



# Educator Guide: Coping Skills Lesson

## **Recommended for Grades:**

6<sup>th</sup>

## **Time:**

7 minutes

## **National Health Education Standards:**

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).

## **Learning Objective:**

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Describe two health effects of marijuana use.

## **Lesson Description:**

In this lesson students learn about stress and how to manage it. Information about anxiety and depression is also presented. They will also learn what marijuana is, what it does to the body and why it is not a good way to cope with life's pressures.

## **Pre and Post-Test Question:**

Use the following question with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool, etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. Health effects, such as increased appetite, panic, paranoia and hallucinations, can be caused by the use of which drug?
  - a. **Marijuana**
  - b. Inhalants
  - c. Cigarettes
  - d. Beer



## Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself or your students as you complete the Coping Skills Lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Anxiety – a worried feeling that occurs when a person perceives a danger or threat
- Anxiety disorder – a condition that involves excessive amounts of fear, anxiety, nervousness, worry or dread
- Brain – the main organ in the nervous system that controls the body's activities by sending and receiving messages to and from different parts of the body
- Bronchitis – swelling of the bronchial tubes that causes coughing and difficulty breathing
- Cannabis sativa plant – the plant that marijuana is made from
- Drug – a chemical that changes the way a person's body works
- Hallucinations – seeing and/or hearing things that aren't really there
- Heart – the organ in the body responsible for pumping blood to every other part of the body. The heart is part of the circulatory system.
- High – a short period of time when a person feels happy, euphoric or carefree after using drugs
- Illegal – something that is against the law
- Immune system – the body's defense system against germs and other organisms that can cause illness or infection
- Lightheadedness – the feeling of being giddy, dizzy or delirious
- Lungs – the organs of the body which take in air to provide the body with oxygen, and exhale, or get rid of, carbon dioxide. The lungs are part of the respiratory system.
- Marijuana – a drug made from dry, shredded leaves, stems and flowers of the cannabis sativa plant
- Panic – a sudden overwhelming fear
- Panic attack – an intense period of anxiety where the person can experience trembling, sweating, pounding heart, etc.
- Paranoia – intense fear or suspicion when there is no real reason to feel those things
- Stress – an anxious, nervous or worried feeling a person gets when reacting to different situations, pressures or events
- THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) – the main active chemical in marijuana, which causes the high for marijuana users

# Coping Skills Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete this worksheet as you move through the Coping Skills Lesson.

1. What is stress?

2. List three things that can negatively impact the body's ability to cope.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are three things that someone experiencing too much stress might experience?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

4. List three ways to manage stress.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is an anxiety disorder?

6. What is depression?

7. Marijuana is a shredded green or brown mix of dried flowers, stems and leaves from what plant?

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8. How long does the high from marijuana usually last?

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9. What are three things marijuana can cause to happen in the body?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What are two long-term effects of marijuana use?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Is it legal to grow, possess or sell marijuana in Wisconsin?

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# Coping Skills Worksheet Answer Key

## 1. What is stress?

Stress is an anxious, nervous or worried feeling we get when we react to different situations, pressures or events. It's the body's way of preparing to meet a tough situation to the best of our abilities.

## 2. List three things that can negatively affect the body's ability to cope.

Being bullied, relationship drama, family conflicts, being exposed to violence, problems with schoolwork, health issues or crammed schedules.

## 3. What are three things that someone experiencing too much stress might experience?

Anxiety, panic attacks, a feeling of being constantly pressured, hassled or hurried, irritability, moodiness, physical symptoms such as stomach problems or headaches, sadness, depression, problems sleeping, drinking alcohol, smoking, overeating or using drugs.

## 4. List three ways to manage stress.

Take a stand against trying to do too much, learn to relax, treat your body well, check your attitude and be realistic.

## 5. What is an anxiety disorder?

When anxiety, or worry, feels extreme. Someone with an anxiety disorder usually needs to get help from a health professional.

## 6. What is depression?

Feeling sad, moody, angry or even just not caring about anything.

## 7. Marijuana is a shredded green or brown mix of dried flowers, stems and leaves from what plant?

Cannabis sativa plant

8. How long does the high from marijuana usually last?

One to three hours

9. What are three things marijuana can cause to happen in the body?

Increased heart rate, bloodshot eyes, difficulty thinking and solving problems, loss of coordination, memory and learning problems, increased appetite, feeling lightheaded or sleepy, anxiety, fear, distrust, panic, paranoia and hallucinations.

10. What are two long-term effects of marijuana use?

Changes in the brain, respiratory problems, immune system problems and emotional problems.

11. Is it legal to grow, possess and sell marijuana in Wisconsin?

No

# Supplemental Activity: My Personal Plan

## **Objectives:**

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Create a personal plan for coping with stress, anxiety or depression.

## **Materials Needed:**

- Chalkboard or whiteboard for brainstorming
- Copies of My Personal Plan Worksheet for each student (included below)

## **Time Required:**

45 minutes

## **Instructions:**

Brainstorm a list of stressors as a class. Examples could include problems at home, problems with friends, an upcoming test, schoolwork in general, a school project, health problems, etc. Explain that everyone is different, and everyone deals with situations differently. What might be stressful for one student might not bother another student at all. For more insight into their stressors, students could keep a stress journal for a week. Each time they feel stressed they can write in their journal. They should include the following:

- What caused the stress
- How they felt both physically and emotionally
- How they acted in response to the stress
- What they did to make themselves feel better

This is a great activity that allows students to really reflect on what causes them stress and how they are currently dealing with it.

Next, discuss some unhealthy ways that people may deal with stress. Examples could include smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs, overeating, skipping meals, withdrawing from friends and family, sleeping too much, becoming violent, procrastinating, etc. Talk about why these are not healthy ways to deal with stress and how they can cause harm to a person.

Review healthier ways to cope with stress and anxiety with students. These include cutting back on activities, prioritizing learning to relax, eating healthy foods, getting regular exercise, getting a good night's sleep, checking your attitude and being realistic.

Explain to students that they will be creating their own personal plan for coping with stress. Because everyone is different, everyone's plan will be different. Plan for some time in class for students to begin working on their plan or assign this as homework.

Encourage students to take their plan home and share it with their family. Have a parent or caregiver sign their plan to show their support. If students are struggling with parts of their plan, encourage them to talk with a trusted adult who can help them. This could be a parent, caregiver, other family member, teacher, counselor, etc.

This plan can be re-visited throughout the school year. Stressors change over time and students may need to come up with different ways to cope.

# My Personal Plan Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Use this worksheet to create your own personal plan for coping with stress. Everyone deals with stress differently, so everyone's personal plan will look different. If you are struggling with your plan, talk with a trusted adult. They can help you complete your plan.

List the top two stressors in your life right now.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

List at least two positive ways to you can deal with each stressor. Examples could include seeking advice, breaking the task into smaller pieces, making lists, avoiding certain people, places or things and letting go of some things.

Positive ways to deal with stressor 1:

Positive ways to deal with stressor 2:

Write down at least one thing to work on for each of the following ways to cope with stressors. These things will help you take care of your body and will allow you to deal with stress in a healthier way.

Exercise regularly:

Eat healthy foods:

Sleep well:

Relax:

Write down two trusted adults that you feel comfortable talking to when things get stressful or when you're feeling anxious or depressed.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



# Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.



# Resources and Services: Alcohol and Other Drug-Use Prevention

- American Lung Association Lung Help Line, 1-800-LUNG-USA (800-586-4872)
- Children's Wisconsin, [www.childrenswi.org](http://www.childrenswi.org)
- KidsHealth, [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
- LifeStance Health, [www.lifestance.com](http://www.lifestance.com)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)
- Partnership to End Addiction, [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)
- Rogers Behavioral Health, [www.rogersbh.org](http://www.rogersbh.org)
- The Tobacco Control Resource Center for Wisconsin, [www.tobwis.org](http://www.tobwis.org)
- United States Government-Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), [www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov)
- Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW



# Transcript

## Slide 1

Claire: Do you ever have days where you're really crabby and irritable, and you have no idea why? Or suddenly you're feeling really down for no reason?

Kwasi: I think we all have days like that. It's not unusual to feel like you're on an emotional roller coaster! As fun and exciting as the teenage years can be, it can also be a time of confusion and stress. There can be a lot of pressures and demands on you.

Claire: For example, you may lose sleep worrying about an upcoming test. Or, with all your after-school activities, you might not have enough time to sit down and eat dinner with your family. All of this can be very stressful!

Kwasi: Let's take a closer look at stress and how we can handle some of life's pressures.

## Slide 2

Stress is an anxious, nervous or worried feeling we get when we react to different situations, pressures or events. It's the body's way of preparing to meet a tough situation to the best of our abilities.

Some stress can be good. For example, feeling a little stress about a school project can motivate you to work hard on it. Too much stress though, is a completely different story. That much stress isn't good for anyone. Pressures that are too intense, or last too long, can cause people to feel overwhelmed. Here are just a few things that can negatively affect the body's ability to cope:

- Being bullied
- Relationship drama
- Family conflicts
- Being exposed to violence
- Problems with schoolwork
- Health issues
- And crammed schedules

These can be difficult for teens to deal with, especially if they feel that they're dealing with them alone.

### Slide 3

People who are experiencing too much stress may experience some of the following things:

- Anxiety or panic attacks
- A feeling of being constantly pressured, hassled or hurried
- Irritability and moodiness
- Physical symptoms such as stomach problems or headaches
- Sadness or depression
- Problems sleeping
- And drinking alcohol, smoking, overeating or using drugs

### Slide 4

It's important to learn how to manage stress. We'll take a look at some things that can help keep stress under control. It's often helpful to practice these strategies when life is relatively calm.

Take a stand against trying to do too much. If you're feeling stressed, consider cutting out an activity or two. Talk to a parent or other trusted adult to help prioritize what's most important to you.

Learn to relax. Sometimes using different breathing techniques in a stressful situation can help you calm down. Try to stay relaxed by building time into your life for activities that are calming and enjoyable. It might be taking your dog for a walk, or just hanging out in your room listening to music.

Treat your body well. This means eating healthy foods to fuel your body, getting regular exercise and getting a good night's sleep. It's so important to keep your body healthy so that you are at your best, and able to deal with stressful situations.

Check your attitude. Your outlook, attitude and thoughts influence the way you see things. Being optimistic can help you make the best of stressful situations. Instead of thinking, "Nothing ever goes my way," after getting a poor grade on a test, why not try thinking, "I'll definitely have to study more next time. I know I can do better."

Be realistic. Nobody's perfect. Don't expect yourself, or others to be perfect. That just adds to your stress level. If you need help with something, don't be afraid to ask for it.

## Slide 5

Some people experience anxiety, which can cause them to overreact to stress, making even a small difficulty seem like a crisis. When anxiety, or worry, feels extreme, it may be a sign of an anxiety disorder. Someone who has an anxiety disorder usually needs to get help from a health professional.

Some people can also suffer from depression. Depression is feeling sad, moody, angry or even just not caring about anything. While it's normal to feel sad, moody or angry occasionally, when these feelings don't go away and get in the way of enjoying life, that's a sign that professional help is needed.

## Slide 6

Claire: If you're experiencing any of these feelings, it's important to talk to a parent, school counselor, therapist, favorite teacher or other trusted adult.

Kwasi: Unfortunately, some teens who have trouble coping turn to drugs instead of turning to adults in their life. But drugs are a very dangerous way to cope.

Claire: One drug teens sometimes turn to is marijuana. We're going to learn why using marijuana is not a good way to cope ... but is actually a way of avoiding the problems or challenges they are facing.

## Slide 7

Marijuana is a shredded, green or brown mix of dried flowers, stems and leaves from the cannabis sativa plant. It is usually rolled and smoked like a cigarette or put in hollowed-out cigars or pipes. Some people mix it into food or brew it as a tea.

## Slide 8

The main active chemical in marijuana is THC, or delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol. When someone smokes marijuana, the THC goes from the lungs into the bloodstream, where it then goes to the brain and other organs. When the THC connects with certain cells in the brain it causes a high, or a temporary period of feeling really good. The high usually lasts for about 1 to 3 hours.

## Slide 9

But that's not the only thing it does to your body. It also causes:

- Increased heart rate
- Bloodshot eyes
- Difficulty thinking and solving problems
- Loss of coordination
- Memory and learning problems
- Increased appetite
- And feeling lightheaded or sleepy

In some people, marijuana can even cause reactions such as:

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Distrust
- Panic
- Paranoia
- And hallucinations, or seeing things that aren't really there

## Slide 10

People who use marijuana over a long period of time can have additional side effects, such as:

- Actual changes in the parts of the brain that help us to remember, multitask and pay attention
- Respiratory problems such as mucous, a chronic cough and bronchitis
- Immune system problems which make it harder for the body to fight off infections
- And emotional problems

Marijuana affects brain development, and when it's used heavily by young people, its effects on thinking and memory may last a long time or even be permanent. Plus, studies have shown that young people are more likely to become addicted to marijuana than adults.

## Slide 11

Growing, possessing or selling marijuana is illegal in the state of Wisconsin. So, if you are caught with marijuana, you may be fined or even go to jail. These crimes can go on your criminal record and make it hard to find a job or get into college someday.



## Slide 12

Claire: It should be pretty clear now that using marijuana to cope with your problems isn't a very good idea.

Kwasi: And, as with most drugs, marijuana use affects your judgment, which means you're more likely to take negative risks.

Claire: Remember, there are better ways to cope with stress. Different things work for different people. Think about what might help you cope. And talk with friends and family...they may have some good ideas too.



# Acknowledgements

Children's Wisconsin gratefully acknowledges the contributions and support provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for the research, development and delivery of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Alcohol and Other Drug-Use Prevention lessons, activities and games.

Children's Wisconsin would also like to acknowledge the following individuals for serving as subject matter experts during the development of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Alcohol and Other Drug-Use Prevention lessons, activities and games:

Julie Allard – Cornerstone Counseling Services

Eileen Hare, MS – Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Keri Schneider – American Lung Association in Wisconsin

Melissa Vukovich, NP – Children's Wisconsin





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