

## Parent Education Resource Package for Primary Schools

### What to do when stressed out? How to cope with parental stress?

#### Strand III: Promotion of Parents' Physical and Psychological Well-being

#### Programme Plan

**1. Programme Name**

What to do when stressed out? How to cope with parental stress?

**2. Target**

Parents of children studying at primary level

**3. Duration**

This activity will last for about 90 minutes

**4. Mode of Activities**

Explanations, discussions, self-reflection, experiential learning, worksheets

**5. Programme Objectives**

Through the activity, parents will be able to:

- a) Understand the definition of parental stress
- b) Increase awareness of their own emotions and understand ways to relieve negative emotions
- c) Identify sources of stress
- d) Understand how to cope with stress by using the emotion-focused and problem-focused coping methods

**6. Programme Procedure**

Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
1	5	Arousing motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce the topic and content</li><li>• Explain that it is normal for parents to experience parental stress. Parents can learn some practical ways to cope with parental stress. Some methods of coping with</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explanations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PowerPoint slides (Slide 2)</li></ul>

Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
			stress (such as body scan meditation exercise) require parents to practise them on a daily basis.		
2	25	Understanding about parental stress, increasing awareness of your own emotions and understanding how to relieve negative emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the definition of parental stress</li> <li>• Increase awareness of your own emotions</li> <li>• Understand ways to relieve negative emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Discussions</li> <li>• Self-reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slides 3-8)</li> </ul>
2a	5	Understanding parental stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor asks parent to share situations in which they experience parental stress and shows empathy through the use of active listening.</li> <li>• Introduce the definition of parental stress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slide 3)</li> </ul>
2b	20	Increasing awareness, recognising emotions arising from parental stress and learning how to relieve negative emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor invites parents to examine the negative emotions that may arise when caring for children.</li> <li>• The instructor asks two to three parents to share <b>negative emotions</b> they might have when caring for their children and why they had these negative emotions. For example: The parents might feel guilty after wrongfully accusing their children of lying; parents might feel frustrated because</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Discussions</li> <li>• Self-reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slides 4-8)</li> </ul>

Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
			<p>their children’s grades have not improved even though they have tried using many methods to teach them (Slide 4).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help parents know the ways to relieve negative emotions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-awareness</li> <li>○ Self-compassion</li> <li>○ Expressing and recording positive emotions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The instructor encourages parents to use the “I feel... because...” sentence pattern to express their negative emotions and describe the reason behind the emotion. Studies have shown that using this sentence pattern to express negative emotions can help people get out of their negative emotions faster (Slide 5).</li> <li>• Help parents understand and master the concept and skills of self-compassion. Self-compassion is a way for parents to express compassion, care and love to themselves when they encounter adversity or experience negative emotions. It can make parents feel better (Slide 6). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mindfulness: “I’m feeling stressed, anxious and uneasy right now because...”</li> <li>○ Common humanity: “Every parent will feel stressed, anxious and uneasy sometimes...”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-kindness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “May I be merciful to myself.”</li> <li>▪ “May I be accepting of myself.”</li> <li>▪ “May I be forgiving of myself.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The instructor helps parents master the skills of how to express and record positive emotions.</li> <li>• The instructor guides parents to share positive emotions that may arise when caring for their children and ask them why they felt that way (Slide 7).</li> <li>• The instructor encourages parents to recall precious moments of caring their children in the past and express and record positive emotions with the following sentence pattern: “I feel... because...” (Slide 8).</li> <li>• Through expressing and recording positive emotions, parents could be simultaneously aware of their own negative and positive emotions, balance the negative emotions they are currently experiencing and make themselves feel better.</li> </ul>		
3	10	Identifying the sources of parental stress and ways of coping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor helps parents understand the different sources and classifications of parental stress (Slide 9).</li> <li>• The instructor further points out that the stressors in the blue area are more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slide 9)</li> </ul>

Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
			<p>controllable because they are related to the parents themselves, of which, parents have more control over their own behaviour, thoughts, and reactions. The stressors in the red area are less controllable because they involve the others, of which, parents have less control over the others' behaviour, thoughts, and reactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor helps parents understand the different roles of <b>emotion-focused</b> and <b>problem-focused</b> coping methods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When dealing with less controllable stress, parents have to firstly deal with their emotions and relax their body and change their own thoughts by using <b>emotion-focused</b> coping methods.</li> <li>○ When dealing with more controllable stress, parents can deal with the problem itself and improve their parenting skills by using <b>problem-focused</b> coping methods.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
4	35	Emotion-focused coping methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help parents understand emotion-focused coping methods, including body relaxation and changing their own thoughts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Discussions</li> <li>• Self-reflection</li> <li>• Experiential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slides 10-18)</li> <li>• Short video: "Body Scan Meditation Exercise" (<a href="#">link</a>) by</li> </ul>

Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
				learning • Sharing	Student Health Service, Department of Health (Chinese Version Only) • <b>Worksheet on Thinking Traps</b>
4a	10	Body scan meditation exercise (must be led by qualified personnel. If the instructor does not possess such qualifications, it is recommended to play the video to guide parents through this experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce mindfulness: Mindfulness refers to the state when we focus our attention in the present and do one thing wholeheartedly, observe our current thoughts and feelings with curiosity and without criticism.</li> <li>• Mindfulness can be practised through different activities, such as scanning the body, breathing, eating, walking, etc.</li> <li>• The instructor points out that the body will send out special signals to help us pay attention to our mental state when it is stressed. Body scan meditation exercise can help parents become more aware of these signals and help them relax their bodies and cope with stress.</li> <li>• While doing the body scan meditation exercise, parents will shift their attention slowly from their feet to their head like they are performing a body scan. During this process, parents will pay close attention to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Experiential learning</li> <li>• Sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slide 11)</li> <li>• Short video: “Body Scan Meditation Exercise” (<a href="#">link</a>) by Student Health Service, Department of Health (Chinese Version Only)</li> </ul>

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			<p>the condition of different parts of the body and relax their tense muscles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor plays a short video to guide parents through the body scan meditation exercise. After completing the exercise, the instructor asks parents to share their feelings during the exercise.</li> <li>• Remind parents that practising body scanning for 5-6 minutes every day can make them feel calmer and more resilient against stress.</li> </ul>		
4b	25	Strategies for combating thinking traps with positive thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor explains that thinking traps are thoughts about the reality or the future that may not necessarily be true but can cause people to have strong negative emotions or experience a lot of pressure (Slide 12).</li> <li>• The instructor uses slides (Slides 13-18) to help parents understand the characteristics of thinking traps and how they can combat these negative thoughts with positive thinking.</li> <li>• For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Catastrophising (Slide 13): Parents think that there will be extremely serious and irreversible consequences if they or their children do something wrong. If parents realise that they have such thoughts, they</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Discussions</li> <li>• Self-reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slides 12-18)</li> <li>• <b>Worksheet on Thinking Traps</b></li> </ul>

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			<p>can tell themselves that things might not be so bad and try to think of ways to remedy the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Overgeneralisation (Slide 14): Parents think that if they or their children do not do well in one aspect, they will not do well in other aspects. If parents realise that they have such thoughts, they can tell themselves that everyone has his/her own strengths and areas for improvement. They can also tell themselves that not doing well enough in one aspect does not necessarily mean they will do poorly in another aspect.</li> <li>○ Every time is the same (Slide 15): Parents think that if they or their children do not do well now, they will not do well in the future. If parents realise that they have such thoughts, they can tell themselves that everyone needs time to improve. For example, children who do not know how to walk at first, will gradually learn how to walk. Children who do not know how to speak at first, will gradually learn how to speak. Children will</li> </ul>		



Section	Time (minutes)	Topic	Content	Mode	Resources / Teaching aids
			<p>definitely make progress if they are given the opportunity to learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fortune telling (Slide 16): Parents are sure that a certain method is useless without trying it. If parents realise that they have such thoughts, they can tell themselves to try because they will not know until they try.</li> <li>○ Perfectionism (Slide 17): Even if their or their children's overall performance is not bad, parents will still remember those areas where they can improve and feel a lot of pressure. If parents realise that they have such thoughts, they can tell themselves that no one is perfect and that it is precisely because we are not perfect that we can still improve.</li> <li>○ Personalising (Slide 18): Parents think that they should take full responsibility for their children's growth. If parents realise that they have such thoughts, they can tell themselves that taking care of children is not one person's job. The teaching and guidance of the father, mother, other family members and teachers, as well as the dedication and efforts of</li> </ul>		

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			<p>the children themselves, all have a great influence on their growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor uses the <b>Worksheet on Thinking Traps</b> to highlight the essential points and help parents master the relevant skills. The instructor can review 2-3 negative thoughts with parents, discuss with parents what thinking traps these negative thoughts represent and further ask parents to combat negative thoughts with positive thinking. The instructor then asks parents to go home and complete the worksheet.</li> </ul>		
5	10	Problem-focused coping method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor will explain to parents that when dealing with more controllable stress, they can use problem-focused coping methods to deal with the problem that is causing stress. Parents can consider using the four steps to problem-solving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Define the problem</li> <li>○ Search for a solution</li> <li>○ Envision the consequences</li> <li>○ Make a decision</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The instructor encourages parents to browse the Education Bureau’s “Smart Parent Net” website (via the QR code) for parent education resources, which includes featured videos, advice from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint slides (Slides 20-21)</li> </ul>

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			<p>experts/academics, etc. Parents can learn the content they need based on their own concerns or choose appropriate methods based on the age and needs of their children (Slides 20-21).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The instructor reminds parents that the four steps to problem-solving only provide steps and ways for solving problems, and that the expected results may not be achieved immediately.</li> </ul>		
6	5	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarise the content of the lecture</li> <li>Complete the evaluation questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explanations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PowerPoint slides (Slide 22)</li> </ul>