Yes, You Have to Teach That!

Stress Management for Students with Disabilities

IDEAS Conference
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Our Goals Today!

- What does stress look like in our kids?
- Understanding that we have to TEACH stress management?
- How do we teach stress management skills?
- What are some specific strategies?
- How can we teach stress management across school settings?
Why Teach Stress Management?

Stress doesn’t get enough credit!

- Our kids in a constant state of arousal
- Chronic stress = illness / disease
- Isolation, low self-esteem, aggression
- Co-morbid mental health diagnoses
Behavior or Lack of Coping Skills?

- Typical cycle:
  Stress = behavior = negative consequences = stress = more behaviors

- Kids labeled oppositional / “bad” rather than looking at root cause:
  Lack of coping skills
What does an anxious, stressed out child look like? What does he or she act like?
Types of Stress

Why do we need an understanding of types of stress?

So we know what type of response/stress management technique to teach!
Type 1

- Irrational: should not illicit an emotional response
- Examples:
  - Relaxation; Desensitization: systematic exposure
Type 2

- Antecedents that cause some anxiety
- Examples: low grade; books knocked over; peer tapping pencil; the work is hard!
- “Over the Top” response / extreme
- Relaxation; Coping Responses (e.g., “bummer”, “I’ll do better next time”; “I did my best”; “they’re just trying to help”; “They didn’t mean it, it was an accident”)
Type 3

- Some form of wrong doing
- Justified reaction of anger but response too strong
- Teach appropriate degree of response ("match")
- Anger without aggression
  - Appropriate ways to express anger first!
- Teach relaxation technique to counter anger response
Proactive Component

**HOW?**

- Stress Management must be taught
  - Students can’t be expected to do something they haven’t been taught

Developing lesson plans

- Presentation style depends on level of student
- Assess their ability, buy in, what works
- Break it down! teach one step at a time
- Systematic teaching as with any other skill
When to teach -

When students are calm -
- Beginning of class
- End of class
- Practice before a test
- During morning work
- Role model why a good time to use
Teaching/Lesson Plan Format: The Teaching Interaction

Task Analysis

Break down the skill into teachable parts. Choose the part(s) to be taught.

Establish Need
Tell the student(s) what you are going to be working on.

Clearly introduce and define the skill.

Explanation of the skill steps.

For younger students, stories, poems, puppets, and questions are used to make the social skill more concrete.
Rationale

Tell the student(s) why it is important to work on this issue (must be meaningful to the individual student).

Rationale for the new behavior.

What benefits will learning the skill provide?
Teaching/Lesson Plan Format
The Teaching Interaction

**Describe/Demonstrate**

Explain to the student(s) what you are going to do and what you want her/him to do; you might choose to model first before having the child practice the skill.

Model the skill and sequence the steps student must use to perform the skill.

Describe the new behavior.

Identify the skill components.
Teaching/Lesson Plan Format
The Teaching Interaction

Practice/Role Play

Complete the role play and have the student follow his/her part.

Rehearse/role play the behavior MANY times.

Behavioral Rehearsal
Give the student positive feedback and social praise based on 2-3 things the student did correctly. You may then label one aspect that the child should do differently.
Teaching/Lesson Plan Format
The Teaching Interaction

Repeat As Necessary

Complete Demonstration, Practice, and Feedback phases again.

Practice in and outside the group
Teaching/Lesson Plan Format
The Teaching Interaction

Reinforcement

Social praise and tangible reinforcement when necessary should be provided for participation in the teaching/role play session.
Teaching/Lesson Plan Format
The Teaching Interaction

**Generalization of Skill**

Natural Setting Practice
Independent Practice Assignments
Independent Use

Make adults across settings aware of new skill learned in order to provide praise and feedback for skill use.
Social skills instruction should include -

- giving students the rationale – convincing them!!!!
- stress management
- self-esteem
- self-confidence
- listening skills
- coping with bullying, teasing, criticism
- recreational/leisure skills
- understanding family dynamics
- protecting ourselves
- advocating and seeking help
- developing positive character traits
Use literature to teach!!
Stress/Happy Collages

- Have your students make them using magazines, etc.
- Teach the use of the happy collage – before tests, after a difficult day for class, for an individual student situation
- Variations: happy book – calming picture – happy journal
Understanding Perspective...

A Place to start . . . .

*Considering the thoughts and emotions, motives, intentions, beliefs, prior experiences, and personality of yourself and others around you.*
Four steps to Perspective Taking

- I think about you.
- I think about WHY you are near me or talking to me. What is your intent?
- I think about what you are thinking about me.
- I monitor and regulate my behavior to keep you thinking about me the way I want you to think about me!
Social Problem Solving

Have a class template for solving a problem – it should list pros and cons, the choice made.

Examples: not studying; not doing your homework; peers disagree; formation of groups for a class project; asking the administration for something

Have a method or form for predicting what will be “faced” that day -
Problem Solving Forms

They’re out there –
Learn to think this way . . .

- What happened?
- What was the social error? Who was hurt by the social error?
- What should be done to correct the error?
- What should be done next time?
Social Autopsies

The autopsy allows for analyzing a social skills problem by dissecting social incidents. When a social error occurs, the student with AS works with an adult to

(a) identify the social error or mistake,
(b) determine who was harmed by the mistake,
(c) decide how to correct the mistake, and
(d) develop a plan to ensure that the mistake does not reoccur.
References for Social Autopsies

These books include teaching ideas and a form.


The **Social Autopsy** is now a very popular strategy for use with students with social cognition deficits. You can search the internet and find many resources and samples of social autopsy forms.

www.ldonline.org
www.txautism.net
www.ricklavoie.com
Debriefing

- Briefer discussions that have the same goal as social autopsies
Let’s get serious -

Track the student’s “stress” – emotional responses

A-B-C Data!!

Antecedent

Behavior – response

Type of stress – does the response “match”

Consequence

Determine what “skill” is missing?
Stress Management Toolbox

- Classroom Tool Box – have a visual representation.
- Each Student has a toolbox – a visual representation that can be referred to.
- The “tools” are the stress management techniques the student has learned.
- Students add to the tool box as they learn new strategies.
- Add a visual representation to the classroom toolbox!
Examples:

- An actual toolbox – with tools.
- Match your toolbox to classroom “theme”
  - Fish in a bowl
  - Clouds
  - Flowers in a flower pot
- Match your toolbox to your classroom management system
- Use something appropriate to subject –
  - A beaker with slide rules
  - A large calculator with strategies as numbers
Creating Your Tool Box

Break Systems

Taking a break! The student is going to end up missing instruction or leaving your classroom AFTER the behavior – why not teach taking a break BEFORE the behavior!

Table Breaks
In-room Breaks
Away Breaks

TEACH the system – what is allowed, when, and for how long!
Break Card

- Must pre-teach this skill before implementation of Break Card program!
- Goal is to teach student to use Break Card before they “lose it”
- Break Card programs need to be highly individualized to meet the specific needs of your student and of your classroom
- When initiating a Break Card program, do not worry about overuse. This can be remedied (but rarely needs to be)
- Remember to use your thermometer “check-in”
Table Breaks

should occur at early signs of frustration or escalation. They involve short breaks that the student can do at his/her desk or

*Examples include:* head down on desk, turning his paper over, pushing himself away from his desk, stretching arms & legs up and out (making sure not to touch anyone sitting next to him), standing up briefly and pushing on his desk (without moving desk).
Local or In-Room Breaks

breaks that the Student can take if he/she is feeling mildly stressed
needs to get up from his/her desk but does not require leaving the room
students should be taught what to do/what is allowed and for how long

Examples include: sharpen a pencil; get a tissue; stretch in the back of the room; go to designated spot
Away Breaks

Break will take longer; student’s behavior will become disruptive if doesn’t have a change
Examples include:
- Wall push ups
- Bathroom break
- Drink of water
- A few walks up and down the hallway
- Errands (non reinforcing)
- See the counselor or designated adult
Break Card

I am feeling upset!
I need to calm down!
What do I do?
Break Card Back

What to do on a break!
1. I can lay my head on my desk
2. I can take deep breathe and count to 10
3. I can go to the “break area” in my room and look at a book
4. I can go get a drink of water
5. I can go to the restroom

Remember: Give your teacher the break card before leaving the room!!!!
I Need a Break

- **Desk break**
  - Head down taking deep breaths
  - Stretch arms & legs
  - Push ups in my chair

- **In the room break**
  - Sharpen Pencil
  - Sit on pillows or chain in the back of the room

- **Away break**
  - Drink of water
  - Restroom
Building Your Toolbox

- Give students a copy of the toolbox
- Add on techniques as you teach!
Teach

Big Deal
Medium Deal
Little Deal
Teach . . .

- What are your stressors or triggers?
- What do you think about when you are stressed?
- What does it feel like in your body when you are stressed?
- What can you do about the feeling of stress?
Creating Your Tool Box
What to teach

“Calm Tools”:
Teach “calm” vs. “tense”: P.M.R

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (P.M.R.)
  
  **Steps**
  1. Make a fist with both hands / Hold / Relax
  2. Roll head around in circle, then reverse / Relax
  3. Wrinkle your face and shoulders tight and up / Hold / Relax
  4. Tighten legs and point toes / Hold / Relax
Relaxation Scripts – they’re out there!

http://www.realclassroomideas.com
   /164.html

http://www.yourfamilyclinic.com
   /adhd/relax.htm

http://www.innerhealthstudio.com
   /relaxation-scripts-for-children.html
Creating Your Tool Box
More “Calm Tools”

- Local / Table Breaks
- Chair push ups (sit or stand)
- Stretching / Yoga
- Write it down
- Squeeze ball (issues?)
- “Happy Place” = Creative Visualizations
- Others?
Creating Your Tool Box
More “Calm Tools”

- Away Breaks
- Wall push ups
- Bathroom break
- Drink of water
- Running laps
- Errands (non reinforcing)
- Scripting
Thermometers

The Thermometer calibration is based on student’s age, interests, etc.
Creating Your Tool Box

Other Meters:
- Horizontal Meter ("Am I stressed or excited?")
- Mood O Meter (current / prediction)
- Frequent meter check ins
  - “Catch them being calm” (not just when kids are escalating)
  - Early in their escalation cycle
Check-ins!!!

- Determine what “plan” or language will be used – a number or color scale – or student decided!
- Ask “Where are you?”
- Student should respond.
- Teacher’s response based on student!
Brainstorm

*When could we use thermometers throughout the school day?*

*Could we share the thermometer with parents for home?*
Creative Visualization
The Incredible 5-Point Scale

- Thermometer type activity with number scales
- Breaks down common target behaviors and puts them in “thermometer format”
- Do not use to replace an individual’s “general” stress thermometer...use in addition to!
Coping Strategies: Keep Filling Your Tool Box!!

- Deep Breathing
- P.M.R. (Progressive Muscle Relaxation)
- Count to 5
- Short Breaks
- Squeeze Stress Ball
- Drink of Water
- “Happy Place”

- Brisk Walk
- Palming
- Worry Stone (spell R-E-L-A-X)
- Reading, looking at pictures
- Listening to music
- Creative Visualization
- Others??
In the general education classroom:

- Live Out Loud – Metacognitive Modeling
- Before a Test/After a Test
- Post a Thermometer
- Post a Big Deal, Medium Deal, Little Deal
- Do the strategies!
Books To Help With Stress


For use with the above book:


Includes a physical folder representation of the 5-point scale and activities. Includes individual stress scales to fill in any person, place, or thing.


This book includes three relaxation training scripts.

*Relaxation training scripts can be found in many places! Use a script!*
