Art4Wellbeing

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Session 10

Stress Management: Recognizing Stress Signals

Exploring how stress appears in the body, noticing early warning signs and identifying supportive responses.

Art Forms Used: Movement / Body Awareness | Embodied Group Sculpture | Role-play

MAIN OBJECTIVE	Recognize possible physical, emotional and behavioural stress signals and explore early supportive responses.
TARGET GROUP	Young people (14–30); adaptable for diverse groups.
TOTAL DURATION	90 minutes
MATERIALS	Open space; music and speaker; flipchart or large paper; coloured markers; sticky notes; A4 sheets; optional chairs and body outlines.

TIME	ACTIVITY & TITLE	PURPOSE	INSTRUCTIONS (KEY STEPS)	FACILITATOR PROMPTS
15 min	10.1 The Body's Traffic Lights Warm-up / Body Awareness	Notice possible early body signs of stress and distinguish relaxed, activated and high-activation states.	1. Walk or move comfortably; seated options welcome. 2. Explore Green (relaxed), Yellow (early tension) and Red (need to pause) with small gestures. 3. Move gently between states, noticing posture and breathing. 4. Return to neutral; identify a possible early signal.	• What changes in posture or breathing? • What might your yellow-light signal be? • How can noticing it help?
20 min	10.2 Stress Signals in Motion Movement / Body Mapping	Explore how fictional stress situations may show up as bodily and movement cues.	1. Name everyday fictional situations. 2. Explore a small movement for each. 3. Show three freeze frames: first sign, building stress, support. 4. In pairs, discuss possible body cues. 5. Mark one signal and supportive action on a body outline.	• What signals might appear first? • How might people differ? • What felt supportive?
25 min	10.3 The Living Tree: Stress and Resources Group Sculpture / Role-play	Identify inner and social resources that can support someone under pressure.	1. Form Roots, Trunk, Canopy and Stressors groups. 2. Invent safe gestures for each role. 3. Create a living tree; mime gentle weather stressors. 4. Show the tree noticing pressure and drawing on resources. 5. Replay with an additional support.	• What was the tree's first stress signal? • What kept it stable or flexible? • Which resources help people?
20 min	10.4 From Signal to Support: Rehearsal Supportive Role-play	Practice recognizing an early signal and trying a manageable response.	1. In small groups, choose a fictional everyday challenge. 2. Show a short low-intensity scene. 3. Freeze at the first signal; name a possible need. 4. Replay with one action: pause, boundary, help or break. 5. Notice what changed.	• What made the signal visible? • Which response was realistic? • When might help from others matter?
10 min	10.5 My Early Signal, My Next Step Closing / Reflection	Integrate one body-awareness cue and a supportive next step.	1. Gently stretch or observe. 2. Complete: "An early signal I may notice…" and "One supportive step…" 3. Share voluntarily. 4. Exchange specific appreciation in pairs. 5. Close with grounding.	• What signal will you notice? • What resource can you use? • What will you take away?