



Managing Our Stress using the Stress Bucket

Leader's Guide

Thank you for facilitating a session with your children, linking with Children's Mental Health Week.

The Aim of this session: To introduce the concept of the stress bucket and help children understand that things can fill our buckets, but that we can manage our stress levels through opening the taps on our stress buckets.



Children learn that we each have a stress bucket which can fill up with lots of different stresses. We can learn to release the stress by opening our taps through different actions and avoid feeling overwhelmed.

Each person is unique, so different things will fill and empty different buckets.

Resources for the session:

1. Show the Managing our Stress video you can find it via the link: <https://standinginthegap.uk/childrensmentalhealthweek2024> or the QR Code here:
The video running time is: 5 minutes
2. You will need one worksheet per child (provided in your pack)
3. Decide on how to run the activity/game and prepare that. (see resources in the pack)



The structure of the session:

1. Show the video: The video will introduce the session and demonstrate some ideas of things that fill our stress buckets and things that open the taps on our stress buckets. (Note: If needed you can rewatch the video after the activity and while completing the worksheets, pausing at each part as the children complete the worksheets)
2. Activity: Follow the video with an activity to review the ideas and add children's own ideas.

Options on the Activity

1. Organise the children into small groups with a picture of a bucket and small pictures of taps and stress water drops to fill the bucket (See pack for info). OR do it as a whole group in two teams as a running activity bringing things up to the bucket at the front.
2. Set a time limit for the game (3 minutes) each team is responsible for saying a cause of stress or an activity to turn on the release tap.

3. You might like to add an element of chance by using a dice. The teams with taps must get an even number to make a suggestion and the team with stress bubbles must get an odd number to make a suggestions.
4. You could keep a record of the ideas as they are said to help the children fill in the sheet.

Finish by giving the children the sheet to complete and send the sheet home so adults at home can discuss it with children. The sheet gives children opportunity to draw or write their own ideas about what causes them stress and what they can do about it.

Please do encourage children to take the worksheets home and parents to look at what they have done. If you can encourage parents to make a donation (info on worksheets) or consider doing a small fundraising event to support us, that would be hugely appreciated,

Hints and tips on what can fill up our buckets (here are some of the suggestions mentioned in the video- there are many others)

Big things like:

- Being unwell ourselves or worrying about someone else who is unwell
- New things- like a new house, or a new teacher, new school or a new person in our lives
- Falling out with someone
- Having some tests coming up
- Practicing for a performance or a big game/ match depending on your sport

Smaller things can also fill our buckets like:

- I can't remember that persons name
- I don't understand my homework
- I can't find my- shoes, jumper, favourite toy
- My hairband isn't right
- My jumper feels wrong

Hints and tips on things that open our taps

- Getting enough sleep- we can't run a car without fuel and your brains won't work if you haven't had enough sleep. Enough sleep is when you wake up feeling refreshed and ready to go.
- Eating healthy food regularly
- Drinking enough water
- Talking to someone you trust if something is concerning you
- Drawing a picture
- Smile at someone or telling them a joke
- Getting some physical exercise- whether that's running up and down outside, bouncing on a trampoline (did you know changes brain waves) or enjoying a quick dance to fun music.
- Doing something different if you are stuck on something
- Watching a film
- Playing a game
- Some things you can do at home with a parent/carer can help- having a hug, a tickle or a pizza massage are all great