Stress Management Plan for STUDENTS

SITUATION #1: A student new to our school is anxious about having no friends

STRESS BUSTER: SWOT Activity

DETAILS: If this new student is feeling alone and afraid, I would use the SWOT activity to help them understand how to use their strengths and resources to reach a goal. In this case, I would ask the student to list their “strengths”, perceived “weaknesses”, “opportunities of interest” (i.e. goal) and “threats” (i.e. the barriers impacting their ability to achieve the goal). If the goal is to make friends, a SWOT chart might look like this:

| SWOT CHART |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Strengths:**  | **Weaknesses:**  |
| - Empathetic    | - Shy            |
| - Athletic      | - Scared to be turned down |
| - Team player   |                  |
| **Opportunities (to make new friends):** | **Threats:** |
| - Talk with students in class | - Being turned down (i.e. not being accepted in response to an attempt to reach out) |
| - Join a sport  | - Being made fun of |
| - Join a school club | - Being too different |
| - Speak with students on the bus | |

In completing this activity, the student could learn that their fears and weaknesses (being shy, afraid of rejection) might be the only things preventing them from making friends. If the focus is instead on strengths, the student might decide to join a team activity (school club, group project, sports). If they join something that aligns with their strengths and use their personal resources, then their perceived weaknesses and threats won’t be as likely to get in the way of reaching the goal of making friends.

SITUATION #2: Student is feeling depressed and hopeless, and comes to counseling

STRESS BUSTER: Gratitude journal and Resources list

DETAILS: If a student were struggling with depression, it would be helpful for them to make a list of their resources, and to identify the he things in their life for which they are grateful. To start a gratitude journal, I would help them to list these things on paper. It would be recommended after creating the list and discussing the resources, that they student keep the list in a safe place where they have access (i.e. night stand or book bag). I would also recommend that they continually edit the list (add or delete items as needed) throughout their life. Then, when they are feeling especially down, they can turn to this list for a reminder of all the positive things that they can be thankful for in life. I would also then help them to make a list of their resources. We would complete this activity by having the student create a chart with their name in the middle. They would write their resources in a resource diagram, and keep access to during times of greatest need. The purpose would be to 1. remind them that they always have support and 2. remind them who specifically then can turn to.

Resource Chart Example: by category, including “home”, “family”, “friends”, “teachers”, “activities” and “internal” resources. The point is for her to see that she’s not alone.
SITUATION #3: Student can’t focus in school because they’re angry at their parents
STRESS BUSTER: “Stress Letter”
DETAILS: If a student were angry with a parent, I would use the “stress letter” activity to help them relieve stress. As suggested in class, the student would be advised to write a letter to their parent detailing all their frustrations. At the end of this activity, he/she would be given the option to rip up and throw out the paper, or if appropriate, to give the letter to their parent to initiate a conversation.

Letter to Mom
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Stress Management Plan for ME

SITUATION #1: I am stressed about whether to go to grad school or buy a home
STRESS BUSTER: Managing you and success (T-Chart for Success)
DETAILS: Currently, I am struggling to decide if I want to go back to school and to attend a 6-year doctoral program. If I make this decision, I likely will not be able to buy a house, which has been my goal and focus until now. To help relieve the stress of this situation, I will use the T-Chart strategy to better determine my priorities. By making out what success has meant to me through different stages of my life, I hope to identify patterns that will help me to determine which of these options (school or buying a home) I should choose. By reviewing patterns, I will earn that success to me has always been defined by 3 characteristics: 1) academic/work achievement and success. 2) Resiliency/overcoming hardship and 3) Positive Family/Friend relationships. Thus, I think the accomplishment of obtaining a degree will mean more than owning a home.

SITUATION #2: I am overwhelmed by the many tasks I need to complete at work
STRESS BUSTER: Managing you and your time (ABC Method)
DETAILS: I frequently feel stressed by managing the day to day tasks and expectations of me at work. To help manage this stress, I will focus on being organized and managing my time effectively. Specifically, I will use the ABC method to prioritize tasks as they are assigned, in order of importance. I have found one app that I can use to assist me with this planning. The app is called “Cozi” and I will use it to make lists/ keep a calendar of “to do” lists. On this list, I can sort tasks in this order: complete today (high priority and urgent), tomorrow (high priority and important), this week/weekend (important), and “general” (important but not urgent) tasks. I can also move tasks as needed, so I can continually adjust my expectations as needed, and prioritize and shift tasks as new tasks are assigned. With this organizational tool, I will also never forget to accomplish tasks.

SITUATION #3: I am anxious/stressed with life in general
STRESS BUSTERS: Exercise (Power Yoga), Managing me and my food, and Managing me and noise
DETAILS: In general, I would define myself as an anxious person; I am a “worrier”. Hence, I would use all 3 of these stress buster strategies to proactively manage my stress. For me, exercise is my main avenue for stress reduction. After work each day, I make time for at least an hour of exercise. I use power yoga to calm my nerves, at least once to week. My goal after taking this class, is to practice yoga on a more regular basis. I also run and/or take gym classes most days of the week, and I find that combining exercise with upbeat music, helps me remain positive and to de-stress. When I get ready for work in the mornings, I use calming music to ease my nerves and worry for what lies ahead that day. And, in my office, I play soothing music to set a calm setting for both me and my kids. In addition, I use food to keep my anxiety at bay. While I shouldn’t drink coffee at all due to the caffeine and its negative impact on anxiety, I drink one cup each morning before work. But after that, I switch to decaf tea and I drink lots of water. Moreover, I have eliminated gluten, dairy and meat from my diet, and I try to eat as many vegetables and fruits as possible. I start each day with a protein shake filled with lots of healthy nutrients, and when I follow a strict meal plan, I feel more energetic and calm!