

Lesson Plans

Session 2: Understanding Stresses in Our Own Lives



Session Objectives

- Become aware of your own stressors. Learn to recognize things that are stressful in your own life.
- Learn to recognize and understand how you naturally react to stressors.
- Identify ways you have successfully managed stressful situations.
- Learn to think about stressful situations in terms of what you can control and can't control about them.

Materials List

- Sign-in sheet with the family ID and contact information
- Name tags and markers
- Objectives Posters for Sessions 2 & 3
- Ground Rules Poster
- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard marker
- Parent folders/pens
- Journey Map
- Stressful Situation Pictures
- Home Activity Cards
- Small paper plates and napkins
- Food handling gloves
- Selected snacks

Preparing for the Session

Create a **Ground Rules Poster** for use in all sessions (see example on program website).

Create an **Objectives Poster** for use in this session and the next (see **Objectives Poster** on program website). Only include objectives from Session 3 on this poster.

Prepare 10-15 pictures of stressful situations (paste onto cardboard) that parents of school-age children might experience (some involving children, some not). Examples include car breaking down, argument with a friend, looking for lost keys, argument with child, etc. You can find such pictures online, in magazines, in newspapers, etc.

Session Protocol

Start class no later than 10 minutes after official start time.

Any parents who have not completed the assessments must first finish their questionnaires before they are allowed to join the program.

At the end of this lesson, add the copies of all handouts and homework cards to the parent folders.

General Introduction (3 Minutes)

Say (or paraphrase):

“In this program, we are going to talk about ways to help your children cope with stress. But we won’t get there right away—we will first cover some basic steps that build upon each other to lead us to our destination.”

Journey Map (5 Minutes)

Introduce the visual of the **Journey Map** and explain it. The map will outline the program goals and lessons, which will help parents see and understand their journey through the program.

Say (or paraphrase):

“The goal of this program is to help you teach your child skills to cope, but we are going to start with talking about stresses in your own lives because we first need to learn how to deal with our own stresses before we can teach our kids. Everything you will learn in the program can be applied to yourself, but most importantly it is for you to teach your child.”

Introduce Folders (2 Minutes)

Distribute a folder to each parent and explain that the folders will have blank paper and a pen for notetaking (if they wish to take notes). The folders will contain a copy of every handout from the program. These folders will stay in the class until the last session.

Objectives (5 Minutes)

Use **Objectives Poster** for Session 2 to go over the session objectives:

“Become aware of your own stressors. Learn to recognize things that are stressful in your own life.

Learn to recognize and understand how you naturally react to stressors.

Identify ways you have successfully managed stressful situations.

Learn to think about stressful situations in terms of what you can control and can’t control about them.”

Total Session Length:
(85 Minutes)

Icebreaker

(10 Minutes)

Reintroduce yourselves.

Facilitate the “Two Truths and a Non-Truth” icebreaker activity. Each person will first introduce him or herself and then say two true things and one non-truth about him or herself. The group will then have to guess which one is the non-truth. The person reveals which is the non-truth and then the next person does the same thing.

Ground Rules

(5 Minutes)

Post and explain ground rules. Ask for any additional ground rules from parents. Read the **Ground Rules Poster** and provide verbal explanations.

1. Voice by choice. You will be invited to share with the group, but you’ll always have the option to pass.

2. Respect each other. You may not always agree with every parent in the group, but staying open to listening shows respect for the other person.

3. What happens at these sessions stays at these sessions.

Sometimes parents share things about their families that are sensitive. By being here we agree that we will not talk to others outside the group about things other parents share in our sessions.

4. Take turns. In order for every voice to be heard, let’s try not to interrupt others when they are speaking and wait for our turn to share.

5. All experiences are valued. Sometimes we do not understand why something is a challenge or a barrier for other people if we do not have similar experiences. We will acknowledge that everyone’s own experience is valued in our group.

6. (Bulleted blank space). Invite parents to add other ground rules for the time they will be participating in the sessions, e.g., cell phones in silent mode.

Anchor

(10 Minutes)

Large Group Discussion:

Facilitate a discussion using the following questions.

Record responses on poster or whiteboard using the table to the right.

“How many of us have been in a stressful situation? Let’s reflect on this past week and think of one stressful situation.”

“How did you manage to get through that stressful situation?”

Start off with your own example (don’t write it on the board) and then have parents come up with their examples.

Wait until parents have finished giving examples and then choose two examples from the controllable and uncontrollable examples on the right and add them to the board.

Stressful Situations	How did you manage it?
• Car broke down •	• Called my husband •

Facilitator Note:

If parents have trouble explaining how they managed the situation, give them an example of how you managed the situation you had mentioned previously.

Controllable Situations	Uncontrollable Situations
• Come home and you still have to prepare dinner • Had an argument with your spouse and both of you are still upset with one another	• Car broke down • Children fighting • Family member is ill • Paying your bills • Getting a ticket from the police • Losing a 20 or 50-dollar bill • Your child comes home upset from school

Transition:

“Now that we have identified stressful situations and how we managed them, we are going to talk about how much control we had in that situation.”

Add

(20 Minutes)

Large Group Discussion:

“What does control mean to you?”

“Now think about how much control you felt you had over what was happening in these situations you mentioned.”

Record responses on a new column of the table.

Stressful Situations	How did you manage it?	How much control?
• Car broke down •	• Called my husband •	• Low control •

At the end of the discussion, summarize by explaining that there are aspects of situations that *can* be controlled and aspects that *cannot* be controlled.

Small Groups:

Split participants into 2 groups.

Group A: Will develop a list of examples of things we CANNOT control (e.g., weather, stoplight, your parents, the color of your eyes and hair).

Group B: Will develop a list of examples of things we CAN control (e.g., *doing well on a test.*)

Facilitator Note:

Try to move parents around by having parents count off by alternating 1 and 2. Then assign all of the 1's to one group and all of the 2's to the other group. The goal is to get parents to work with different peers.

Transition:

“Now that we came up with a general list, we are going to apply what we learned by selecting a picture.” (Lay out stressful situation pictures.)

Apply

(15 Minutes)

Still in Same Small Groups:

Ask each parent to choose one picture that shows a stressful situation. Once they have chosen their pictures, have parents:

Group A: talk to their small group about what they *can* control about the situation in the picture.

Group B: talk to their small group about what they *cannot* control about the situation in the picture.

Large Group Discussion:

Have the parents report back on what they discussed. Do this 2-3 times, if time allows, and have the groups switch to talk about what they *can* or *cannot* control.

Away

(5 Minutes)

Explain the process of the Home Activity.

Say (or paraphrase):

“At the end of each class I will give you a Home Activity to practice what you have learned during this week’s session.”

“At the beginning of next week’s session, we will do a check-in with you about the Home Activity from the previous week.”

Wrap-Up

(5 Minutes)

Remind parents of next week’s session, time, and location. Provide a brief overview of the next lesson using the **Objectives Poster** for Session 3.

Ask if parents are OK with receiving a reminder text the day before class; otherwise, they will be called the day before as a reminder.

Invite parents to take snacks with them on the way out of the session.

Home Activity S2

OBSERVE—Observe yourself in a stressful situation. What about this situation was controllable and what could you not control?

What did you spend most of your time focusing on—what could be controlled or what couldn’t be controlled?