



# How to Handle & Identify Stress

Brought to you by the Prevention Department at



# What is stress?

What you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something.

You may feel angry, frustrated, scared, or afraid.



## Example:

Right now the whole world is under stress due to the pandemic. A lot of people are experiencing the symptoms of stress, whether they are scared, angry or frustrated.

Many of you may feel stress due to not being able to attend prom, socialize with your friends or finish your final season in sports, band or orchestra.

Many of you may feel increased stress due to not being able to have in class instruction from a licensed teacher due to the cancelation of classes.

With many families not working, family financial problems could cause you to stress over how the bills will be paid or where the next meal will come from.

You are not alone during this time of isolation. The Council is here and we have provided you with a packet full tips and activities to help you get through this time.



## What can stress do?

Stress can give you a stomachache or a headache. When you're stressed you may not feel like sleeping or eating, or you might sleep or eat too much. Teens can experience weight loss or weight gain. Some withdraw socially from friends. Individuals can become irritable and become more aggressive.

**When teens do not manage their stress, they are more likely to get physically sick and prone to mental health issues.** Some try to escape by using drugs when they are stressed out, but that usually causes more problems.

Problems with smoking & using other drugs include:

1. Increases level of stress instead of reducing it.
2. Trouble keeping up in sports or physical activities
3. Once you start, extremely difficult to stop
4. Causes cancer, lung disease, and heart disease
5. Teens who smoke are three times more likely than nonsmokers to use alcohol, 8 times more likely to smoke marijuana and 22 times more likely to use cocaine
6. Associated with risky behavior such as fighting, truancy, and illegal activities

**There are many things you can do to help release stress, here are a few you can do.**

During this time of isolation, it's easy to rely on drugs and alcohol to deal with your stress. We want you to know that there are plenty of solutions to relieving stress that are healthy and drug free.

1

## avoid caffeine

You should also aim to avoid or reduce your intake of refined sugars - they are contained in many manufactured foods and can cause energy crashes which may lead you to feel tired and irritable. In general, try to eat a healthy, well-balanced and nutritious diet.



2

## indulge in physical activity



When you feel stressed and tense, go for a brisk walk in fresh air. Try to incorporate some physical activity into your daily routine on a regular basis, either before or after doing work, or at lunchtime. Regular physical activity will also improve the quality of your sleep.

3

## get more sleep

A lack of sleep is a significant cause of stress. Unfortunately, though, stress also interrupts our sleep as thoughts keep whirling through our heads, stopping us from relaxing enough to fall asleep. You should also aim to go to bed at roughly the same time each day so that your mind and body get used to a predictable bedtime routine.

# To get more sleep, try these practices:

Tip 1:

Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep at the same time every night.

Tip 2:

Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening. The longer your naps are in the afternoon, the longer you will stay up at night. Try to limit your naps and take a short nap closer to noon or in the morning.

Tip 3:

Develop a bedtime routine. Turn off all electronics, close your door and have a nice read before bed each night or shower to relax yourself before sleep. Whatever you do just make sure it is relaxing and you are constantly doing it every night.

Tip 4:

Try not to watch television or use your computer, cell phone, or tablet in the bedroom. The added light keeps you up and actually makes your mind work rather than relaxing your mind.

Tip 5:

Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature. Do not have your room be too cold or too hot.

Tip 6:

Stay away from caffeine late in the day. The later in the day you have caffeine, the longer you have a chance of staying up.

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP:**

ALCOHOL WILL NOT HELP YOU GET A FULL NIGHT OF HEALTHY DEEP SLEEP. In most cases alcohol actually disrupts sleep due to alcohol poisoning sickness and dehydration.

# 4

## Try relaxation techniques

Each day, try to relax with a stress reduction technique. There are many tried and tested ways to reduce stress so try a few and see what works best for you.

Don't worry if you find it difficult to relax at first. Relaxation is a skill that needs to be learned and will improve with practice.

The 4-7-8 breathing technique, also known as “relaxing breath” is breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 seconds, and exhaling for 8 seconds. This breathing pattern aims to reduce anxiety or help people get to sleep.

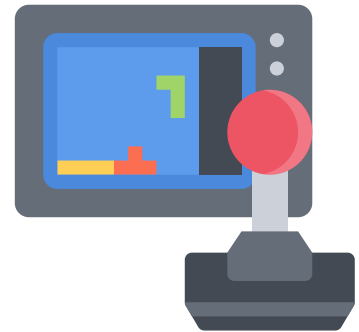
Different relaxation techniques include:



**YOGA**



**LISTENING  
TO MUSIC**



**PLAYING  
VIDEOGAMES**

# 5 Talk to someone

Just talking to someone about how you feel can be helpful. Talking can work by either distracting you from your stressful thoughts or releasing some of the built-up tension by discussing it.

Stress can cloud your judgement and prevent you from seeing things clearly. Talking things through with a friend, classmate, or even a trained professional, can help you find solutions to your stress and put your problems into perspective.



\*If you are still dealing with stress after trying the above 5 recommendations (Avoiding caffeine, indulging in physical activities, getting more sleep, relaxation techniques, or talking to someone.) Stay occupied by learning a new skill:

1. Learning a skill on YouTube
2. Watching an informative documentary
3. Improve communication and develop assertiveness training skills. For example, state feelings in polite, firm, and not overly aggressive or passive ways: ("I feel upset when you yell at me." "Please stop yelling.")
4. Painting or other forms of art work.
5. Reading your favorite book or magazine.
6. Exploring a topic that excites you

# Let's dive a bit more into what cause you stress and how you can cope with it.

## Stress Quiz

Get out something to write with so you can remember what answers you put. Or keep up with the answers on your phone or somewhere safe.

- This is a 10-question quiz
- Keep track of the numbers that you chose from 0-3 while answering each question
- Be honest with yourself so that you can help yourself out
- Most importantly...HAVE FUN
- How to Answer each question:
  - o 0: Almost never applies to me
  - o 1: Applies to me some of the time
  - o 2: Applies to me most of the time, but not all the time
  - o 3: Applies to me majority of the time, almost all of the time



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Stress Quiz

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

0: Almost never applies to me

1: Applies to me some of the time

2: Applies to me most of the time, but not all the time

3: Applies to me majority of the time, almost all of the time

Put the number that matches the way you feel in the space below the statements.

1. I find it difficult to take the first step to get things done.

2. I have tremors, twitches, or shakiness in parts of my body.

3. I worry about situations about where I could make a fool of myself.

4. I feel depressed or melancholy.

5. I no longer enjoy things I used to enjoy.

6. I tend to overreact to situations. Whether personal or public.

7. I am easily agitated or annoyed.

8. I have trouble sleeping or falling asleep.

9. I engage in activities or work that make me nervous or anxious.

10. I get upset by unimportant or small things.

\_\_\_\_\_ = total of the numbers added together

# Points Self-Assessment

0-10 points:

You are suffering from levels of stress that are normal for the average person from time to time. This stress will likely disappear within a short period of time.

10-20 points:

You are dealing with life and trying to understand things that are out of your control. Learn that it is ok to take a step back and take care of your mental health first before tackling other problems in yours or others lives. Do not go too long without taking care of yourself. (you never want to go overboard with stress)

20 or more points:

Your stress level has reached a critical stage. Now is the time to take serious steps to reduce the stressors in your life. Speak with your doctor or counselor as soon as possible, and explain your life situation to them. Ask for help!



# Word Scramble

Find the words in the scramble that are healthy ways to handle stress.

Exercise    Talk    Yoga  
Read    Journal    Music  
Rest    Sleep    Walk  
Laugh    Run

E F J T M S L E E P  
A X R S U Q L N U R  
T I E E S R A E N K  
K G A R I S U F E D  
L W D K C F G E A P  
A Q X S G I H C G J  
T A Y M Q V S L O G  
Y P S W A L K E Y B  
N N K L A N R U O J

**List unhealthy ways YOU may handle stress. Replace those unhealthy ways with healthy alternatives.**

*Example:*

*When I am stressed, I usually smoke marijuana (unhealthy choice).*

*Instead, I can play basketball (healthy choice).*

*Now, come up with 5 statements of your own following this template.*

When I am stressed, I usually \_\_\_\_\_ (Unhealthy choice).

Instead, I can \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy choice).

When I have to face a stressful challenge, I usually \_\_\_\_\_

(Unhealthy Choice). Instead, I can \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Choice).

When I am in a stressful situation, I usually \_\_\_\_\_ (Unhealthy

Choice). Instead, I can \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Choice).

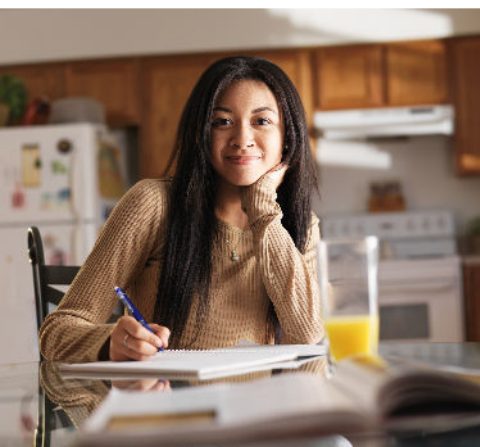
When I have a stressful conversation with another person, I usually

\_\_\_\_\_ (Unhealthy Choice). Instead, I can \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy

Choice).

When I am stressed out by others, I usually \_\_\_\_\_ (Unhealthy

Choice). Instead, I can \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Choice).



# Online Resources for Stress

For High School and Middle School Youth

[https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/Reaching-Teens/Documents/Private/Personal\\_plan\\_handout.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/Reaching-Teens/Documents/Private/Personal_plan_handout.pdf)

<https://www.adolescenthealth.org/Resources/Clinical-Care-Resources/Mental-Health/Mental-Health-Resources-For-Adolesc.aspx>

For Parents

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/stressful-lives/202003/adolescent-stress-in-the-time-covid-19-coping-loss>

<https://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/6to8/problems/emotions/stress.pdf>

