

COPING SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL



Grades 8-12

Physical and Health Education, Language Arts, Arts Education & Career Education

Purpose of the Lesson:

High School years can be tough for many students when it comes to finding their identity and coping with a different school environment. These are the years that many students experience a change in friendship dynamics and can encounter bullying situations. Since this can be a very stressful time for students, Stigma-Free Mental Health Society included a video on “10 Tips for Coping with Middle School and High School” in the Student Mental Health Toolkit. We hope you find this video helpful as a lesson hook and to teach your students some practical coping skills! Overall, the purpose of this lesson is to educate students on coping skills to help deal with difficult situations that they might encounter in high school.

Curriculum Competencies:

Physical and Health Education:

- Identify and apply strategies to pursue personal healthy-living goals (Grade 8/9/10).
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grade 8/9).
- Explore and describe the impact of transition and change on identities (Grade 8).
- Explore and describe factors that shape personal identities, including social and cultural factors (Grade 9/10).

After Grade 9, Physical and Health Education becomes an elective and divides into more specific courses. However, this lesson plan can still be used in classrooms for Grades 10-12.

Language Arts

- Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audiences (Grade 8/9).

After Grade 9 Language Arts divide into a more specific curriculum. This lesson could be used in Creative Writing or Spoken Language 10/11/12.

Arts Education

Take creative risks to experience and express feelings, thought, ideas, and experiences (Grade 8/9).

This lesson can also be used in Art Studio 10/11/12.

Career Education

Recognize the impact of personal public identity in the world of work (Grade 8/9).

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning requires the exploration of one's identity.

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Video:

[5 Tips for Getting Through Middle School or High School \(Part 1\)](#)

[5 More Tips for Getting Through Middle School or High School \(Part 2\)](#)

Guiding Questions:

Part 1:

How can you be assertive?

What is positive self-talk? What are some examples?

What is negative self-talk?

What does ABRA stand for? When might you try this?

What are the differences between mental and physical health?

How can you stand up for your peers in a bullying situation?

Part 2:

What are SMART goals?

Why is exercise important? What exercise might work well when feeling angry? What about sad?

How can you advocate for your needs? Who can help? Who should you share this information with?

Who are some good celebrity role models that have talked about their struggles with mental health?

What is self-care? What are some examples?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Set up the projector, queue both videos, ensure students have access to a computer or tablet for research, and gather materials for creating posters (e.g., paper, markers, pencil crayons, glue).

1) Begin the lesson by watching the videos “5 Tips for Getting Through Middle School or High School (Part 1). This can be found [HERE](#). This awesome animation features 5 tips for mental health including: being assertive, positive self-talk, working on negative self-talk, a helpful acronym ABRA, and standing up for peers.

2) Pause the video and use the teacher guiding questions to spark discussion.

3) Next, watch Part 2 of the video, “5 More Tips for Getting Through Middle School or High School.” This can be found [HERE](#). This video continues with 5 more tips including: SMART goals, exercise, advocating for needs, following celebrity role models, and self-care.

4) Pause the video and use the teacher guiding questions to spark discussion.

5) Discuss the curricular objectives for this lesson with your class. Share how coping skills are important to apply in their everyday life and provide situations where students might want to try some of their coping skills. For example, when getting a needle or doing bloodwork, when going to a party where you don’t know anyone, or before doing a presentation in front of the class.

6) Follow-up activity: Create your own poster or visual explaining strategies of how to take care of your mental health. Have the students do some of their own research on laptops of other coping strategies and suggestions of how to take care of their mental health for example, journaling, gratitude exercises, mediation, yoga, music, etc.

7) Lesson closure: Create a school-wide poster contest for a prize and display the top 5 posters across the school for mental health awareness.