Classroom Strategies that Support Stress Management, Emotional Regulation and Executive Skills Development

2017 School Climate, Culture and Positive Behavior Conference

Eric Mann, MSW
NH Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports (NH CEBIS) @ SERESC
603-206-6820
emann@seresc.net
Introduction and Learning Objectives

_Things You’ll Think About and Learn About Today:_

- The Importance of Finding Common Ground For Understanding Behavior
- The Stress-Executive Skills Behavior Paradigm
- The Value of Stress Awareness and Stress Management
- Six Stress Skills
- Connecting of Stress Management to the Classroom
- Behavioral Support Strategies that Reduce Stress and Improve behavioral success
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Big Idea:

Keep Getting Better!

Schoolwide Multi-Tiered Support is Really about Following the Example of Good Teaching
Goal of MTSS Implementation: Continuously Get Better!

Organizing and Strengthening:
- Systems
- Practices and Routines
- Data Use and Accuracy

Doing things you already do, but doing them:
- More effectively
- More efficiently
- More systematically
- More strategically
And... Building “Muscle-Memory” (Culture)
MTSS/ RtI: Strategic Decision-Making Model

Quick MTSS-B Overview

**Tier 1**
(All)

- Identify Concerns and Needs (Using Data)
- Prioritize Concerns; Set Goals

**Tier 2**
(Some)

- Select Strategies
- Monitor Strategies using data; Sustain Effective Strategies
- Assess Effectiveness of Strategies

**Tier 3**
(Few)

- Implement Strategies with Fidelity
- Assess Fidelity of Implementation of Strategies
- Assure Readiness to Implement Strategies
How Do You Understand Student Behavior?

The Importance of Exploring Behavioral Philosophy
If you can’t make sense of a person’s behavior, it’s hard to develop a sensible response (or plan).
**Ways That Adults May Make Sense of A Child’s Behavior (Examples)**

1. **Skill Deficits:** Concerning student behavior (or dysregulated behavior) is associated with a deficit (could be real or perceived) in:
   - Academic skills
   - Social skills
   - Emotional regulatory skills
   - Executive skills (examples: impulse control, organization, planning, working memory, goal-directed persistence, mental flexibility…)

2. **Stress Overload:** The presence of stress in the current context or carried in from home or other school contexts, leads to emotional dysregulation and impacts behavior.

3. **Cognitive Theory:** Behavior emanates from perceptions (or misperceptions) that generate thoughts, which trigger feelings, and result in actions/behaviors. A student’s perceptions are driven by stress, past experiences, and his/her own psychological needs and perspective.

4. **‘Function of Behavior’:** Behaviors (and the results/outcomes of behaviors) are clues that reveal a child’s need to “get” (gain/access to) or “avoid” (escape from) attention, an object/task/activity, or sensory input.

5. **Reward-Consequence:** Behavior occurs to either get a “payoff” (reinforcement) or avoid a “cost” (aversive consequence).

6. **Fight-Flight-Freeze:** Quickly escalated aggression, defiance, avoidance or shut-down may indicate a history of trauma or adverse childhood experiences that could include neglect, rejection/abandonment, abuse or under-nurtured attachments.

7. **Power-Control Dynamic:** Non-compliance, disrespect, disruption, or on-going adult-student “battles” reflect the child’s need to feel/be in control or indicates a deficit in feeling powerful.

8. **Blaming the Child:**
   - **Manipulator or Entitled:** Concerning behavior is understood as a child “manipulating” to avoid anything he/she prefers not to do, or, is interpreted as the child feeling “entitled” to do whatever he/she wants
   - **Indifference:** Behavior is understood as a reflection of a child not caring or being lazy.

9. **Blaming the Parent:**
   - **Enabling or Spoiling or Did Not Teach Respect for Authority:** Concerning behavior occurs because the parent(s) never held/holds the child accountable, never says “no”, or did not teach the child to respect authority:
   - **Parental Neglect or Indifference:** Misbehaviors are the result of parents who don’t care or don’t provide adequate support.
Activity: Ways to Think About Behavior

5 Minutes

- Peruse the “Ways Adults May Think about Student Behavior”.
  - 3 Minutes

- Voluntary Share: Which ways of thinking do you tend to use when discussing student behavior?
  - 2 or 3 Whole Group Shares
Activity: Behavior Example

• Consider this behavioral example:
  
  • You (teacher) just completed instructions for a assignment and handed out a corresponding guide for the task.
  • Robert is now leaning back in his chair with his hands clasped behind his head and his eyes closed.
  • You walk over to Robert and suggest that he begin his assignment.
  • Robert says “No way... I’m not doing this G-Damn work”.

• Using the list of “Ways Adults May Understand Behavior” consider how different ways of thinking about the behavior may generate a different adult response (...if I thought about it this way, would it change how I might respond?).

• Share your thoughts with your neighbors (2-4 people). 3 Minutes

• Whole group share: 2 or 3 voluntary shares
My Behavioral Philosophy

The *Stress-Executive Skills* Behavior Paradigm

Mann, 2015
Stress Defined

Any external or internal mental, physical or emotional factor that causes tension and uses up mental or physical energy.

What “Stress” Do You Have?:

My Stress

- Airplanes
- Hangry
- Soccer Ball/ Eyeglass Selection
How do you *Respond* When Stress Isn’t Well-Managed (Stress Overload)?
Executive Skills are as Fundamental to “Ready to Learn” as the “3 R’s”

Executive skills comprise a set of skills that regularly impact success in school, at work and in relationships.

These skills may have more to do with school success than a student’s ability to read, write or do math.
### Executive Skills Definitions

(Adapted by Mann, 2014 from **Peg Dawson, Center for Learning and Attention Disorders, Portsmouth, NH**)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Skill</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response Inhibition</strong></td>
<td>The ability to inhibit inappropriate, irrelevant or impulsive responses or reactions to stimuli. Also can be thought of as “Impulse Control” or ability to “Delay Gratification”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salience Determination</strong></td>
<td>The ability for a student to select and attend to the most important (most salient) information in social or academic contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The ability to create and maintain well-ordered systems to keep track of information or materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Management</strong></td>
<td>The ability to estimate how much time one needs to complete a task &amp; stay within time limits and deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning and Prioritizing</strong></td>
<td>The ability to create a sensible, feasible roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. Includes ability discern “salience”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Flexibility</strong></td>
<td>The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It includes the ability to adapt/adjust to changing or unexpected conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thoughtful Decision-Making</strong></td>
<td>As opposed to impulsive, spontaneous decision-making, thoughtful decision-making means that a thinking process is utilized to make every day decisions. The thinking process, if most effective, incorporates consideration of positive and negative immediate, short and long-term consequences from possible choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Initiation</strong></td>
<td>The ability to begin tasks without too much procrastination in an efficient or timely fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustaining Attention</strong></td>
<td>The ability to maintain attention to a situation or task despite distractibility, fatigue, disinterest or boredom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working Memory</strong></td>
<td>Working memory is used to hold information in our mind as we work on it. If working memory skills are weak for a student, he/she may struggle to manage (remember) some aspect of needed information. The more information given or requested, the more working memory skills are needed to successfully complete the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal-Directed Persistence</strong></td>
<td>The capacity to have a goal and follow through to the completion of the goal without being distracted by competing interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Regulation</strong></td>
<td>Emotion regulation refers to the ability to use and respond to emotions in a healthy manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Understanding or Metacognition</strong></td>
<td>The ability to assess how well you understand yourself and to observe how you do things. A person with self-understanding is able to stand back &amp; take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It includes the ability to observe how you solve problems, how you monitor behavior and how you evaluate your actions and choices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Turn and Talk: Executive Skills

3 Minutes

1. Review Executive Skills & Definitions

2. Discuss: Which executive skills do you regularly see children having difficulty with?

3. Quick Share: 2 or 3 Voluntary Comments
As Stress Grows, the Ability to Use Executive Skills is Compromised

*Stimuli:*
- Sensations
- Perceptions
- Feelings

*Executive Skills*

*Response:*
- Actions

**STRESS**

Mann and Bolick, 2015
“Under Stress, we all Regress”

Steven Atkins
May 2009
Adults can contribute inadvertently to escalation and crisis.

To avoid this, the keys are:
- Preparation and Planning,
- Paying attention to our own stress, and
- Honest self-reflection
First Step in Effectively Supporting Children is to Manage Your Stress / Engage Your Own Frontal Lobe

- Sometimes we get lost in our own stress and miss opportunities to lighten the stress of others.

- When in stress overload, we have trouble seeing other perspectives and considering our own behavioral options.

- If we are able to lighten our own stress enough to focus on lightening theirs, we may both end up breathing easier.
Video: Activating the Frontal Lobe in Crisis
“Brace, Brace Brace....Heads Down, Stay Down... Brace, Brace, Brace”
It’s All About Activating the Frontal Lobe! *First Yours, Then Theirs*

- What strategies do you use when stress is compromising your executive skills and you are on the verge of an impulsive response?
Examples: Self-Talk Strategies and Self-Reminders During Student Behavioral Escalation

- **Low, Slow and Gentle**: Voice low; body movements slow; gentle verbal & non-verbal communication

- **Act like a See-Saw rather than an Elevator**: Go down (emotionally) when the child goes up.

- **Act like a Thermostat**: Thermostats lower temperature when things get hot. Remind yourself that it is up to you to cool down the room when emotions are heating up, rather than adding a log to the fire.

- **Q-TIP (Quit Taking It Personally)**: Use Q-TIP to remind yourself not to personalize what a child is saying or doing – it isn’t about you – it’s about how the child is processing his/her stress. A child’s inner world is impacting thoughts, emotions and behaviors possibly compromising executive skills.

- **Big Deal – Little Deal**: Remind yourself to gage the true intensity of the issue that you are facing. This can help to lower your emotional temperature and engage your “frontal lobe”.

- **Presume Positive Intent**: “The guy tailgating me has an emergency he is dealing with”. When you presume positive intent in another’s actions your brain and body can avoid an impulsive response.

- **Think, “What are the student’s current stressors - how can I help him/her manage the stress?”** instead of reacting to student’s emotion with impulsive emotion, learn the student’s stressors - try to **validate** before reminder to get back to task. Learn strategies to re-engage the student’s frontal lobe.
Carry Your Own Weather

- https://youtu.be/oAsYQNfk8Uk
Turn and Talk: Self-Talk Strategies

1. Review the Self-Talk examples on the previous slide.


3. 2 or 3 Voluntary Shares
Fight, Flight or Freeze Response

**Fight-or-Flight** is a physiological reaction that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival first described by Walter Bradford Cannon. The theory speaks to the primitive part of the human brain that responds quickly to perceived threat and danger fighting or fleeing.

In a sense, Fight or Flight is a “*hopeful*” response as it signifies some measure of belief in survival.

The **Freeze** response works a little differently in the sense that it is a “*hopeless*” response. When overwhelmed by an attack (or perceived threat) and we determine there is NO HOPE of surviving, we tend to freeze (essentially an acceptance of the inevitable).
Video: Fight, Flight or Freeze?
Impact of Too Much Stress and Poor “Stress Skills”: The Reactive, Impulsive Brain


http://www.forbes.com/sites/travisbradberry/2016/07/14/stress-literally-shrinks-your-brain-7-ways-to-reverse-the-damage/#497ba72d63de
Laying the Groundwork for Successful Behavioral Support Systems

Well-Managed Stress is Required for Children to be Ready to Learn!

…and for Adults to be Ready to Do Their Jobs Effectively
How Can School-Wide and Classroom Behavior Support Practices in MTSS-B Help Create the Optimal Conditions for:

1. Supporting Stress Management
2. Building Stress (Coping) Skills
3. Executive Skills Development

?
Big Idea:

Use Strategies that *Reduce Stress* by Supporting Predictability, Community Culture, and Relationship-Building

This is Why MTSS-B Aligns with My Behavioral Philosophy
**Stress-Reducing Practices**

1. **Model Emotional Self-Regulation and Positive Mindset.**
   - Take care of your own emotional regulatory needs (plan ahead)
   - Focus on the future with hope and optimism
2. **Common Language and Common Values.**
3. **Identify, Teach and Notice Expected Behaviors in:** Classrooms, Non-Classroom Locations, Routines.
4. **Notice Expected Behaviors more often than Concerning Behaviors.**
5. **Consistent and effective responses to concerning and escalating behaviors.**
   - Common understanding of why concerning behavior happens so approaches to behavior support are consistent.
6. **Cultural Strategies for Relationship-Building:**
   - “Choose Your Weather” (Be Proactive; Model Self-Regulation)
   - Be Glad to See the Students.
   - Be ‘Present’ and curious
   - Treat each day (or each post-behavioral event contact) as a new moment: *Restore Belonging*
   - Validate Student Stress and Feelings
7. **Low, Slow and Gentle approach to prevention and response.**
1. **Empathic Listening and Attending Skills:**
   - Listen carefully and nonjudgmentally to student’s perspective:
     - Does not excuse misbehavior but understand student’s point of view.
     - Restate what you heard to clarify and to convey the message that you are really listening.

2. **Validation and Decoding:** A student may communicate stress and feelings *through behavior (actions).* Validation can help a student feel ‘heard’ and help reduce stress. Validation can improve teacher-student communication, build trust, and may help a student become more aware of connections among thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

**Validating Skills:** Validating statements effectively convey to the student that their thoughts and feelings matter.
- Example of validation to an overactive student: “It’s hard to get back to the slower pace of school work when you still have so much energy from PE.”
- Example of validation to a student who says ‘I am stupid’: “It’s tough to keep working when you feel like you’re not getting it fast enough.” Provide praise for resilience and persistence.
- Example of validation to an angry, frustrated or sad student who you know is having troubles at home: “it is extra hard to focus on school work when you’ve got lots of stress going on in your life.”
Model Emotional Self-Regulation
Use Body Language and Non-verbal Communications Less Likely to Add Stress:

1. **Facial Expressions** that convey interest, concern, curiosity and kindness rather than anger, disappointment, frustration, exasperation.
2. **Supportive Stance:** About a leg length away, on an angle to the student, hands visible.
3. **Personal Space:** Know personal comfort variations – generally 1.5 to 3 feet.
4. **Awareness of gestures and movements:** Non-threatening; Slow and calm rather than quick and herky-jerky.
5. **Tone:** Avoid inflections of sarcasm, impatience, disrespect, etc. Use tone that is supportive, understanding, comforting (practice your tone).
6. **Volume:** Volume appropriate to situation and person (preferably Low).
7. **Cadence:** Even Rate and rhythm (preferably Slow).
Use **Active Supervision** in All Contexts:

Three Components of Active Supervision:

1) **Move:** Move strategically throughout the classroom. Proximity to teacher increases likelihood of student attention to task (for most children). Movement allows teacher increased opportunities for scanning (see “scan”). Increases opportunities for private interactions with students. It is important to continue movement rather than ‘camp out’ in areas of predictable concern, however, frequent visits to those areas may help.

2) **Scan:** Scan the classroom for evidence of pro-social behavior (i.e., students demonstrating positive behaviors). Respectfully notice (verbally or non-verbally) pro-social behavior. Scan for emerging concerns, implementing non-verbal proximity control as a first step. Scanning effectively helps children know that you are attuned to and engaged with what is going on in the classroom. Children should expect that you’ll notice pro-social behaviors at least as frequently as you’ll notice concerning behaviors.

3) **Interact:** Talk with kids; ensure every student is spoken to positively, or provided a non-verbal positive contact during every classroom period. Interactive comments can be task-performance related, but can also be simple social contacts. Use name, smile, kind voice/ kind words, low voice, slow movement and gentle verbal and non-verbal communication.
REMEMBER:
Transitions are Big Stress Producers!

Some Every Day Transitions:
- Sleep to Wake
- Home to Bus
- Bus to School
- Arrival to Classroom
- Group Task to Individual Task
- Centers Transitions
- Classroom to Cafeteria/Specials
- End of Day / Classroom Dismissal
- School to Bus
- Bus to Home

Big School-Based Transitions:
- Home to First Year in School
- Grade to Grade Transitions (Start of New School Year)
- School to School Transitions (elementary to middle…)
- School to Post-School Transition
Teaching Classroom Transitions
(from www.responsiveclassroom.org/)

“In many classrooms, it’s during transitions that things get chaotic, resulting in behavior problems that frustrate in the moment and spill over into the rest of the day”

- Teach Pacing of Transition Tasks (Time management; Planning/Prioritizing/Organizing)
- Teach Expectations During Transitions (Planning; Mental Flexibility)
- Provide Advance Warnings (Mental Flexibility; Response Inhibition)
- Teach What to do After the Advance Warning (Task Initiation)
- Teach What to do If/When Stressed (Emotional Regulation)
- Structure the Transition Routine using Pacing Reminders and Time Cues (Sustained attention; Time management)
- Model Consistency and Predictability (Emotional Regulation)

-Tina Valentine, Northeast Foundation For Children
Explicit Teaching of Transition Routine: Arrival and Unpacking your Backpack

1. Take chair down
2. Put backpack on desk
3. Hang jacket in cubby
4. Take out home/school folder
5. Put notes from home in Mrs. B’s note box
6. Put homework in Mrs. B’s inbox
7. Put home/school folder in desk
8. Hang backpack on other hook in cubby

Let’s Practice!
Explicit Teaching of Transition Routine: Moving from the Desk to the Rug

- Wait for the direction “It’s time to go to the rug.”
- Stand up quietly.
- Push in chair quietly.
- Walk quietly to the rug.
- Sit quietly with crossed legs on your carpet square.
- Wait quietly for Mrs. Jenkins to start the lesson.

Let’s Practice!
Common Routines or Strategies that can Address Transition Stress:

- AM Check-in
- Arrival Routine
- Positive Greetings (Glad to See Them)
- Morning Meeting
- Signal for Attention
- Advance Warnings (Pre-teaching)
- Expectations Preview
- Closing Circle
- Dismissal Routines
- Carefully and explicitly teaching and practicing routines and expectations

Others?
As School-Wide Systems Evolve....
Develop Classroom Behavioral Matrices (unique to each classroom).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routines:</th>
<th>Arrival to class routine</th>
<th>Morning Meeting</th>
<th>Asking a question</th>
<th>Sharpen pencil</th>
<th>Group discussions</th>
<th>What to do when done with work and others aren’t</th>
<th>Silent reading</th>
<th>Class end routine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Respectful**  | Listen for Directions   | Use Listening Ears When Others Speak | Raise Hand Polite Language | Walk and Sharpen Quietly | One person speaks at a time | Silent Voices | Silent | Take care of your book
|                 |                          |                 |                   |                |                  | Listen for adult instructions               |                | Line up Silent and Straight |
| **Responsible** | Check your job on the “Job Board” | Participate in greetings and sharing | Ask Relevant Questions | Use only if needed | Stay on Topic | Check ‘Options Board’ for ideas | Have book ready | All papers and materials in their place |
|                 | Check “Options Board’ for quiet activity ideas |                  |                   |                |                  | Read something you are interested in         |                |                  |
| **Safe**        | Hands/Feet to Self Straight to Your Desk | Sit Safely in Circle | Walk slowly to and from the sharpener | Accept differences of opinion | Stay at your desk | Stay in your area | Chairs in |                  |
As School-Wide System Evolves, Build in Social-Emotional Learning
Social-Emotional Learning: Stress Skills (for Effective Stress Management)

**Skill #1:** Awareness of what stresses you.
- What are your triggers?

**Skill #2:** Awareness of how stress effects you.
- What do you do when stressed?

**Skill #3:** Awareness of Your Current Stress Level

**Skill #4:** Knowledge of strategies that help to manage stress.
- Emotional Regulatory Strategies
- Stress Reduction Strategies
- Stress Management Strategies

**Skill #5:** The ability to slow down and use your stress strategies when stress is triggered.

**Skill #6:** Insights:
- Well-managed stress produces goal-supporting outcomes.
- Stress overload makes it harder for me to use my “executive skills”.
- Stress overload leads to self-defeating or goal-defeating behaviors.
Skill # 1: Awareness of what stresses you

What stresses you may be different than what stresses others.

Big Emotional Learning Idea: Promote Self-Awareness
### Stress List: Some Stressors that May Impact Success in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body or Physical Stress</th>
<th>Stress Carried in From Home</th>
<th>Stress Triggered at School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Stress from sleep issues (too much or too little)</td>
<td>- Stress related to illness or death in the family</td>
<td>- Stress from anger or conflict with a peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Too much energy (hyper; “engine” is running high)</td>
<td>- Worries about family members (siblings, parents, grandparents…)</td>
<td>- Stress from anger or conflict with a teacher (or other adult at school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - Too little energy (tired; fatigued) | - Worries about money | - Stress from school work:  
  - Too hard  
  - Too much |
| - Stress from not feeling well (always; sometimes)  
  ◦ Feel ill/sick; stomachache; headache, body aches | - Worries about food (not enough to eat)  
- Worries about shelter (paying the rent/mortgage; worries about homelessness) | - I don’t understand what to do |
| - Feel worried/anxious; sad; angry (but not sure why) | - Stress about clothing | - Don’t like doing school work |
| - Stress (stressful thinking) regarding body health or body image (perceptions pertaining to weight, height, physical appearance,…) | - Stress from being angry/frustrated with your parent or guardian | - Stress from not understanding a teacher/adult (talks too slow/fast; too loud/quiet; vocabulary; non-verbals) |
| - Stress from sensory input:  
  ◦ Too much sensory “noise” (sounds, smells, sights…)  
  ◦ Too much activity around me  
  ◦ Body feels uncomfortable/nervous | - Stress from being angry/frustrated with brother / sister (other family member/ household member) | - Stress from not understanding English well enough (peer interactions; adult interactions; teacher instruction,…)
| - Stress from not feeling well (always; sometimes)  
  ◦ Feel ill/sick; stomachache; headache, body aches | - Stress from parents/guardians (or parent and other adult) having conflict with each other | - Stress from being told what to do (asked to do work…) or how to behave |
| | - Drug or alcohol issues in the family | - Not feeling safe at school |
| | - Stress from not basic getting needs met (sleep, nutrition, safety) | - Stress during non-classroom times: lunch, recess, physical education, music, art, hallway (unsure what to do; stress from “chaos” during unstructured activities…)
| | - Stress from legal worries (self, sibling, family member) | - Stress from unexpected changes to routines |
| | - Stress from not feeling safe at home or in the community | - Stress at bus stop or on bus to/from school |
Skill #2: Awareness of how stress affects you
Knowledge of what you do when you are in stress overload:

Big Emotional Learning Idea: Connecting Words and Emotions
Skill #3: Awareness of Your Current Stress Level

• The Alert Program: How does your engine run? (Williams & Shellenberger, 1994) and the “Engine Chart” (a modification by P. Rose, 2002) http://alertprogram.com/

• The Zones of Regulation (L.M. Kuyper, 2011)

• Incredible 5-Point Scale

• Home-made Stress Scales

Big Emotional Learning Idea: Self-Awareness of Need for Drain-Off; Readiness to Tell Your Story
# The Challenge to Manage ("Stress Test")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: ___________________</th>
<th>Student Name: ___________________________________</th>
<th>Time of Day: ____________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Anxiety or Worries (or too much thinking about something)</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I am worried or scared</td>
<td>☐ I have lots of thoughts that won’t go away</td>
<td>☐ I feel nervous and it’s hard to keep my body still</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Anger or frustration about something</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I am mad</td>
<td>☐ I am frustrated</td>
<td>☐ I feel like I want to yell and scream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sadness or low energy</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I am sad</td>
<td>☐ I feel like I want to cry</td>
<td>☐ I feel so tired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Too much energy</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I am jumpy and hyper</td>
<td>☐ It’s really hard for me to sit still</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Basic needs aren’t met</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I didn’t get enough sleep last night</td>
<td>☐ I didn’t get enough food to eat today</td>
<td>☐ I don’t feel safe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>School Work Challenges</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Homework wasn’t done</td>
<td>☐ I don’t understand what my teacher wants me to do</td>
<td>☐ Class is boring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Negative Thinking or Negative Self-Talk</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I am Dwelling</td>
<td>☐ I am Mind-Reading</td>
<td>☐ I am Discounting the Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Carried something in from home or my personal life</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unfinished business to take care of</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| **There is nothing going on right now that should keep me from being Ready to Learn -- just need a quick break.** |  |  |
Connecting Words and Emotions

“New Beginnings”

Stress Scale
I am Ready to Learn (Stress is Well-Managed)

**Behavior:**
- Tracking the Speaker
- Body control
- Sitting full in seat; “6 on the Floor”
- Engaged/Involved/Participating
- Can avoid the impulse to interrupt the speaker
- Can follow directions the first time
- Task is getting done
- Verbal AND Non-verbal language are respectful
- Can listen to another person’s perspective

**Thoughts and Feelings:**
- I can consider behavior options to manage challenges
- I can be flexible – I Can “Go with the Flow”
- “I can complete this task”
- “I am in control of my body movements
- My “engine” is steady – feels just right
- I Feel Self-Control (in control of thoughts, feelings and behaviors)
- I can influence my own thoughts; I am Mindful of the current task – No Thought Intruders; I am MINDFUL of my Thoughts, Feelings and How my body feels
- Calm mind – Calm Body;

**Important Idea About “Ready to Learn (Stress is Well-Managed)”:**
When I am Ready to Learn my behavior usually supports the achievement of things that matter to me.
I am a Little Stressed / Uncomfortable

**Behaviors:**
- Starting to be more impulsive (acting before thinking)
- Starting to avoid stressful activity, task or instruction
- Difficult to sustain *Tracking the Speaker*
- Talking over others
- Using sarcasm
- Using humor at *unexpected* times
- Sitting on the edge of my seat
- My body is loose and slumped; swinging arms
- My muscles are tense or tight
- Rushing through my work
- May be able to hear another perspective (maybe not)
- Might be able to accept suggestion to try a stress strategy

**Thoughts and Feelings:**
- Thoughts are drifting away from task
- Mind intruders are present (social worries; stress carry-in from home; “I can’t do this work”; “I’m not a capable student”)
  - “I don’t feel well”
  - “I don’t want to do this (task)”
  - “When is break”/ “When is Flex time?”
- Starting to get stuck on a singular idea (off-task thought, concern, or worry)
- “I don’t understand what I am supposed to do”
- A little nervous; worried; irritated (bugged); tired; mad; sad
- My body feels tense or starting to feel not in control
- Irritated; Mildly Defensive

**Important Ideas About When “I am Uncomfortable/ A Little Stressed”:**
If I can manage my stress while it’s still small, I can avoid bigger problems.
If I can manage my stress while it’s still small, I can stay on-track with things that matter to me.
Behaviors:
- Impulses are not controlled (act without thinking about the cost)
- Slamming or Banging objects
- Arguing or Questioning everything
- Work refusal “I’m not doing it”
- Not accepting help; Not really listening to adults
- Negative Comments:
  - “this is stupid”
  - “I can’t” statements
  - “I won’t” statements
  - “I hate school”
  - “I hate you!”
  - “I am stupid” “You are stupid”
- Working super slowly – avoidance
- Acting very sleepy - Head on desk
- Flushed face
- Can’t “go with the flow”; inflexible
- Blaming others; “It’s your fault!”
- Not able to accept a suggestion to try a stress strategy
- Can’t hear another person’s perspective

Thoughts and Feelings:
- Many thought intruders / Too many thoughts:
  - “I hate school”; “I hate you”
  - “No one can help me”
  - “No one gets (understands) me”
  - “I am stupid”
  - “I’ll never be a good student”
- Starting to feel overwhelmed by my current stress
- Stuck on negative thoughts.
- Difficulty thinking about the “now” – being mindful.
  - Mind is FULL rather than Mindful
- Hard to consider options for my behavior
- I need to prove I am right
- Feelings are rising:
  - Worries/ anxiety rising
  - Frustration
  - Anger at self or others (or life)
  - Sadness or Hopelessness rising
  - Agitated; Defensive
- Feeling a loss of self-control; Body feels less in control

Important Ideas About When “I am Stressed (I Need Drain-Off)”:
I can still manage my stress if I get the time and space to drain-off.
If I can start to connect my feelings with words, I may be able to restore myself and reduce my stress.
I am in Stress Overload

**Behaviors:**
- Non-communication shut-down
  - Non-verbal
  - Not responding to anything adults say
- Aggressive:
  - Acting out with anger/rage
  - Physically aggressive: throw objects, hit/push/kick
  - Verbal aggression; Scream/Yell; Loud; Swear
  - Blaming and verbal attack
- Run / Hide / “Escape”
- Tears (cry)
- Self-Harm (punch wall; punch self)

**Thoughts and Feelings:**
- Feel Out of Control
- Flooded with negative thoughts:
  - “My Life sucks!”
  - “Everyone hates me”
  - “Things will never get better”
  - “Nobody can ever help me”
  - “I am not worth being helped”
  - “Life is hopeless”
  - “I must be crazy”
- Escape thoughts:
  - “I’ve got to get out of here”
  - “I need relief from all this pressure”
  - “Everyone needs to get out of my face; out of my space”
- Intense Feelings:
  - Panic/Anxious Anger/Rage Deep sadness or Depression
  - Need escape/relief
  - Need to fight (physical or verbal)

**Important Ideas About When “I am in Stress Overload”**

I will get through this.

After this is over, I can continue to learn strategies that will help me prevent stress overload.
Skill #4: Knowledge of reliable strategies that help you manage your stress

Feelings and Remedies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel</th>
<th>I can</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image of boy feeling sad]</td>
<td>![Image of boy saying 'Inhale']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of boy with clenched teeth]</td>
<td>![Image of boy saying 'Gently push out']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of boy with his head down]</td>
<td>![Image of boy with his head up]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of boy screaming]</td>
<td>![Image of boy making a plan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image of boy with his eyes closed]</td>
<td>![Image of boy laughing]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bi Emotional Learning Idea: Connecting Words and Emotions; Learning New Emotional Regulatory Skills
Stress Reduction or Stress Management Strategies (Examples):

1. “Calming Breath” or “Belly Breath”:
   • Breathe in to a count of 5, hold for 3, and gradually release the breath.

2. Frustration Journal (writing or drawing):
   • Appropriate for children able and willing to benefit from writing OR drawing to acknowledge stress or feelings. Prompt: “Jon, This may be a good time to use your frustration journal so you can get yourself back on-track.”

3. Positive Thinking Journal:
   • Teach negative and positive thinking. Develop positive thinking journals. Use as a tool to stop negative thinking. Prompt use of positive thinking journal at first sign of concerning behavior. Can be an on-going, growing, personalized journal.

4. Mindfulness Meditation or Visual Imagery:
   ‘Calm Place’
   ‘Cut off the Chains’
   Visualize a Positive Outcome

5. Make a plan:
   • Take care of unfinished business (handle the issue that is on your mind)
   • Set an achievable goal and make a step by step (First This, Then….) plan to achieve it
   • Make an organizational plan to get caught up on your work

6. Exercise/Sensory Break:
   • Recommended that an OT, a PE instructor and/or a Health Education instructor partner in the design of short 1-5-minute routines (that include a wind-down period if there is high activity) that can be practiced and then posted in the exercise area. May include calisthenics, ‘sensory-balancing’, body stretches and may involve relaxation or thinking component.

7. Movement Break for energy regulation and refocus to provide short break from the classroom task:
   • Examples:
     • Pass out papers. Collect papers.
     • Organize teacher’s desk or an area in the room.
     • An important errand to the office, nurse, counselor, custodian, cafeteria, or other classroom.
     • Collate papers (worksheets, materials for lessons).
     • Color code/organize materials.
     • Lead the class in a stretch break or a class-wide calming breath.

Mann, 2015
Skill #5: The ability to use your stress strategies when stress is triggered

OK now… Deep Breath…1..2..3..4...

Big Emotional Learning Idea: Promote Self-Regulation; Apply New Skills
Skill #6: Stress Insights

Well-managed stress leads to goal-supporting thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Well managed stress makes goals more achievable.

Poorly managed stress (or Stress Overload) can lead to self-defeating or goal-defeating thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Stress overload gets you further from your goals (often makes things worse).

Big Emotional Learning Idea: Promote Metacognition; Can See the Value of Emotional Regulation and Stress Management
Stress in Literature

• Discuss: Stress in Fiction or Non-Fiction

• Whole Group: Examples of fictional or non-fictional characters who have:
  • Identifiable Stressors
    - How well did they manage the stress?
    - What strategies were used to manage the stress?
    - What strategies could they have used to manage their stress?
    - Did management of stress help them achieve their goal(s)?
    - Did poorly managed stress impact their ability to achieve their goal(s)?
Using Covey’s 7 Habits of Happy Kids to Teach/Model Executive Skills

1. Be Proactive:
   - Choose Your Weather
2. Begin with the End in Mind
3. Put First Things First
4. Seek First to Understand; Then to be Understood
5. Think Win-Win
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the Saw

http://www.theleaderinme.org/
Mind-Up: Four Pillars (Very Trauma-Sensitive)

1. Social-Emotional Learning:
   - Acting with Kindness
   - Acting with Gratitude
   - Mindful Actions

2. Positive Psychology:
   - Perspective-Taking
   - Choosing Optimism
   - Savoring Happy Experiences

3. Mindful Awareness:
   - Mindful Listening
   - Mindful Seeing
   - Mindful Smelling
   - Mindful Tasting
   - Mindful Touch
   - Mindful Movement

4. Neuroscience:
   - Your Brain
   - Mindfulness
   - Focused Attention

https://mindup.org/
Cost-Benefit Behavior Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You play video games after bed-time (till 3AM):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You eat three doughnuts for breakfast:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You snap back an angry response when your friend is giving you advice:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t complete your homework:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are told to re-do an assignment before you can go to recess. You scream “No way, I can’t miss recess!” - then you rip up the assignment and walk out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You yell something inappropriate in class:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You talk back to your parents:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You interrupt a conversation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive result (benefit): Possible Immediate Benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative result (cost): Possible Costs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at both positive and negative results shows us that many choices in life come with a benefit AND a cost. Many impulsive behaviors come with a short-term benefit and a long-term cost. It is important to consider costs AND benefits if we want to make good, thoughtful decisions. For each example below, consider the positive and negative results that are immediate, short-term and long-term. After discussing these examples, try to develop other examples.

Mann, 2015
I Wish My Teacher Knew....

http://www.iwishmyteacherknewbook.com/

Kyle Schwartz, 3rd Grade Teacher

LSCI Connection: Words to Feelings; Nothing Comes From Nothing; Look Beyond Behavior
#IWISHMYTEACHERKNEW
I wish my teacher knew...

#IWISHMYTEACHERKNEW
I wish my teacher knew...
I wish my teacher knew there's a reason why I am so quiet in class.
I wish my teacher knew I have ADHD and I’m different from everyone else.
I wish my teacher knew my dad died this year and I feel more alone and disconnected from my peers than ever before.

Brittney, 6th grade.
I wish my teacher knew she is like a mother to me.
I don’t get to see my other mom a lot.
I wish my teacher knew how I learn, and don’t get mad at me when I ask questions.
I wish Mrs. King knew that I think I have depression but I think I’m dealing with it or it’s going away. (I told my mom just so you know.)
I wish Mrs. Majdi knew that I feel left out sometimes.
I wish my teacher knew that my dad works two jobs and I don’t see him much.
I wish my teacher knew that we are low on money and have to go to a food bank to get food.
I wish my teacher knew that my little brother gets scared and I get worried about getting up every night.
I wish my teacher knew that I tend to get a little stressed out, like if there is a test coming up or if it was just the weekend and I have to come back to school on Monday, but I will try my best to calm down and not get stressed as much as I can.
I wish my teacher knew Vietnamese because then she can say words that I forget and songs.
I wish my teacher knew that my mom might get diagnosed with cancer this week and I’ve been without a home 3 different times this year alone.
I wish my teacher knew that my mom and dad are divorced, and that I am the middle child of 7 kids. 5 out of that 7 are boys.
I wish my teacher knew I don't have a friend to play with me.
For MTSS-B and Effective Behavioral Support to Have its *Best Chance* to Thrive in Schools...

**They Must Be Places Where:**

- Leaders are role models for compassion, curiosity, courage, and love of children.
- All adults are models for emotional regulation and stress management.
- “Looking Beyond Behavior” has become rooted in habit.
- Reliability and trust are offered and nurtured.
- The psychological world of each child matters.
- Validation has become an ingrained *cultural* “impulse”.

Thank You for Listening Today!
Q & A

- Adjourn