays could perhaps continue from the situation in the final frame of each sheet.

Very mature groups could work in pairs, actually using an example of a situation from their own lives that parallels the issue covered in the worksheet. They could then talk about the issues involved for them while their partner listens. You may want to set up class guidelines for listeners, such as: just listen, don't swap experiences; don't interrupt; don't judge; don't give advice; keep it confidential. If the topic being covered is a sensitive one, you will also want to be sure that all students, both talkers and listeners, are able to handle any strong emotions that occur.

If there are any students who do not find it easy to take part in roleplay, you could ask them to act as observers, taking notes on the performance. In this way they could be involved without feeling threatened or embarrassed.

- **Written work**

Students could carry out written work based on the various themes developed within each page.

Where relevant, allow students with poor writing skills to work on the sheet and to mark, underline or colour to show understanding. Results can be filed or stuck in exercise books.

Where extended writing or copying is required, it may be useful to modify the task and set a precise target for students who work very slowly or frustratingly inaccurately or untidily. A sensitive way of modifying an activity might be to use a fluorescent pen to mark sections which you expect the student to complete.

— General Teachers' Notes —

Where students are asked to design leaflets or posters on a page, they should be reminded that their drawing ability is not being judged, and encouraged to work without criticising each other. You may also want to liaise with the computer department to offer students desktop publishing facilities to produce leaflets in a more professional way.

- **Emotional trouble-shooting**

Some pupils with poor interpersonal skills and listening skills will not handle open-ended situations very well – they will not participate or will misbehave. Here, it may be useful to provide opportunities for students to work in pairs and increase to larger groups only when they have increased in confidence.

If a sheet covers a particularly sensitive topic, students may become emotionally affected by that. If so, the most important thing is that you yourself deal with their emotion so that it does not spiral out of control in an inappropriate way, yet at the same time, not give them the message that it is unacceptable to have feelings.

Doing all this in the context of an ordinary school lesson is a challenge, but if a student does become affected and is then supported to handle his or her emotions, you will find that the group learns from that experience and becomes more mature through it.

Some general things you can do to handle emotion are: guide students towards less-risky activities if you feel emotions are running high; offer to let students come to you after the lesson if they want to talk things through; talk about emotion in a way that tells students that feelings are natural and acceptable. In emotional situations there is a risk of intrusion, so allow the student be the one to come forward, or volunteer information. Don't intrude unless your help is wanted.

Some things that you can do to handle emotion if a student becomes distressed in a lesson, but seems at ease with that, are: sit by the student, listen and comfort; ask the student to talk to the group about what they feel; ask the student to sit alone and write about what they feel. Some things you can do if a student becomes distressed in a lesson and the group or yourself are not at ease with their emotion are: take the student out of the room; ask them to stand up and walk around; ask them to look around the room (to take their attention away from their internal emotions); ask them to tell you about what they are going to do later that day (to take attention away from their present distress); ask them to do some mental arithmetic (to take their attention away from feelings to mental activity). In particular, it is important to make sure students can 'put away' any distressing issues and turn their attention to the next lesson.

It is also vital not to allow students to jump up from a deep discussion or roleplay – they may well take with them the associated feelings. Therefore, gather students together at the lesson's end and make some closing remarks which sum up and reflect what has been happening; get all students to move about, perhaps going back to their original desks; make some comment on what will be happening during the next lesson – or any activity that brings them back to the here and now.

Lesson follow-up

The Teachers' Notes include, where relevant, suggestions for *Extension Activities*. These are usually designed to carry the topic into a double lesson, or to provide an opportunity for out-of-classroom work.

If students need extra emotional support in dealing with the issues raised on any sheet, then you may want to talk to them privately or arrange for them to see the school counsellor.

Teachers' Notes

STRESS IS ...

Aim This page encourages students to consider and discuss their perceptions of stress.

Classroom Management *Points To Be Aware Of:* Students may need to move places in order to find someone with whom they strongly disagree on a chosen statement.

Extension Activities The paragraphs written in the final activity could be pasted onto an illustrated display under the headings Positive, Neutral and Negative – according to their evaluation of stress.

This worksheet could also lead on to group discussion and even a debate on either:

- (a) Modern life is more stressful than life 200 years ago; or
- (b) Stress is necessary and unavoidable.

STRESS IS ...



Everybody experiences stress, but different people have different ideas about what stress is. What do you think it is?

Now choose a statement you feel strongly about and discuss it with someone who feels the opposite way. See what you can learn from each other.

Look at the grid below showing some of the things people say about stress. Tick each one according to how far you agree with it.

	Agree	Maybe	Disagree
1 Stress brings out the best in you.			
2 Stress is an illness.			
3 Stress causes mental illness.			
4 Cigarettes, alcohol and drugs relieve stress.			
5 All stress is harmful.			
6 Stress makes you alert.			
7 Stress is sometimes helpful.			
8 Some stress is enjoyable.			
9 We can learn how to handle stress.			
10 Getting stressed is a sign of weakness.			
11 Tranquillizers provide a cure for stress.			
12 Stress can make you ill.			
13 Stress is when you can't cope.			
14 Stress is when too much is asked of you.			
15 Some people never suffer from stress.			



Do you think that stress is mostly a good thing, mostly a bad thing, or somewhere in between? Write a paragraph giving your views.

Teachers' Notes

THE STRESSED BODY

Aims This page aims to introduce students to the effects of stress on the body.

Preparation It is helpful if students have done some work on parts of the body, possibly in science lessons. You may need to have books available to enable identification of body parts and further work on adrenaline.

Classroom Management *Differentiation:* less-able students can be given some hints as to the words they are looking for, and that all words go left to right or top to bottom.

Links: This page is closely linked with the worksheet SYMPTOMS OF STRESS, though they do not necessarily have to be used together.

Answers The words are: asthma, skin, dry mouth, rashes, hair, allergies, sweaty palms, tiredness, heart, diarrhoea, aggression, ulcers, colds, stomach, twitches, headaches.

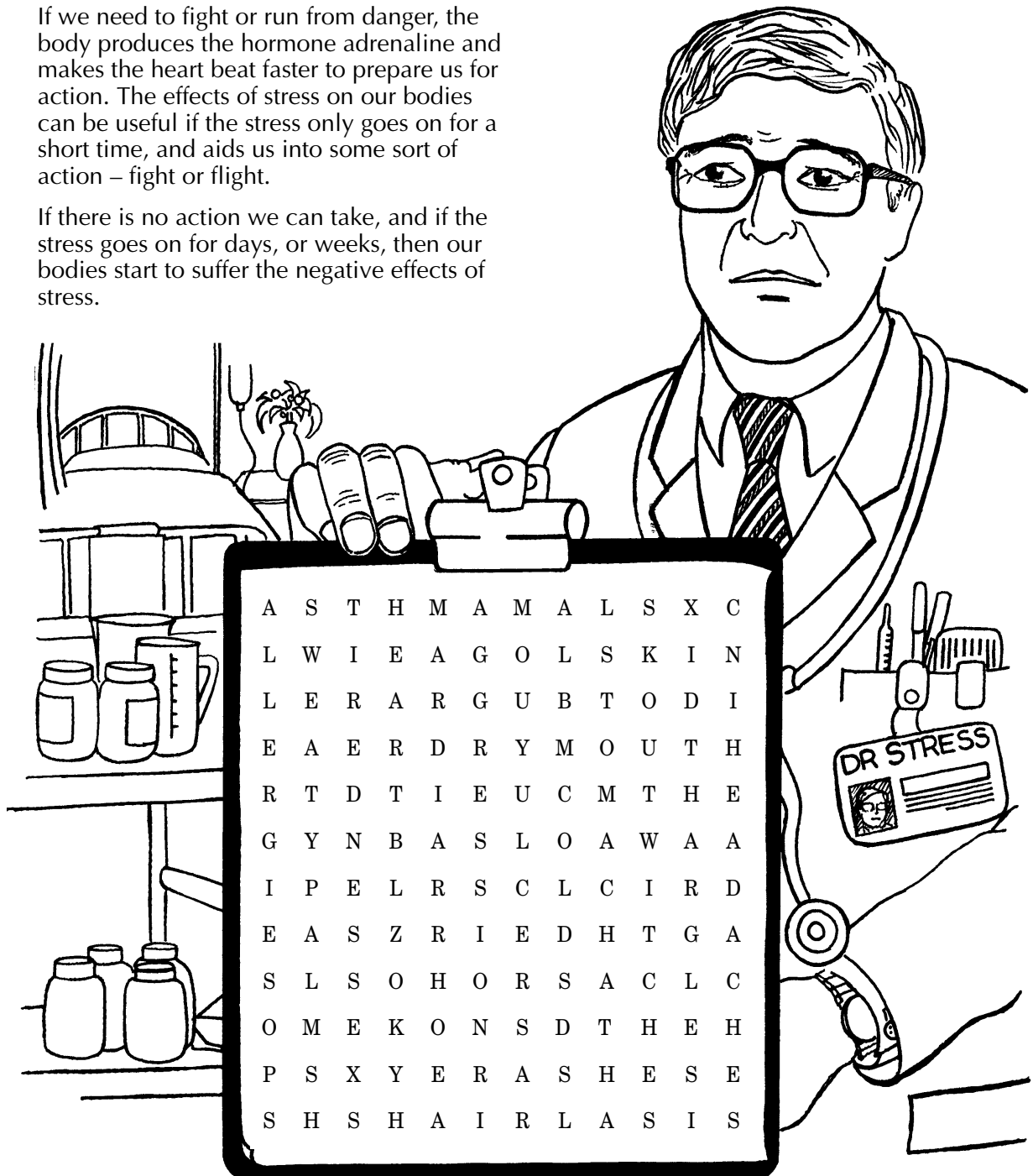
Extension Activities In groups or as a class, students could build on the drawing activity to produce a life-size cut-out figure with the appropriate parts of the body labelled, organs drawn or stuck on, and effects of stress indicated.

There is room for further research into such things as allergies and asthma, and into questions such as, 'How can stress affect the stomach?' Students could also keep a 'stress diary' for a week, recording stressful incidents and their effects.

— THE STRESSED BODY —

If we need to fight or run from danger, the body produces the hormone adrenaline and makes the heart beat faster to prepare us for action. The effects of stress on our bodies can be useful if the stress only goes on for a short time, and aids us into some sort of action – fight or flight.

If there is no action we can take, and if the stress goes on for days, or weeks, then our bodies start to suffer the negative effects of stress.



Look at Dr Stress's wordsearch. It contains words describing some of the physical effects of stress and the parts of the body affected. See how many you can find. Circle each one.

Using a full sheet of paper, draw a human body and label the parts affected by stress, and what the effects are. You may need to find out more from books.