

Deal When Things Get Difficult

Today's Big Idea:

Dealing with stress can be a challenge no matter how old you are. Today's activities will help your girl practice identifying her emotions and take steps to manage stress.

Why it Matters:

While we often think of stress as a grown-up problem, 20% of kids say that they worry a great deal. When we give girls tools and practice to manage their stress in healthy ways, they're better able to take on the world with confidence!

Silly Starters:

- Would you rather have eyes that change color with your mood or hair that changes length with the temperature?
- Would you rather be a superhero or the president?

Share the Big Idea:

It's likely you experienced a tiny bit of stress just from having to choose between taking down villains or running a country. Now imagine actually doing it! We all deal with stressful situations that make us feel nervous or overwhelmed – whether we're superheroes or not. All the activities that come next will help you learn how to deal when things get difficult.

Get Moving! Minute to Win It

Materials:

- Paper torn into strips and crushed into ball shapes
- 1 cup or container
- 1 tissue or piece of toilet paper per participant
- 1 spoon per participant
- 10 cotton balls (or any small objects that can balance on a spoon – berries, small toys, mints, etc.)



Game 1

How to do it:

- Place the cup or container on a table.
- Mark a starting line 5-8 feet away from the table.
- Skip** around the table three times then stand behind the starting line.
- From the starting line, you will try to throw the paper ball into the cup! Each shot you take requires three skips around the table before returning back to the starting line.
- During round one, the goal is to get three balls into the cup, there is no time limit.
- During round two, take turns timing each other. You will each have one minute to toss as many paper balls into the cup as you can. Don't forget to skip around the table between each toss! Count down the seconds and cheer each other on.

Game 2

How to do it:

- Designate an area as your playing space- you'll need to be able to walk or run in either laps or a straight line back-and-forth. Make clear where you will start and where you will finish.
- You each get a tissue to place on your head as you attempt to move from the start to the finish without the tissue falling off.
- During round one, you can move at any pace and the goal is to make sure the tissue does not fall off your head.
- During round two, your goal is to move across or around the space as quickly as possible without the tissue falling off your head. Time each other and count the number of laps (from start to finish) you're able to do in a minute!

Game 3

How to do it:

- You will each need a spoon and a cotton ball (or other small item to balance) to start.
- Use the same designated space used in Game #2. Put a small container at the finish line.
- You will each put a spoon in your mouth, place a cotton ball on the spoon, and walk towards the finish line without dropping the cotton ball – you are not allowed to use your hands at all! At the finish line, drop the ball into the container and go back to the start.
- During round one, the goal is to get 3 cotton balls into the container without dropping. If you drop, you go back and restart.
- During round two, you will do the same thing but with the new goal to get as many cotton balls into the container as possible within a minute.



Share & Connect:

- Were the activities more stressful in the timed round or the untimed round?
 - How could you tell if you were feeling stressed? What did you notice in your body?
 - What are some things that make you feel stressed?
 - What are some things you can do to deal with stress?
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Get Creative! Flip the Skit

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencil/pen/marker
- Props – anything to make your script come to life (optional)

How to do it:

- Choose one of the stressful situations below.
- You are going to create one play with two different endings.
- Grab a pencil/paper and begin writing your script using these skit steps:
 - Step 1: Set the scene – Think: Where am I? Who else is involved?
 - Step 2: Set up the situation – Think: What's going on?
 - Step 3: Show what you feel – Think: How would I feel if this happened?
- To write the first ending to your play, complete these final skit steps:
 - Step 4: Deal with the difficult – Choose one of the ways below to deal with the difficult situation:
 - Way #1: Hold it all in and try not think or feel anything.
 - Way #2: Quit – leave the situation or get out of there, fast!
 - Way #3: Take it out on someone else!
 - Step 5: Show what comes next – Think: What happens if you deal with the difficult in THIS way?
- Now that you have your skit ready, rehearse, get into character and act it out!
- Finally, it's time to FLIP THE SKIT and try out a different ending.
- Grab a new piece of paper and write a different ending using these final steps:
 - Step 6: Deal with the difficult – Choose one of the ways below to deal with the difficult situation:
 - Way #1: Take a deep breath and count to 10.
 - Way #2: Name it – Close your eyes and consider what you are feeling in your body and heart. Name those emotions, say it out loud or in your head (I feel angry or I feel nervous). Let yourself feel
 - Way #3: Choose to move – take a break and walk or move to work through your feelings.
 - Step 7: Show what comes next – Think: What happens if you deal with the difficult in THIS way?
 - Rehearse, get into character and act out the flipped skit!



Stressful Situations:

- Situation #1: You arrive in class to find your teacher passing out a test on a subject you forgot to study for.
- Situation #2: You just started a new afterschool activity and you don't know any of the other participants. The leader tells you to find a partner as quickly as possible.
- Situation #3: You have too much homework and you can't get it all done.
- Situation #4: Brainstorm your own stressful situation.

Age it up for Heart & Sole:

- Have your middle-schooler think about stressful situations they've seen in their favorite TV shows. Have them choose one of those situations and switch up how the characters choose to respond by following the skit steps above.

Share & Connect:

- How did it feel to flip the skit?
 - Which ways of dealing with stress seem healthier? Why?
 - Do you find yourself using healthy ways for dealing with stress in your everyday life? If not, how can you incorporate more positive strategies to deal with stress?
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Make it Stick! Count Down

How to do it:

- Go through the 3,2,1 countdown and brainstorm ways to manage stress together:
 - Name 3 healthy ways to deal with stress that you use regularly.
 - Name 2 healthy ways to deal with stress that you have never used.
 - Name 1 healthy way to deal with stress that you would like to try.

Keep it Going – Challenge:

- Sometimes we need to de-stress at the end of the day, not just in response to a specific situation. This week commit to trying one of the new ways to deal with stress you just brainstormed and use it to de-stress each day this week. Or, try out a totally different way to shake off the stress daily (for example – listening to music or talking to a friend). Connect at the end of the week to check-in and see if you notice a difference.



****Note to grown-ups:** We want all girls to be able to participate in these activities. If your child requires adaptations, do whatever you think is best to meet her specific needs. Here are possible adaptations for the Minute to Win It games should they be helpful:

For Game 1:

- Skipping replaced with moving around the table by pushing, rolling, or whatever works for your girl
- Use a basket and bean bags (something larger than a cup and ball) if needed

For Game 2:

- Mark the playing space with bright colors
- Provide tether cord if needed
- Use a hat or piece of cloth for easy balance instead of tissue

For Game 3:

- Use a flat surface – something bigger than spoon (ex: a frisbee) to balance a ball if needed

If you need additional ideas for adaptations, please reach out to us.

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