

STRESS: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION

Large Group Activity (5 Minutes)

Make two columns on the chalkboard. On the left side, write down what students say are the specific things that stress them out. On the right side, write down what they say is the specific result or action they take because of the stressful event (either emotionally or physically).

SHOW THE VIDEO (16 Minutes)

Small Group Questions (10 Minutes - 5 per group, assign 3 or 4 questions)

1. What are the activities and pressures that give you the most stress and why?
2. How do you act when you are stressed, and who do you usually take it out on?
3. How can stress be a positive thing?
4. What can happen to people who never take stress seriously?
5. What steps can you take to avoid being stressed?
6. How can you relax in the middle of a stressful time?
7. How can your long-term outlook on life help you to deal with stress?
8. What things do you do now to help relieve stress?

Group Activity (10 Minutes)

Have one person from each group come to the board and write the answers to #1. Have them write the answers under your headings of School, Family, Looks, and Relationships. Ask for the students' ideas on #5. The Wrap-Up on the following page will provide some helpful answers. This can lead you into the homework assignment on Stress Skills.

STRESS: WRAP-UP

THE MAIN STRESSORS ARE FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND BEING ACCEPTED BY YOUR FRIENDS AND PEERS.

- The key to living with stress is to deal with it.
- Deal with your family by communicating with them.
- Deal with your schoolwork by having realistic expectations of yourself and what you can do. Allow twice as much time as you think you'll need for new projects.
- Deal with your friends and peer acceptance by being who you like to be, not who others want you to be. You may end up with different friends, but you will be happier.
- Deal with your looks by recognizing that you are a special and unique person.
- Deal with over-commitment by prioritizing and cutting back on your schedule.
- Learn to say NO.

MANY PEOPLE THINK THAT SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE ARE NOT STRESSED, BUT THEY ARE!

- Stress is very dangerous and it can hurt you if you don't do anything about it. Stress can lead to exhaustion, drug addiction, alcoholism, and worse! (Use a personal example if you have one.)

USE THESE STRESS SKILLS TO GET THROUGH IT!

- Evaluate each problem and keep it in perspective.
- Prioritize your time and see what is really important.
- When you're really upset, get some exercise to calm down and clear your head.
- Remember to ask for guidance and perspective from a friend or adult. They may have some good tips on how to deal with life and stress!

HOMework: STRESS

HOMework Project: How to develop "Stress Skills"

List one of your own stress issues and answer the following questions:

1. How does this situation fit into the whole scheme of life?
2. What will be the long-term effect if I don't deal with this situation? (Put it in perspective!)
3. What is the worst thing that could happen to me if this situation doesn't work out the way I want it to?
4. What could I do to recover from this possible defeat or problem?
5. What are the steps I need to take NOW to address this stressful situation? What is the first thing I need to do? The second, etc? Make a plan!
6. Think of an adult or older person you know who you could talk to about your stress and your life (perhaps your teacher, a school counselor, a youth leader, your parents, a brother or sister, or a person at your church). People who have gone through it often have good advice about how to deal with it. Ask them how they deal with stress. Write down their top two suggestions.

HOMework Project: Scheduling Priorities and Saying NO

Draw a schedule chart with all of your activities for the week. On the left side, vertically list the time blocks in your day, from wake-up, through each class time, each break time, and two hour segments after school. Across the top of the paper, enter the days of the week. Then fill in your schedule! Remember to include time for study, exercise, play, work, family, friends, talking on the phone, watching TV, and so on. Scheduling your free time is just as important as your work or study time.

1. Take a good look at your schedule. What do you wish you had more time for? Make a list, and what you would do with the extra time.
2. Look at which events you could do without. Make a list of them and write down the time you would have if you dropped those events from your schedule.
3. Make a list of those things you never have time to accomplish. See what time you can gain from #3 and then schedule activities in place of the ones you dropped.
4. Make an assessment of your free and relaxing time. When do you blow off stress? Schedule in this time, even if you have to cancel other activities.
5. Carry your schedule in your notebook. If you say "yes" to something, write it down. If it doesn't fit and it is not a priority, say "no" to it. Learn to say "no" to keep from being over committed and stressed out!