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## Week 6: Behavioral Health: Physiology, Choices, & Community Impact

### Module 2: Resiliency Training: Physiology of Stress Part 2

#### Lesson: Why Does Stress Make It Easier to Get Sick?

| Lesson Overview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Students deepen their understanding of stress by investigating how it affects the body's immune system and ability to adapt. They use evidence from the module to explain how chronic stress influences health and evaluate decisions that support overall well-being. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Learning Targets                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Vocabulary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Explain how stress affects the body's ability to fight germs.</p> <p>Use evidence to evaluate claims about stress and health.</p> <p>Explain how managing stress helps protect the body.</p>                                                                        | <p><b>IgA</b><br/>a body "guard" that helps block germs at entry points</p> <p><b>Chronic Stress</b><br/>stress that lasts a long time</p> <p><b>Heart Rate Variability (HRV)</b><br/>how flexible the body is in responding to stress</p> <p><b>Coherence</b><br/>when body systems are working smoothly together</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Instructional Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Module</p> <p>Student response sheets</p> <p>Whiteboard or chart paper</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>This lesson builds directly on Module 1, where students learned that stress activates body systems through the brain, hormones, and the stress response. In this lesson, students investigate what happens when that stress response remains active over time and how it affects the body's ability to fight infection.</p> <p>The conceptual shift is from viewing stress as something that only affects emotions to understanding that stress has measurable effects on the immune system and body adaptability. Students should discover that chronic stress can lower IgA levels, reducing the body's ability to defend against pathogens, and that HRV provides information about the body's flexibility and resilience. Students may believe that getting sick is caused only by exposure to germs or that stress affects only feelings and emotions. Through evidence gathering and discussion, students should recognize that the body's defenses and ability to adapt also influence health outcomes.</p> |



| Learning Experience |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| 8 min               | Opening     | <p>The teacher displays the following scenario: “Two students are exposed to the same germs. One gets sick often, while the other rarely gets sick.”</p> <p>The teacher asks, “Why might one student get sick more often?” Students independently select one explanation: more germs, weaker body defense, or random chance. Students record their thinking and then discuss with a partner.</p> <p>The teacher asks students to make an initial prediction about what affects a person’s ability to stay healthy. Students choose one explanation, write a brief explanation for their choice, compare and discuss ideas with a partner, and create an initial prediction about what causes differences in illness.</p> <p><b>Sentence Frame:</b><br/>I think one student gets sick more because _____.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 15 min              | Module      | <p><b>Focus:</b><br/>Students gather evidence about the body’s defenses against germs, how stress affects those defenses, and how HRV reflects adaptability.</p> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What protects the body from germs?</li><li>• How does stress affect that protection?</li><li>• What does heart flexibility show about health?</li></ul> <p><b>Revise initial predictions using module evidence, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IgA is a type of antibody that serves as a first line of defense against pathogens at the body’s entry points.</li><li>• Chronic stress can suppress IgA production.</li><li>• Lower IgA levels can leave the body more vulnerable to infection.</li><li>• High HRV reflects greater adaptability and resilience.</li><li>• During stress, HRV often decreases.</li><li>• Coherence is associated with balance, focus, and well-being.</li></ul> <p><b>Quick Checks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain one way IgA helps protect the body.</li><li>• Explain how chronic stress may affect the body’s defenses.</li></ul> <p><b>Sentence Frame:</b><br/>At first I thought _____, but now I think _____ because _____.</p> |
| 15 min              | Application | <p>The teacher displays the following scenario:<br/><i>A popular social media creator posts a video called “Success Means No Days Off.” In the video, the creator encourages students to stay up late, fill every hour with activities, push through exhaustion, and ignore signs of stress in order to achieve their goals.</i></p> <p><i>The video becomes popular at school. Students begin debating whether this advice would actually help people succeed in the long run.</i></p> <p>The teacher tells students they are members of a Student Wellness Advisory Team. Their task is to determine whether the advice should be recommended, revised, or rejected using evidence from the module.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |



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|       |                    | <p>Students begin with <b>Step 1: Evaluate the Advice</b>. Students read the advice from the social media creator, identify which parts may help performance and which parts may create concerns, and use evidence from the module to support their evaluation.</p> <p>Students then complete <b>Step 2: Gather Evidence</b>. Students identify evidence from the module related to stress, IgA, HRV, and overall health. Students determine which evidence is most important when evaluating the advice and discuss how prolonged stress could affect a student's ability to stay healthy and adapt to challenges.</p> <p>Next, students complete <b>Step 3: Make a Wellness Recommendation</b>. Students decide whether the advice should be recommended, revised, or rejected. Students support the decision with evidence from the module and prepare a brief statement explaining the decision.</p> <p>Students conclude with <b>Step 4: Defend Your Decision</b>. Students share their recommendation with another group, compare evidence and reasoning, and revise their recommendation if new evidence strengthens their thinking.</p> <p><b>Sentence Frames:</b><br/>Our recommendation is _____.<br/>The strongest evidence is _____.<br/>This evidence suggests _____.</p> |
| 2 min | Reflection         | <p>Why does managing stress help protect your health?</p> <p>Students revisit and revise their opening prediction.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2 min | Career Connections | <p>Health science professionals, physicians, nurses, behavioral health specialists, coaches, and wellness consultants regularly evaluate how stress affects physical health and performance. They use evidence about immune function, adaptability, and well-being to help people make informed decisions. Understanding the relationship between stress and health can help students evaluate advice they encounter online, make healthier choices, and build long-term resilience.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |