

Stories of Us

Episode 3: STRESS

Teacher's Guide

Preview extracts of pages 12-15

Class One *(Play Version)*

Note: If conducting a double lesson, Class One and Class Two can be combined – in that order – but the questions may need to be rationalised to fit the time. Alternatively, the double lesson could begin with a MindMatters activity (see MindMatters Sessions 1 or 2) as a preliminary to video Class One, with Class Two held over until the next lesson.

Student Briefing

Before playing the video:

- Based upon past experience, students may be negatively predisposed to the prospect of watching 'yet another a video'. To help engender a more positive attitude, begin by emphasising that the *Stories of Us* video is unlike any they are likely to have seen before. This program is Made with Students, For Students.
- Briefly summarise the types of issues touched upon in the video and explain the options should the students want private support with anything raised in the video (e.g. talking to Student Counsellor or Student Wellbeing Coordinator or phoning Kids Helpline).
- Hand out the photocopied centre page of the workbook with the characters' names, draw their attention to the Support & Research details on the hand-outs – and mention that they can take the sheets with them after class.
- Explain that the story does not come to a complete end – it is intentionally left unresolved so that they can explore possible endings themselves. In the second version (which they will see later) there are some additional scenes which provide a positive outcome to the stories.

Important Note: After playing the video, do not to ask students if they have been in similar situations, as the class is not the environment for personal disclosure. If some students have been (for example) the victim of bullying, it can be counterproductive or even dangerous to discuss it in front of other students.



PLAY THE VIDEO WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

(The *Play Version* duration is 23 minutes 11 seconds)



STOP THE VIDEO AT THE END PROMPT

- When the *Play Version* finishes there is a series of still photos with the characters' names (similar to the hand-outs), then a prompt where the following questions are used as discussion starters.



PLAY VERSION QUESTIONS

- How might Travis be feeling? [Angry; hurt; overwhelmed.]
- How might Travis be feeling about Jake? [Betrayed; disappointed; angry.]
- How might he be feeling about Jess? [Hurt; manipulated; confused.]
- How might Anna be feeling? [Embarrassed; angry; hemmed in.]
- How might Anna be feeling about what happened with Sam? [Embarrassed; confused.]
- What has happened to Travis to get him to this point? [Break down the different stages of his story step by step.]
- What has happened to Anna to get her to this point? [Break down the different stages of her story step by step.]
- What do you think about Travis driving after he has been drinking? [Foolish and potentially extremely dangerous.]
- What do you think about Anna getting in the car with Travis when he has clearly been drinking? [Again, foolish and potentially extremely dangerous.]



TEACHER SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR PLAY VERSION

- There are many issues raised in the video. In this *Play Version* students should be encouraged to look at the 'big picture' and avoid becoming unduly bogged down in detail. In *Class Two (Segmented Version)* they will look in more depth at specific issues as they happen. There are also extensive support notes in that section of the workbook.

Student Debriefing

At the end of the session:

- It is particularly important to re-emphasise that in the next version of the video there is additional footage in which they will see a positive outcome for the two main characters.
- It's important that they don't leave the class feeling unsupported if they want to talk about it some more, so teachers should emphasise that the Student Counsellor or Student Wellbeing Coordinator is available if they want to talk privately about the video or any personal reactions they may have experienced to the issues raised.
- Also, ask the students to hold onto the hand-out for re-use in *Class Two* and remind them that the sheet contains contacts for additional support with the issues.

Optional Extension Activity

Having discussed the video in class, if time allows there is an optional extension activity in which the students break into groups and create possible endings to the story. They could also explore possible endings with role-play.

Optional Homework

There is also an option to set homework in which students write an end to the story. Keep it brief so it doesn't become a chore, as it's very important to maintain student interest for *Class Two* in which they explore the story in more detail. This homework has the added benefit of helping to keep the story 'alive' until next class.

Note: Some students may see this assignment as an opportunity to make light of the issues, so they may need to be reminded that those types of responses are not acceptable.

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Preview extracts of pages 20-23

Segment A

▶ **PLAY SEGMENT A**
(Duration 4 minutes 38 seconds)

|| **PAUSE & SUMMARISE SEGMENT A**

At the *End Segment A* prompt, summarise what we have learnt.

- Travis is in trouble over a biology assignment.
- Anna tells her parents that she's done all her homework but we then see her working late into the night.
- Anna's parents think she has a relatively easy time with her school work and assume she can take on further commitments.

? **SEGMENT A QUESTIONS**

- What's going on in Travis' life that might be causing him stress? [Parents have separated and are arguing a lot; trouble over biology assignment.]
- How do we know that Travis is experiencing stress? [Hesitation before going to join his parents; his body language as he walks down the hall.]
- What about Anna – are there any things in her life that might be causing her stress? [Parents' expectations and their not understanding how hard she works.]
- Why do you think Anna lied about having done her homework – then worked late into the night? [To please her parents and avoid explaining that she is under pressure.]

i **TEACHER SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR SEGMENT A**

- Travis' parents have recently separated and are fighting a lot – which is further clarified in the next Segment.
- Anna's parents believe she is cruising through her school work, which is why they plan for her to do more sporting activities. Anna

is in a double bind: she doesn't want to let her parents down by admitting that she has trouble keeping up with her school work and yet she leads them further into their belief (that she finds study easy) by pretending all is well (light-heartedly telling her father all her homework is done, then working late into the night).

- Anna's mother doesn't like her friend Ali – a possible cause of some tension for Anna.

Segment B

▶ **PLAY SEGMENT B**
(Duration 3 minutes 45 seconds)

|| **SUMMARISE SEGMENT B**

At the *End Segment B* prompt, summarise what we have learnt.

- Travis forged his mother's signature on the card notifying his parents about his cheating on the biology assignment.
- Travis is given internal suspension as a punishment.
- Anna is missing spending time with Ali.
- Ali invites Anna to her brother Sam's 18th party and they plan not to tell Anna's mum.
- Travis seems to be keen on Jessica.
- Also, notice that not everything is negative in their lives.



SEGMENT B QUESTIONS

- What additional things does Travis have to deal with now? [Given suspension; teacher knowing about his troubles at home.]
- Why do you think Travis might not have wanted to talk to the teacher or Student Counsellor about his troubles at home? [Embarrassed; shy.]
- What good things are happening for Travis? [Support of Jake, who also has experienced family separation; friendship group; possible relationship with Jessica.]
- Is there anything else you noticed with Anna – what good things are happening for her? [Friendship group.]
- What things are possible causes of pressure for Anna? [Missing spending time with Ali; mother not letting her go to parties.]



TEACHER SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR SEGMENT B

- Jake is a supportive friend to Travis and has himself been through the experience of separating parents.
- Travis believes that it's his fault that his parents argue – and may privately believe he is the cause of their separation.
- The reason for highlighting the positive things going on for Travis and Anna is that supportive friends and inner confidence are very important contributors to resilience (Travis has the confidence to openly approach Jess). These things can form a solid foundation for dealing with the issues that contribute to stress.

Segment C



PLAY SEGMENT C

(Duration 5 minutes 33 seconds)



SUMMARISE SEGMENT C

At the *End Segment C* prompt, summarise what we have learnt.

- Ali invites her friends to Sam's party.
- Jessica's friends don't seem to approve of her talking to Travis.
- Jake jokes about Anna having once wet herself.
- Travis had copied his biology assignment off the internet and is given a hard time by James for 'mucking it up'.
- Anna tells Elise that she's concerned that Ali is revealing private things about her to Jake.
- Anna is doing school work during lunch break.



SEGMENT C QUESTIONS

- It looks like there are different groups here (Anna's and Travis' group and Jessica and the other girls) – what problems might this cause for Travis given his interest in Jess?
- Anna seems to be getting a hard time at the moment – what things have happened that she might not be happy about? [No money; old mobile phone; Ali revealing secrets.]
- What do you think about the way Travis reacted to the boys arguing about the football game? [Overreacted and stepped in when it didn't involve him – a sign that he is stressed.]
- How might he feel about seeing Jess talking to the other guy? [Inferior, challenged... Might this contribute to his stress?]
- What further things are happening for Travis that might contribute to his stress? [Doing internal suspension; his mates giving him a hard time about internet cheating; Jake ribbing him about Jess.]
- What is Anna really worried about here – is it just the story about wetting herself or might there be more to it than that? [Other more private things being shared with Jake; but it also indicates that Anna's and Ali's relationship is changing.]

