

**THEME OF THE WEEK:** THE FOLLOWING IS AN ADAPTATION FROM “STRESS BUSTING” COMPILED BY GRACE WILHELM, M.A., AND THE STRESS REDUCTION WORKBOOK FOR TEENS BY GINA M. BIEGEL, M.A., LMFT

**STRESS MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION. EVERYONE HAS STRESS, BUT IT’S NOT ALWAYS BAD. STRESS IS THE REASON WE GET OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING BECAUSE WE HAVE THINGS TO DO AND PEOPLE TO SEE. STRESS MOVES US THROUGH OUR MORNING ROUTINES SO WE DON’T EXPERIENCE UNDESIRABLE STRESS, LIKE MISSING THE BUS. STRESS IS WHY WE STUDY FOR A TEST AND WHY WE DO OUR HOMEWORK. IT’S WHAT MAKES US WASH OUR FACE IN THE MORNING, BRUSH OUR TEETH, AND PUT ON DEODORANT.**

**TIME:** 75 minutes

**CLASSROOM TEACHER/STUDENT PREPARATION:**

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Small group..... Check In/How Was Your Week? (10 minutes)
  - What is stress? (5 minutes)
- Large group..... How Stress Affects You (15 minutes)
  - Good vs. Bad Stress (10 minutes)
  - Managing Stress BBC Video (5 minutes)
  - Ways to Manage Stress (10 minutes)
  - Health Risks of Stress (10 minutes)
  - Pulse Check Deep Breathing Exercise (10 minutes)

*Don't underestimate the value of Doing Nothing, of just going along, listening to all the things you can't hear, and not bothering. ~ Pooh's Little Instruction Book, inspired by A.A. Milne*

**SUPPLIES:**

- How Stress Affects You** worksheet
- Defining Stress** laminated copies
- 101 Ways to Manage Stress** laminated copies

**CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)**

- Does your family celebrate Thanksgiving?
- What are your plans for Thanksgiving?
- What is your favorite Thanksgiving dish? Do you like leftovers?
- What traditions are unique to your family?

**WHAT IS STRESS? (5 MINUTES)**

Stress is defined as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances. Stress looks and feels different to everyone. Some people thrive in stressful situations, and others shut down. Take a minute to think about how stress looks and feels to you. Use the laminated **Defining Stress** handouts to help identify how stress feels to you, emotionally, physically, and mentally. Encourage students to think about what else should be included on the handout.

## HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU (15 MINUTES)

Fill out the **How Stress Affects You** worksheet. Encourage students to use color, and to put thought and hard genuine effort into completing this. Ask for some students to share their experiences if comfortable.

Process questions:

- *What areas did students' noticed stress show up the most in their lives? Mentally, Emotionally, Physically?*
- *Out of these three, which is the most challenging to manage?*
- *What affect do these three areas have on one another, if any? Is it possible to just be stressed in one area and not others?*
- *Summarize common themes: Ex: "Sounds like a lot of people feel stress in their bodies; shoulders," "Everyone has mentioned worrying about doing well in school" or "Everyone has reported feeling overwhelmed is connected to stress."*

## GOOD STRESS VS. BAD STRESS (10 MINUTES) THE STRESS REDUCTION WORKBOOK FOR TEENS BY GINA M. BIEGEL, M.A., LMFT

Lead a discussion on GOOD and BAD stress. Say, ***"Many of you may think of stress as solely a negative thing, but there are times when stress actually helps you!"***

*Travis plays soccer for Poudre. He tends to get really nervous before a game, and his stomach often feels a little queasy. At the same time, his adrenaline increases and that helps him perform better.*

If you go beyond that perfect point, the balance tips; the stress gets too great. It begins to decrease your ability to do well and starts to hurt you.

*Diana tends to put her assignments off until the very last minute. Sometimes waiting close to the deadline works in her favor; she gets her homework done, and the pressure helps her do it well. At other times, she waits too long and the stress is so great that she can't finish her homework and she gives up altogether.*

Say, ***"As you can see, sometimes stress is a good thing"***.

Here are a few other examples to help you see how the balance can tip.

You get named the captain of the basketball team.

**Good Stress:** You are proud of this position and work harder and do better on the team because of it.

**Bad Stress:** You get so nervous that it actually makes you play worse.

You get a really difficult homework assignment.

**Good Stress:** You feel challenged by this assignment and spend extra effort on it because you want to do well and are interested in the topic.

**Bad Stress:** You are so overwhelmed that you give up and don't even do the assignment.

DISCUSSION:

- *Tell about a time when stress helped you perform better or increased your motivation.*
- *Can you think of a time when you passed that perfect point of stress so that it actually began to hurt you? Describe what happened.*

## RISKS (10 MINUTES)

Think of a time when stress negatively impacted your life. What did that impact look like? Often times we think stress is just emotional or mental. When stress completely compromises our system, we can get sick. Can you remember a time when you were stressed out, maybe not getting enough sleep, exercising, or eating right and then landed a cold? Stress affects us all differently; some people lean on food and tend to overeat, while others just aren't hungry. Some people just need to sleep and can't even get out of bed, while others can't sleep at all. When we are not regulating our bodies, i.e. eating and sleeping regularly, we cannot regulate our emotions, there is a direct correlation. When our emotions are in dysregulation everything suffers, from our relationships with other people, to our ability to handle stress, to our quality of work. These are just some of the examples of how stress can turn into serious issues like obesity, heart diseases, headaches, depression, anxiety, etc. What examples do you have?

## MANAGING STRESS (5 MINUTES)

Watch the Video: *Managing Stress -BBC*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnpQrMqDoqE> (2min35sec)

## WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS (15 MINUTES)

Instruct everyone to take out a piece a paper and compile, as a group, as many ways to manage stress as possible. Call on specific students to get ideas. Refer to the 101 handout for more ideas. Encourage students to be creative and think about what really works for them or an idea they may have but haven't tried yet.

As we go through these next couple of months, think about this time of the year. At the end of the semester all of your projects and assignments are due. Finals come and go, and grades get recorded forever! Additionally, the holidays are such a great time of the year but for many of you and your parents, this can be a very stressful time.

High School offers a lot of ways and resources for students to combat stress! Remember your peers, teachers, counselors, social worker, etc. they are here to help! Check out all the cool sports and clubs that are offered, get involved and stay active!

Spring sports: Baseball, Girls' Tennis, Boys' Lacrosse. Track & Field, Girls' Soccer, Boys' Swimming and Girls' Golf.

Clubs: Gay-Straight-Alliance, Yoga Club (Starting Dec.), Environmental Club, World Diversity Club, Writer's Club, Fellowship of Christian Teens (FCT), Yearbook, Service Club, Science Olympiad, Science Bowl, SAVA Club, Robotics Team (Starting Jan.), River Watch, Poudre Book Club, Poetry Club, National Honor Society, Mock Trial Team, Math Club, Link Crew, Leadership Council, Knowledge Bowl, HYPE (Hispanic Youth Promoting Excellence), Freshmen Class Council, French Club, FOR: Friends of Rachel, FCCLA, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), Drama Club/Thespians, DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) and Ambassadors.

- What other clubs or sports do you play that weren't on this list?

## LARGE GROUP PULSE DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE (10 MINUTES)

This will challenge a lot of students. Many of them will struggle to find their pulse and will need to be helped. **It may also be a challenge to get the students to be silent, (which is necessary during pulse check).** Have one person in the group take time. Once everyone has located their pulse time the group for 30 seconds and then write down that number. Next, multiply that number by two and that number is your **resting heart rate**.

### Resting Heart Rate

- For teenagers (age 13 to 19), a normal resting heart rate is anywhere between 50 and 90 beats per minute. Because of differences in teens' bodies and physiology, the range for an acceptable resting heart rate is much greater than for other age groups. People who experience a lot of anxiety tend to have higher heart rates than others; use of nicotine or caffeine also increases the resting heart rate.

Now ONE Ambassador will lead the entire class in a deep breathing exercise. *Try hard to keep students on-task and taking this seriously (while I recognize this might be hard ☺).*

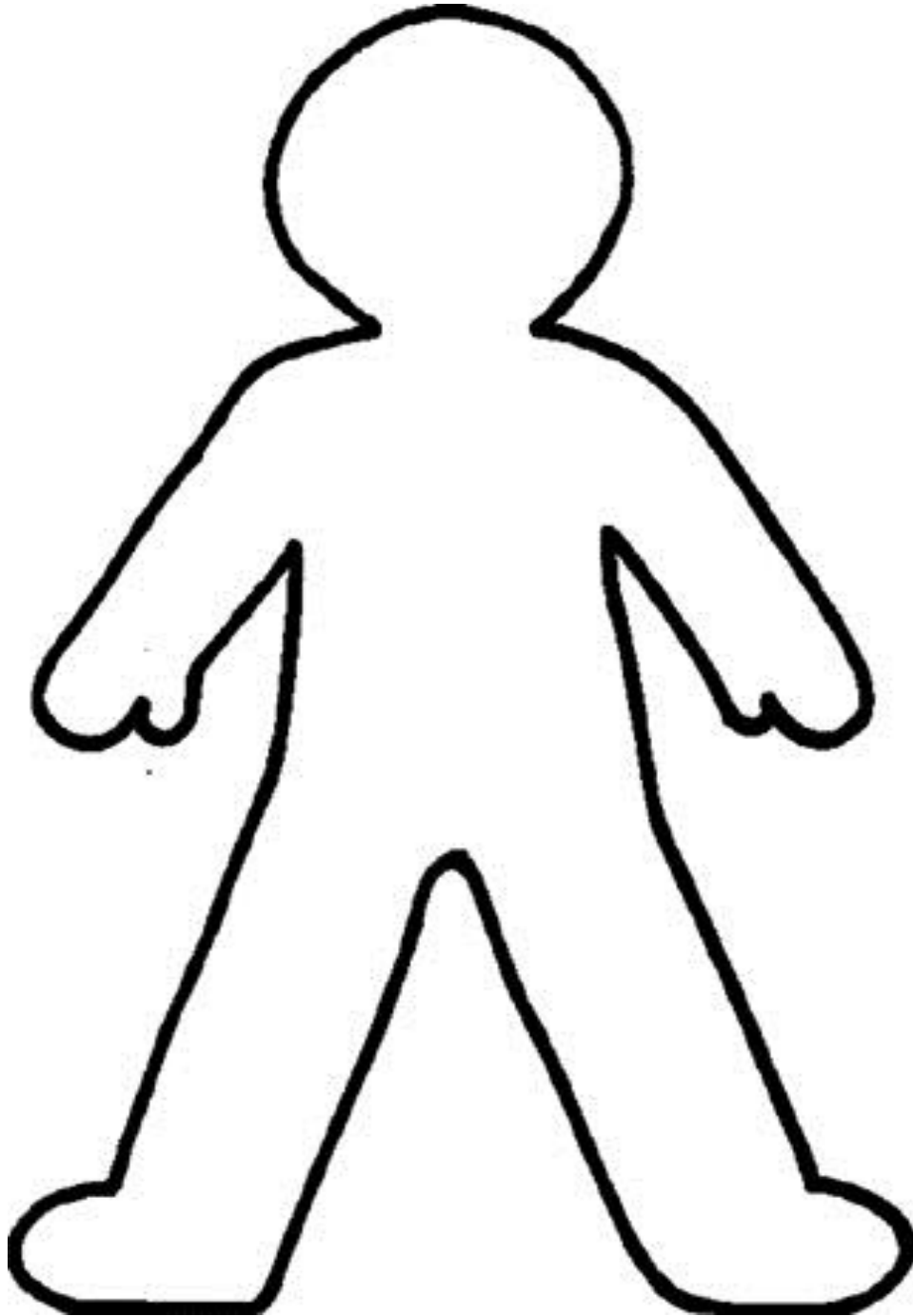
### “Equal Breathing”

How it's done: Balance can do a body good, beginning with the breath. To start, inhale for a count of four, then exhale for a count of four — all through the nose, which adds a natural resistance to the breath. We will do this for one full minute. More advanced people can aim for six to eight counts per breath with the same goal in mind: calm the nervous system, increase focus, and reduce stress.

This exercise works best anytime and anyplace — but it's especially effective as your lying in bed trying to sleep. Instead of counting endless sheep, try deep breathing instead, this will hopefully help take your mind off of your overactive brain, or whatever else might be keeping you from getting your zzzzz's.” Now lead everyone through a second pulse check and compare that new number to their resting heart rate... Did it work?

## How Stress Affects You

Spend a few minutes thinking about a stressful situation that you have recently experienced. Try to think about exactly how that made you feel, where in your body you felt it, and what exactly did it feel like and what were some of your thoughts? Draw and color below your experience.



## 21 Habits of Happy People

*“Happiness is a habit – cultivate it.” ~ Elbert Hubbard*

Happiness is one aspiration all people share. No one wants to be sad and depressed.

We’ve all seen people who are always happy – even amidst agonizing life trials. I’m not saying happy people don’t feel grief, sorrow or sadness; they just don’t let it overtake their life. The following are 21 things happy people make a habit of doing:

- 1. Appreciate Life** Be thankful that you woke up alive each morning. Develop a childlike sense of wonder towards life. Focus on the beauty of every living thing. Make the most of each day. Don’t take anything for granted. Don’t sweat the small stuff.
- 2. Choose Friends Wisely** Surround yourself with happy, positive people who share your values and goals. Friends that have the same ethics as you will encourage you to achieve your dreams. They help you to feel good about yourself. They are there to lend a helping hand when needed.
- 3. Be Considerate** Accept others for who they are as well as where they are in life. Respect them for who they are. Touch them with a kind and generous spirit. Help when you are able, without trying to change the other person. Try to brighten the day of everyone you come into contact with.
- 4. Learn Continuously** Keep up to date with the latest news regarding your career and hobbies. Try new and daring things that has sparked your interest – such as dancing, skiing, surfing or sky-diving.
- 5. Creative Problem Solving** Don’t wallow in self-pity. As soon as you face a challenge get busy finding a solution. Don’t let the set backs affect your mood, instead see each new obstacle you face as an opportunity to make a positive change. Learn to trust your gut instincts – it’s almost always right.
- 6. Do What They Love** Some statistics show that 80% of people dislike their jobs! No wonder there’s so many unhappy people running around. We spend a great deal of our life working. Choose a career that you enjoy – the extra money of a job you detest isn’t worth it. Make time to enjoy your hobbies and pursue special interests.
- 7. Enjoy Life** Take the time to see the beauty around you. There’s more to life than work. Take time to smell the roses, watch a sunset or sunrise with a loved one, take a walk along the seashore, hike in the woods etc. Learn to live in the present moment and cherish it. Don’t live in the past or the future.
- 8. Laugh** Don’t take yourself – or life to seriously. You can find humor in just about any situation. Laugh at yourself – no one’s perfect. When appropriate laugh and make light of the circumstances. (Naturally there are times that you should be serious as it would be improper to laugh.)
- 9. Forgive** Holding a grudge will hurt no one but you. Forgive others for your own peace of mind. When you make a mistake – own up to it – learn from it – and FORGIVE yourself.
- 10. Gratitude** Develop an attitude of gratitude. Count your blessings; All of them – even the things that seem trivial. Be grateful for your home, your work and most importantly your family and friends. Take the time to tell them that you are happy they are in your life.
- 11. Invest in Relationships** Always make sure your loved ones know you love them even in times of conflict. Nurture and grow your relationships with your family and friends by making the time to spend with them. Don’t break your promises to them. Be supportive.
- 12. Keep Their Word** Honesty is the best policy. Every action and decision you make should be based on honesty. Be honest with yourself and with your loved ones.
- 13. Meditate** Meditation gives your very active brain a rest. When it’s rested you will have more energy and function at a higher level. Types of meditation include yoga, hypnosis, relaxation tapes, affirmations, visualization or just sitting in complete silence. Find something you enjoy and make the time to practice daily.
- 14. Mind Their Own Business** Concentrate on creating your life the way you want it. Take care of you and your family. Don’t get overly concerned with what other people are doing or saying. Don’t get caught up with gossip or name calling. Don’t judge. Everyone has a right to live their own life the way they want to – including you.
- 15. Optimism** See the glass as half full. Find the positive side of any given situation. It’s there – even though it may be hard to find. Know that everything happens for a reason, even though you may never know what the reason is. Steer clear of negative thoughts. If a negative thought creeps in – replace it with a positive thought.

**16. Love Unconditionally** Accept others for who they are. You don't put limitations on your love. Even though you may not always like the actions of your loved ones – you continue to love them.

**17. Persistence** Never give up. Face each new challenge with the attitude that it will bring you one step closer to your goal. You will never fail, as long as you never give up. Focus on what you want, learn the required skills, make a plan to succeed and take action. We are always happiest while pursuing something of value to us.

**18. Be Proactive** Accept what can not be changed. Happy people don't waste energy on circumstances beyond their control. Accept your limitations as a human being. Determine how you can take control by creating the outcome you desire – rather than waiting to respond.

**19. Self Care** Take care of your mind, body and health. Get regular medical check ups. Eat healthy and work out. Get plenty of rest. Drink lots of water. Exercise your mind by continually energizing it with interesting and exciting challenges.

**20. Self Confidence** Don't try to be someone that you're not. After all no one likes a phony. Determine who you are in the inside – your own personal likes and dislikes. Be confident in who you are. Do the best you can and don't second guess yourself.

**21. Take Responsibility** Happy people know and understand that they are 100% responsible for their life. They take responsibility for their moods, attitude, thoughts, feelings, actions and words. They are the first to admit when they've made a mistake.

Begin today by taking responsibility for your happiness. Work on developing these habits as you own. The more you incorporate the above habits into your daily lifestyle – the happier you will be.

Most of all: BE TRUE TO YOURSELF.

## DEFINING STRESS

How do you know if you or someone is stressed? Everyone defines stress differently. Some people explain it as an uncomfortable emotion, some people experience it physically and some focus on how it affects their thinking.

### Here are some words that are used to define stress in emotional terms:

Apprehensive	Overwhelmed	Depressed
Unhappy	Nervous	Anxious
Uncomfortable	Worried	Frustrated
Freaking out	Lost or confused	Overcommitted
Out of control	Wound up	Stretched too thin

### Here are some words that are used to define stress in physical terms:

Tension	Headaches	Stomachaches
Panic	Jitteriness	Dizziness
Aches and pains	Trouble breathing	Excessive appetite
Chest pains	Trouble sleeping	No appetite

### Here are some words that are used to define stress in terms of thoughts:

Overthinking	Blanking out on things	Too much to think about
A negative state of mind	Constantly thinking	Having trouble thinking
Unable to focus	Having bad thoughts	Having too many things to do
Not being able to concentrate		

### Others? What is missing?