

# Stress Management and Coping Skills

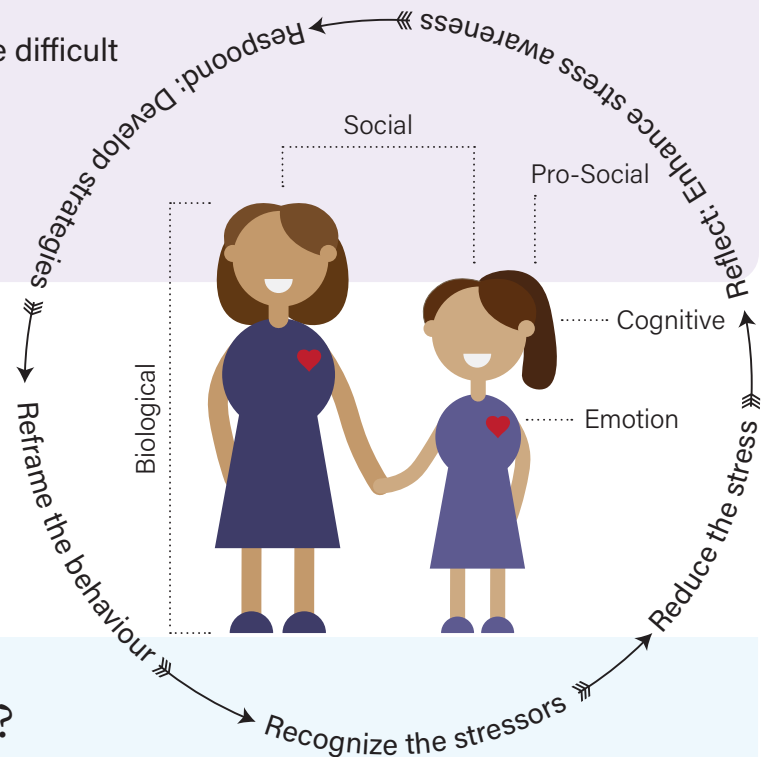
## Well Being for Families with Children 3 - 8 Years Old

### What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?

Social-emotional skills help us to be successful at home, school, and work. They are the kinds of skills that are needed to start and keep friendships, complete tasks, and stay positive in the face of stress or adversity. There are many social-emotional skills that we learn in life as we grow up into adulthood, but most fall into these main categories, skills that help us:

- identify and manage emotions
- cope with stress
- stay positive and persevere when things are difficult
- build and keep healthy relationships
- understand and celebrate our identity
- engage in critical and creative thinking

Source: Student Mental Health Ontario



### How can parents promote SEL?

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) begins within you as the parent/caregiver. Your children learn how to differentiate unhealthy relationships from healthy relationships. They learn from their environment what is socially acceptable. Social Emotional Skills are needed in order to form healthy relationships, complete tasks, and work through stressors or adversity in life. "Your child learns these skills from you, and they are also taught at school. The way that we learn to develop these skills formally at school is called social-emotional learning. Students learn this as part of everyday classroom life and through a specific focus within the Ontario curriculum."

As a parent/caregiver, to initiate SEL learning it is important to role model these skills in your life as an adult. When a child has access to learning healthy SEL skills, it can contribute to their life success.

Source: [What is Social-Emotional Learning? - Parents and Families](#)

## Lesson 5

### Stress Management and Coping Skills: Guided Imagery

#### Strategy / Activity

##### What is Guided Imagery?

Guided imagery provides an opportunity to shift our focus away from worries. It can help students to relax as they visualize an image that promotes feelings of calm.

Take a look at this awesome resource!

[http://bit.ly/RRHC\\_SEL03](http://bit.ly/RRHC_SEL03)

#### Instructions / Lesson

##### Learning Goals

To teach students a way to calm feelings of tension or anxiety.

##### Support Strategies to Teach the Lesson

- Teach this skill when your child is calm and happy. Once the skill is familiar, it is a great option for when your child is feeling stressed or needs a break. It is also a wonderful activity before bed or before writing or art.
- This is a good practice before tests or transitions.
- Adapt for what works best for your child.

#### Activity

##### Imaginary Walk (Time: 10 minutes)

Have your child sit or lie down comfortably and take a slow breath in through their nose and imagine what you read. Begin to read:

Breathe out and soften your gaze. Imagine that you are standing in a safe, peaceful forest. Birds are singing in the trees and bushes all around you. You can hear the soothing, gentle songs behind you...to your left...to your right...in front of you...and in the trees above. You breathe in deeply and your nose tells you that it has rained recently. Everything smells alive and full. Up ahead you notice flowers growing beneath the trees. You walk over and lean in to look more closely at one flower. Notice the rich colour of the petals. Is it different from the colour at the flower's center?

Now a butterfly dances into view and lands on this special flower. Perched on the flower, the butterfly's wings slowly open and close while you slowly breathe in and out and enjoy this moment. Notice the colour and pattern of the wings. The butterfly seems curious about you but is not afraid. You watch it for a while. Then, gently, the butterfly lifts off the flower and flies away. You follow it with your eyes until the wings disappear into the tree leaves.

Looking around, you notice that you have walked into a clearing filled with tall grass and a rainbow of flowers. You hear a creek in the distance, and crickets in the meadow. Dragonflies dance across the tall grass. Looking down at your hands, you notice the warm glow of sunlight on them.

Close your eyes and bring your hands full of sunlight to your heart. Breathe in calm. Breathe out calm. When you are ready, focus your eyes.

### Adaptations

- Some students may not be comfortable with the visualization experience, so you may wish to have peaceful images out on their desks or projected for them to reflect on instead.
- Use different scripts throughout the year to keep the practice engaging.
- For some, it may be helpful to draw the visualization script.
- Knowing your child, you may need to scaffold the activity.
- Add relaxing background music (there is lots of relaxing music available on the free meditation app Insight Timer).

### Extension

- It could be a wonderful idea to ask your child to lead you through a guided meditation journey, using their imaginations!



## Lesson 6

### Positive Motivation and Perseverance - Vision Board

#### Strategy / Activity

What are Positive Motivation and Perseverance?

Positive motivation and perseverance skills can help students approach challenges in life with an optimistic mindset and remain hopeful even when their circumstances are difficult.

Take a look at this awesome resource!

[http://bit.ly/RRHC\\_SEL04](http://bit.ly/RRHC_SEL04)

#### Instructions / Lesson

##### Learning Goals

To practice optimism and envisioning goals and dreams.

##### Support Strategies to Teach the Lesson

- Teach this skill when your child is calm and happy.
- Adapt for what works best for your child.
- This activity could be an ongoing project that gets added to as goals and dreams change or are added.

#### Activity

Vision Board (Time 30-45 minutes, ongoing)

**Materials Needed:** old magazines, photos, pens, markers, crayons, paper, glue stick, scissors, (optional cork board with thumb tacks if that is readily available in the home as an alternative to gluing images as a collage on paper.)

Ask your child what big or small dreams and goals they have. What does he/she want to experience? Where does he/she want to travel to? How does he/she want to feel and be?

Peruse old magazines for photos that match your child's visions and cut them out. If there are goals that aren't found in photos, your child may want to draw or write about them on a piece of paper.

Consider all the items collected, written, drawn, and cut out, and invite your child to start assembling a collage of these visions and goals, either by gluing onto a piece of paper, or tacking on to a cork board with pins.

It is okay if there are some spaces left open -- this is a wonderful project to keep as an ongoing process. New goals and ideas and images/words can be added whenever there is inspiration.

After the vision board is assembled, ask your child to look at it and envision all of the ideas as possible, even probable. How does it feel?

Encourage this visioning practice with some affirmations:

Everything is possible

I believe in my dreams

Wonderful experiences are coming to me

Anything I can dream can come true

Now ask your child to plan one small step towards their biggest dream. The way to the top of the mountain is with small steps!

Invite your child to look at his/her vision board often for inspiration.