



## Educator guide: Healthy minds lesson

### **Recommended for grades:**

6<sup>th</sup> grade

### **Time:**

11 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.
- Standard 5: Use a decision-making process 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 lesson students will be able to:

1. Describe at least three healthy behaviors (including one that specifically helps keep the mind healthy) they can do each day.
2. Analyze the outcome of a health-related decision.
3. Determine when an adult is needed in making a health-related decision.

### **Lesson description:**

In this lesson students will learn about different ways to keep their minds healthy and how stress can help or hurt people. They will also explore decision making and the steps in the decision making process.



## Pre and post-test questions:

Use the following questions 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. Which of the following will help you get better sleep? Choose all that apply.
  - a. Sleep in on the weekends.
  - b. Keep your phone next to your bed.
  - c. Turn off electronics at least 30 minutes before bed.**
  - d. Keep your room cool and dark.**
2. What is the last step in the decision making process?
  - a. Make your decision.
  - b. Look at your options.
  - c. Evaluate the results.**
  - d. List the positives and negatives of each option.

## Vocabulary:

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

- Brain – the organ inside the head that controls thought, memory, feelings and activity
- Down time – time spent where a person is not focused on anything in particular and just lets the mind wander, or simply relaxes, helping the brain recharge
- Melatonin – a hormone that controls the sleep/wake cycle
- Relaxation response – the body’s response when it is no longer in perceived danger, and the autonomic nervous system functioning returns to normal
- Screen time – time spent using a device such as a computer, phone, tablet, television or game console
- Sleep – the natural state of rest in which the eyes are closed and the body is inactive, allowing the body and brain to rest and recover
- Stress – a response to pressure or a threat
- Stress response – a physiological reaction that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack or threat to survival
- Stressor – an activity, event or other stimulus that causes stress

# Healthy minds worksheet

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

**Instructions:** Complete this worksheet as you move through the Healthy minds lesson.

1. How many hours of sleep does someone your age need?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. List three things you can do to get better sleep.

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

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

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

3. List the three ways electronics can interfere with sleep.

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

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

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

4. What is the definition of stress?

5. List two things that could cause you stress.

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

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

6. What are three things you can do to keep your stress under control?

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

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

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

7. List the five steps of the decision-making process.

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

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

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

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

# Healthy minds worksheet answer key

1. How many hours of sleep does someone your age need?

10 hours

2. List three things you can do to get better sleep.

Keep a regular routine, keep your room cool and dark, use your bed only for sleeping and reading, turn electronics off at least 30 minutes before bedtime, keep electronics outside of the bedroom while sleeping

3. List the three ways electronics can interfere with sleep.

a. The blue light emitted by screens limits the body's production of melatonin, which is the hormone that controls your sleep/wake cycle. Less melatonin makes it harder to fall and stay asleep.

b. Electronic devices keep your mind alert.

c. Electronic devices can wake you up.

4. What is the definition of stress?

A response to pressure or a threat

5. List two things that could cause you stress.

Tests, divorce, illness, giving a presentation, family problems, moving, etc.

6. What are three things you can do to keep your stress under control?

Any of the following are acceptable answers:

- Make sure you're not overscheduled.
- Be realistic.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Learn to relax.
- Make time for fun.
- Treat your body well.
- Find the upside.
- Solve little problems.
- Build positive relationships.
- Treat your body well.
- Find the upside.
- Solve little problems.
- Build positive relationships.

7. List the five steps of the decision-making process.

- a. Define the situation.
- b. Look at your options.
- c. List the positives and negatives of each option.
- d. Make your decision.
- e. Evaluate the results.

# Supplemental activity: Decision making

## Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Identify one health-related situation that requires a thoughtful decision.
- List healthy options to a health-related issue or problem and examine the potential outcomes of each option.
- Choose the healthiest option when making a decision.
- Determine when an adult is needed in making a health-related decision.

## Materials needed:

- Chalkboard or whiteboard
- Copies of Decision making worksheet (included below)

## Time required:

15 minutes

## Instructions:

Review the five steps of the decision making process with students. The steps are:

1. Define the situation.
2. Look at your options.
3. List the positives and negatives of each option.
4. Make your decision.
5. Evaluate your decision.

Ask students to think about a health-related decision that they've had to make recently or that they may need to make in the future. Give each student a copy of the Decision making worksheet. You may find it beneficial to go through one example with the class. Examples could include: deciding which sport to play, deciding between having an apple with peanut butter or a piece of apple pie for an after-school snack, deciding whether or not to try out for the select softball/baseball team, etc. Discuss that for certain health-related decisions, students may need to get an adult involved. Brainstorm which health-related decisions might fall into that category. Once students have completed their Decision making worksheet, ask if anyone would like to share their decision.



# Decision making worksheet

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

1. Define the situation. What is the health-related decision that you need to make?

2. Look at your options and list them. You may have more than two options to choose from.

Option A: \_\_\_\_\_

Option B: \_\_\_\_\_

Option C: \_\_\_\_\_

Option D: \_\_\_\_\_

3. List the positives and negatives of each option.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Positives				
Negatives				

4. Make your decision. Which option did you choose?

5. Evaluate your decision Did you make the right choice?



# Handouts

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



# Nutrition and physical activity resources for parents, caregivers and educators

- American Heart Association, [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- Children's Wisconsin, [childrenswi.org](https://www.childrenswi.org)
- KidsHealth, [kidshealth.org](https://kidshealth.org)
- Mental Health America, [mhanational.org](https://www.mhanational.org)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), [nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- Society of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, [effectivechildtherapy.org](https://www.effectivechildtherapy.org)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), [myplate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov)
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Student Services/Prevention and Wellness, [dpi.wi.gov/sspw](https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw)



# Transcript

## Slide 1

Sofia: In this lesson you'll learn about why sleep is so important and what you can do to get great sleep. We're also going to take a look at stress and how to make healthy decisions that can hopefully lower your stress!

Jack: Don't forget to open the worksheet and either save it or print it. Complete this worksheet as you move through this lesson.

## Slide 2

Sleep is so important for the entire body. Sleeping gives the brain and body the rest it needs so that you are ready for the next day. Kids your age need about 10 hours of sleep each night. Unfortunately, due to early school start times, homework, friends and other activities, many kids are not getting enough sleep. Lack of sleep adds up over time too, so getting an hour less than you need every night for a week is like losing a whole night of sleep by the end of the week. A lack of sleep can lead to lots of unpleasant things, like short-term memory loss, being less attentive, anger issues, and trouble in school.

## Slide 3

One thing that will help you get good sleep is to try and keep a regular daily routine. That means trying to go to bed and get up around the same time each day. It's ok to sleep in a little later on the weekends, but for the most part, try to go to bed and get up around the same time each day, even on the weekends.

## Slide 4

The environment you sleep in is important too. Your bed should be a place to sleep or read before bedtime, not a place to play video games, watch TV, or eat a snack. It's best to keep the room you sleep in cool, dark and quiet when trying to fall asleep.

## Slide 5

Screen time should make up no more than two hours of your day. This includes playing video games, being on a computer, tablet or phone, and watching TV. Also, all electronics should be turned off at least 30 minutes before bedtime. This allows your brain time to relax and prepare for sleep.

## Slide 6

Technology affects sleep in three ways. First, the blue light emitted by screens limits the body's production of melatonin, which is the hormone that controls your sleep/wake cycle. Less melatonin makes it harder to fall and stay asleep.

Second, electronic devices keep your brain alert. Watching a movie, texting, or spending time online is keeping your brain engaged and excited when it should be winding down and getting ready for sleep.

Lastly, these devices can wake you up. Just because you're not on your device doesn't mean it can't affect your sleep. Even on vibrate incoming texts and emails can wake you up.

For the best sleep, electronics should be kept outside of the bedroom.

## Slide 7

Aside from making sure you're getting good sleep each night, it's also good to be involved in activities that you enjoy. It's important to allow yourself to be creative and enjoy new experiences. This helps make new connections in the brain.

## Slide 8

Jack: Down time is really important each day, too. Down time is when you are not focused on anything in particular and you just let your mind wander, or you just simply relax. This helps the brain recharge.

Sofia: Some kids though, are simply too busy. Sports and other activities are great and can provide many benefits like time with friends, physical activity and great experiences, but not having enough down time is not good. Trying to do more activities than you're comfortable with can increase your stress.



## Slide 9

Everyone feels stress at times, but if you're feeling stressed every day, it's time to ask for some help. Stress is a response to pressure or a threat. The body releases adrenaline which causes your heart to beat faster and your lungs to breathe faster. Your palms might get sweaty or your knees may get shaky. But, a situation doesn't need to be physically dangerous to activate this response in the body.

## Slide 10

Everyday pressures can activate it too. For example, you may feel stress before taking a test or giving a presentation at school. Usually in these types of situations the stress response helps you perform well under pressure. It can help you rise to a challenge and meet it with alertness, focus and strength. Normally, when the particular challenge is over, the stress response goes away. You can then relax and recharge, and be ready for the next challenge that comes up.

## Slide 11

However, stress doesn't always happen in response to things that end quickly. Ongoing, or long-term events like coping with a divorce or illness, or moving to a new school, can cause stress too. Long-term stress can cause a person to feel tired, overwhelmed, and wanting to be alone. This is the time to find a trusted adult to talk to. That person might be a teacher, counselor, parent, or other family member. It's important to know when things become just too much for you to handle alone.

## Slide 12

Let's take a look at some things you can do to try and keep your stress from everyday pressures under control.

First thing to do is make sure you're not trying to do too much. Adults like to call that "being overscheduled". Consider cutting out an activity or two, and just focusing on the ones that are really important to you.

Be realistic. No one is perfect, so you don't need to be either. Don't put unnecessary pressure on yourself.

Get a good night's sleep. Remember, getting enough sleep will help your body and mind be able to deal with any negative stressors you may face each day.

Learn to relax. The body's relaxation response is the opposite of the stress response. It's a feeling of well-being and calm.

Make time for fun. Remember, it's good for your mind to do activities you enjoy, whether it's reading a good book, playing with your pet, making music, or hanging out with friends!

## Slide 13

Treat your body well. Getting regular exercise and eating healthy foods will help your body and mind function at its best. When you're in stressful situations, you need good nutrition more than ever.

Find the upside. Your general outlook, attitude and thoughts influence the way you see things in life. Is your cup usually half full or half empty? Do you look for lessons learned in challenging times? Thinking positively as much as possible will help you make the best of stressful circumstances.

Solve the little problems. Taking action to solve things that you can will help decrease your stress. For example, if you're stressed out over the upcoming school play auditions, what can you do to feel more prepared? Maybe asking a friend or family member to help you practice would help you feel more prepared.

Lastly, build positive relationships. Ask for help or support from trusted adults when you need it. And don't be afraid to share your feelings.





## Slide 14

Let's take a minute to talk about decision making. There are some steps that you can follow to ensure that you make the best decisions possible. First, you will need to define the situation. Then, look at your options. Write them down if it helps. List the positives and negatives of each option. Now it's time to make your decision. Some people would assume that is the last step, but you should always go back and evaluate the results. You may not be able to change what's already been done, but there's always an opportunity to make a different decision next time.

While you may not use this process to decide what you're going to wear tomorrow, it could be very useful if you're feeling overwhelmed and need some guidance in making bigger decisions. And remember, it's often helpful to get support from a trusted adult in your life, especially when you're making important decisions.



## Slide 15

One of the things we talked about was how being too busy can cause stress in your life. If you feel like you're overwhelmed and stressed a lot, it's probably time to take a look at everything you're involved in and make some decisions. This is a great time to use the decision making process.

First you need to define the situation. In this case the situation is that you're too busy and that is causing you stress.

Next you should look at your options. Right now let's say that you are in art club at school and you are planning on trying out for the school play coming up. You've got lots of homework this year and you're finding it hard to get it all done because you have also started babysitting for your neighbor a couple nights a week. You can't exactly get rid of the homework, and you love art club. That leaves you with a few options. You could skip trying out for the play this year. Or, you could give up babysitting. Maybe you could even cut back to one night a week of babysitting.

Next step is listing the positives and negatives of each option. You'd love to try out for the school play, but you also know that it would take a lot of your time. You really like babysitting and you'd miss the kids if you quit altogether. Plus it's good money and you're trying to save up for a new bike.

Time to make your decision. Because this is a pretty big decision that will affect your stress level, this would be a good time to talk to an adult. Adults can be very helpful, especially when the decision can affect your health. In this situation let's say that you decide to cut back on babysitting and just babysit one night per week.

Now it's time to evaluate the results of your decision. This step is very important. Give it a few weeks and see how things are going. Are you feeling less stress? Are you still too busy? If after a few weeks you still feel too busy you may need to re-evaluate things and you may need to make another decision about what to cut back on.

## Slide 16

Jack: The decision-making process can take some getting used to, but it can be really helpful, especially as you get older and face more and more important decisions.

Sofia: Absolutely. We've covered a lot of information today, and I hope you learned some ways to keep your mind healthy. And remember it's always a good idea to get help from a trusted adult if you're struggling, especially when it comes to your health!



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