



# Educator Guide: Stress Detective Game

## **Recommended for Grades:**

6<sup>th</sup>

## **Time:**

15 minutes

## **Prerequisite:**

For students to be successful in the game, they would benefit from participating in the following lesson:

- Stress Toolkit Activity

## **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.
- Standard 4: Use interpersonal communication skills 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 Objectives:**

After completing this activity students will be able to:

1. Differentiate between positive and negative ways of dealing with stress.
2. Identify positive ways to deal with stress that they may be dealing with in their own life.

## **Activity Description:**

In this game students will differentiate between positive and negative ways to deal with stress. Students will become stress detectives and investigate stressful situations. They will need to search for evidence and help identify the positive and negative ways to deal with stressful situations.



**Vocabulary:**

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

- Communication – the sharing of information, thoughts and emotions
- Prioritize – to list or rate tasks, goals, projects, activities, etc., according to their importance
- Stress – the body's response to pressures from a situation or life event

# Handouts

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



# Mental Health Resources for Families and Educators

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, call 988 or [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

Anxiety and Depression Association of America, [adaa.org](https://adaa.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/](https://cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/)

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, [chadd.org](https://chadd.org)

Children's Wisconsin, [childrenswi.org](https://childrenswi.org)

Children's Wisconsin Shine Through, <https://shinethrough.childrenswi.org/parents>

The Institute for Child and Family Well-Being,  
<https://uwm.edu/icfw/tools-and-resources-3-2/>

KidsHealth, [kidshealth.org](https://kidshealth.org)

Mental Health America, [mentalhealthamerica.net](https://mentalhealthamerica.net)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), [nami.org](https://nami.org)

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), [nimh.nih.gov](https://nimh.nih.gov)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Student Services/Prevention and Wellness), [dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health](https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health)



# Transcript

## Introduction

### Stress Detective

You're part of an elite investigation team called the Stress Detectives. This team investigates stressful situations and helps identify the positive and negative ways kids deal with them. You've been assigned four new cases. Click on the folders to begin investigating each case.

## Charlie Introduction

Charlie has a math test tomorrow, and he really needs to do well on it. He is feeling stressed because math has always been hard for him. Charlie is in his bedroom the night before the test. Have a look around and see if you can find evidence of how he's dealing with the stress he's feeling.

### Chips

It looks like Charlie has been eating some unhealthy foods. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Snacking on candy and chips is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's right. Snacking on candy and chips is a negative way to deal with stress. Healthier snacks would be a better option.

### Video Game

Charlie's video game system is on. It looks like he's been playing for hours. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Playing video games all day is not a positive way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's correct. Playing video games all day is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Family

Charlie's family is having dinner together, while he has isolated himself in his room. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Avoiding your family is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's correct. Avoiding your family is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Phone

It appears that Charlie has been texting with a friend who is in his math class about the test tomorrow. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's right. Talking to your friends about stress is a positive way to deal with it.

Negative: Talking to your friends is a positive way to deal with stress.

### Soccer Ball

Charlie's soccer ball isn't going to help him pass his math test.

### Laundry

It looks like it's time to do some laundry, but that doesn't have anything to do with Charlie's stress over his math test.

### Soccer Shoes

These are just Charlie's soccer shoes. Nothing to see here.

### Outcome

Now that you've recognized the positive and negative ways that Charlie is dealing with stress, let's see what happens if Charlie addresses the negatives and emphasizes the positives.

Charlie decides to turn off his game system, throw out the chips and candy and join his parents for dinner. Talking with his parents helps him put things into perspective and the healthy meal gives him some extra energy. After dinner he texts his friend and they decide to study for the test together. After a good night's sleep, Charlie feels great the next morning and does well on the test.

## Gabby Introduction

It's Sunday night and Gabby has a big presentation to give at the end of the week. She hates giving presentations because she gets very nervous when speaking in front of people. She's been stressed about this for a couple of days. Have a look around and see if you can find evidence of how she's dealing with stress.

### Vape

Gabby's considering vaping. Some of her friends say they find it relaxing. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Vaping, or using any other type of drug, is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's right. Vaping, or using any other type of drug, is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Backpack

Looks like Gabby hasn't opened her backpack all weekend. She's been avoiding practicing her presentation. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's incorrect! Putting off homework is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's correct. Putting off homework is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Clock

It's almost midnight. Gabby is staying up late tonight, even though she needs to get up early for school tomorrow. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: This is a negative way to deal with stress. Gabby should be getting at least nine hours of sleep every night.

Negative: That's correct. Staying up too late, and not getting enough sleep, is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Dog

Gabby gets regular exercise by taking her dog, Ozzy, for walks. Looks like she wore him out! Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's right. Getting regular exercise is a positive way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's incorrect. Getting regular exercise is a positive way to deal with stress.

### Photo

Nice family photo, but it doesn't seem relevant.

### Coaster

This is just a coaster and doesn't seem to have anything to do with Gabby's stress.

### Magazine

This looks like a magazine. Nothing to see here.

### Pillow

This pillow is just for decoration. Nothing worth noting.

### Outcome

Now that you've seen the positive and negative ways that Gabby is dealing with stress, let's see what happens if Gabby addresses the negatives and emphasizes the positives.

Gabby decides to stay away from vaping. To prepare for the presentation she writes out notecards and makes a plan to practice the presentation each night this week, using Ozzy as her audience. By Friday her planning seems to have paid off and she feels much less stressed about the presentation, which goes very well.

## Nya Introduction

Try outs for the play are after school today, and Nya is really stressed out about them. She's never been in a school play before, and she doesn't know any of the other kids trying out. Have a look around and see if you can find evidence of how Nya is dealing with her stress.



### Alone

Nya is sitting all by herself instead of with her friends. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Avoiding friends is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's right. Avoiding friends is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Friend

Nya is so stressed that she ended up taking her anger out on her friend, Liv. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Taking your anger out on others is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's correct. Taking your anger out on others is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Empty Tray

Looks like Nya isn't eating any lunch today. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Skipping meals, or eating too little, is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's correct. Skipping meals, or eating too little, is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Notebook

Nya has been writing down her priorities for this year. Number one on her list is making the honor roll, number two is getting a part in the school play and number three is to compete on the track team. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's right. Prioritizing is a positive way to deal with stress.

Negative: Actually, prioritizing is a positive way to deal with stress.

### Poster

This is a poster for the sign language club. Nya isn't in that club so it doesn't seem relevant.

### Worker

Ms. Carroll has been working in the cafeteria for eleven years. She has seen a lot but doesn't know anything about Nya or the school play.

### Full Tray

This student appears to be eating a good lunch today, but that doesn't have anything to do with Nya and how she's feeling.

### Vending Machine

You can buy water, flavored water and sports drinks in this vending machine, but it doesn't seem relevant to Nya's stress.

### Outcome

Now that you've recognized the positive and negative ways that Nya is dealing with stress, let's see what happens if Nya addresses the negatives and emphasizes the positives.

Nya apologizes to Liv for getting angry with her. She knows that healthy eating habits will help keep her stress in check, so she joins her friends for lunch. She asks them if they know anyone trying out for the play and learns about a few kids she thinks she'll get along with. Doing these things changes her attitude, helping her nail her audition and reach her goal of getting a part in the play.

### Lucas Introduction

Lucas just got in a big argument with his little brother, Jace, over what to watch on TV. Jace always gets his way, and it stresses Lucas out. Lucas is always arguing with his brother. Have a look around and see if you can find evidence of how he's dealing with stress.

### Beer

Lucas's neighbors left a bottle of beer on the porch, and he's thinking of trying it to see if it will help him relax. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: Drinking alcohol, or using any other type of drug, is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's right. Drinking alcohol, or using any other type of drug, is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Phone

It looks like Lucas has been using a breathing and meditation app to help him learn how to take deep breaths. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's correct! Taking deep breaths is a healthy way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's incorrect. Taking deep breaths is definitely a healthy way to deal with stress.

### Journal

Lucas has started journaling. He's been writing a lot about his brother lately. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's right! Journaling is a positive way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's incorrect. Journaling is a positive way to deal with stress.

### Fast Food

Even though Lucas just ate dinner an hour ago he's really in the mood for a burger and some fries. Is this a positive or negative way to deal with stress?

Positive: That's incorrect. Overeating is a negative way to deal with stress.

Negative: That's right! Overeating is a negative way to deal with stress.

### Plant

Lucas's mom likes gardening and keeps a lot of plants in and around the house, but this doesn't have anything to do with what Lucas is feeling.

### Chair

This is just an empty chair. Nothing to see here.

### Basketball

This basketball belongs to one of his neighbors. It doesn't seem important.

### Sign

Lucas's family received this as a gift a few years ago. It has nothing to do with Lucas's stress.

### Outcome

Now that you've recognized the positive and negative ways that Lucas is dealing with stress, let's see what happens if he addresses the negatives and emphasizes the positives.

Lucas decides that alcohol isn't for him and that overeating is probably going to make him feel worse. Instead he's going to try to start being more mindful. He notices that taking deep breaths help him relax whenever Jace makes him angry, so he starts doing that regularly. He continues writing in his journal, which helps him work out his feelings toward his brother. All of these things help Lucas manage his stress better, and communication between himself and his brother improves.

### Win

Nice work! You've closed all four of your cases. You really know how to handle stress! Now go take a break. You've earned it!

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