



**Do Drugs Make You Happy? (🧠 An Emotional Health Story)**  
**(5<sup>th</sup> Grade – 10-11 yrs.)**  
**Think, Pair, Share: Stressbusters**



**STORY CONNECTION – SLIDES 5 & 8 (Approx Time: 30-40 mins)**

Why do some people get happy playing video games, talking to their friends or hugging their dog? The answer...stress relief. Too much stress is NOT good for your body or your brain – so when you are doing things that you like to do, your brain turns on your happy place. This takes away your stress – just like eating food takes away your hunger. You and your brain feel happy – so the next time you are stressed out you will know to do something that you like to do to relieve the stress. Remember, stress just like hunger can be bad for your body and your brain. So, you NEED something to relieve the stress. So, your happy place turns on when you do the behavior that gets you what you need. Your happy place turns off when you get what you need. Your happy place was working right. Now, the next time you are stressed you will know that doing a behavior that will relieve your stress will make you happy.

**Materials needed:**

- Stressbusters: Group Focus Questions (included below)
- Paper
- Pencils
- Sticky notes or small squares of paper
- Chart paper or butcher paper
- Tape
- No Stress image (included below- optional)

**Preparation needed:**

- Determine student grouping (Facilitators working with an individual student will serve as the student's partner.)
- Print Stressbusters Small Group Focus Questions (1 per student).
- On a piece of chart paper or butcher paper, print out and attach or draw the No Stress image at the top.

**Instructions:**

1. In this activity, student(s) will learn about stress. They will think about what triggers stress for them, and they will learn strategies to help them alleviate stress so they can turn on their happy place to keep their brain happy and healthy.
2. Each student will need a piece of paper and a pencil.
3. Asks student(s) to write or draw anything that comes to mind when they hear the word stress.

4. Give them a few minutes to brainstorm independently on their paper.
5. Next, partner student(s) up with another student.
6. Give them a few minutes to share their ideas and/or drawings with each other.
7. Bring the group back together.
8. Ask for a few groups to share some of the ideas they talked about.
9. Tell the student(s) that they are now going to be working with a small group to think about various aspects of stress.
10. Allow student(s) to get into their groups.
11. Pass out the Small Group Focus Questions.
12. Allow the small groups ample time to read and respond to each of the focus questions.  
*\*\*Suggestion: We recommend about 10-15 minutes.\*\**
13. When time is over or all groups have finished their focus questions, come back together as a group.
14. Discuss with the class the following points that align with the focus questions:
  - Too much stress is not good for the body or brain, but they will be faced with stressful situations every day. Ask “Would anyone like to share a stressful situation they faced recently?”
  - People react to stress in different ways. Ask “How do you react or respond to stress?”
  - Ask “What emotions do you feel when you are stressed?” “How do you feel physically when you are stressed?”
  - Stress can change as they grow older. What stressed them out in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is different than what stresses them out now. Ask “What stressed you out when you were younger but now does not bother you?” “What stresses you out as a 5<sup>th</sup> grader?”
  - They will have different stress as a teenager and an adult. Ask “What do you think might stress out a teenager?” Ask “What might cause an adult stress?”
  - People use different strategies to handle stressful situations.
15. Next, explain to the student(s)...
  - that when they know how to handle stressful situations, they are more likely to make better decisions.
  - when faced with a stressful, dangerous, or scary situation, our fight or flight mechanisms kick in.
    - This means that we either feel the need to defend ourselves (fight) or run away from the situation (flight).
  - Having strategies to help relax and calm down will allow us to think more clearly and make better and safer decisions.
16. Have the student(s) look at the following question on their focus questions sheet: “What do you do to relieve stress?”
  - Tell them to look at their list and circle one or two things that they use most often and that work best for them.
  - Once they have narrowed it down to one or two, give student(s) sticky notes or small squares of paper.
  - They will write one strategy on each sticky note/square and hang it on the No Stress chart.
  - They do not have to put their name on them
17. Once all the student(s) have placed their strategies on the chart, read them and add any others.
  - Strategies to include might be taking a walk, talking to a friend, listening to music, intentional breathing, counting, walking away, reading a book, etc.
  - Explain that the chart up will be left up in the room so student(s) can reference it as much as needed and remind them it will be there for them to use.
18. In closing, remind student(s) that their brains like to be happy. When they are stressed out, their happy place is not turned on. They need to learn positive and productive ways to relieve stress so they can turn on their happy place in a positive way. Without a toolbox of strategies, they might turn to other not so positive and productive ways to get their happy place turned on. So, the next time they are stressed they will know that doing a behavior that will relieve their stress will make their body and brain happy and healthy.

**Stressbusters: Small Group Focus Questions**

**Name:**

What are some stressful situations that you have faced recently?

What do you do when you feel stressed or are in a stressful situation?

How do you feel emotionally and physically when you are stressed?

Do the same things that caused you stress when you were younger cause you stress now? Give an example.

What might cause a teenager stress?

What might cause an adult stress?

What do you do to relieve stress?

Why do you think it is important to have strategies to cope with stressful situations?

