



Grades 6–12

# Resilience Activities

## Purpose

These short, research-based student activities are designed to help teachers support students' coping and recovery following a crisis. Each activity focuses on a topic or skill known to support students' coping and well-being.

## Delivery

Each activity is stand-alone, so teachers can choose the activities that meet their students' needs. The activities are simple, require few materials, and can be adapted for remote delivery. Some are meant to be taught once, and others will be most effective if reinforced with ongoing practice.

## Teaching Notes

Students are enduring stress and uncertainty right now. These activities may trigger strong feelings or prompt students to bring up difficult topics. If students show signs of distress, allow them to take a break. Then follow up with the school counselor, social worker, or other mental health professional if necessary. If you have questions or concerns before or after leading these activities, we encourage you to seek advice or support from a school counselor or social worker. If a student discloses information that leads you to suspect abuse or neglect, follow your school's reporting policy and procedures.

This content was created as part of the Second Step® SEL for Adults Resilience During Crisis Module. Visit [secondstep.org/social-emotional-learning-adults](https://secondstep.org/social-emotional-learning-adults) to learn more about the program.

## Middle School Activities

### Getting a Good Night's Rest

Students learn facts about sleep and stress. Then they assess their sleep quality and habits and identify one sleep-improvement strategy to try for a week.

### Handling Grief and Getting Help

Students reflect on what they've lost since the crisis to help them let it go. Then they identify ways they want adults at school to support them.

### Telling Your Story

Students make sense out of a difficult experience by telling their story about it.

---

## High School Activities

### Making Sleep Your New Best Friend

Students learn facts about sleep and stress. Then they assess their sleep quality and habits and identify one sleep-improvement strategy to try for a week.

### Naming Feelings Accurately

Students learn how naming emotions can help manage them. Then they apply the emotion-naming strategy to accurately label strong emotions they've experienced recently.

### Processing Through Personal Narratives

Students make sense out of a difficult experience by telling their story about it.

---

## Objective

Students will assess their sleep quality and habits and identify one sleep improvement strategy to try for one week.

## Materials

- Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan handout, one per student
- For remote adaptation: Facts About Sleep and Stress handout, one per student



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

## Why This Matters Now

Stress can lead to changes in students' sleep quality and duration. But sleep is incredibly important for managing stress. In this activity, students learn about the relationship between sleep and stress and assess their own sleep quality and habits. Then they learn strategies to improve their sleep and choose one to try out. This helps empower students to take control of their sleep as a way to manage stress.

## Activity Instructions (25–30 min.)

1. Facilitate a discussion about sleep. Use the information below to help you.
  - Recommended hours of sleep:
    - **Raise your hand if you know how many hours of sleep you're supposed to be getting at your age.** Give students think-time. Invite a few students to respond.
    - **The American Psychological Association recommends that teens get between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep per night. How close are you to the recommendation?** Notice students' responses.
  - Why sleep is important:
    - **Why is sleep important? What happens when we sleep?**
    - Your brain integrates new information with existing knowledge, making it stick.
    - Your body also repairs muscles and other cellular damage and restores your energy for the next day.
  - The effects of sleep deprivation on teens:
    - **How does a lack of sleep affect you?** Give students think-time. Invite a few students to respond.
    - Relate their answers to what many teens report: Feeling more irritable, anxious, depressed, sad, and overwhelmed. Feeling sluggish or lazy. Poor memory and concentration. Slower response time. Poor food choices and weight gain. Family or social conflict due to irritability. Getting sick more often. Worse acne.

## Activity Instructions (cont.)

- How sleep and stress are related:
  - **How many of you have noticed this stressful period affecting your sleep? Show a thumbs-down.** Notice students' responses.
  - Discuss how stress affects sleep. **Stress means higher levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, which can make it harder to fall asleep or stay asleep. And a lack of sleep increases your stress levels, which creates a vicious cycle!**
- 2. Introduce the activity. **During periods of high stress, it's even more important to look at your sleep quality and habits and make changes to help you sleep better. You're going to take a couple of quizzes about your sleep right now. Then you'll learn some strategies that'll help you sleep better and pick one to try for a week.**
- 3. Distribute the Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan handout and go over it together. Ask students if they have any questions. Give students 10 minutes to complete the handout. Circulate and help students as needed.
- 4. Discuss the handout. **Does anyone want to tell us which strategy they're going to try?** Facilitate a brief discussion about what students learned and what they plan to do to sleep better.
- 5. Reinforce. **Let's check in next week to see how your Sleep Improvement Plan is going.** When you check in with students, encourage them to try a different strategy in addition to or instead of the one they tried.

### Remote Adaptation

- Email the Fast Facts About Sleep and Stress and Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan handouts home, and have students read and complete them on their own. If they can't print the handouts, have students record their responses on a sheet of paper.
- At your next remote meeting, have students share what they learned about sleep and what they plan to do to sleep better.

## Fast Facts About Sleep and Stress

Sleep is very important for your health and well-being, especially during adolescence, when your brain and body are developing rapidly. When you sleep, your brain integrates new information with existing knowledge, making it stick. It's also when your body repairs muscles and other cellular damage and restores your energy for the next day.

When you don't get enough sleep, the level of stress hormones in your body increases, making you feel wired, edgy, and even more stressed! It can lower your threshold for stress, which means you'll interpret minor things as *more* stressful than if you were rested. Most teens report sleeping less than the recommended 8.5–9.25 hours per night. They say they're sleeping more like 7 hours on school nights and 8 on nonschool nights. And about a quarter of teens say their sleep quality is fair or poor.

What happens when you don't get enough sleep? Here's what teens notice:

- Feeling more irritable, anxious, depressed, sad, and overwhelmed
- Feeling sluggish or lazy
- Poor memory and concentration
- Slower response time
- Poor food choices and weight gain
- Family or social conflict due to irritability
- Getting sick more often
- Worse acne

So a lack of sleep feeds the stress cycle, but it works the other way, too. Being stressed also affects your sleep. It can make it harder to fall asleep or stay asleep. So during periods of high stress, it's even more important to look at your sleep quality and habits and make changes to help you sleep better. Getting a good night's rest will help you get through these stressful times.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan

### Quiz 1—Your Sleep Quality

**Instructions:** Read each statement and circle the response that best applies to you.

Since the current crisis . . .	Never/ Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
I'm getting less sleep.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm waking up a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm taking naps or longer naps.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm going to bed and waking up at irregular times.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm feeling more agitated or amped up before bed.	1	2	3	4	5

Add up the numbers you circled and write your total here: \_\_\_\_\_

### Quiz 2—Your Sleep Habits

**Instructions:** Read each statement and circle the response that best applies to you.

Since the current crisis . . .	Never/ Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
I'm using my phone, computer, or other devices with blue lights before bed more than I used to.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm drinking more caffeinated drinks.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm eating closer to bedtime.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm exercising less during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm doing more in bed that's not sleep-related (for example, studying).	1	2	3	4	5

Add up the numbers you circled and write your total here: \_\_\_\_\_

## Make a Plan to Sleep Better

If your total on either quiz was over 20, then sleep is likely having a big effect on your stress levels right now. There are four strategies you can use to sleep better. Read about each strategy and why it helps. Then pick one to try for a week.

1. **Strategy 1: Say goodnight to screens an hour before you go to bed.**
  - **What it looks like:** Turn off all electronic devices and, if possible, move them out of your room for the night.
  - **Why do it:** Maybe you've heard of the "blue light" that electronics emit? Well, it suppresses your brain's ability to release melatonin, a hormone that signals your body that it's time to sleep. Teenagers already release melatonin later in the evening than children or adults, so unplugging early is even more important for your sleep quality.
2. **Strategy 2: Cut way back on caffeine.**
  - **What it looks like:** Reduce your caffeine consumption, especially before bed. And eliminate caffeinated drinks designed to keep you awake.
  - **Why do it:** Your body can take hours to process caffeine fully. Even if you can fall asleep after drinking a caffeinated beverage, the stimulant effect makes it less likely you'll get a deep, restful sleep.
3. **Strategy 3: Move more during the day.**
  - **What it looks like:** Aim for about 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day. It doesn't have to be all at once! Break it up throughout the day into shorter bursts of activity.
  - **Why do it:** Aside from the obvious health benefits, exercise helps lower your stress hormone levels so you can get to sleep more easily and sleep more deeply.
4. **Strategy 4: Make your sleep time regular.**
  - **What it looks like:** Decide on a regular time to go to bed and to wake up. Try not to vary it too much on the weekend. Avoiding naps during the day can help you stick to the regular bedtime. A bedtime routine can also help. It usually includes a time to unplug (see Strategy 1 above!), preparation for the next day (think picking out an outfit or packing your backpack), or a relaxing activity (for example, stretching, reading, or listening to relaxing music).
  - **Why do it:** When something is a routine or habit, you're more likely to do it! And the body works best when it has a steady, consistent rhythm.

**What's your pick? Write down which sleep improvement strategy you want to try for one week:**

---





## Objective

Students will identify what they're grieving over and how adults can support them.

## Materials

- What's Your Grief? handout, one per student
- How Can We Help? handout, one per small group



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

## Why This Matters Now

Students are grieving the loss of many things right now, including normalcy. They may be overwhelmed by sadness. Naming things they've lost and aren't likely to get back can help them let those things go and move on. Identifying ways adults can support them gives them a sense of control over their recovery process and cues adults about how to help.

## Activity Instructions (25–30 min.)

1. Introduce the activity. **Recent events changed everything for every one of us. Our lives are different now, and it's okay to feel sad about it. In fact, it's normal to grieve about what you've lost. Naming what you've lost can help you let it go so you can move on. So today you're going to take some time to reflect privately about what you've lost recently or what's different in your life now. Then, in groups, you'll list what you need or want from the adults around you to support you going forward. I'll be sharing your lists with other staff to help us figure out the best ways to support you.**
2. Distribute the What's Your Grief? handout and go over it together. Ask students if they have any questions, then let them get started.
3. Give students 5–10 minutes to complete the handout. Circulate and assist as needed. If students request more time, that's okay. You can do the group work another day.
4. Introduce group work. If group work isn't possible, students can complete the handouts individually. **You've had some time to reflect on what you've lost or what's changed. Now you're going to work with your peers to develop a list of ways I and the other adults at this school can support you.**
  - **Step 1:** Divide the class into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the How Can We Help? Handout. If group work isn't possible, have students fill out the handout individually.
  - **Step 2:** Have groups think of ways the adults at your school can support them. Have one member of each group record the group's list on the handout.
  - **Step 3:** Give students 10 minutes to work on their list. Circulate and assist as needed.
  - **Step 4:** Discuss students' lists as a class. Invite students to share their ideas. Point out similarities and differences.
5. Reinforce. **I'll share your lists with my teaching team. Next time, I'll tell you what we'll do to address the things on your lists.** Be sure to follow up with students about how you and your teaching team can respond to their requests.

**Remote Adaptation**

- Do the list-generation activity with students when you meet remotely.
- **Before the activity:** Email students the What's Your Grief handout, or post it on your learning platform. Have students complete the activity individually. If students can't print the handout, have them write their responses on a sheet of paper.
- **During the activity:** If the feature is available in your meeting platform, use breakout rooms to group students. Have them record their lists on Google docs or another cloud-based application they can all see. Have students send you links to their completed lists.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## What's Your Grief?

**Instructions:** Answer the questions below.

1. Think about what's changed from before the event. What's missing from your daily life? What's different? Write everything you can think of below.

---

---

---

---

2. How do you feel about the losses you described above? All feelings are okay. Everyone grieves differently.

---

---

---

---

3. Pick one thing you wrote about in Question 1 and describe what it might feel like to let go of the sadness or other feelings you have about it.

---

---

---

---



## Objective

Students will process a difficult experience by telling a story about it.

## Materials

- My Story Plan, one per student
- My Story handout, one per student
- Feelings Wheel, one per student



**Bold**—Teacher’s script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

## Why This Matters Now

Students can make meaning out of a difficult situation by turning it into a coherent narrative. The process of creating a structured retelling of an event helps students make sense of what happened. It can help them process any negative emotions and integrate the experience into a broader perspective so they can move on.

## Activity Instructions (10+ min.)

1. Introduce the activity. **Have you ever told a friend about something that happened, something hard or heavy, and found yourself feeling like a load had been lifted afterward? Show a thumbs-up if you’ve ever had this experience.** Comment on the number of thumbs-up. **That’s the healing power of storytelling. It turns out that turning a difficult event into a story—your story—can help you make sense of it and let it go. The world is turned upside down right now. I know you’ve all been dealing with really challenging things. So today you’re going to harness the healing power of storytelling and tell your story.**
2. Introduce the handouts. **One way telling your story helps you heal is by turning your experience—which still may be a jumble of emotions, actions, and sensations—into an organized, structured retelling of the events. It’ll help you understand more about what happened so you can move on. These handouts will help you create your story. First you’ll use the prompts on the My Story Plan to plan your story. Then you’ll tell your story on the My Story handout. You can decide to write a traditional narrative or to tell your story another way, for example, a graphic-novel-style story, blog post, or video—get creative! The important thing is that your story has a beginning, middle, and end.**
3. **If you need help thinking of feelings words to use in your story, use the Feelings Wheel.** Distribute the three handouts, ask students if they have any questions, and then let them get started.
4. Circulate and help students as needed. Students can work on their stories over many days.
5. Reinforce. **You can use stories to help you process difficult experiences anytime.** You can invite students to share their stories, but they may be too personal to share.

## Remote Adaptation

- Email students a PDF of the handouts or post them on your online learning platform.
- Students can submit their stories to your online learning platform.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Story Plan

**Instructions:** Use the prompts below to help you plan a story about a difficult event you experienced recently. Include as much detail as possible.

### First, the facts:

1. What difficult event is your story about?

---

---

---

2. When did this happen?

---

---

---

3. Where did it happen?

---

---

---

4. Who was there?

---

---

---

5. What happened? Write down as many details as you can, in the order they occurred.

---

---

---



**Then, the feelings:**

1. Write down any feelings you had. You can use the Feelings Wheel to help you find the best words to describe your feelings.

---

---

---

2. Write down any sensations you had in your body.

---

---

---

3. Write down any thoughts you had during this event.

---

---

---

**And, finally, the meaning:**

1. What's the most important point you want to make about your experience?

---

---

---

2. What do you want people to understand about your experience? Why?

---

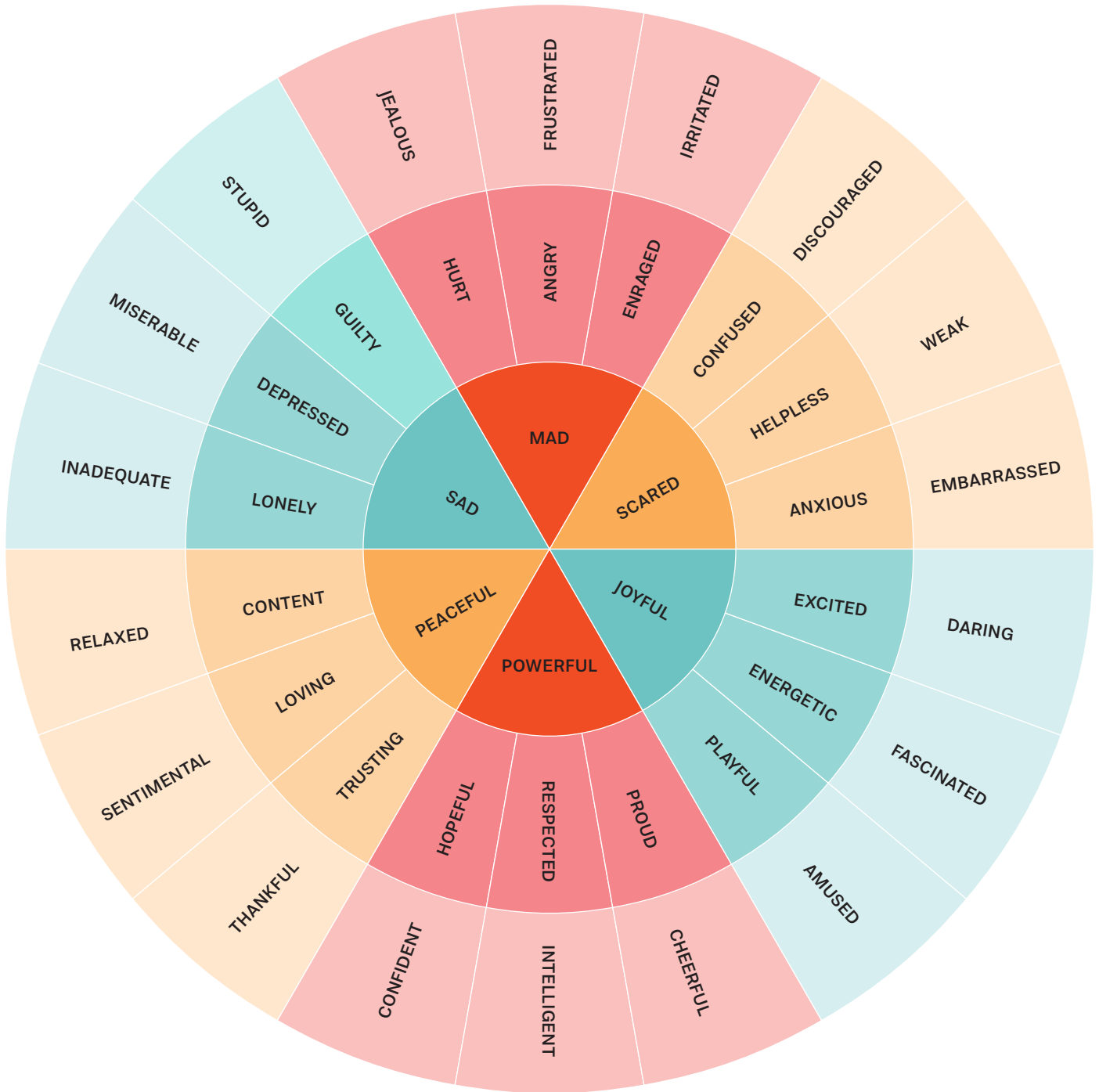
---

---

Use the My Story handout to put it all together into a narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end. You can also choose to tell your story in a different way, such as a graphic novel, video, or blog post.







## Objective

Students will assess their sleep quality and habits and identify one sleep improvement strategy to try for one week.

## Materials

- Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan handout, one per student
- For remote adaptation: Fast Facts About Sleep and Stress handout, one per student



**Bold**—Teacher’s script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

## Why This Matters Now

Stress can lead to changes in students’ sleep quality and duration. But sleep is incredibly important for managing stress. In this activity, students learn about the relationship between sleep and stress and assess their sleep quality and habits. Then they learn strategies to improve their sleep and choose one to try out. This helps empower students to take control of their sleep as a way to manage stress.

## Activity Instructions (25–30 min.)

1. Facilitate a discussion about sleep. Use the information below to help you.
  - Recommended hours of sleep:
    - **Raise your hand if you know how many hours of sleep you’re supposed to be getting at your age.** Give students think-time. Invite a few students to respond.
    - **The American Psychological Association recommends that teens get between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep per night. How close are you to the recommendation?** Notice students’ responses.
  - Why sleep is important:
    - **Why is sleep important? What happens when we sleep?**
    - Your brain integrates new information with existing knowledge, making it stick.
    - Your body also repairs muscles and other cellular damage and restores your energy for the next day.
  - The effects of sleep deprivation on teens:
    - **How does a lack of sleep affect you?** Give students think-time. Invite a few students to share their ideas.
2. Relate their answers to what many teens report: Feeling more irritable, anxious, depressed, sad, and overwhelmed. Feeling sluggish or lazy. Poor memory and concentration. Slower response time. Poor food choices and weight gain. Family or social conflict due to irritability. Getting sick more often. Worse acne.

## Activity Instructions (cont.)

3. How sleep and stress are related:
  - **How many of you have noticed this stressful period affecting your sleep?** Notice students' responses.
    - Discuss how stress affects sleep. **Stress means higher levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, in your system, which can make it harder to fall asleep or stay asleep. A lack of sleep lowers your threshold for stress, so you perceive more minor things as stressful. This increases your stress levels, making it harder to sleep. It's a vicious cycle!**
4. Introduce the activity. **So during periods of high stress, it's even more important to look at your sleep quality and habits and to make changes to help you sleep better. You're going to take a couple of quizzes about your sleep right now. Then you'll learn some strategies that'll help you sleep better and pick one to try for a week.**
5. Distribute the Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan handout and go over it together. Ask students if they have any questions. Give students 10 minutes to complete the handout. Circulate and help students as needed.
6. Invite students to share. **Does anyone want to tell us which strategy they're going to try?** Facilitate a brief discussion about what students learned and what they plan to do to sleep better.
7. Reinforce. **Let's check in next week to see how your sleep improvement plan is going.** When you check in with students, encourage them to try a different strategy in addition to or instead of the one they tried.

### Remote Adaptation

- Email the Fast Facts about Sleep and Stress handout and Sleep Assessment and Improvement Plan handouts home and have students read and complete them at home on their own. If they can't print the handouts, have students record their responses on a sheet of paper.
- At your next remote meeting, have students discuss what they learned about sleep and what they plan to do to sleep better.

## Fast Facts About Sleep and Stress

Sleep is very important for your health and well-being, especially during adolescence, when your brain and body are developing rapidly. When you sleep, your brain integrates new information with existing knowledge, making it stick. It's also when your body repairs muscles and other cellular damage and restores your energy for the next day.

When you don't get enough sleep, stress hormone levels increase in your body, making you feel wired, edgy, and, well, more stressed! It can lower your threshold for stress, which means you'll interpret minor things as *more* stressful than if you were rested. Most teens report sleeping less than the recommended 8.5–9.25 hours per night. They say they're sleeping more like 7 hours on a school night and 8 on a nonschool night. And about a quarter of teens say their sleep quality is fair or poor.

What happens when you don't get enough sleep? Here's what teens notice:

- Feeling more irritable, anxious, depressed, sad, and overwhelmed
- Feeling sluggish or lazy
- Poor memory and concentration
- Slower response time
- Poor food choices and weight gain
- Family or social conflict due to irritability
- Getting sick more often
- Worse acne

So a lack of sleep feeds the stress cycle, but it works the other way, too. Being stressed also affects your sleep. It can make it harder to fall asleep or stay asleep. So during periods of high stress, it's even more important to take a look at your sleep quality and habits, and to make changes to help you sleep better. Getting a good night's rest will help you get through these stressful times.



# Making Sleep Your New Best Friend

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Quiz 1—Your Sleep Quality

**Instructions:** Read each statement and circle the response that best applies to you.

Since the current crisis . . .	Never/ Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
I'm getting less sleep.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm waking up a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm taking naps or longer naps.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm going to bed and waking up at irregular times.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm feeling more agitated or amped up before bed.	1	2	3	4	5

Add up the numbers you circled and write your total here: \_\_\_\_\_

## Quiz 2—Your Sleep Habits

**Instructions:** Read each statement and circle the response that best applies to you.

Since the current crisis . . .	Never/ Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
I'm using my phone, computer, or other devices with blue lights before bed more than I used to.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm drinking more caffeinated drinks.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm eating closer to bedtime.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm exercising less during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm doing more in bed that's not sleep-related (for example, studying).	1	2	3	4	5

Add up the numbers you circled and write your total here: \_\_\_\_\_

## Make a Plan to Sleep Better

If your total on either quiz was over 20, then sleep is likely having a big effect on your stress levels right now. There are four strategies you can do to sleep better. Read about each strategy and why it helps. Then pick one to try for a week.

1. **Strategy 1: Say goodnight to screens an hour before you go to bed.**
  - **What it looks like:** Turn off all electronic devices and, if possible, move them out of your room for the night.
  - **Why do it:** Maybe you’ve heard of the “blue light” that electronics emit? Well, it suppresses your brain’s ability to release melatonin, a hormone that signals your body that it’s time to sleep. Teenagers already release melatonin later in the evening than children or adults, so unplugging early is even more important for your sleep quality.
2. **Strategy 2: Cut way back on caffeine.**
  - **What it looks like:** Reduce your caffeine consumption, especially before bed. And eliminate caffeinated drinks designed to keep you awake.
  - **Why do it:** Your body can take hours to process caffeine fully. Even if you can fall asleep after drinking a caffeinated beverage, the stimulant effect makes it less likely you’ll get a deep, restful sleep.
3. **Strategy 3: Move more during the day.**
  - **What it looks like:** Aim for at about 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day. It doesn’t have to be all at once! Break it up throughout the day into shorter bursts of activity.
  - **Why do it:** Aside from the obvious health benefits, exercise helps lower your stress hormone levels so you can get to sleep more easily and sleep more deeply.
4. **Strategy 4: Make your sleep time regular.**
  - **What it looks like:** Decide on a regular time to go to bed and to wake up. Try not to vary it too much on the weekend. Avoiding naps during the day can help you stick to the regular bedtime. A bedtime routine can also help. It usually includes a time to unplug (see Strategy 1 above!), preparation for the next day (think picking out an outfit or packing your backpack), or a relaxing activity (for example, stretching, reading, or listening to relaxing music).
  - **Why do it:** When something is a routine or habit, you’re more likely to do it! And the body works best when it has a steady, consistent rhythm.

**What’s your pick? Write down which sleep improvement strategy you want to try for one week:**

---



## Objective

Students will practice managing strong emotions by naming them.

## Materials

- Name Your Feelings handout, one per student
- Feelings Wheel handout, one per student

## Why This Matters Now

Students may be dealing with a lot of emotions right now. Having more words to describe their emotional experience can help them process what they're going through. Assigning words to emotions also engages the thinking brain, which can help students pause and manage stress better.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

## Activity Instructions (25–30 min.)

1. Have students name the emotion they've brought with them to class today. **How are you feeling today? Take a minute to pinpoint the perfect word for the feeling you're bringing to class with you today.** Give students think-time. **Now call out the name of your feeling. Or if you'd prefer, say it to yourself in your head.** Notice if many students use the same or similar words, or if there's a lot of variety. Discuss what you notice with students.
2. Introduce emotion-naming. **You just practiced emotion-naming. Did you notice a shift in your mood after naming your feelings?** Wait for students to respond. **Naming emotions is a simple technique that can help reduce the intensity of an emotion. Emotions arise from an ancient part of our brain called the amygdala that reacts quickly when we're stressed. But naming our feelings activates a more evolved part of the brain, known as the prefrontal cortex. Research shows that naming a feeling reduces activity in the amygdala and helps us manage strong emotions.**
3. Introduce the activity. **Humans have thousands of words for emotions, but most of us use just a few. Today you're going to use a Feelings Wheel to help you accurately label some of the strong emotions you've experienced in the past few weeks.**
4. Distribute the Name Your Feelings handout and Feelings Wheel and go over them together. Ask students if they have any questions, then let them begin filling out the handout.
5. Circulate and help students as needed.
6. Reinforce. **You can use emotion-naming to help you pause and name strong feelings.** Check in with students to see if they're using the emotion-naming strategy and if they're finding it beneficial.

## Remote Adaptation

- Before doing this activity remotely with students, email them the handout and Feelings Wheel and have them complete the handout at home on their own. If they can't print the handout, students can record their responses on a sheet of paper.
- At your next remote meeting, have students tell the group if they've used the emotion-naming strategy and if it's been helpful.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Name Your Feelings

**Instructions:** Complete each item. Use the Feelings Wheel to help you name your emotions accurately.

### Practice Naming Emotions

1. Think about a time in the past few weeks when you felt a strong emotion. Try to put yourself back into the moment. What was happening? Who was there? Describe the situation below.

---

---

---

2. How did you feel emotionally? Physically?

---

---

---

3. Look at the Feelings Wheel. Identify what emotion(s) you were feeling at that moment and name them below.

---

---

---

4. Did naming the emotions change them in any way? If so, how?

---

---

---



## Plan to Use Emotion-Naming

1. For this strategy to work, you'll need to make it a habit. This can be challenging, because the goal is to be able to do it when your emotions are particularly intense. How could building the habit of pausing and naming your emotions benefit you?

---

---

---

2. What are two things you could try to help yourself build this habit? How do you typically remind yourself to do something? Visuals? Notifications? Write your ideas below.

---

---

---

## Reflect

After a week of using the emotion-naming strategy, reflect on how it went.

1. How often did you use emotion-naming strategy?

---

---

---

2. Did using the strategy help reduce the intensity of your emotion(s)?

---

---

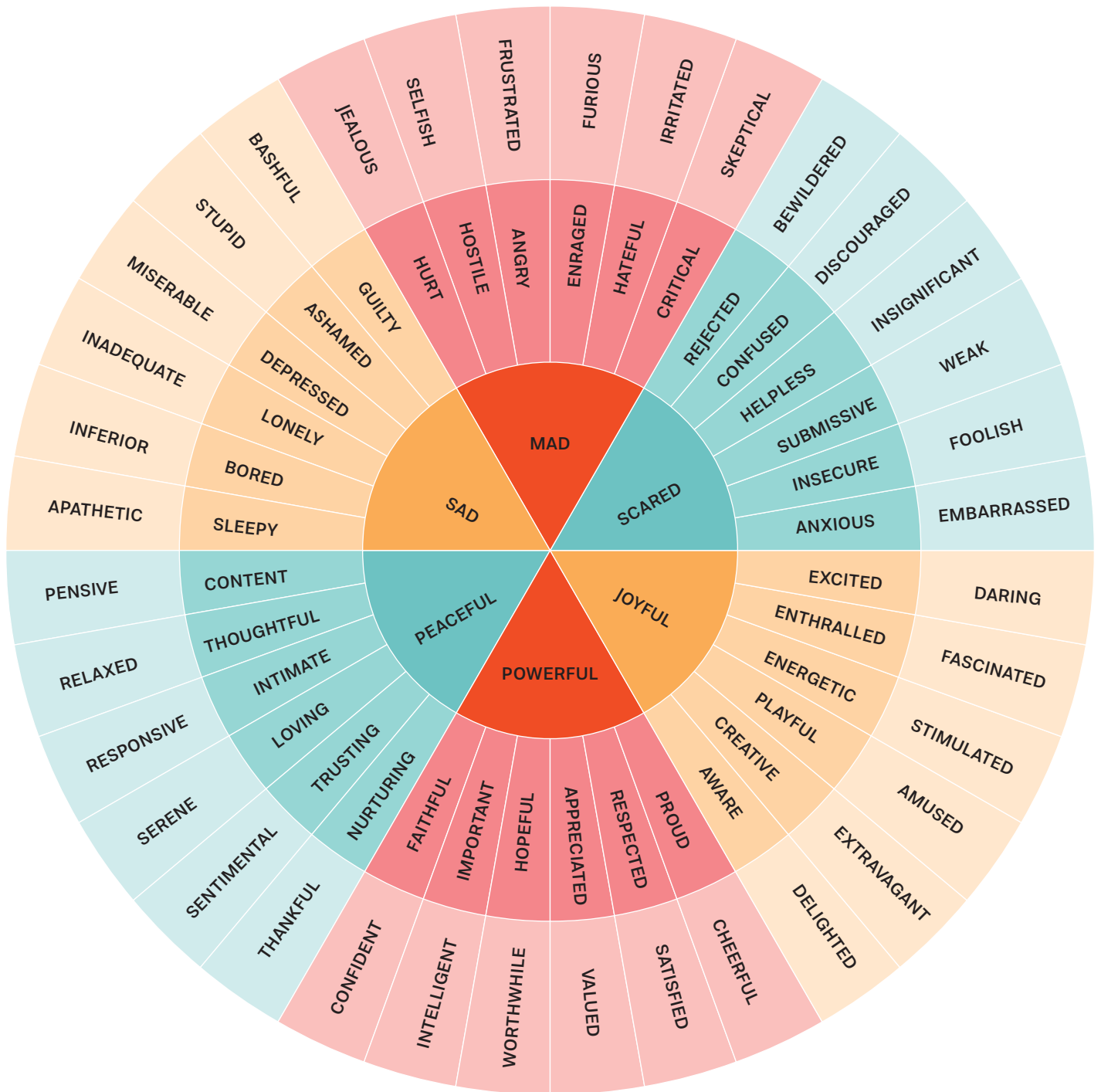
---

3. Will you keep using the strategy or teach it to someone else?

---

---

---



## Objective

Students will process a difficult experience by creating a personal narrative about it.

## Materials

- Personal Narrative Planning Guide handout, one per student
- Feelings Wheel, one per student

## Why This Matters Now

Students can make meaning out of a difficult situation by turning it into a coherent narrative. The process of creating a structured retelling of an event helps students make sense of what happened. It can help them process any negative emotions and integrate the experience into a broader perspective so they can move on.



**Bold**—Teacher’s script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

## Activity Instructions (10+ min.)

1. Discuss the healing power of stories. **Have you ever told your tale of woe to someone or written it in a journal and found yourself feeling like a weight had been lifted?** Watch for nods of agreement. **There’s a reason for this. Putting a difficult experience into words does something for humans. Our main mode of communication is words, and when we use them to tell the story of a difficult, painful experience, the words have a healing power. Why do you think that is?** Give students think-time. Invite them to share their ideas. Help guide students to the following ideas: *Helps you make sense of things. Creates an organized summary of the event. Helps you separate yourself from it. Makes it less overwhelming. Forces you to slow down your thinking, which allows for closer inspection of your thoughts and feelings during the event. Helps you get a sense of closure so you can move on.*
2. Introduce the activity. **You’ve all gone through a lot recently. Today you’ll create a personal narrative to help you process a particularly painful or difficult event. It will be a story about you, for you. And it’ll help you process and integrate what’s been happening in your life.**
3. Introduce the Personal Narrative Planning Guide handout and Feelings Wheel. **Use this handout and Feelings Wheel to help you plan your personal narrative, but don’t limit yourself to the questions on the handout. Take the story wherever you need to to help you understand what’s happened so you can move on. You can choose to create your personal narrative in any form you like, for example, a graphic novel, blog post, letter, video, one-act play, or song. Use the Feelings Wheel to help you describe what you were feeling during your story.** Distribute the handout and Feelings Wheel and go over them together. Ask students if they have any questions, then let them get started.
4. Circulate and help students as needed. Students can work on their stories over many days.
5. Reinforce. **You can create personal narratives to help you process difficult experiences anytime.** You can invite students to share their stories, but they may be too personal to share, so be sure to make this optional and not required.

## Remote Adaptation

- Email students a PDF of the handout and Feelings Wheel or post them on your online learning platform.
- Students can submit their stories to your online learning platform.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Narrative Planning Guide

**Instructions:** Use the prompts below to help you plan a narrative about a difficult event you experienced recently. Include as much detail as possible.

### Start with the basic facts:

1. What difficult event are you writing about?

---

---

2. When did it happen?

---

---

3. Where did it happen?

---

---

4. Who was there?

---

---

5. What happened? Write down as many details as you can, in the order they occurred.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Now go deeper:**

1. What was your emotional experience? How did your feelings change throughout the event? What do you feel now as you look back on it? Use the Feelings Wheel if you need help finding the perfect emotion.

---

---

---

---

2. What was going on in your body? What kind of sensations did you experience?

---

---

---

---

3. What was going on in your mind? What thoughts were you having?

---

---

---

---

4. What else stands out in your memory of the event? Sights? Smells? Sounds?

---

---

---

---



## Find the meaning:

1. What's the most important point you want to make about your experience?

---

---

---

---

2. What do you want people to understand about your experience? Why?

---

---

---

---

3. What have you learned about yourself as a person as a result of this experience? What will you carry into your life going forward?

---

---

---

---

Put it all together into an organized summary of the event. Include details that express the full experience and its meaning for you. This can take the form of a traditional story or other forms such as a graphic novel, poem, song, letter, blog post, video, or one-act play.



