

Class Activity – My Life: It’s Cool To Talk About It

Write the following phrases in a circle on the whiteboard: “I often have a lump in my throat”, “I have sweaty palms”, “I am often tense”, “I often have back aches, stomach aches or headaches”, “I cry easily”, “I am never hungry”, “I have trouble sleeping”, “I eat excessively”.

Write in capital letters, in the centre of the circle, the word STRESS, mixing the letters (e.g. RSSSTE).

Write in capital letters and in mixed order, at the bottom of the circle, the title of the activity: it cool about talk to it’s. (See reverse for sample)

Tell the students that if they can decode the word found in the centre of the circle, they will uncover what all these symptoms are a sign of.

Tell the students that if they can decode the phrase at the bottom of the circle, they will already be on their way to finding a solution to these problems.

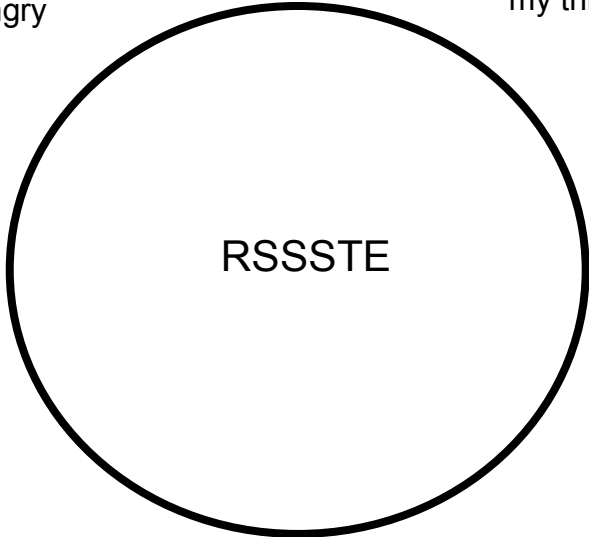
After the students have finished decoding the words on the board, begin a class discussion. Ask the students the following questions:

- Is it possible to imagine that a teenager may be stressed? (like an adult)
- Where does excess stress lead to? (pursue the idea of personal imbalance, mention other possible disorders – solitude, drug use, suicide or violence).

Then ask the students to define mental health. Also ask the students to explain the link between mental health and stress. Try to elicit the following ideas:

- Mental health is a matter of balancing all aspects of our lives: physical, mental, emotional, social, family and school.
- The slogan suggests that, if confronted with personal problems, we must discuss them, even consult.
- Remind students that the expression “he’s crazy” is derogatory and can reinforce existing prejudices concerning mental health. It can even result in some individuals not seeking needed help. Seeking help is important not only when we are not feeling well but also at moments when we wish to see things more clearly, to understand what’s happening to us.

Further activities and discussion ideas around the issues of maintaining one’s personal equilibrium or mental health can be found in the My Life document.



I am never hungry

I often have a lump in my throat

I am often tense

I often have back aches, stomach aches or headaches

I have sweaty palms

I have trouble sleeping

I cry easily

I eat excessively

It cool about talk to it's