



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

3. EUSTRESS AND DISTRESS

Objective: Students will be able to understand the difference between eustress and distress. Additionally, they will learn that eustress can work in their favor and help them achieve their goals.

WARM UP

Explain to students that you are going to play a game that prohibits them from saying *yes* or *no*. Therefore, they must think of other ways of conveying an affirmative or a negative answer. Before they begin to play, elicit different ways of saying *yes* and *no*. Tell students they cannot repeat the same answer over and over again. Then ask some *Yes / No* questions related to stress and have students answer them randomly.

STEP BY STEP

- A** Make sure every student has a copy of the printed handout or ask them to copy it in their notebook. Ask a volunteer to read the introduction about eustress and distress out loud and the instructions in the Step by Step section.
- B** Have students work in pairs. Ask them to look at the pictures, go over the characteristics of eustress and distress, and discuss the differences between them.
- C** Ask students to keep working in pairs and decide if the situations listed in the chart are examples of eustress or distress.
- D** Ask students to brainstorm difficult situations that have caused them stress. Invite them to reflect on those situations and the way they felt. Ask students to write five of those events on the chart and decide whether they caused them eustress or distress. Finally, have each pair discuss their answers with another pair.

WRAP IT UP

- E** *Do your bodies react the same way when in similar stressful situations? Give an example. Do you think it is possible to change distress into eustress? How? How can knowing the difference between stress and eustress help you in general?*

Have students answer the questions in groups. Then invite volunteers to share their answers with the class. Ask volunteers to write some situations on the board and discuss whether they are eustress or distress. It is likely that in some cases students will have a hard time deciding which type of stress the situations cause. End the activity by telling them that depending on our culture, age, personal beliefs, and experiences, the same situation may fall into the eustress category for some people, but into the distress one for others.

TEACHING TIP

Teenagers often struggle when coping with distress. They can be particularly overwhelmed when their stress is connected to a traumatic event, a natural disaster, family loss, or community violence. One way to help is to encourage them to keep a routine that includes time to sleep, relax, and exercise. They should wake up, go to sleep, and eat meals at regular times as this will provide them with a sense of control and stability.

- IT** You can draw students' attention to the IT box if you need more help.



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

4. EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT

Objective: Students will reflect on past reactions and emotions so they can recognize, accept, and learn how to control them effectively.

WARM UP

Have a volunteer read the introduction about emotional restraint. Then encourage a class discussion about any situation they might have had in which their emotions took over. Ask them how they felt then and why they think they felt that way. End the discussion by asking students if they consider that it is helpful to acknowledge their emotions and why.

STEP BY STEP

- A** Make sure every student has the printed handout to work with. You can also project the handout and ask them to answer it in their notebooks.
- B** Have students work in small groups and read the situation introduced in the handout. Tell them to share a similar experience they have had and how they reacted to it. Also, invite them to reflect on their reaction. You could ask them if they think they overreacted to that circumstance or if their response caused them any difficulties. Make sure they write their reactions on the space provided.
- C** Remind students of what they have learned in previous activities. Ask them to get together with another group and discuss the reactions they wrote in step B. Have some volunteers share their answers and invite them to reflect on them. Then, you may ask them which reaction gave them the best result with the teacher. Allow other students to respectfully advise how to react with emotional restraint to the classmates that shared their work.

WRAP IT UP

- D** *Have you been able to apply emotional restraint in everyday life? How? Do you think that emotional restraint can help your relationships with family members, friends, teachers, etc.? Do you think that emotional restraint can help you achieve your goals?*

Invite students to discuss the questions in groups. Set a time limit. Ask them to share their conclusions with the class. Remind them that they can control their feelings if they take time to acknowledge them. Explain that it is important to recognize their feelings and accept them without judgement. Only then they will overtake them and make decisions without having their emotions control their actions.

TEACHING TIP

Teenagers tend to have negative reactions to failure. You can help them by using different strategies. For example, next time they are about to judge themselves harshly, tell them to try and treat themselves the way they would treat their best friend. Have them reflect on why we tend to be more severe with ourselves than with other people. If we try to talk to ourselves the way we talk to people we care about, we will see a change in our reactions in different situations. It is important to be kind to oneself in order to be able to be kind to others.

- IT** You can draw students' attention to the IT box if you need more help.