STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR TEACHERS

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Rationale and Overview
The Teacher Coping Model
Awareness
Adaptive Thinking
Adaptive Behaviors
Beyond Survival

PREVIEW
What causes people to experience negative emotions like stress, sadness, or anger?

Do events cause emotions? That is, are emotions caused by what happens to us?
At a faculty meeting at Riley Elementary school, the principal announces that she will make weekly observations in every teacher’s classroom for the remainder of the school year. Three teachers at the school have very different emotional reactions to the news. Ms. Malcolm feels inspired and excited about the announcement, Mr. Gonzales feels anxious, and Ms. Phipps feels angry. They all experienced the exact same event, yet their emotional reactions were completely different.
Do events, or the things that happen to us, cause our feelings?

So if not events, what has a more direct impact on how we feel?
What is stress?

- How do you experience stress?
- Is stress good or bad?
Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)

Sympathetic NS  
"Arouses"  
(fight-or-flight)

Parasympathetic NS  
"Calms"  
(rest and digest)

Stress response system serves our basic need for survival

- But it is poorly designed for the more common types of stress we experience:
  - Daily Hassles

To manage stress you need to learn to activate your parasympathetic system and inactivate your sympathetic system more often

- Our thoughts and behaviors are intimately involved in reducing chronic stress responses.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE
WHAT ARE COMMON TEACHER STRESSORS

- Administrative Support and Expectations
- Colleagues
- Time Demands and Limited Resources
- Diverse Student Needs and Differentiating Instruction
- Student Behavior and Attitudes
- Lack of Preparation
- Life Stress
- Parents

We’re not in it to be recognized, but we are asking to be treated with respect as experts in our area and that’s never the message that’s given out.

6th Grade Teacher

There’s too many things for us to do in the amount of time we have to do them. I think the most important work is with the children. But there is all the paperwork on top of the challenges in the classroom. So we end up doing a lot of our work at home.

5th Grade Teacher

In this environment, the multitude of behaviors all going on at the same time for a 3rd grade child, it’s not typical 3rd grade kid behaviors. The children are very upset, and aren’t able to manage their emotions, so they manifest in so many ways: lashing out at others, being stubborn and unwilling to cooperate, running out of the room. That’s just really hard to do when there are 30 in a class, and some of them are very needy.

5th Grade Teacher

Everyone’s different. Everyone learns differently and has different needs. And what happens outside of the classroom greatly impacts what happens in the classroom. I have to build relationships with every one of them. That’s just really hard to do when there are 30 in a class, and some of them are very needy.

3rd Grade Teacher
Every day I feel under attack. Sometimes it feels like nobody respects teachers anymore. At work, many students and parents don’t seem to respect us. Even worse, it seems like every time I pick up a paper or turn on the news there is a story about what’s wrong with teachers. It’s as if society expects us to solve all the world’s problems and blames us when we don’t.

8th Grade Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. How stressful is your job?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stressful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. How well are you coping with stress of your job right now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profiles of Teacher Stress and Coping

STRESS, COPING, AND EFFECTIVENESS
CAN TRAINING IN STRESS MANAGEMENT HELP?
A GOOD THEORY
Social Learning Theory

Thoughts → Feelings → Behaviors

Cycles

- Positive Thoughts
- Positive Behaviors
- Negative Feelings
- Negative Behaviors
TEACHER COPING MODEL

**Awareness**
- Self-Monitoring
- Goal Setting
- Problem Solving
- Deep Breathing
- The TCM

**Adaptive Thoughts**
- Positive/Negative Method
- ABC Method
- Self-Praise

**Adaptive Behaviors**
- Pleasant Activities
- Social Skills and Support
- Exercise & Healthy Eating
- Relaxation Practice
- Competence

**Positive Feelings**
- Calm and Relaxed
- Inspired
- Happy
BUILDING BLOCKS

Figure X. The Teacher Coping Model Pyramid

Wellness

Happiness  Flow

Centering

Values Affirmation  Mindfulness  Gratitude

Beyond Survival

Pleasant Activities  Social Skills and Support  Professional Competence  Exercise and Healthy Eating

Adaptive Behaviors

Positive/Negative Thought Method  ABC’s of Adaptive Thinking  Self-Praise and Reward  Optimism

Adaptive Thinking

The TCM Theory  Problem Solving  Self-Monitoring  Goal Setting  Deep Breathing

Building Awareness
- Mood Monitoring
- Breathing
- Goal Setting

AWARENESS
Mood Monitoring Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<th>Saturday</th>
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Positive thoughts or activities that made me happy, calm, or relaxed:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Negative thoughts or activities that made me sad, mad, or anxious:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
ADAPTIVE THINKING I: POSITIVE/NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Mood Formula

20 pleasant activities + 100 positive thoughts - 3 unpleasant events - 7 negative thoughts = 110 positives

2 pleasant activities + 8 positive thoughts - 14 unpleasant events - 86 negative thoughts = 90 negatives
# Tracking Positive and Negative Thoughts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Thoughts</th>
<th>Negative Thoughts</th>
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**Total:**

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<th>Total:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Thoughts</td>
<td>I have this thought sometimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m a terrible teacher.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It’s awful to be disrespected.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This will never work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can’t stand this.</td>
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<td>This is too hard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This is not fair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have too many students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can’t do this.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am losing control.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I hate being disrespected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>His parents just don’t care.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>She’s doing this on purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can’t let him get away with that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It will make me look weak.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No one ever supports me.</td>
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<td>This paperwork is such a waste of time.</td>
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<td>I don’t know what I’m doing</td>
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<tr>
<td>This is hopeless.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He doesn’t care so why should I?</td>
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<tr>
<td>I must get control of this classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>These students should listen to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He always acts this way.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Take a moment to reflect on why you became a teacher in the first place. See if you can tap into that passion that excited you and called you to action.

Document what you most enjoy about being a teacher and rereading the list on a regular basis can help generate positive thoughts.
- I can get through this. This won’t last forever.
- It’s okay to be upset. It will pass.
- I’ve handled this before.
- Just remember to breathe.
- One step at a time.
- Keep focused on what I need to do.
- Remember to stay calm.
- Take your time. There’s no rush. Time is on my side.
- I will learn from this. It will get easier each time.
- Remember to praise students who are meeting expectations.
- I can do this.
- Staying calm shows that I am in control.
- If I get upset now, he may learn that his misbehavior works to get my attention and the problem could get worse.
- Single words repeated over and over: relax, peace, calm, breathe
- My attitude sets the tone.
- I don’t fight with 8 year-olds.
- Remember to notice the ones being “good” when I feel stressed.
- I should be as forgiving as my students.
- This situation will not matter in five years.
- Ask myself, Is this situation affecting the entire class or just me?
- I am a model for these children for how to manage my anger by staying calm. For some children, I may be their only positive coping model.
- People don’t care what you know until they know that you care.
Worry time involves scheduling a time during the day where you allow yourself to worry, setting a timer for no more than 20 minutes, and then ending your worry session at that time. If you find yourself worrying outside of your worry time, simply say to yourself, “Not right now. I will allow myself to worry during my worry time.”
This week I am going to use the following strategies for increasing positive thoughts and decreasing negative thoughts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Strategy</th>
<th>Negative Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Inspiration and Recalling Passion</td>
<td>☐ Worry Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Priming</td>
<td>☐ Time Projection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Using Cues</td>
<td>☐ Exaggeration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Acknowledging Accomplishments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Self-Rewarding Thoughts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My current rate is ____ Positive thoughts for every ____ Negative thought. By the end of the week my goal is to do have ____ Positive thoughts for every ____ Negative thought.

Each day, I reach my goal I will reward myself with the following self-rewarding thoughts:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

When I reach my goal for 3 or more days in a row, I will reward myself with
___________________________________________________________________________ (bigger reward).
Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them.  
Epictetus

**ABC Worksheet**

1. **Activating Event**
   - Just the Facts
     - (1) What happened just before I started feeling upset?
     - (2) Who? What? Where? When?

2. **Beliefs**
   - How much do you believe each belief? Rate 0-100 before and after Disputing.
   - Before | After
   - _______ | _______

3. **Consequences (Emotions)**
   - What Were You Thinking?
     - (1) What went through my mind about A that caused C?
     - (2) Why does that bother me?
     - (3) If my belief is true, so what?
     - (4) What does it say about me?
     - (5) What is the worst part of it?
     - (6) Are these thoughts enough to make me feel this bad?
     - ✓ Watch for “should” “must” “never” “always” “awful”
     - ✓ Think of thoughts in complete sentences

4. **How Were You Feeling?**
   - (1) What am or was I feeling?
   - (2) What’s the strongest feeling?
   - ✓ Use single words to identify my feelings.

**ADAPTIVE THOUGHTS II:**
**THE ABC METHOD**
***Ms. Phipps’ ABC Worksheet***

**Activating Event**

**Beliefs**

**Consequences (Emotions)**

---

***Mr. Gonzalez’s ABC Worksheet***

**Activating Event**

**Beliefs**

**Consequences (Emotions)**

---

***Ms. Malcolm ABC Worksheet***

**Activating Event**

**Beliefs**

**Consequences (Emotions)**
Mr. Caldera is nearing the end of his 3rd period math instruction when he notices three students in the back texting and not paying attention. Mr. Caldera stops his instruction, charges to the back of the room, waves his finger at the students and shouts, “I am not going to tell you again. Put those away and start paying attention.” He hovers over them for several more seconds before quickly turning and walking to the front of the room. The class notices Mr. Caldera is flushed and visibly shaking as he begins instruction again.
FUNNEL METHOD

The Funnel Method

First Thought

Answer to Question 1

Answer to Question 2

Ask Yourself:

Q1: What about this thought bothers me so?

Q2: What about this thought upsets me most?

Q3: If this were true, what about it would be so upsetting?

Q4: Does just thinking this thought make me as upset about the situation as I ever felt?

If yes, you have found the key belief.

If No, keep asking Qs 1–3 until you hit the belief that leads you to answer Q4 as a yes.
ABC Worksheet

Activating Event
(1) What happened just before I started feeling upset?
(2) Who? What? Where? When?

Beliefs
Rate 0-100 before and after Disputing.

What Were You Thinking?
(1) What went through my mind about A that caused C?
(2) Why does that bother me?
(3) If my belief is true, so what?
(4) What does it say about me?
(5) What is the worst part of it?
(6) Are these thoughts enough to make me feel this bad?
   ✓ Watch for “should” “must” “never” “always” “awful”
   ✓ Think of thoughts in complete sentences

Consequences (Emotions)

How Were You Feeling?
(1) What am or was I feeling?
(2) What’s the strongest feeling?
   ✓ Use single words to identify my feelings.

Just the Facts
(1) What happened just before I started feeling upset?
(2) Who? What? Where? When?

Questioning
(1) What’s the proof?
(2) Are there other ways of thinking about it?
(3) What would an optimist think?
(4) What would I tell a close friend in the same situation?
(5) How does it help/hurt me to think this way?
(6) How will I feel about this in a week/month/year/decade?

Disprove/Dispute/Debate

Evaluate

Evaluate/Exonerate
(1) How do I feel now?
(2) Did you exonerate yourself?
(3) If I don’t feel better, find new arguments in D.
Ms. Phipps’ ABCDE Worksheet

**Activating Event**
My principal announced at our faculty meeting that she would start doing weekly classroom observations starting next week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. She is wasting my time.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She’s just trying to show she’s in charge.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She is incompetent and has no business telling me how to teach.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Consequences (Emotions)**
1. Frustrated
2. Annoyed
3. Angry
I was teaching 3rd period math and was delivering instruction when I saw three students texting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activating Event</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Consequence (Emotions)</th>
<th>Dispute</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Furious</td>
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<td>2. Frustrated</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Defeated/Hopeless</td>
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</table>
Gratitude Note

Think of someone who has made your life better. It may help to close your eyes and see the first person who pops into your mind when you think of someone who has had a positive influence on you. Now find time to write a thank you note to the person, a note of gratitude. Make it specific and detailed, not just a generic thank you. It should be at least a page of writing, about 300 words. Now to make it stick, to make it even more meaningful, deliver the note in person and read aloud. Arrange a time and place to meet with the person where you can express your gratitude. Read the note to them, or if you’re artist, sing it to them! Seligman’s research tells us, you will be feeling happier and less depressed one month after doing this. We’re guessing the person who you deliver your message of gratitude to will also benefit!
- Increasing Positive Activities
- Communication and Social Problem Solving Skills
- Relaxation Skills
- Minimal Interventions
What Went Well in Your Classroom

For the next several nights before you go to bed, take a moment to reflect back on the day. Keep a tablet, piece of paper, journal, or an electronic device you are comfortable writing on next to your bed. Write down three things that went well in your class that day and why; why it went well, why you enjoyed it, and why you experienced it in a positive way. You don’t have to write for long, but it is important that you spend time thinking deeply about what happened, why, and what caused it to happen. Within in a few days, you will notice a difference in your ability to tune your feelings to be more positive. Give it a try!
Getting to Good
Mindfulness
Values, Affirmations, & Virtues
Gratitude and Generosity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes or No</th>
<th>Specific Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever forgiven another person when they have hurt you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever been considerate of another person’s feelings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever been concerned with the happiness of another person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever put another person’s interests before your own?</td>
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<td>Have you ever been generous and selfless to another person?</td>
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<td>Have you ever attended to the needs of another person?</td>
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<td>Have you ever tried not to hurt the feelings of another person?</td>
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<td>Have you ever felt satisfied when you have helped another person?</td>
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<td>Have you ever gone out of your way to help a friend even at the expense of your own happiness?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you ever found ways to help another person who was less fortunate than yourself?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductions/Overview/Rules/Goal Setting</td>
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<td>Basics of Stress and Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Teacher Coping Model</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Positive/Negative Thought Method</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ABC Method</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Adaptive Behaviors</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Professional Competence</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Getting to Good</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Summary and Next Steps</td>
<td>Chapters 10-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Mood Check-In**
  - Ask everyone to report their mood right now on a scale from 1-10
  - You can change the mood discussed weekly (positive/negative, happy/sad, anxious/calm)
  - Ask participants to identify one thought or behavior related to their mood rating

• **Review Homework from Prior Week’s Chapter**
  - What went well?
  - What was challenging?
  - Brainstorm solutions to any barriers or challenges

• **Summary of New Chapter**
  - Ask one participant to summarize the big ideas of this week’s reading

• **Group discussion about what did you learn from this week’s reading?**
  - What made sense?
  - What did you try or will you try?
  - What was unclear or confusing?

• **Group Exercise(s) from the current chapter**

• **Summary and Goal Setting**
  - Ask a member to summarize the entire meeting
  - Ask each member to set a goal for the coming week
    - Ask each member to say why their goal is important
    - Ask each member to rate their confidence in meeting their goal
  - Problem solve any barriers for members who express low commitment or confidence