Group Proposal-Stress Management

Group Process and Practice

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Rationale for Group:

Stress surrounds those of all ages in various forms each and everyday. At some point in everyone’s lives they experience a stressful situation on a small or a large scale. According to Jane Collingworth (2016), “We are all familiar with stress — it’s a fact of life. With the rapid pace of modern living, it feels increasingly difficult to keep up. Sadly, the negative effects of stress are widespread and growing”. It’s never too early or too late to discover new ways of dealing with stress. Although some people come equipped with a multitude of ways to handle stress and may have adapted to their everyday stressors, this is not true for all.

Objectives for Group:
- Learning to self monitor stress
- Increasing tools for coping with stressful situations
- Identifying good and bad stressors in situations
- Increase appropriate reactions to stressful situations

Practical Considerations:
- Parents may not want their son/daughter participating in group
- Students may not want to participate in group
- Teachers may not want student missing class time
- Students may have past history/current conflict with each other
- Members may not consistently attend

Group Composition:

Size: 6-8 boys and/or girls
Open vs. Closed: Closed-Members are not allowed to join following second session
Frequency and duration: Once per week for 30-45 minutes for six to eight weeks
Location: School Psychologist Office

Procedures: Techniques, activities, etc.

1st Meeting: Getting to Know Each Other and Setting the Stage

- Welcome/Check-in
  - Introduce the program, what we will be doing and why we’re doing it
    - Stress Management.
    - Learning about stress, coping strategies and how to react appropriately in various situations.
    - Stress is in everyone’s life, and learning about it and strategies will make stressful situations easier to navigate through.
  - Introductions-Ice breaker
    - Students will start off by standing in a circle.
    - The first member of the group will introduce their name and give a nickname which starts with the same letter.
They will then say why they chose that nickname.
The facilitator will then model by starting: “My name is Brittany and the nickname I would give myself is Bouncy because I have a lot of energy.”
Then the facilitator would open up the floor for someone to go next.
Each member would then repeat the name and nickname of each member in the circle then once completed give their name and nickname.

- **Processing:**
  - What did we just do?
  - How did you participate or how did you contribute to the group?
  - How did we work together?
  - What was hard?
  - What was easy?
  - What did we/you learn about our group?

- **Ground Rules/Norms**
  - **Create list of Rules/Norms with the group**
    - Explain what group norms/rules are
    - Share an example of a group rule/norm the facilitator would like to contribute
      - Be respectful
      - Listen to others
      - Differences are ok. Agree to Disagree
      - Be flexible
      - Encourage each other
    - Have each group member write down one or two rules/norms they think are important
    - All group responses will be collected in a hat
    - Group will then go around the circle taking out one piece of paper and reading a possible rule/norm and will decide if they all agree
    - Facilitator will offer suggestions to the group if needed
    - Facilitator will then write down all the agreed upon items and will bring a copy of them to each session so group members can remember or add or make changes as necessary
  - Educate group on the term confidentiality *(if necessary)*

- **Introduce Stress Tracker (Appendix)**
  - Encourage students to utilize this to rate their level of stress
  - Facilitator will explain each area of the tracker and give room for questions/comments
Group members will be asked to bring the tracker each week and will be able to share if they feel comfortable or they may keep it private between themselves and the facilitator.

The stress tracker completion will be added to the group norms/rules to remind group members of the expectation to complete it as an important part of group

- **Action Assignment**- For next week utilize your stress tracker, bring any questions, comments or concerns to group next week.

- **Closing**- Questions, Reviews and plans for next week

2\textsuperscript{nd} Meeting: Stress can be both Good and Bad?

**Welcome/Check-in**
- Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week.
- Remind students of ground rules which they came up with.
- Check in with students about stress tracker:
  - How did the stress tracker go?
  - When did you use it?
  - How easy was it to integrate into your schedule?
  - How did it feel to complete the sheet?
  - Could you offer suggestions for future use?
  - What do you understand better about yourself or your stressors?

- **Coloring**
  - Each student will be given crayons/markers and coloring books.
  - Coloring books will be a variety of materials including younger, older and age appropriate material.
  - Students will be able to color independently for about 5 minutes.
  - Students will then be allowed to continue coloring throughout the session if they choose to.

- **Processing**
  - What did we just do?
  - How did you feel before coloring?
  - How did you feel while coloring?
  - How did you feel after coloring?
  - Do you think you could use this in your everyday life?

- **Introduce Stress**
  - “Do you ever feel like there are too many pressures and demands on you? Do you ever lose sleep worrying about tryouts or a school project? Everyone gets stressed now and then. Good stress helps you rise to a challenge and prepare to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness. Bad stress, like coping with a divorce
or moving to a new neighborhood or school — can leave a person feeling overwhelmed and unable to meet challenges. But there are many ways to ease stress” (The Nemours Foundation, 2011).

- **Opening Discussion:**
  - Think about a time when you experienced bad stress.
  - What did that experience look like?
  - How did you respond?
  - Any ideas on how else X could’ve responded?
  - Think about a time when you experienced good stress. Would anyone like to share?
  - Which stress do you experience more? When?
  - Which stress is easier to control?

- **Action Assignment**—Continue utilizing your stress tracker.

- **Closing—Questions, Reviews and plans for next week**

**3rd Meeting: Is it Really that Big of a Deal?**

- **Welcome/Check-in**
  - Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week or if they would like to share an item from their stress tracker sheet.

- **Activity—How big is my problem?**
  - On a large sheet of poster board will be a timeline with “Not a Problem” on the left end and “Huge Problem” on the right end of the timeline.
  - Students will then be given a set of sticky notes which have potential problems written on them (E.G. I have no ride home from school, my friend hung up on me, I left my homework at home)
  - Facilitator will then model expectation.
  - Facilitator will read card, explain how big she thinks the problem is then will post the sticky note in the appropriate place on the poster.
  - Students will then take turns placing their sticky notes on the poster board.
  - Students will then be given a worksheet similar to the poster with ratings from “Not a Problem” to “Huge Problem” and are asked to add in their own everyday problems/stressors to.

- **Throughout the activity processing questions:**
  - How come you chose to put that sticky there? Does the group agree/disagree?
  - Have you ever been in any of these situations? How did you feel?
  - What did you learn?
  - How can you take what you learned from this activity and apply it to life outside of group?
• Action Assignment
  o Continue utilizing stress tracker sheet
  o Think about your worksheet from today when rating where you think your stress level is on your tracker
  o Ask a friend/family member how they deal with stress and what kind of things they perceive as stressful

• Closing-Questions, Reviews and plans for next week

4th Meeting: Stress Relief Bubbles

• Welcome/Check-in
  o Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week or if they would like to share an item from their stress tracker sheet.
  o Did your ratings of a certain item change after last week’s activity?
  o Discuss how friends/family members deal with stress.
  o Processing Questions
    ▪ How do your friends/family members deal with stress?
    ▪ Do group members have similar strategies for dealing with stress?
    ▪ Did you learn a new way to deal with stress?
    ▪ Is there a strategy a friend/family uses you would never use?

• Activity-Stress Relief Activities
  o Ask for volunteer to read for each of the circles
  o Students will then be given a blank copy of the worksheet and asked to fill in their own stress relief activities for each of the senses
  o Students will then post their sheets up on the walls and will be able to look at their peer’s stress relief strategies for about five minutes
  o Students are allowed to ask questions or be completely be silent during this portion depending on the nature of the group. (go with the flow)

• Students will then get together to discuss activity.
  o What did we do?
  o Was it hard or easy to think about stress relief activities you do?
  o Which sense circle was easiest for you to complete?
  o Which was the hardest?
  o How did you feel when you looked at your peers stress relief circles?
  o Which activities can you use at school?

• Action Assignment
  o Over this week try to utilize at least one of your stress relief circles.
  o If you think of others which you can add to your circle continue your list.
  o Continue utilizing stress tracker sheet.
5th Meeting: Is it Healthy?

- **Welcome/Check-in**
  - Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week or if they would like to share an item from their stress tracker sheet.

- **Activity-Introduce Healthy/Unhealthy Ways of Coping with Stress**
  - “Ask the teens to describe the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods. How do they know what is healthy? Explain that the ways we cope with stress in our lives also can be healthy or unhealthy. Ask for examples. Tell them that today they will participate in a skit activity to understand healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with stress” (2006).
  - Students will then be broken up into groups of two or three and will be given a skit to role play.
  - Students will be given 5-10 minutes to read situation and prepare a skit.
  - The skit will include an unhealthy coping strategy.
  - Once students see unhealthy coping strategy they will then switch places with the actor and continue the skit with the healthy coping method.

- **Processing:**
  - What did we do?
  - How did you participate?
  - What did you do that you were most proud of?
  - What did you learn/relearn?
  - How can you take what you learned from this activity and apply it to life outside of group?

- **Activity:**
  - I’m going to give you one minute and as a group I want you to call out as many healthy coping strategies as you can. On your mark, get set, GO!

- **Action Assignment-**
  - Try using one of the healthy coping strategies you learned today throughout the week preferably one you’ve never tried before.
  - Continue Stress Tracker.

- **Closing-Questions, Reviews and plans for next week**

6th Meeting: Creating your Own Toolbox

- **Welcome/Check-in**
  - Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week or if they would like to share an item from their stress tracker sheet.
  - Ask students if they utilized a new healthy coping strategy and how that went.
• **Activity-Develop a Stress Relief Toolbox**
  - Each student will be able to choose a box (tissue box, shoe box, etc.)
  - Students will then be asked to think of all the things that help them to feel calm or things that make them feel happy
  - Students will have a variety of materials (e.g. crayons, magazines, stickers) and will be able to draw, write or cut out things to put in their tool box

• **Action Assignment**
  - Take your Stress Relief toolbox with you, keep it somewhere safe or take it with you in your backpack.
  - When you encounter a stressful situation think of all the items in your box to help to remind you ways to calm down.

• **Closing-Questions, Reviews and plans for next week**

Meetings 7 and 8 can be placed in between previous sessions if further work is necessary around a specific topic or sessions can continue after the sixth session to extend the group. Extending additional sessions will be up to the facilitator to gauge where the group is in the process. The facilitator can utilize the levels from the stress trackers to have solid data to make this decision.

7\textsuperscript{th} Meeting:
• **Welcome/Check-in**
  - Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week or if they would like to share an item from their stress tracker sheet.

• **Action Check-in**
• **Activity**
• **Action Assignment**
• **Closing-Questions, Reviews and plans for next week**

8\textsuperscript{th} Week
• **Welcome/Check-in**
  - Check in to see how student’s week is going, ask students if they would like to share a positive and/or negative from their week or if they would like to share an item from their stress tracker sheet.

• **Action Check-in**
• **Activity**
• **Closing-Questions, Reviews**

**Evaluation:** Students will utilize their stress tracker from beginning session to final session (Appendix)
Appendix.
Evaluation Method.

## STRESS TRACKER

**Rate your stress level** regularly by choosing a number between 0-10, where 1 means not bothersome, 5 means somewhat bothersome, and 10 means very bothersome. Tracking your stress will help you identify patterns in your stress.

### Stress Ruler

“On a scale of 0–10, how bothersome has your stress been?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not at All Bothersome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A Little Bothersome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Somewhat Bothersome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Very Bothersome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extremely Bothersome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you notice your stress rising, you should practice your favorite stress management techniques before your stress levels get too high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Stress Level (0–10)</th>
<th>What was I doing?</th>
<th>What was I thinking?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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Session #4: Stress Relief Bubbles

Stress relief activities

- Read a good book
- Watch a your favourite film
- Engage your visual senses in painting or photography
- Allow yourself to day dream for 10 mins
- Use visualisation techniques
- Evoke good memories from look at memory or story board

- Sit outside and enjoy the sounds
- Listen a a favourite piece of music
- Listen to some sounds, lapping water
- Listen to a motivational recording
- Play a relaxation cd
- Listen to a radio programme with your eyes closed

- Engage one or more of your senses to relieve stress

- Exercise
  - Squeeze a stress ball
  - Stroke a pet - particularly cats, dogs, rabbits
  - Wear soft warm clothing.
  - Bake - enjoy the soothing, repetitive movements
  - Play a musical instrument
  - Have a massage
  - Yoga or pilates

- Sing
  - Laugh

- Have a chat with someone who listens
- Chew a piece of sugarless gum
- Use deep breathing exercises
- Eat a piece of dark chocolate
- Use deep breathing exercises
- Repeat affirmations out loud

- Burn some aromatherapy oils
- Enjoy the aroma of scented candles
- Do some baking - the mixture of aromas and soothing movements
- Enjoy outdoor smells from walks in the country or near the sea...
- Freshly brewed tea or coffee
Session #3: Is it Really that Big of a Problem?
RUNNING HEAD: Group Proposal Stress Management

Session #5 - Is it Healthy? Role Play Scenarios

**Situations** *(You will be assigned one of these situations.)*

A. Bobby is 17 years old. He is having some problems with his girlfriend. He feels that she is always checking up on him and says that she doesn’t trust him. He is feeling a lot of stress from this situation. He can’t seem to concentrate or getting anything done at school.

B. Sherneice is 14 years old. She can’t stand walking home from school every day. She gets harassed and called names by men in her neighborhood. She is so anxious and stressed by the problem that she hasn’t been able to get enough sleep.

C. Alan is 12 years old. Every day, he is getting into arguments with his math teacher. He feels that his teacher is treating him unfairly. Since he is so stressed out over this problem with his teacher, he gets angry with everyone in his life including his mom and his little brother.

D. Angela is 13 years old. She feels like her mom puts too many responsibilities on her at home, such as taking care of her little sister every day. She can’t stop thinking about all that she has to get done at home and at school.

E. Gretchen is 15 years old. She just heard that someone at school has been talking about her and telling stories that are not true. This problem is really getting to her.
References


