

# Teen Stress Workbook

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**Facilitator Reproducible  
Self-Assessments, Exercises  
& Educational Handouts**

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### **Teen Stress Workbook**

Facilitator Reproducible Self-Assessments,  
Exercises & Educational Handouts

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## **Using This Book** *(For the professional)*

**Adolescence can be a period of significant change for most teens, leading them to experience stress.**

Stress is the way our bodies and minds react to changes in life. Stress, an uncomfortable feeling teens get, is triggered when they are overwhelmed, out of control, frustrated, or excessively worried about something.

Because of the multiple life changes teens must work through, many find themselves under more stress than they have formerly experienced in their life.

**Stress can come from many different sources:**

- Family members' constant reminders such as "Don't use drugs," "Go out for that team," "I don't like your friends," "Make new friends," "Get good grades," "You have a curfew," and "Stay out of trouble."
- Friends frequent reminders and suggestions such as "Be cool," "Skip that class," "Take one drink," "Try this," "Don't hang around that person," "Let's pick on that person," and "Let's cheat on the test."
- Teen inner thoughts and worries such as "I need to lose weight," "If I don't do better I will never get into college," "My parents will be upset with me," "I don't fit in at school," and "I should get a job."
- Adults' remarks such as "You need to get that done," "You were late," and "Get it done or you will get into trouble."

**No one can avoid stress. Small amounts of stress can be okay, but chronic stress can push people beyond the limits of what can be handled.**

**Some facts about stress:**

- Teens are trying to cope with many physical, social, and emotional changes during adolescence.
- Teens are struggling to make their own decisions and develop their own identity.
- Teens are more resilient than most people expect.
- Teens need to feel competent and in control in order to cope with stress.
- Teens often have trouble identifying or expressing their feelings about being stressed.
- Teens are struggling for independence from their family.
- Teens are torn between their need for more responsibility and their dependence on family members and adults.
- When teens are experiencing chronic stress, even the smallest amount of additional stress can trigger strong negative emotional responses.

*(Continued on the next page)*

## Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

The *Teen Stress Workbook* contains five separate sections to help teens learn more about themselves and the skills they possess and learn to manage the stress that occurs in their lives. Participants will learn new skills and the importance of preventing, managing and coping with stress and its symptoms.

- **How Do I know When I'm Stressed Scale** helps teens to explore the behavioral, emotional, and physical signs and symptoms, and their intensity.
- **My Stressors Scale** helps teens examine the various sources of stress in their lives.
- **Eustress vs. Distress Scale** helps teens identify ways to build resiliency in preventing and dealing with stress and its symptoms.
- **Stressed for Success Scale** helps teens identify the various ways that they put too much pressure on themselves.
- **How I Deal with My Stress Scale** helps teens identify their effectiveness in coping with stress and the symptoms of stress.

## Use Codes for Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a term for any action that preserves the privacy of other people. Because teens completing the activities in this workbook might be asked to answer assessment items and to journal about and explore their relationships, you will need to discuss confidentiality before you begin using the materials in this workbook. Maintaining confidentiality is important because it shows respect for others and allows participants to explore their feelings without hurting anyone's feelings or fearing gossip, harm or retribution.

In order to maintain confidentiality, explain to the participants that they need to assign a **name code for each person or each group of people** they write about as they complete the various activities in the workbook. For example, a friend named Joey who enjoys going to hockey games might be titled JLHG (Joey Loves Hockey Games) for a particular exercise. In order to protect their friends' identities, they should not use actual names or initials of people or groups, only name codes.

*(Continued on the next page)*

## Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

The *Teen Stress Workbook* is designed to be used either independently or as part of an integrated curriculum. You may administer one of the assessments and the journaling exercises to an individual or a group with whom you are working, or you may administer a number of the assessments over one or more days.

This book includes the following reproducible pages in the first five sections:

- **Assessment Instruments** – Self-assessment inventories with scoring directions and interpretation materials. Group facilitators can choose one or more of the activities relevant to their participants.
- **Activity Handouts** – Practical questions and activities that prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors.
- **Quotations** – Quotations are used in each section to provide insight and promote reflection. Participants will be asked to select one or more of the quotations and journal about what the quotations mean to them.
- **Reflective Questions for Journaling** – Self-exploration activities and journaling exercises specific to each assessment to enhance self-discovery, learning, and healing.
- **Educational Handouts** – Handouts designed to enhance instruction can be used by individuals or in groups to promote a positive understanding of managing stress. They can be distributed, scanned and converted into masters for overheads or transparencies, projected or written on boards and/or discussed.

### Who Should Use This Program?

This book has been designed as a practical tool to help professionals such as therapists, counselors, psychologists, teachers, group leaders, etc. Depending on the role of the professional using the *Teen Stress Workbook* and the specific person's or group's needs, these sections can be used individually or combined for a more comprehensive approach.

### Why Use Self-Assessments?

- Self-assessments are important in teaching various stress management skills because they help participants to engage in several ways:
- Become aware of the primary motivators that guide their behavior
- Explore and let go of troublesome habits and behavioral patterns learned in childhood
- Examine the effects of unconscious childhood messages
- Gain insight and recognize a “wake-up call” for behavioral change
- Focus thinking on behavioral goals for positive change
- Uncover personal resources that can help them to cope better with problems and difficulties
- Explore personal characteristics without judgment
- Identify personal strengths and weaknesses

**Because the assessments are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-use format, individuals can self-administer, score and interpret each assessment at their own pace.**

## **About the Assessments, Journaling Activities and Educational Handouts**

Materials in the Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts sections in this book are reproducible and can be photocopied for participants' use. Assessments contained in this book focus on self-reported data and thus are similar to ones used by psychologists, counselors, therapists, and career consultants. The accuracy and usefulness of the information provided is dependent on the truthful information that each participant provides. By being honest, participants help themselves to learn about unproductive and ineffective patterns in their lives, and to uncover information that might be keeping them from being as happy or as successful as they might be.

An assessment instrument can provide participants with valuable information about themselves; however, these assessments cannot measure or identify everything. The assessments' purpose is not to pigeonhole certain characteristics, but rather to allow participants to consider all of their characteristics. This book contains self-assessments, not tests. Tests measure knowledge or whether something is right or wrong. For the assessments in this book, there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments ask for personal opinions or attitudes about a topic of importance in the participant's life.

When administering the assessments in this workbook, remember that the items are generically written so that they will be applicable to a wide variety of people but may not account for every possible variable for every person. No assessments are specifically tailored to one person. Assessments are structured to help a variety of participants to identify negative themes in their lives and find ways to break the hold of these patterns and their effects.

Advise teen participants taking the assessments that they should not spend too much time trying to analyze the content of the questions; they should think about the questions in general and then spontaneously report how they feel about each one. Whatever the results of the assessment, encourage participants to talk about their findings and their feelings pertaining to what have they discovered about themselves. Talking about issues such as teen stress and coping can be therapeutic and beneficial.

The *Teen Stress Workbook* sections serve as an avenue for individual self-reflection, as well as group experiences revolving around identified topics of importance. Each assessment includes directions for easy administration, scoring and interpretation. In addition, each section includes exploratory activities, reflective journaling activities, insightful quotations and educational handouts to help participants to learn more about the stress they are experiencing and how to effectively manage the stress they will inevitably have in the future.

*(Continued on the next page)*

## **About the Assessments, Journaling Activities and Educational Handouts** *(Continued)*

The art of self-reflection goes back many centuries and is rooted in many of the world's greatest spiritual and philosophical traditions. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, was known to walk the streets engaging the people he met in philosophical reflection and dialogue. He felt that this type of activity was so important in life that he proclaimed, "The unexamined life is not worth living!" The unexamined life is one in which the same routine is continually repeated without ever thinking about its meaning to one's life and how this life really could be lived. However, a structured reflection and examination of beliefs, assumptions, characteristics and patterns can provide a better understanding which can lead to a more satisfying life and career. A greater level of self-understanding about important life skills is often necessary to make positive, self-directed changes in repetitive negative patterns throughout life. The assessments and exercises in this book can help promote this self-understanding. Through involvement with the in-depth activities, each participant claims ownership in the development of positive patterns.

Journaling is an extremely powerful tool for enhancing self-discovery, learning, transcending traditional problems, breaking ineffective life and career habits, and helping people to heal from psychological traumas of the past. From a physical point of view, writing reduces stress and lowers muscle tension, blood pressure and heart rate levels. Psychologically, writing reduces feelings of sadness, depression and general anxiety, and it leads to a greater level of life satisfaction and optimism. Behaviorally, writing leads to enhanced social skills, emotional intelligence and creativity.

By combining reflective assessment and journaling, your participants will engage in a powerful method for managing the inevitable stress they will have in the future.

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**Thanks to the following professionals whose input in this book has been invaluable!**

Amy Brodsky, LISW-S	Jay Leutenberg
Carol Butler, MS Ed, RN, C	Hannah Lavoie
Kathy Khalsa, MAJS, OTR / L	Kathy Liptak, Ed.D.
Eileen Regen, M.Ed., CJE	

# Introduction for the Participant

Like adults, you experience stress every day. You will benefit from learning effective stress management skills. A little bit of stress is okay, and can even be helpful. However, when you become overloaded with stress or the stress lasts for long periods of time, the stress needs to be managed. When you are unable to adequately manage your stress, you may feel anxiety or depression, experience physical problems, withdraw from family and friends, display aggression or bullying behavior and even become involved with drug and/or alcohol abuse.

You will experience stress when you perceive a situation too challenging, too difficult, too painful, or beyond your control. Some of your stress sources might include the following:

- Changes in your physical appearance
- Negative feelings about yourself
- Problems with peers at school
- Unsafe living conditions at home
- Separation or divorce of parents
- Death of a loved one
- Death of a pet
- Change in family living situation
- Move to a new neighborhood or city
- Change of schools
- Peer pressure
- Bullying

This workbook will help you develop and polish the skills you need to build basic resiliency habits, prime your coping skills when you encounter stress, and manage effective stress management skills. You may encounter many of the above types of stress in your lifetime. When you encounter negative changes in your environment, changes occur in your mind and body to prepare you for that change. You can, however, minimize and reverse this stress response by using the stress management techniques contained in this workbook.

You will be encouraged throughout this workbook to complete assessments, journaling activities and exercises. Because active involvement is as important as talking about theories, it is to your best advantage to take the time to complete all of the skill-building exercises.

The *Teen Stress Workbook* is designed to help you learn more about yourself, identify the primary reasons you are feeling stress, and find better ways to use your newfound stress management skills to feel more confident and less helpless, and to cope and make better choices when responding to stress.

## IMPORTANT

**You will be asked to respond to assessment items and to journal about and explore your relationships with your friends. Everyone has the right to confidentiality, and you need to honor the right to privacy of others. Think about it this way – you would not want someone writing things about you that other people could read about. Your friends feel this way also.**

**In order to maintain the confidentiality of your friends, assign people code names based on things you know about them. For example, a friend named Sherry who loves to wear purple might be coded as SWP (Sherry Wears Purple). Do not use actual names of people or groups when you are listing your friends.**



# Teen Stress Workbook

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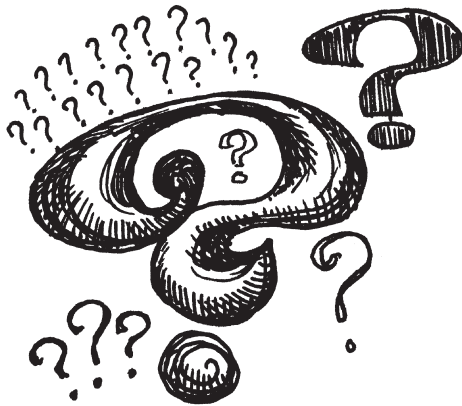
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SECTION I:

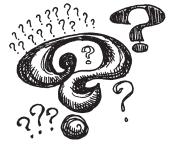
# How Do I Know When I'm Stressed? Scale



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





## How Do I Know When I'm Stressed? Scale Directions

We all experience stress, but we all react to each stress differently. Signs and symptoms differ from person to person. Some react to stress behaviorally, while others react emotionally or physically. This assessment will help you learn more about how you experience stress so that you will know when you are experiencing too much stress in your life.

This assessment contains descriptors of the symptoms of stress that are divided into three sections. Think about the times when you were or are feeling stressed. Place a check in the boxes that describe your reactions to the stress. In the following example, the ✓ shows that the person completing the assessment forgets things and feels bored when experiencing stress.

### When I am stressed, I find myself... (✓)

- Fighting a lot
- Forgetting things
- Feeling bored
- Writing sad e-mail/texts

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time thinking about your answers. Your initial response will be the most true for you. Be sure to respond to every statement.

*(Turn to the next page and begin)*

## How Do I Know When I'm Stressed? Scale

### When I am stressed, I find myself... ( ✓ )

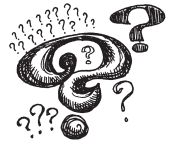
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting a lot                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling anxious           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetting things               | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling upset             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling bored                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling depressed         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing sad e-mails/texts       | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isolating myself                | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling hopeless          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking alcoholic beverages    | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling bad about myself  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking illegal/addictive drugs  | <input type="checkbox"/> Losing my self-confidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting poor grades             | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling out of control    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing poorly                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting distracted easily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Losing my temper easily         | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling tired constantly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding my studies             | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling like I don't care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting overwhelmed easily      | <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing sad pictures            | <input type="checkbox"/> Being pessimistic a lot   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying others                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling abandoned         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Failing to cope                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling fearful           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cursing                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling grouchy           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being bullied                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Having aches and pains    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to run away from things | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling picked on         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letting little things bother me | <input type="checkbox"/> Crying often              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Verbally attacking others       | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling alone             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               |

**B TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

**E TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued on the next page)*





## How Do I Know When I'm Stressed? Scale *(continued)*

### When I am stressed, I find myself... ( ✓ )

- Skipping meals
- Sleeping too much
- Experiencing a fast heartbeat
- Perspiring a lot
- Having clammy hands
- Acting without thinking
- Having nightmares
- Biting my fingernails
- Pulling my hair out
- Sleeping restlessly
- Getting an upset stomach
- Losing weight rapidly
- Eating constantly
- Getting a rash
- Suffering from headaches
- Feeling dizzy or light-headed
- Feeling bad all over
- Feeling tired all the time
- Crying a lot
- Feeling my heart racing or thumping
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**P TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Go to the Scoring Directions on the next page)*

## How Do I Know When I'm Stressed? Scale Scoring Directions

Everyone experiences signs and symptoms of stress. It is important to identify your symptoms when you are stressed, to become aware of them and to notice how you are affected. This assessment will help you explore the various ways you experience symptoms of stress. For each of the sections, count the number of boxes in which you placed a ✓. You will receive a score from 0 to 22. Put that total on the line marked TOTAL at the end of each section.

Transfer your totals to the spaces below:

**B (BEHAVIORAL) TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_**

**E (EMOTIONAL) TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_**

**P (PHYSICAL) TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_**

### Profile Interpretation

Individual Scales Scores	Result	Indications
<b>15 to 22</b>	high	If you score high on any of the scales, you tend to experience a great deal of stress in that mode.
<b>8 to 14</b>	moderate	If you score moderate on any of the scales, you tend to experience some stress in that mode..
<b>0 to 7</b>	low	If you score low on any of the scales, you tend to not experience much stress in that mode.

For scales which you scored in the **Moderate** or **High** range, find the descriptions on the pages that follow. Then, read the description and complete the exercises that are included. No matter how you scored, low, moderate or high, you will benefit from these exercises.