

PART 2. Today's Signpost: Pressure (15 minutes)

- a) Tell students they are now going to work together as a class on Today's Signpost – Pressure – which they can see on the board/poster.
- b) Split students into small groups of three to five. Provide each group with one billboard setup. Have each group pick a writer for the group.
- c) Ask each student in each group to take a few moments to think of a situation where s/he felt a lot of pressure and how s/he handled it; students can also think of a time they saw someone else experiencing pressure and how that person handled it. Each person should then share their example with their small group. Next, the group should select one of the examples to report back to the class, describing why it is a good example of being under pressure. On the group's billboard, the writer should display the words from the Signpost definition that best relate to their example.
- d) Tell students they should listen carefully to each small group report because they will need to pick an example to record in their *Success Roadmaps* in a few moments. Ask each group to report back to the class, in turn. You may need to ask clarifying or extending questions about some groups' reporting statements, such as:
 - *Why does your group think this is a good example of someone experiencing a lot of pressure?*
 - *How did this person deal with the pressure?*
 - *How would the situation have been different if the person had not been feeling this pressure or had dealt with it differently?*
 - *When you look at the definitions available in Today's Signpost, which words do you think best describe the example your group selected? Why?*
 - *Has anyone else in the class experienced pressure like this?*

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e) Tell students they will now record Today’s Signpost and one of the groups’ examples into their *Success Roadmaps*. (Students can stay in their small groups for now, if their collaboration seems effective.) Provide students with their *Success Roadmaps*.

TODAY'S DATE:

TODAY'S SIGNPOST:

CLASSROOM DEFINITION:

MY PERSONAL DEFINITION:

In a few sentences, describe an example of a time when someone experienced a significant amount of pressure.

How did the person react to feeling so stressed?

What are four examples of times when I feel stress?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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f) Referencing the definitions you have written on the board or posted in the room and the small-group work recorded on their group billboards, the students should then complete the Today’s Signpost section on page XX in the *Success Roadmaps*. First, students should put the day’s date at the top of the page and copy the classroom definition into their *Success Roadmaps*. They should also complete the section in which they record one of the examples discussed by the groups and describe how someone handled a stressful situation. They may work together in their small groups to decide what they want to record in their *Success Roadmaps*, if appropriate.

g) Ask students to close their *Success Roadmaps*.

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PART 3. Teacher Sharing (5 minutes)

- a) Remind the students that part of Success Highways includes you, their teacher, talking about your own experiences. Tell students that today you're going to be talking about times in your life you have experienced a lot of stress and pressure.
- b) Ask students to listen to your experiences for some of the themes you will talk about as a class today: feeling stressed out, ways you've managed or not managed your stress, etc.
- c) Tell them about yourself using your experiences as outlined in the box on the following page.
- d) Lead a brief discussion reviewing your story. You may wish to ask students some of these questions:
 - *What are some of the pressures that I described feeling?*
 - *How can the people around me tell that I am feeling more stressed?*
 - *How have I been able to recognize for myself that I am feeling stressed?*
 - *What are some of the ways I've worked on managing my stress?*

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INFORMATION TO CONSIDER SHARING DURING LESSON 9

Here, you are modeling for students that adults experience pressure and react to stress. It's important to be honest about your struggles with stress and pressure and to describe some of the ways you deal with these feelings.

What are some of the pressures you experience as a teacher (or in other areas of your life)?

What are the signs that tell you or others around you that your stress level is increasing?

What strategies do you use to manage your stress?

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PART 4. Investigating Stress & Pressure (10 minutes)

a) Tell students that you are now going to investigate as a class three ways people can respond to stress and pressure. As you go through each way, try to get students to relate these back to the examples they used during Part 2 of the lesson or to your own experiences disclosed in Part 3.

For instance, if in Part 2 a student told a story about someone attacking others in response to a stressful situation, tie that example into the discussion of (c) below. Or if your story in Part 3 referenced a stressful experience where you dealt with the pressure by avoiding the situation, tie that into (d) below.

b) Explain to students that one way people respond to pressure is by trying to change the situation.

- *What are some examples that we've talked about today when someone has tried to change a stressful situation?*
 - Changing how you personally respond
 - Changing your attitude about a situation
 - Changing whom you approach for help
 - Changing the way you talk about the situation with people
- *Do you remember our discussions about social support and connections? How could someone use social support to help them change a stressful situation?*
 - Talking to someone supportive when you're feeling stressed can help you figure out how to solve the problem or just let you vent your frustration.
- *Is changing the way you deal with a stressful situation generally a positive or negative approach?*
 - Positive

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c) Explain to students that another way people respond to pressure is by attacking people involved in the situation.

- *Have you ever seen someone who was under a lot of pressure “explode” and attack the people nearby?*
- *What are some examples of how people attack others when they’re stressed?*
 - Making negative remarks
 - Using sarcasm
 - Causing a physical confrontation
- *Has this way of reacting helped the situation? Did the person effectively manage the stress through the attack?*
- *Is attacking other people generally a positive or negative approach?*
 - Negative

d) Explain to students that another way people respond to pressure is by avoiding the situation altogether.

- *Has anyone here ever tried to ignore a problem that was stressing them out?*
- *Did ignoring the problem help with the stress?*
- *When someone avoids a situation, does this usually make the pressure they’re feeling go away?*
 - Usually pressure only increases when you avoid dealing with a situation.
 - Nothing’s being done about it, so the stress is still there.
- *Is avoiding the situation generally a positive or a negative way of dealing with stress?*
 - Negative

e) Ask your students to think about a time when pressure actually helped them.

- *Is pressure always a bad thing?*
 - Sometimes pressure, like a deadline, helps you structure your time and energy to get something done, like completing homework or mastering skills for an exam.
- *Are pressure and stress the same thing?*

f) Ask students to explain how learning how to handle stress in positive ways could help us on our life highways.

- *Do you think this is an important skill? Why or why not?*
- *If you don’t learn to manage stress in school, are you likely to manage stress effectively in your future workplace?*

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