

Stress Bucket



Our bodies are built to be able to cope with stress... Stress is a normal and manageable part of life. This exercise highlights what happens when we have too much stress without acting to bring our level of stress down.

Say to the students:

Water droplets

We're like a bucket and we are built to be able to contain stress - it is normal and manageable... What is the stress that is going into your container at the moment? Ask them to annotate the

water droplets to describe the current stress in their life flowing into the bucket.

Taps

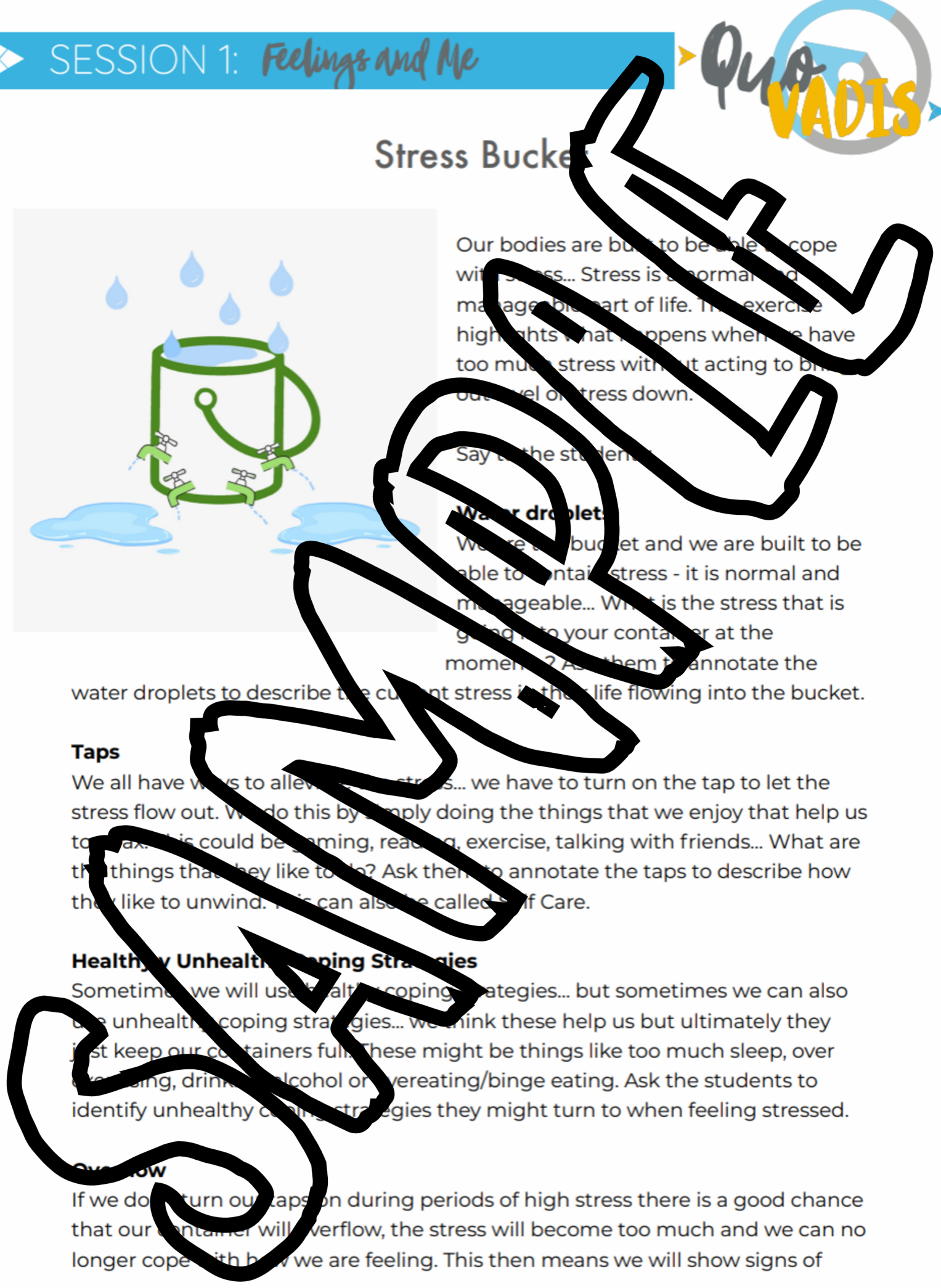
We all have ways to alleviate stress... we have to turn on the tap to let the stress flow out. We do this by simply doing the things that we enjoy that help us to relax. It could be gaming, reading, exercise, talking with friends... What are the things that they like to do? Ask them to annotate the taps to describe how they like to unwind. This can also be called Self Care.

Healthy vs Unhealthy Coping Strategies

Sometimes we will use healthy coping strategies... but sometimes we can also use unhealthy coping strategies... we think these help us but ultimately they just keep our containers full. These might be things like too much sleep, over sleeping, drinking alcohol or overeating/binge eating. Ask the students to identify unhealthy coping strategies they might turn to when feeling stressed.

Overflow

If we don't turn our taps on during periods of high stress there is a good chance that our container will overflow, the stress will become too much and we can no longer cope with how we are feeling. This then means we will show signs of



“emotional snapping”. This will look different for everyone. Some people will become angry or aggressive, some will turn in on themselves and stop engaging with people. Ask the students to identify what their ‘snapping’ looks like when they are over stressed.

Supporting those around us

Tell the young people that it is good to know ourselves well so that we can intervene when we feel like our bucket is becoming full, it is good to turn those taps on before we “snap”. But sometimes we can become so stressed that we don't know how to help ourselves. The great thing is that we can become mindful of the taps, snapping signatures and healthy coping strategies of our friends and family. If we were able to see that our friends “snapping” we could then suggest a way that they like to turn their tap on the help them take care of themselves. In that way our friends and family are never alone, we are there to help each other and bring each other through the hard times. Wouldn't it be great if a friend noticed that we were overstressed because we had started showing our snap signature and then suggested something we could do together that is one of their healthy coping strategies... Ask the students to share with someone what they have written so that they can start to look out for each other.

