



Botvin Life Skills

Lesson 5: Dealing with Stress



What is Stress?

Everyone in our society experiences stress. We can't escape it. Stress is not always bad. Sometimes stress may motivate people to study more before an exam or practice harder before a tryout. What can be bad for us is the way we learn to cope with stress.

What is stress?

Stress is the nervous, uptight, uneasy or apprehensive feeling that we all experience from time to time.

Write this definition on page 39.

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What causes stress?

Stressors
Something that causes stress.

What are some stressors in your life?

List them on page 21, Worksheet 10.



Different types of stress

Eustress
Good or positive stress.

Distress
Bad or negative stress.

Look at your list, write an E or D next to each item. Which type of stress is most on your list?

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Not all stress comes from negative situations. Many times stress can also be caused by a positive or happy event too.



Ways to Deal with Stress

- In groups, brainstorm some positive and negative ways to deal with stress.
- Write them on page 22, Worksheet 11.

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The only way to determine what coping method works for them is to try different methods out at different times. Once you find something that works for you, you should practice it and try to make it a habit.

The difference between positive and negative techniques

Negative stress responses have negative consequences and there are few if any negative consequences for positive stress responses.



Negative coping techniques do not actually reduce stress. In the long run, they make more stress!



Two techniques to try

Guided Imagery

Relax in your chair. I am going to read something and then we'll talk about it.

Did you feel relaxed? Did some parts of this exercise work better than others? Which parts? Would anyone feel comfortable doing this for themselves? What other scenes would help you feel relaxed and peaceful?

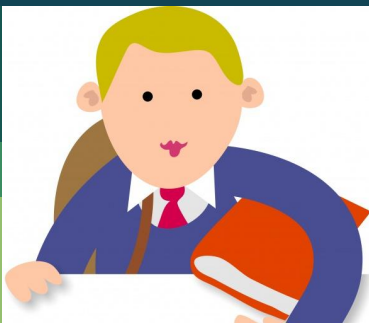
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Relax and follow what I say.

What do you think? Did you feel relaxed? Would anyone feel comfortable doing this for themselves?



Journal Topic



Turn to Worksheet 12 on page 25 and complete the journal page.

Remember to try to use some of the ideas discussed today in class in your response.

The principal of your school is so stressed out that he can't take it anymore. He has so much work he can't ever seem to relax. The principal is so desperate to learn ways to deal with his stress that he offered a challenge to the school. The student who gives the principal the best ideas to deal with stress will win a "no-homework" pass. This pass will free the winner from homework for the rest of the year!