



Stress Management

Warm Up

- True or False... There are two types of stress?
- True! There are two forms. Healthy Stress and Toxic Stress

STRESSED OUT!



Coping Skills
for **kids &**
teens

STOP

Warm Up

- What are some common things high school students get stressed over?

Stress Test

- Teacher: Please review the “Stress Test” Document with your students.
- Students: You will be answering the following questions with a yes or no response.

Good Stress

Helps you get tasks done if they are manageable

Example: getting ready for a big presentation by practicing before class

Symptoms:

Feeling Challenged, motivated, and like you're getting out of your comfort zone

Solutions:

Be aware of what feels good when it's being accomplished and what just feels exhausting afterwards

Toxic Stress

Is chronic and overwhelming— not helping you in the long term.

Example: When you have an exam and start studying the material the night before

Symptoms

Body aches, getting sick more often than usual, headaches, changes in your attitude, not sleeping well

Solutions

Know when what you're doing is too much and take some responsibilities off your shoulders

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

What stress does to your body

Can't stop thinking about what you have to do

Racing heart

Fidget all the time

Low energy

Hard to fall asleep

Breathing is rapid / shallow

Feel sick when you realise how packed your week is

Muscles feel tense

Warm Up

- What are some ways you deal with managing your stress?



Change Your Mind(set)



-Don't think of STRESS as

- a threat
- a demoralizer
- pressure
- overwhelming
- debilitating

-Don't focus on problems

-Don't fight stress



+Do think of STRESS as

- a challenge
- a motivator
- an opportunity
- manageable
- energizing

+Do focus on possibilities

+Do embrace stress

Stress Management Skills

Self-control

Practice Resilience

Exercise

Communication

Sleep well

Good Routines

Relaxation

Journaling

Time management



Stress Management Techniques

- Understand what is causing the stress
- Get organized
- Socialize with positive friends
- Be assertive and stand up for yourself
- Meditate daily
- Give yourself time off
- Exercise regularly
- Eat healthy
- Listen to music
- Turn off screens!
- Be mindful
- Journal
- Learn something new

Relaxation

- **Teachers: Read through the “Short Relaxation” Page in the “Stress Management Techniques” document and have the students participate and practice this technique.**
 - This exercise is very useful when you don’t have much time available or are somewhere you cannot lie down (e.g. library, waiting for an interview, etc.).



Behavioral Coping Strategies

- These refer to ways of dealing with stress by doing something or taking action to reduce the stress experienced. Examples of these strategies are:
- **Physical exercise** – aerobic exercise is the most beneficial for reducing stress. It releases neurochemicals in the brain that aid concentration. For some people, even a short walk is sufficient to relieve stress.
- **Relaxation** – from simple relaxation such as dropping the head forward and rolling it gently from side to side or simply stretching, to more complex progressive relaxation exercises. Progressive relaxation involves tensing and releasing isolated muscle groups until muscles are relaxed. There are also tapes and books available on this topic.
- **Breathing** – from simple deep breaths to more complex breathing exercises related to relaxation and meditation.
- **Smile and Laugh** - gives us energy and helps to lighten the load; relaxes muscles in the face.
- **Time management** – specific strategies such as clarifying priorities, setting goals, evaluating how time is spent, developing an action plan, overcoming procrastination and organising time. These help us to cope with the numerous demands placed upon us, often a source of stress.
- **Social Support/Friends** – encourage the development and nurturing of relationships.
- **Seek Help** – to help us cope with unmanageable stress. Supports for students in College include the Student Health Centre, Student Counselling Service, College Tutors, and Chaplains.

Cognitive Coping Strategies

- These refer to ways of dealing with stress using our minds. Cognitive coping strategies are a good way to combat stress-producing thoughts. As Shakespeare's Hamlet said, ". . . *for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. . .*" Examples of these strategies are:
 - Reframing – focus on the good not the bad; think in terms of 'wants' instead of 'shoulds'. It's best if our thinking is related to our goals. For example, "I want to read and understand this chapter in Chemistry so I do well in my lab practical" instead of "I have to read this difficult chapter in Chemistry".
 - Challenging negative thinking – stopping the negative thoughts we may have about a situation or ourselves. Examples of negative thoughts include expecting failure, putting yourself down, feelings of inadequacy - a thought such as "Everyone else seems to understand this except me."
 - In order to gain control of negative thoughts or worries, you must first become aware of them. Next, yell "Stop!" to yourself when they occur. Try replacing with positive affirmations or at least challenge or question any irrationality of the thoughts.
 - Positive self-talk – using positive language and statements to ourselves. These are sometimes referred to as positive affirmations; they are useful for building confidence and challenging negative thoughts. For example, "I can do this or understand this" or "I'll try my best". These work best when they are realistic and tailored to your needs and goals.
 - Count to ten – this allows you time to gain control and perhaps rethink the situation or come up with a better coping strategy.

Continued

- Cost-benefit analysis – Is it helping me to get things done when I think this way?
- Keeping perspective – when under stress it is easy to lose perspective; things can seem insurmountable. Some questions to ask yourself: Is this really a problem? Is this a problem anyone else has had? Can I prioritise the problems? Does it really matter? *“Look on the bright side of life!”* - Cultivate optimism.
- Reducing uncertainty – seek any information or clarification you may require to reduce the uncertainty. It helps to ask in a positive way. Situations that are difficult to classify, are obscure or have multiple meanings can create stress.
- Using imagery/visualisation –imagining yourself in a pleasant or a successful situation to help reduce stress. One way to use imagery is as a relaxation tool; try to remember the pleasure of an experience you’ve had or a place you’ve been. The more senses you involve in the image the more realistic, therefore the more powerful. This strategy is often combined with deep breathing or relaxation exercises.
- Visualisation can also be used as a rehearsal strategy for an anticipated stressful event. For example, if you have a presentation to give, practice it in the mind a few times, picturing the audience’s reaction and even visualising yourself overcoming any potential pitfalls.
- Smell the roses – *“Experiencing life as fully as possible requires conscious effort, since we become habituated to things which are repeated. Varying our experiences (such as taking different routes to school or work) can help in this process” (Greenberg, 1987, p. 129).*

Deep Breathing and Quick Release of Tension

- **Teachers: Please have your students participate in the “Deep Breathing and Quick Release of Tension” activity**
- This exercise forces your shoulders down and it relaxes the abdomen – both areas where tension gathers. It also gives you a short break to think some positive thoughts and get back in control.

