



Short Description

Using gamification activities, various forms of coping strategies involving both active and passive approaches will be identified for various types of stressors.

Materials Needed

Whiteboard/Chalkboard
Dry Erase Markers/Chalk
Two Pieces of Masking Tape
Katy Perry's Song "Rise"
Never Have I Ever Statements (provided in lesson)

Required Set-Up/Preparation

To set up for Never Have I Ever game:

- Print, cut, and fold Never Have I Ever statements into individual strips
- Place strips in a jar, cup, or bucket

To set up for the relay race:

- Prior to class, secure access to Katy Perry's song "Rise" and have the means to amplify the song through speakers.
- Place two pieces of visible tape on the floor equal distances from the board
- Create an obstacle course between pieces of tape and the board (optional for added fun/difficulty for students)

Lesson Outline

- Introduction – Never Have I Ever
- Instruction – Coping Strategies and Stressors
- Student Assignment (Group)– Rise Relay Race
- Reflection (Individual) – My Way of Coping
- Extension Activity – Coping with Leadership Challenges
- Extension Activity – Harbor Episodes
- School Climate Impact – Provide Coping Assistance

Introduction – Never Have I Ever

The well-known game “Never Have I Ever” will be altered for this lesson so that it focuses on the use of common coping skills. In the traditional game, if a person is ‘guilty’ of the having done what is mentioned in the statement, they have to provide the back story behind the incident. You will need to gauge the level of trust and openness that is present in your classroom between your students to determine if you want to include this aspect of the game or not. It is also important that you have some understanding of your students and their situations so that if any of the statement stems offered below would create emotional stress or embarrassment you can avoid including them in the game.

To play, the class should sit in a semi-circle in front of you. You will have Never Have I Ever statements in a jar. You will select a statement out of the jar, read it aloud to the class and if any of the students have never done what the statement says, they will sit quietly. If any of the students HAVE done what the statement is referring to, they will either raise their hand or stand up (whichever you prefer). As mentioned above, those students who have done what the statement is referring to could be asked to tell the story behind the incident but that is a judgment call on your part. You will repeat the process by pulling out another statement from the jar. The activity ends when all the statements have been read aloud to the class and for each one, the students fess up to whether or not they have done what the statements refer to.

All the statements in this jar will refer to coping strategies and different scenarios for using them. Below is a list of 12 Never Have I Ever statements. If these do not align well with your students and their experiences, or they do not push as deep as you’d like to see your kids go in this activity, please add some that would.

1. NEVER HAVE I EVER...eaten junk food when I was upset even though I wasn’t hungry.
2. NEVER HAVE I EVER...stalked the social media posts of someone who I didn’t like.
3. NEVER HAVE I EVER...cried myself to sleep.
4. NEVER HAVE I EVER...participated in physical activity to release some steam.
5. NEVER HAVE I EVER...used substances of any kind to fit in or look cool in front of a group of my peers.
6. NEVER HAVE I EVER...journalled my feelings and reflections or kept a diary.
7. NEVER HAVE I EVER...sought refuge in my bedroom from people or things that are bothering me by locking the door and engrossing myself in something that calms me.
8. NEVER HAVE I EVER...driven aimlessly down back roads to clear my mind.
9. NEVER HAVE I EVER...prayed to a higher power than myself for guidance.
10. NEVER HAVE I EVER...changed my appearance in order to fit in with a certain group or scene.
11. NEVER HAVE I EVER...lied about what I really thought or felt just to keep the peace.
12. NEVER HAVE I EVER...cheated on a test that I forgot to study for in order to avoid getting a bad grade.

At the conclusion of the Never Have I Ever coping game, inform students that this lesson will focus on coping strategies.

Instruction – Coping Strategies and Stressors

Ask the class if they can define the term Coping Strategies. As you field their answers, ensure they understand that a coping strategy is the means by which we choose to address the presence of a stressor.

Next, ask students for examples of stressors. Odds are they will mostly name negative examples. Lead them down a train of thought that requires them to also think of more positive stressors as well. Conclude this portion of the conversation with the formal definition of Stressor – a physical, psychological, or social force that places real or perceived demands on our body, emotions, mind, or spirit.

Point out that coping strategies are simply how we choose to deal with a stressor in our life.

Draw a line down the middle of the whiteboard/chalkboard. On one side of the line, write in large letters the word ACTIVE. On the other side of the line, write in large letters the word PASSIVE. Inform the class that coping strategies can be classified as either active or passive, and share definitions for each:

Active Coping Strategies – an attempt to use your own resources to attack a problem or address the existence of a stressor. (Example: study hard for a test)

Passive Coping Strategies – a focus on enduring the presence of a stressor. (Example: meditate)

Pull out a couple of the examples used in the Never Have I Ever Coping game and ask the class to identify the stressor and the coping strategy used in that situation. Once the coping strategy has been identified, ask the students to determine if that was an active or a passive coping strategy. Assist them with making the correct determination by asking leading questions when necessary.

Student Assignment – Rise Relay Race

Divide the class into two teams. Give each group a dry erase marker or a piece of chalk (depending on the type of board in your classroom).

Have two pieces of tape on the floor of equal distance from the board. These lines will serve as the 'starting line' for a relay race the two teams will compete in. This activity will be most fun if there are 'obstacles' of some sort between their starting line and the board, but will still be an effective activity using a simple foot race.

Each team must form a line behind their starting line. The first student in the line will hold the marker/chalk. One team will be assigned the Active category and the other team will be assigned the Passive category of coping strategies.

Play the song “Rise” by Katy Perry. As soon as the music starts, the race starts. As soon as the song concludes, the race is over. During the song, each team will race to the board, one team member at a time, and write a specific example of a coping strategy that matches their category – the Active team will provide examples of active coping strategies while the Passive team will provide examples of passive coping strategies.

Rules for the race:

- Only the team member at the front of the line can run to the board
- They can only run to the board once they have the marker/chalk in their hand
- All other team members must remain in a line behind their starting line
- Once a student has made their trip to the board, they must proceed to the end of their team’s line
- Strategies identified by teams can be for either positive or negative types of stressors
- Team members can share answers with their teammates but they cannot take their team member’s place on a trip to the board (no substitutions allowed)

When the song has ended, you should review the list written on the board for each category of coping strategy. Erase any that may be incorrect. Reward the team that had the highest number of correct answers.

Reflection – My Way of Coping

Have students complete a self-reflection activity. This could be a written journal entry, a blog post, a vlog submission, etc. In this self-reflection activity, the student should recount a time in their personal life that they encountered a negative stressor. The student should explain what their coping strategy was in the moment and assess whether that was the best way they *could* have dealt with the stressor. Due to the personal nature of the activity, it is advised that these reflections be an assignment for you only and not one to be shared publicly with the class in any way.

Sometimes the best way to build trust and relationships with students is to share a bit of personal vulnerability or life lessons of your own with the class. This particular assignment would provide such an opportunity if you feel comfortable enough to offer the class an example from your own life as you are providing them instructions for their assignment.

Extension Activity – Coping with Leadership Challenges

For advanced leadership classes in which your students are conducting school-wide leadership activities, an extension of this lesson could be taken from examining coping strategies from an individual perspective to that of a leadership group. Have students examine how they do and how they should cope with the following:

- Planning a school-culture, school-spirit event
- Consistently seeing only the same groups of students getting involved in school activities
- Receiving negative feedback from educators in the building on a project/activity
- Receiving negative feedback from their peers on a project/activity
- Seeing something they want to change within their school but being told there is nothing they can do about it

- Having a great idea about something but not having the money or resources to pull it off

Extension Activity – Harbor Episodes

For more on self-improvement, show one of the following Harbor episodes and use the accompanying Critical Thinking Guide as either a whole group discussion or as an individual writing assignment.

[Harbor Episode: Stress and Pressure](#)

When you add homework, athletics, and activities to what's happening at home, stress and pressure can really build up, and this episode offers some practical tips on how to manage the pressure.

[Harbor Episode: Armando Sanchez](#)

Where we come from can shape who we are, but it doesn't have to define or limit us. High school senior Armando Sanchez shares his story of breaking away from the expectations of his environment and his decision to pursue his passion for leadership.

[Harbor Episode: Stress and Time Management](#)

We all have the same 24 hours in a day, but learning how to manage that time effectively and reduce distractions can make all the difference when it comes to increasing our productivity and reaching our goals.

[Harbor Episode: JR Galardi](#)

Tragedy can strike at any time, interrupting our plans and forcing us to make difficult decisions. JR Galardi shares the story of when an unexpected tragedy rattled his world and the steps he had to take – and the plans he had to change – to deal with the loss of his father.

School Climate Impact – Provide Coping Assistance

Brainstorm ways for your school to provide coping assistance for students outside of the existing procedures already available to them. To get ideas flowing, think of examples such as:

- A designated Zen Room where students can go to in order to meditate
- Develop a stress-buster week during testing or high-stress weeks during the school year with daily activities centered on relaxing/coping activities (coloring stations, bubble wrap popping, etc.) (Cultivate Kindness Coloring Postcards can be found in the Renaissance Store)
- Explore ways to invite service pets into the school, as a one-time event or as a permanent addition

Choose one of the ideas and prepare a persuasive letter or presentation to administration describing the idea, the costs and benefits, and an outline for how to make it happen.