

**Lesson****De-stress with S.T.O.P and Mindful Putty****Objective**

Teach students about how they can calm their bodies and minds when they are starting to become stressed, triggered, and/or anxious while making a therapy-type putty.

**Materials**

- White school glue (2 oz. per student)
- Food coloring
- Borax powder (1/4 tsp. per student)
- Essential oils (optional; recommend Lavender for calming)
- Hot water (use electric tea kettles; 1/4 cup per student)
- Small bowls
- Spoons
- Small cups
- Measuring cup (1/4 cup)
- Measuring spoons (1/4 tsp. if not pre-measuring)
- Buckets (for excess water if no sink available)
- Paper towels
- Handwipes (if no sink available)
- Containers for finished putty (2 oz containers or baggies)
- Garbage bag or bins

**Prep**

- For each student, pre-measure 2 oz. of glue into small bowl and 1/4 tsp. Borax powder into a small cup. Place at workstation along with two spoons.
- Place food coloring nearby workstations.
- Put water into kettles and turn kettles on. Water should be warm to hot (not boiling) when using.
- Have paper towels and handwipes out

**Procedure**

1. Introduce that the topic of the activity will be about identifying when we feel stressed, what steps we can take to decrease our response to stress and making a "Mindful Putty" that we can use as a tool to calm ourselves.
2. Ask, *"Has anyone heard of the fight or flight response before?"* Wait for answers. Then say, *"The 'fight or flight' response is a way our bodies prepare us when we feel we are in danger or when we perceive a threat. This a very old response that has been in human and animals for thousands of years. Do you know what it looks like when a dog or a cat gets afraid or stressed? What happens? That happens in us too. When we think there is a threat or we feel we are in danger, our brain shoots out chemicals to get our bodies ready to fight or run! But nowadays, it is things that stress us out that cause that reaction to happen, which leads to more stress. What does your body feel like when you feel stress?"*
3. Say, *"We can learn to calm that response down ourselves! It is a technique called S.T.O.P – easy to remember, right? So, when you start to have that not so great feeling in your body or if your thoughts start to make you feel not so good, do this: [GO OVER POSTER WITH S.T.O.P]. Okay, what does S.T.O.P stand for?"*
4. Say, *"Let's make some Mindful Putty and practice remembering S.T.O.P. Mindful Putty is helpful because sometimes having something in your hands helps calm us, and if you want, you can make this even more calming by using lavender oil."* (pass around sample so the students know what lavender smells like).



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5. At their stations, instruct students to choose food coloring colors they want (recommend choosing a color that makes you feel calm and good inside) and add a few drops to their glue. Stir to combine well (lavender color is two drops of red and two drops of blue).
6. If students want their putty to smell like lavender, add in about three drops of lavender essential oil to the glue mixture and stir to combine.
7. Measure out  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of warm-hot water (not boiling) and pour in student's cups that contain borax. Have students mix with clean spoon until the powder is dissolved (okay to see some undissolved grains).
8. Have students slowly pour water mixture into glue mixture while quickly stirring. Not all water will get mixed in.
9. Mixture will mostly come together in the bowl. At this point, students can pick up the glob and begin to squeeze and stretch. Mixture will be sticky but will come off hands as it is worked. Dip in the water again if more liquid is needed.
10. During putty making portion of activity, quiz students on what S.T.O.P. stands for and ask questions such as, "*what kinds of things do you do to help your stress?*"
11. When done, ask if there are any questions. Have students throw away used items in garbage and handout containers/baggies for their putty.



**S**

**Stop what you are doing**



**T**

**Take a few deep breaths**



**O**

**Observe your thoughts,  
feelings, and emotions**



**P**

**Proceed with whatever  
you were doing**



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