Lesson 1: Stress: A Natural Part of Your Life

Bellringer

Write a short paragraph that describes one of the most stressful times in your life.
Objectives

- **Describe** the relationship between stress and stressors.
- **Distinguish** between distress and positive stress.

**Start Off Write**

Why is some stress in your life good for you?

**What Is Stress?**

- **A Natural Body Response** Stress is the combination of a new or possibly threatening situation and your body's natural response to the situation.
- **What Is a Stressor?** A stressor is anything that causes a stress response. Stressors can be physical, such as an emergency operation to remove your appendix. Stressors can also be mental, emotional, or social.
Bad Stress and Good Stress

- **Distress** Distress is the negative physical, mental, or emotional strain in response to a stressor.
- **Eustress** Positive stress—sometimes called eustress—is the stress response that happens when winning, succeeding, and achieving.

Major events, such as being in a car accident, can also cause distress.

**Common Stressors for Teens**

- Arguing with a brother, sister, or friend
- Being in a new home or school
- Getting a poor grade
- Feeling stressed
- Arguing with a parent
- Being uninvited to a party
- Being picked last for a team
- Being asked to do chores or other household tasks
- Being teased or bullied
- Being physically or sexually abused
- Being asked to take care of a sick family member
- Being a victim of violence
- Feeling pressure to perform well in school
- Being asked to help with younger siblings
- Being asked to do a lot of chores
- Being asked to get help with homework

Stressors in Your Life

- **Different People, Different Responses** Not everybody feels stressed by the same event. People respond differently to the same stressor.
- **Balancing Stress** You should find stressors—and a level of stress response—that leave you feeling motivated and enthusiastic.
Stress—and stressors—can be physical, mental, emotional, or social.

### Stressors Never Come One at a Time

- **Everyday Stressors** Every day, you deal with stressors you have faced many times, such as quizzes, disagreements with friends, and worrying about how you look. Most of the time, you deal with these routine stressors.

- **Major Life Events** If a major life event, such as the death of a favorite grandparent, is suddenly added, your stress level may change quickly.

All routine stressors may become major problems, and even small stressors may seem beyond your control.

**Major Life Changes That Cause Serious Stress**

- being pregnant and unmarried
- experiencing the death of a parent
- going through parents' divorce
- becoming an unmarried father
- becoming involved with drugs and alcohol
- experiencing the death of a brother or sister
- experiencing a change in your acceptance by your peers
- experiencing the death of a close friend
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Describe a situation in which you felt a strong positive stress. Then, describe how you felt when the stress was gone.

Objectives

- **Describe** the body’s stress response.
- **Discuss** how stress may affect relationships.

Start Off Write

How might long-term responses to stress damage relationships?
Responding to Stressors

• **What Is a Stress Response?** A stress response, also called a "fight-or-flight" response, is your body's reaction to a stressor.

• **Physical Changes and Stress** Your body responds to stress with the physical changes shown on the next slide. These changes are an immediate and unconscious physical response to the stressor.

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Short-Term Responses To Stress

• **Short-Term Symptoms of Stress** Short-term responses to stress include:
  1. Dry mouth
  2. Tightened muscles
  3. Extra energy
  4. Sharpened vision and hearing
Lesson 2 How Stress Affects You

Lasting Effects of Stress

- **Long-Term Symptoms of Stress** When you are distressed continuously, you may have:
  1. physical, emotional, and mental fatigue
  2. difficulty sleeping or frequent headaches
  3. mental or emotional problems
  4. become depressed, bored, or frustrated
  5. feel tense, irritable, and overwhelmed
  6. have trouble concentrating
  7. overeat without meaning to or lose your appetite

Prolonged distress can be serious.

**Long-Term Effects of Stress on the Body**

- **Brain** anxiety disorder or depression, elevated blood pressure
- **Heart** heart disease and heart attacks
- **Circulatory** system high blood pressure and coronary artery disease
- **Respiratory** system increased risk of infections and disease
- **Digestive** system digestive problems, such as diarrhea, constipation, ulcers, and abnormal bowel habits
- **Skin** including acne, hives, psoriasis, and eczema
- **Weight** loss of appetite and weight loss
- **Other** diabetes, chronic pain, emotional, and sleep disorders, all of which may be made worse by long-term stress.

Distress Affects Relationships

- **Making Bad Decisions** Your distress may hurt your ability to think clearly and to make good decisions. Your bad decisions may hurt other people even if you do not mean to.
- **Dealing with Stress** Learn what your stressors are. Know when you are stressed. Then, you can deal with your stress and will cause less damage to your relationships.
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Draw a picture of what you think of when you hear the term defense mechanism.

Objectives

• Describe the purpose of defense mechanisms.
• Identify three defense mechanisms.
• Explain why defense mechanisms may be harmful.

Start Off Write

What do defense mechanisms defend against?
Lesson 3 Defense Mechanisms

Short-Term Ways of Handling Stress

- **Some Defense Mechanisms**
  - Defense mechanisms include:
    1. Rationalization
    2. Displacement
    3. Repression
    4. Denial
    5. Projection

Do Defense Mechanisms Help?

- **Short-Term Relief**
  - Defense mechanisms are temporary. They are the easy way out. Defense mechanisms delay having to deal with the stressor.

- **Defense Mechanisms Do Not Solve Problems**
  - Defense mechanisms do not make the stressor go away. The stressor is still there. Often, it becomes even worse, so it is important to realize when you are using defense mechanisms.
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Write a paragraph that explains the relationships among facing a threatening situation, recognizing your signs of distress, and taking control of the situation to reduce your stress.

Objectives

- Identify eight physical signs of stress.
- Identify eight mental or emotional signs of stress.
- Discuss three tools for managing stress.
- Discuss why sharing emotions can help relieve stress.

Start Off Write

How do you know when you are stressed?
Recognizing Stress

• **What Is Stress Management?** Managing stress is part of mental and physical health. Stress management is the ability to handle stress in healthy ways.

• **First Step to Stress Management** The first step to managing stress is recognizing that you are stressed.

Stress—even positive stress—produces warning signs.

### Common Signs of Distress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical signs</th>
<th>Emotional and mental signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooth grinding</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortness of breath</td>
<td>Worrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounding heart</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle aches</td>
<td>Forgetfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Poor concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
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</tbody>
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Handling Distress

• **Stress Management Tools** Ways to manage distress include the following:
  1. Asserting yourself
  2. Planning ahead
  3. Laughing
Sharing Emotions

- **What Are Emotions?** Emotions are the feelings produced as you respond to something in your life.

- **Talk About How You Feel** Wanting to share your emotions with other people is natural. Often, just talking about your problem will help you solve it. Talk to a grownup you can trust—a parent, relative, teacher, religious leader, or guidance counselor.

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**WARNING!**

**Distress Is Dangerous**

Don’t ignore signs of distress! Stressors will not just go away. Distress can lead to illness, depression, or unhealthy behavior.

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Taking Time for Yourself

- **Personal Time** Personal time lets you forget all your stressors for a little while. It is time when you can relax.

- **Planning Personal Time** Plan all the things that you must do during the day and find 30 minutes of time where you can do something just for yourself.