From Stress to Success

Do you have stress in your life? Chances are that you do. In this interest project, you will learn about sources of stress, how to manage it, and even how to turn it into a positive asset!

Skill Builders

1. Find out how the human body responds to stress. How are the following affected by stress: metabolism, blood pressure, heart rate, breathing? What happens to the body if it is continually under stress?

2. Feelings of stress can be reduced by using relaxation techniques. Sit in a quiet, comfortable place. Close your eyes. Breathe slowly and deeply. Notice your body's reactions. Are you feeling more or less stressed than before?

3. Effective time management is the ability to plan your time well. Such planning often eliminates stressful situations. Plan your time by creating a reasonable schedule for yourself. Try it for a week. How do you feel? Does it reduce your stress?

4. Massage can relieve stress in muscles. Learn several massage strokes that help in relaxation. Try working on your feet, hands, or someone's shoulders. For example, a hand can be massaged by making firm circular patterns with your thumb between the tendons on the back of the hand. Then grasp each finger one at a time with your hand, and with a slight twisting motion slide your hand slowly from the base of the finger to the tip. Similar patterns can be used on the feet. A little hand lotion or oil will help to make the motion more soothing.

5. Some stressors are caused by problems for which you cannot readily see a solution. Choose one of these problems and brainstorm at least five ways you could cope with it. Read chapter 5 in the Creative Writing: Handbook for Teachers. Ask your parents or guardians, friends, and teachers for possible solutions. Practice one of the "solutions" regularly.

6. The symptoms of stress can be relieved by physical activity. Make room in your schedule to participate in your favorite activities at least three times a week. Do this for at least one month. Compare how you feel before and after the one-month period.

   - Play an active sport.
   - Participate in a movement or dance activity that makes you feel more flexible.
   - Go for a 20-minute walk or ride a bicycle for several miles.
   - Participate in a vigorous physical activity that lasts at least 25 minutes.

Service Projects

Help to plan a workshop on stress management for your school or community center. You may want to include a role-play in which you and your parents and friends participate. Discuss how you can use your information to reduce stress in your own life.

Technology

1. Find out how biofeedback works. What ailments respond well to biofeedback techniques? Which are less responsive? Why? How does biofeedback machinery help to treat the ailments? How can you use this information to reduce stress in your own life?

2. Hold a discussion at your troop or group meeting about the advantages and disadvantages of technology in today's society. Questions to consider include: Is it a good idea to invest more money in technology? What are the effects of technology on society? What are the effects of technology on the environment?

3. Some of the symptoms of stress can be relieved by physical activity. Make room in your schedule to participate in one of the following activities at least three times a week. Do this for at least one month. Compare how you feel before and after the one-month period.

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Career Exploration

1. Read about or interview two professionals from among the following: biofeedback consultant, yoga instructor, physical therapist. Ask them about their field, how they were trained, and how they see their field expanding or changing in the next 10 years.

2. Find out how biofeedback works. What ailments respond well to biofeedback techniques? Which are less responsive? Why? How does biofeedback machinery help to treat the ailments? How can you use this information to reduce stress in your own life?

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