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Unit Eight

Stress Management

Ages 9 - 12

Total Time: 1.5 Hours

PART 1: Ice Breaker

PART 2: What is Stress?

PART 3: Signs and Sources of Stress

PART 4: Stress Management

PART 5: Matching Body Language to Message

PART 6: Follow – Up Activities

ANNEXURE 1: Stress Affects Our Bodies

ANNEXURE 2: Stress Management Techniques

ANNEXURE 3: Evaluation

ANNEXURE 4: Yoga Poses for Stress Relief

ANNEXURE 5: Angry Octopus

ANNEXURE 6: Sample Mosaic

Part 1: Ice Breaker

Time:

15 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will take part in an ice breaker activity designed to get them thinking about activities and places that help them to relax and de-stress.

Materials:

- None

Technique:

Ice Breaker

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Choose one of the ice breaker activities from the options below. You may refer back to their responses later in the session as you are discussing stress management techniques.

Option One: Relax! – Invite the children to take turns introducing themselves and listing a few of their favorite things to do for fun and relaxation. (For example, play sports, spend time with friends, listen to music, dance, etc.)

Option Two: My Special Place – Instruct the group to take a few minutes to think about what their space would look like if they could create their own special place. What would it include? Invite each child to share their ideas with the group.

Part 2: What is Stress?

Time:

15 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will understand the definition of stress and important concepts related to stress.

Materials:

- None

Technique:

- Group Discussion

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Introduce the topic of stress management by asking the group, "What is Stress?" Invite them to give their definition of stress.
2. Provide the following definitions and concepts related to stress:
 - Stress is the body's natural reaction to changes and challenges, things that scare us or things that worry us. We experience stress when we play sports, when there are deadlines to meet, when we get sick, during tough exams at school, or when we aren't getting along with friends.
 - Stress is the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus and strength.
 - What stresses people is different from one person to the next. For example, keeping up with homework might be very stressful for you, but for your friend it isn't a problem at all.
3. Discuss the following important information about stress:

- Some level of stress is normal for everyone. It's ok to sometimes feel angry, upset, frustrated or anxious
 - Even though stress is uncomfortable, it's not always a bad thing. Sometimes stress helps us deal with tough situations. Stress changes our bodies and helps us react to an emergency. A little stress keeps us alert and helps us work harder.
 - For example, feeling a little stress about a test that's coming up can motivate you to study hard. But stressing out too much over the test can make it hard to concentrate on the material you need to learn.
 - Stress is a natural and important part of life, but too much of it can be overwhelming and even bad for our health.
4. We all react to stress in different ways. Some people become angry and act out their stress or take it out on others. Although stress can help us be more alert and prepared when we need to be, it can also cause emotional and physical issues.

Part 3: Signs and Sources of Stress

Time:

30 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will identify their warning signs and sources of stress.

Materials:

- Annexure 1: Stress Affects our Bodies
- Crayons or markers
- PowerPoint: Stress or Not Stressed?

Techniques:

- Individual Activity
- Group Discussion

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Note that sometimes people are stressed, but don't really realize how much it is affecting them. Stress can cause us to feel many different things.
 - Distribute Annexure 1 and ask the children to draw or write on the area of the body that might be affected by stress. Offer the following common symptoms of stress and help the children illustrate them on the handout. Suggestions are offered below, but allow the children to use their creativity to illustrate their drawing.
 - Headaches (could draw an arrow pointing at the head and write "headaches," or could make a dark colored mark on the head symbolizing a headache, etc.)
 - Stomachaches (same as headache, but pointing toward stomach or color the stomach area)

- Tired all the time, or can't sleep (could draw eyes open or eyes closed)
 - Don't feel like eating (could make a mark on the stomach area)
 - Can't concentrate (could color the area of the brain in a dark color)
 - Crying a lot (could draw tears on the face) Feeling angry (could color a red cloud above the person)
2. Encourage the children to add to this list of symptoms and draw them on the picture of the body.
 3. Invite the children to talk about times they may have felt stressed and had any of these symptoms.
 4. Turn the discussion of what causes stress. Explain that it's important to know what causes you stress. To get the conversation started, show the group the photos in the power point and ask if they would find the situation stressful and why. Notice that what is stressful to one person isn't necessarily stressful to another – some may find school or sports stressful while others find them fun and relaxing. Take time to discuss each photo in terms of what is stressful to each person in the group.
 5. Ask the group for any of their stressors that were not in the power point.
 - In order to help the group identify their sources of stress ask them to think about the following questions:
 - What things have you found stressful over the past few weeks?
 - What are the biggest causes of stress for you over the past year or more?
 - What is bothering you the most today?
 6. Explain that now that they have identified some of the sources of their stress, you will discuss how to manage them.

Part 4: Stress Management

Time:

30-40 Minutes

Objective:

Participants will discuss and practice stress management techniques.

Materials:

- Music for Freeze Dance
- Annexure 2: Stress Management Techniques
- Annexure 3: Evaluation

Techniques:

- Presentation
- Deep Breathing Exercise

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. State that stress management skills work best when they're used often, not just when you're stressed. Knowing how to "de-stress" and doing it when things are relatively calm can help you get through the challenges when they arise.
2. Instruct the group in the following stress management techniques:
 - Take care of yourself. Get good sleep, eat well, exercise.
 - Exercise is the most important part of a plan to manage stress. When you are stressed, your body is saying, "Run!" So do it. Exercise every day to control stress and build a strong, healthy body. You may think you don't have time to exercise when you are most stressed, but that is exactly when you need it the most. If you are stressed about an assignment but too nervous to sit down and study—exercise! You will be able to think better after you have used up that energy. Exercise includes playing sports and games.

- Use the Life Skills you have learned in these sessions – talk to others when things are bothering you and express your emotions – don't hold them in.
- Talk to someone you trust – house parent, social worker, teacher, etc.
- Do things that make you happy such as listening to music, taking a walk, spending time with friends, etc. Art, music and drama are good stress relievers - you don't have to be a great artist, singer or dancer to make it feel good while you're doing it.

Trainer: Invite the group to take part in a Freeze Dance – participants move to the music. When the music stops, the children freeze. When the music starts again, the children continue to dance. (Start with slow calm music, then fast upbeat, then slow and calm to end activity) **NO talking or noises.** This activity relieves stress and tension.

- Deep breathing helps the brain slow down the stress response, and helps you to feel calm. It takes your worries away from your head and quiets your mind. Practice every day and it will become second nature. You can use this technique when you are in the middle of a stressful situation. The entire exercise only needs to take 6 seconds.
 - Lead the group through a deep breathing exercise. Ask them to lie on the floor or sit in a chair and get comfortable. Then guide them with the following instructions:
 - First, smile and with your eyes and mouth and release the tension in your shoulders. This is a powerful muscle release in the places where most people hold their muscles tense.
 - Then imagine holes in the soles of your feet. As you take a deep breath in, visualize hot air flowing through these holes moving slowing up your legs, through your abdomen and filling your lungs. Relax your muscles sequentially as the hot air moves through them up your body. When you exhale, reverse the visualization so you can “see” hot air coming out of the same holes in our feet.
 - Repeat several times.
 - Did you notice any difference in your breathing during the exercise? Do you feel more relaxed?
 - Repeat throughout the day whenever you need to feel calm.
3. Ask the group, what are some negative ways that people sometimes deal with stress? (Responses include: bullying, arguing, talking back, etc.) Discuss how important it is to avoid these at all times, and why.
 4. Explain that even if you are great at dealing with problems, there may be times when stress feels like it is getting to you. You deserve to feel good. Signs you should seek help from a trusted adult include:
 - Your grades are dropping.
 - You worry a lot.
 - You easily get moody or angry.
 - You feel tired all the time.
 - You get a lot of headaches, dizziness, chest pain, or stomach pain.
 - You feel sad or hopeless.
 - You feel bored all the time and are less interested in being with friends.
 - You ever think about hurting yourself

Trainer: Discuss the importance of getting help when it is needed, and help them identify their resource people. Address the issue of stigma around getting help: we need to support each other, especially if someone is hurting. We should never tease someone for getting counseling help or gossip about them with others.

5. Distribute Annexure 2 and review the content. Ask the children to keep the handout in their folder for future reference.
6. Distribute Annexure 3 and invite the group to complete the evaluation form regarding this Unit.
 - Explain that they are to give a score from 1-5 (5 being the highest) for each part of the Unit, as well as a score for the Unit overall.
 - Then they should write comments under the happy face for items they liked/learned, and under the sad face for items they didn't like or are confused about.
 - Briefly recap what was covered in each part so their memory is fresh when evaluating.
 - Instruct them to be as specific as possible in their comments.
 - Items to consider include:
 - Did you understand the topics covered? If not, what was confusing?
 - Was there enough time to cover the material?
 - Did the presentation keep your interest?
 - Were the handouts/power points/videos helpful?
 - Add any comments that would be helpful for future programs.
 - Gather the completed evaluations and include them in your trainer report.

Part 5: Follow-Up Activities

Time:

Varies by Activity

Objective:

Participants will have the opportunity to practice the skills learned in this session.

Materials:

(Depending on Option Selected)

Option One:

- Annexure 4: Yoga Poses for Stress Relief

Option Two:

- Annexure 5: “Angry Octopus”

Option Three:

- Envelope or small box for each child
- Art supplies
- Small pieces of paper for worries

Option Four:

- Paper, small pieces of colored paper, glue, scissors
- Annexure 6: Sample Mosaic

Technique:

- Applying learning to daily life
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TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Explain that participants will have the opportunity to review the material learned today throughout the next few weeks, and take part in activities designed to put the learning into action. They will take part in follow-up sessions to discuss the activities.
2. Assign one of the options below for this first week. Additional activities will be assigned in the following weeks.

Option One: Yoga for Stress Relief – Teach the children that yoga is a great way to reduce the effects of stress. It helps us slow down for a moment and tune into our breathing. Simply focusing on one thing (the definition of meditation) allows us to de-stress. Yoga poses release tension in different ways and help certain parts of the body. Using Annexure 4, practice each of the yoga poses considered best for stress relief. You may want to invite a few of the children to lead the poses, or you may use the videos listed below to lead a yoga activity. You could use the videos on mute if the language isn't appropriate for your group.

Hindi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rpb29UGWptQ>

Hindi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=970YLBkSEc>

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCHrcq5wRY>

Tamil: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KWjRvIS4qs>

Option Two: Progressive Relaxation “Angry Octopus”– Progressive Relaxation is an effective stress management technique that addresses the stress exhibited in the body (rapid breathing, higher blood pressure, and muscle tension). Through relaxation exercises your muscles relax, your breathing slows, your blood pressure decreases, thus reducing the damaging effects of stress. Lead the group through a progressive relaxation exercise using Annexure 5.

Explain that it is a good idea to practice this type of relaxation while you are not completely stressed so that you may use it quickly when you really need it. You will get so good at it that when you think about the angry octopus you will begin to relax. You can do it in just a minute or two, even in your seat at school.

Option Three: Worry Box – All adults and children experience some worry, dread, and fear, especially when faced with new or challenging events or situations. It is very helpful for

children to be able to identify and name a worry and have a place to put the worry away so they don't think about it all the time. Allow the children to decorate a box or envelope where they can store worries they write down or draw. The Worry Box is a safe place children can put their worries while they think them through and develop a plan to deal with them. Even if they have worries and fears, they don't have to carry them around with them all the time.

Allow the children to decorate their Worry Boxes and when finished, invite them to write or draw some of their worries and place them in the box. Invite them to add worries at any time in the future.

Option Four: Paper Mosaics – This art activity is a great stress reduction exercise. It relaxes the mind and allows the children to focus on something other than their stress. Mosaic is art made by arranging small pieces of stone or glass to create a beautiful picture, but the children can create mosaics with paper. Show them Annexure 6, a sample mosaic, to help guide them in this activity.

Ask them to begin by drawing an outline of an object, shape, or simple scene on their paper. Then, cut small pieces of colored paper to act as the small tiles of the mosaic. Fill in one part of the picture at a time with the paper tiles until the picture is complete.

Invite the children to share their work and what they found fun or challenging about the activity. Discuss the stress reduction purpose of the activity and ask if they are feeling more relaxed.

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Unit Eight Annexures

Stress Management

Ages 9-12

ANNEXURE 1: Stress Affects Our Bodies

ANNEXURE 2: Stress Management Techniques

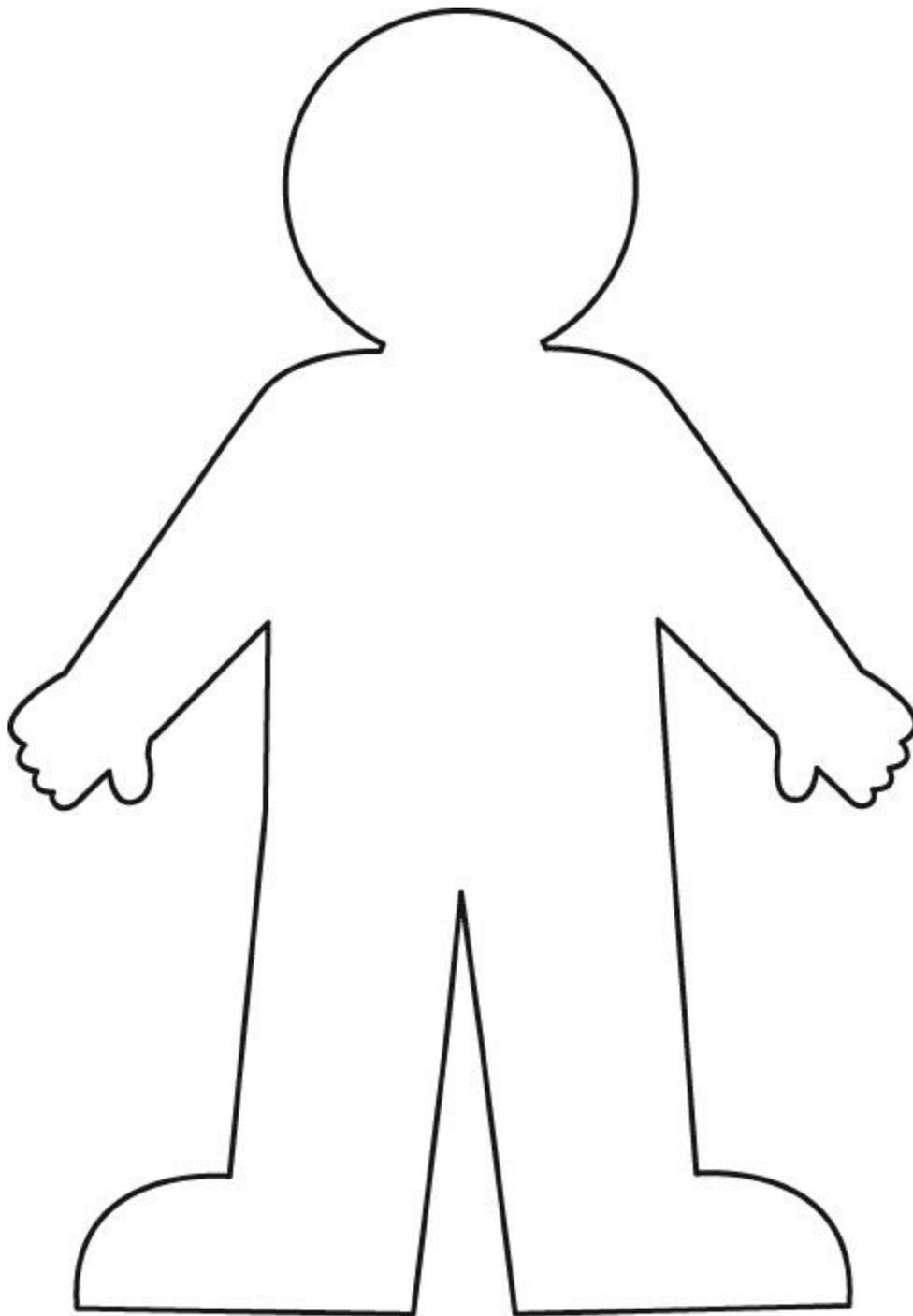
ANNEXURE 3: Evaluation

ANNEXURE 4: The 10 Best Yoga Poses for Stress Relief

ANNEXURE 5: “Angry Octopus”

ANNEXURE 6: Sample Mosaic Art

Annexure 1: Stress Affects Our Bodies



Annexure 2: Stress Management Techniques

What is Stress?



- Stress is your body's natural reaction to changes and challenges, things that scare you or things that worry you.
- Stress is your body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus and strength.
- What stresses you is different from what stresses other people.

Things to Know About Stress:

- **Some level of stress is normal for everyone.** It's okay to sometimes feel angry, upset, frustrated or anxious.
- **Stress is not always a bad thing.** Sometimes stress helps us deal with tough situations, react to emergencies, keep us alert and work harder.
- **Stress is a natural and important part of life,** but too much of it can be overwhelming and bad for your health.
- **We all react to stress in different ways.** Some people become angry and some people become very sad. Be careful not to let stress cause emotional and physical issues.

Symptoms of Stress

Headaches



Stomachaches



Tired / Can't Sleep



No Appetite



Can't Concentrate



Crying



Feeling Angry



Stress Management Techniques

- Take care of yourself. Get good sleep, eat well, exercise.
- Use the **Life Skills** you have learned in your sessions.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Do things that make you happy.
- Use deep breathing techniques to feel calm.

Negative Ways People Deal with Stress:

Bullying



Fighting



Arguing



Talking Back



Time to Seek Help



- Your grades are dropping.
- You worry a lot.
- You easily get moody or angry.
- You feel tired all the time.
- You get a lot of headaches, dizziness, chest pain or stomach pain.
- You feel sad or hopeless.
- You feel bored all the time and are less interested in being with friends.
- You ever think about hurting yourself.

Annexure 3: Evaluation

Unit 8 - Stress Management	Score (Circle a number, 5 is the Best)	 What I Liked/Learned	 What I Didn't Like or Things I'm Confused About
Part 1 – Ice Breaker	1 2 3 4 5	 	
Part 2 – What is Stress?	1 2 3 4 5	 	
Part 3 – Signs and Sources of Stress	1 2 3 4 5	 	
Part 4 – Stress Management	1 2 3 4 5	 	
Part 5 – Matching Body Language to Message	1 2 3 4 5	 	
Overall Score		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Annexure 4: The 10 Best Yoga Poses For Stress Relief

Child's Pose (Balasana) – A resting posture that can quiet the mind.



Bridge Pose – Stretches the back and legs while alleviating stress and tension.



Uttanasana – Stretches the hamstrings, thighs, hips and relieves stress by reversing blood flow



Eagle Pose – Releases tension in the shoulders, legs and back. You squeeze the tension out of the body.



Savasana – Calming and emphasizes complete relaxation



Extended Triangle Pose (Utthita Trikonasana) – Full body stretch and excellent stress reliever



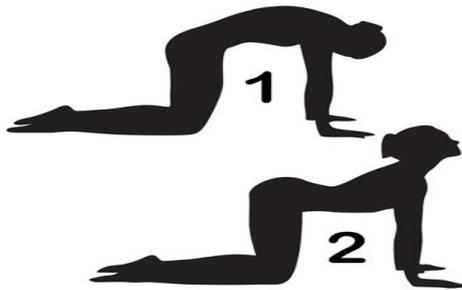
Legs up the Wall Pose (Viparita Karani) - Helps to renew blood flow back into the heart



Puppy Pose (Uttana Shishosana) – Similar to child's pose but opens up the chest area.



Cat Pose (Marjaryasana) – Relieves stress while gently massaging the spine



Dolphin Pose – Quiets the mind and reduces stress



Modified from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/06/10-yoga-poses-for-stress-_n_3000801.html

Annexure 5: Angry Octopus

By Lori Lite

(Read with soft, calming voice)

The sun's morning light trickled down through the water to the entrance of the cove. An octopus sleeping inside the cove could feel the life energy of the sun touch his face.

He took a deep breath and opened his eyes. He stretched his body and ventured outside of his home. Just in front of his cave was a seashell rock garden that he had created. Each morning he would begin his day by eating breakfast in his special garden as he watched the ocean come alive in the morning sun.

This morning his garden looked different. During the night, lobsters traveling across the ocean floor had bumped into his seashells and rocks. Everything was knocked over and out of order. The octopus was not happy. In fact, he was very angry.

The more he looked at the mess, the worse he felt. He got madder and madder and felt his body get tighter and tighter. His muscles were tense and his stomach was rumbling like a volcano. He looked around at this ruined garden and his face started to turn red with anger. He knew what was happening to him but he did not know how to stop it. He was so angry that he thought he might explode...and he did.

The angry octopus lost his temper, and as he screamed and yelled he released a purplish-black cloud of ink into the water around him. He felt frustrated and out of control. He didn't feel like he was the boss of his own body or feelings, and now he couldn't see through the dark ink cloud surrounding him.

A sea child swimming by the cave saw the cloud of anger and confusion and stopped by to speak to the octopus. "Why are you so angry? Why are you sitting in a dark cloud on such a beautiful day?" The octopus answered that he didn't know why he always did this when he got angry, but he did know that it didn't feel good to lose his temper and it always made his problem get worse.

The sea child giggled and said, "I will show you how to be the boss of your body and your anger. I will show you how to calm down, let go of your anger, and see things more clearly. Lie down on your back and wiggle yourself into a comfortable position. Feel the sand moving slowly around your body as you snuggle in. Now close your eyes and take a deep breath. Breathe in through your nose and let the air out of your mouth." *Ahhhh...*

"Now tighten your toes and feet. Squeeze them as tight as you can. Squeeze then into a tight ball." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

"Now let the air out of your mouth...and let your toes and feet relax." Surprisingly enough, the octopus felt his toes and feet relax.

The sea child continued, "Tighten your legs tight as you can. Squeeze then as tight as you can." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

Now let the air out of your mouth, and let your legs stretch out gently as you let the angry, tight feelings start to slip away." The octopus felt his legs stretch out on the cool sand as he let the angry feelings leave his body.

The sea child continued, "Tighten your hips, stomach and back. Squeeze them as tight as you can." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

"Now let the air out of your mouth, and let your back, stomach and hips melt into the sand beneath you." The octopus felt his body melting into the soft sand beneath him. The rumbling in his stomach became quiet and was now replaced with calm air as he felt his breath move in and out, in and out, in and out.

The sea child continued, "Tighten the muscles in your chest, your neck and shoulders. Squeeze them as tight as you can." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

"Now let the air out of your mouth...and feel all that tension in your chest, neck and shoulders drift away." The octopus felt the tension leave his chest, neck and shoulders, and drift away.

The sea child continued, "Tighten your arms, hands and fingers. Squeeze them as tight as you can. Squeeze them into a tight ball." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

"Now let the air out of your mouth...and let your arms, hands and fingers unfold." The octopus felt his hands open and the last of his anger float away.

The sea child continued, "Tighten your jaw, your lips and your nose. Crunch up your whole face. Squeeze them as tight as you can." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

"Now let the air out of your mouth, and let your face and skin soften." The octopus felt his skin soften. The octopus enjoyed how relaxed he felt. He focused on how his breath was moving in and out, in and out, in and out, filling his body with warm, happy air. He felt relaxed and peaceful.

The sea child continued, "Tighten and wrinkle the skin on your forehead and the thoughts in your head. Squeeze then as tight as you can." *Hold, hold, hold... Ahhhh...*

"Now let the air out of your mouth and let your forehead and mind become smooth and clear and still."

The octopus stayed very still for the next few moments. He realized that he was now the boss of his own body and feelings. He felt his breath moving in and out, in and out, in and out touching every cell of his body. He felt good.

After a few moments, the octopus opened his eyes. His mood had shifted and the color of his body had returned to a warm shade of brown. He felt calm, balance, and comfortable in his own skin. The dark cloud that had surrounded the octopus was gone. The ever moving ocean had replaced it with pure blue water. In this calm, still moment he realized that he could solve his problem without being angry. With a little help he could fix his seashell rock garden.

The octopus asked the seachild if she would help him. Together they worked and laughed as they created a new seashell rock garden that was more beautiful than anything he had ever imagined. Being the boss of his angry feelings helped the octopus to make a new friend. Being calm helped him to see new possibilities. It helped him to think clearly.

Now, whenever the octopus feels like he is going to explode with anger, he takes a deep breath...*ahhh*. He tells himself that his is the boss of himself. He remembers that being clam helped him to fix his garden and make a new friend. He smiles at how much better he feels, as he feels his breath move in and out, in and out, in and out...

Annexure 6: Sample Mosaic Art

