Stress Awareness Month - Key Stage 2: Up to 30 minutes

Aims:

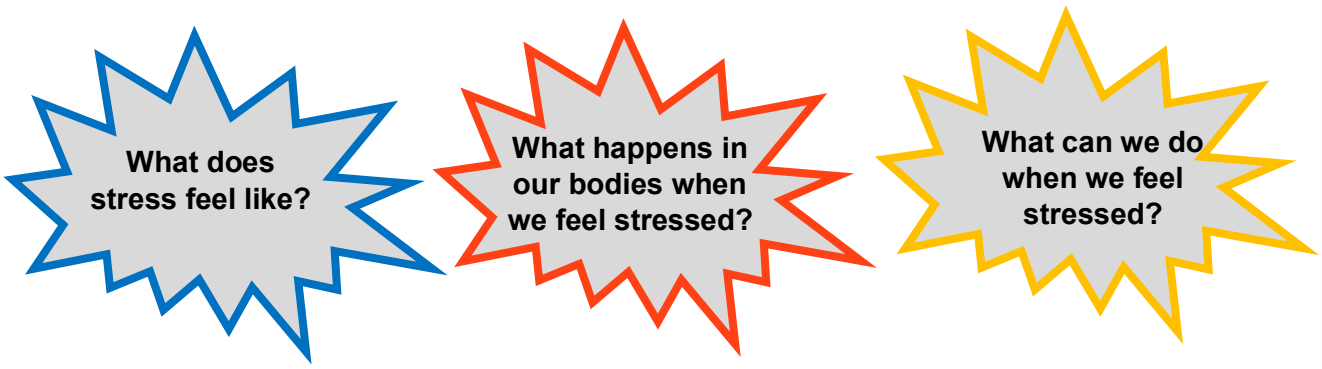
- To help children understand what the word stress means
- To explore positive and negative aspects of stress
- To identify key words that we can use to help us talk about stress
- To think about what happens to our bodies and our thoughts when we become stressed
- To develop some tools for recognising and managing stress

Content:

- Video Slideshow: https://youtu.be/Eon8RRhJSSE
- Discussion
- Activity Sheet

Learning themes:

Supporting the class to think about…



Video Script (video to be played on whiteboard) 3 mins

https://youtu.be/Eon8RRhJSSE

We all feel stress at times. *Adults as well as children. Stress is a normal response in our bodies and it happens all the time.*

It's our brain's way of telling us to ***get ready and to be prepared*** *for something. Maybe it's something new or something challenging, or something you find a little scary. We all find different things stressful.*

Stress can come from all sorts of different things, it could be trying to concentrate in a busy or noisy place, or it could be when difficult things happen with friends or family, some people feel stressed when they want to do really well at something and others feel stressed when they don't know what is going to happen next.

When we feel stress our brains are releasing ***cortisol and adrenaline.*** *Cortisol and adrenaline are hormones that get us ready. This is often called* ***fight or flight****. We either get ready to face the difficulty or we flee, meaning we want to get away from it.*

Cortisol and adrenaline can feel like a power-up for our brain, suddenly we are moving faster, seeing clearer and feeling more alert. Most of the time, stress is good for us. It can help us concentrate, focus our attention, it helps us be alert, focused, it makes us excited and motivated.

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This feeling of stress comes and goes with different situations. When we face the challenge, or complete the task our stress levels go back down. But sometimes it can feel like there's too much stress and stressful events are piling up one on top of the other. Or it feels like there's no break from the stress. And sometimes things happen to us that can feel like a huge wave of stress hitting us all in one go.

When stress is too much, it can feel overwhelming or upsetting. Our stress levels don't go back down. It can make it more difficult to concentrate, too hard to complete a task or even to have a go. When that happens we need to tell a grown up and the grown up will help us think about what we can do to feel better and manage those stress feelings.

What can we do when we feel stressed?

1. *We can think about stress differently*
2. *We can find ways to calm our bodies to calm our brains*
3. *We can ask for help*

1.Thinking about stress differently:

"I don't understand the maths, I can't do it."
OR
"This maths is new; it might take me a while to get it right. I'll have a go and then my teacher can show me where I am going wrong."

"I'm starting a new swimming class and I don't know anyone there. I wish I could stay in my old class where I know what to do and what it's like."
OR
"It is scary to go somewhere new but it's exciting too. Maybe I'll make some new friends. I can't wait to see how deep the deep end is!"

2. Sometimes we can find ways to calm our bodies down to help calm down our brains.
There are lots of breathing exercises that we can do to help us. When we calm our bodies our brains get the message to calm down too, so our cortisol and adrenaline levels go back down and we start to feel less stressed.

***3. When it feels like stress is piling up on top of us, one stressful thing after another or is hitting us like a huge wave it's important to ask for help from an adult you trust**.*

- *Can you explain how your stress is making you feel?*
- *What are the words you can use to share your feelings?*
- *Can you work together with an adult to find ways to make things feel better?*

There are lots of things that we can do to help us with stress. When we feel stressed we need to remember that playing outside or going to the park, laughing with a friend, telling someone how we feel, or enjoying a book or game can all help us feel better.

Time for us to have a go…

Teacher Discussion **5 mins**

The teacher highlights the main points of the presentation.
*We all feel stressed at times and it's a **normal** feeling. There are lots of things we can do to help ourselves when we feel stressed. These will be different for everybody.*

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If we feel that the stress feeling is too much and that the stress level isn't going back down, it's really important to tell a grown up who can help us with that.

Let's have a go at thinking about what makes us stressed, how stress feels in our bodies and what we can do. I am going to write this on the board.

I will start. Sitting in lots of traffic which is making me late, I feel aggravated. I'm restless. I can remember to do some deep breathing and tell myself that it will be okay if I am late.

Would anyone else like to share an example?

The teacher asks the class for some suggestions and writes them on the board.

Activity Sheet: 10-15 mins

When the teacher has taken a few examples the **stress comic strip activity sheet** is handed out to the children to complete. The teacher goes through each box on the worksheet with the children before they individually fill them in.

Conclusion:

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