

Understanding Stress: What It Feels Like in My Body

Youth Worksheet

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is your body's natural reaction to challenges, threats, or major changes. Think of it like your body's alarm system that helps you respond to situations that need your attention.

Everyone experiences stress differently in their body.

MY BODY'S STRESS SIGNALS

! [Body outline diagram]

ACTIVITY 1: COLOR YOUR STRESS MAP

1. Look at the body outline above
 2. Using different colored pencils or markers:
 - **RED** = Where you feel tense or tight
 - **BLUE** = Where you feel pain or discomfort
 - **YELLOW** = Where you feel energy or restlessness
 - **GREEN** = Parts that feel calm even when stressed
 3. Circle the **THREE** strongest reactions you notice in your body when stressed.
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COMMON STRESS SIGNALS

HEAD & MIND

- Headaches
- Racing thoughts
- Trouble focusing
- Feeling worried
- Forgetfulness
- Feeling overwhelmed

HEART & LUNGS

- Fast heartbeat
- Chest tightness
- Breathing faster
- Feeling hot or cold
- Sweating

STOMACH & DIGESTION

- Stomach aches
- Feeling sick
- Not hungry or too hungry
- Upset stomach

MUSCLES & MOVEMENT

- Tense shoulders
 - Shaking or trembling
 - Feeling tired
 - Restless legs
 - Clenched jaw
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ACTIVITY 2: MY PERSONAL STRESS SIGNALS

Write down your top 5 stress signals that tell you you're feeling stressed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

When I notice these signals, I will:

ACTIVITY 3: STRESS THERMOMETER

Draw how your stress feels at different levels:

I[10] - EXTREME STRESS! (My body feels like: _____)

|

|

[7-9] - HIGH STRESS (My body feels like: _____)

|

|

[4-6] - MEDIUM STRESS (My body feels like: _____)

|

|

[1-3] - MILD STRESS (My body feels like: _____)

|

|

[0] - NO STRESS/CALM (My body feels like: _____)

□

ACTIVITY 4: MATCHING STRESS SIGNALS TO CALMING TECHNIQUES

Draw a line connecting each stress signal to the calming technique that might help:

STRESS SIGNALS

CALMING TECHNIQUES

Racing heart

Deep breathing

Tight muscles

Progressive muscle
relaxation

Racing thoughts

Counting to 10

Feeling hot

Getting a drink of water

Stomach ache

Gentle stretching

Trouble focusing

Taking a short walk

Feeling angry

Talking to someone you trust

ACTIVITY 5: MY STRESS RESCUE PLAN

When I notice stress in my body, I can:

BREATHE: Take 5 deep belly breaths, counting to 4 as I breathe in, and 6 as I breathe out.

MOVE: I can help my body release stress by: _____

CALM: I can calm my mind by: _____

TALK: I can talk to: _____

CREATE: I can express my feelings by: _____

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is the earliest sign that tells you you're getting stressed?
 2. Where in your body do you feel stress the most?
 3. What activities make your body feel calm again?
 4. What's one new thing you learned about how YOUR body experiences stress?
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MY STRESS BODY SCAN PRACTICE

When you notice stress building, try this quick body scan:

1. Sit or lie down comfortably
2. Close your eyes or look down
3. Take 3 slow breaths
4. Notice your feet (Are they tense? Relaxed?)
5. Move up to your legs (How do they feel?)
6. Notice your stomach (Tight? Uncomfortable?)
7. Check your chest and breathing (Fast? Slow?)
8. Notice your shoulders and neck (Tight? Relaxed?)
9. Pay attention to your face (Jaw tight? Forehead scrunched?)
10. Take 3 more slow breaths

Remember: Noticing how stress feels in YOUR body is the first step to managing it!

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