



Stress Management: Zentangles

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Colored pencils
- Relaxing music (optional)

Brainstorm

Ask students: What healthy ways do you use to relax when you're stressed out?

Discuss

Those are some great healthy strategies we can use when we're stressed. We've all felt stress.

Stress is the feeling you get when you are worried, frustrated, or overwhelmed. Sometimes stress can be a positive thing - such as making the game-winning point or being part of a drama performance. Sometimes stress can be negative, but manageable, like wanting to go out on a Saturday night with friends but having to work, or preparing to take a college entrance exam. What are some examples of stress that you've been dealing with lately?

Dive in!

Detail: Too much stress can be bad for you, and it can cause physical and emotional problems. Fortunately, there are healthy strategies you can use to help you manage stress. It's important to note that the stress concept is as varied as instances of many other emotion concepts. Something that might be stressful for you might not be stressful for someone else. Something that works for you might not work for your friend, or something that works for another person might not be best for you. We talked about some of those strategies earlier in class. Does anyone use doodling or drawing as a way to relax? Today, we're going to create a zentangle to help us de-stress. A **zentangle** is a patterned symbol that you can create to help you calm down and de-stress. Show students the examples on the worksheet. Sometimes, people use zentangles as a way to meditate. The beauty of the zentangle is in the simplicity of the shapes and the freedom you have to create it however you want. Perhaps you'll use certain shapes or patterns that signify something to you or that make you feel calm and relaxed. Or, you may choose to add different colors. The choice is all yours!



Activity

Distribute the worksheet to students and provide them with enough time to create their zentangles. You may wish to get them started, with prompts to start in one corner or to add specific shapes and patterns. If you're able, play soothing music while students work. When they're done, call on student volunteers to share their finished product and have students respond verbally to the reflection questions.

Reflect

When students are done, ask the Reflect question verbally: Did you find the process of creating your zentangle relaxing and soothing? Do you think this is a strategy you might use again in the future?

Extend and Enrich

Everyone has different ways of relaxing when they're stressed. Challenge your students to find their favorite healthy ways to de-stress and share them with the class. Possible examples include: Yoga, creating mandalas, practicing mindfulness, meditation, and exercising.

Optional Home Connection → Have students pick a relaxing strategy and practice using it at home as a way to de-stress. Ask volunteers to report back on which strategies worked best and whether or not the strategies helped them feel less stress.

Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your favorite healthy ways to de-stress. What works best for you? Are there any unhealthy strategies that you'd like to replace?

For Further Study:

- Learn how to make a zentangle: [zentangle.com/pages/learn](https://www.zentangle.com/pages/learn)
- Yoga for Teens by Teens: wanderlust.com/yoga-for-teens/
- Free Headspace access for teachers to build mindfulness practices: www.headspace.com/educators
- Mindfulness Zentangle Day 1 <https://youtu.be/A5J16X0Wq10>