



## OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish between stress and stressor, and distress and eustress
- Recognize common causes of stress for teens
- Identify healthy and unhealthy ways of coping with stress

## *NATIONAL STANDARDS*

7. Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

## MATERIALS

- Five foam balls
- *Stress and Health* worksheet for each student
- *Coping with Stress* worksheet for each student

## RECAP

**(2 minutes)** Tell students that today they will be starting a new unit on managing stress and its many effects.

## KEY MESSAGE/WARM-UP

**(3 minutes)** Write on board and tell students: ***Stress is the reaction and adaptation of our minds and bodies to change.***

Introduce the lesson by telling the class “Clear your desks, take out a pen, and get ready to take that big unit test that I mentioned we were going to have today.” (Observe students’ reactions. Many will complain, “You never told us about a test.” On the other end of the continuum there will be some students who simply take out a pen and get ready to take the test.)

# INTRODUCTION

**(10 minutes)**

Explain to students that you just gave them a “Stress Test.” Tell them that in mentioning a test, you caused a reaction in their body and mind. Some people reacted strongly, with fear, anxiety, or resentment towards the teacher for not being fair, etc. Others just kind of took it in stride.

This is what **stress** is all about. Emphasize that in the example, stress wasn't the test itself - it was the way each student reacted to the announcement about the surprise test.

Complete the *Assembly Line Ball Toss*. Afterwards ask the class which job was the most stressful? Why? Were all three stressful in their own particular way?

## ACTIVITY 1

**Activity Prep:** Make a copy of the *Stress and Health* student handout for each student.

**(10 minutes)**

Divide class into small groups. Distribute the *Stress and Health* worksheet to each student. Discuss the definitions of stress, stressor, eustress, and distress. Explain that everyone has to deal with stress every day just by being alive.

Tell students they have 5 minutes to list as many stressful things as possible on the brainstorm list. Everyone in the group should contribute ideas as they pop into their heads. (Remind them that some good things can be stressful, like playing sports or getting an award on stage.)

After time is called, have a whole class brainstorm. Each group should alternate giving one of their answers. If the other groups did not have that on their list, they should add it. Continue until all stressors are listed from each group. Each student should now have a sheet with many potential stressors on it.

## ACTIVITY 2

**Activity Prep:** Make a copy of the *Coping with Stress* student handout for each student.

**(15 minutes)**

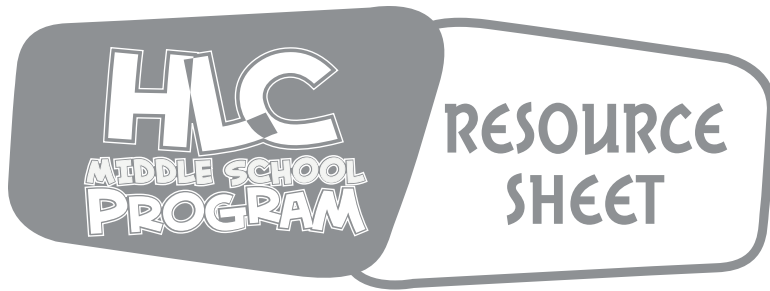
Distribute *Coping with Stress* worksheet to each student. Ask groups to brainstorm and list healthy and unhealthy ways of coping with stress. (Healthy ways might include taking a break, listening to music, TV, exercise, etc. Unhealthy ways might include fighting, taking drugs or alcohol, yelling at someone, being rude or short tempered, etc.)

As in the first activity, groups will alternate giving healthy ways of dealing with stress, then unhealthy ways of dealing with stress.

**Note:** If they do not list “Depression”, suggest that as an additional unhealthy reaction to stress. Then ask, “What would be the ULTIMATE negative reaction to stress.” (SUICIDE)

Next, instruct students to individually rank-order their personal Top Ten stressors like a pyramid,





## Assembly Line Ball Toss

- Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Tell them that they just applied for a summer job. The boss described their duties in the following way:  
“Every half hour, a ball is going to pop out of that tube. You have to catch it and put it on this conveyer belt. It will come every half hour exactly. Your hours are from 8:00 AM to 4:00PM every day. If you drop even one ball, you are fired!! Any questions?”

Then demonstrate by throwing a ball to the student and having them catch it and put it down.

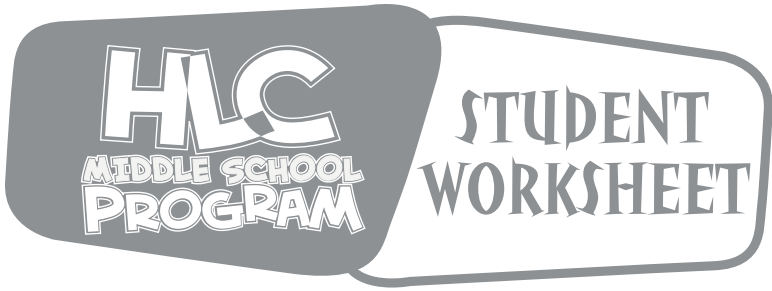
- Now ask for a second volunteer.  
“Your duty is to catch the ball that comes out of that tube and then put it on the conveyer belt. There will be a steady stream of balls, coming every 5 seconds. Your hours are from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, but you will have a break every hour for 10 minutes. If you drop even one ball, you’re fired. Any questions?”

Again, demonstrate by throwing the person a ball every 5 seconds.

- Ask for one more volunteer.  
“Your duties are to catch a ball that comes out of that tube. Only eight balls will come out all day, but you will never be sure when they might come out. If you drop one ball, you’re fired. Any questions?”

Again, demonstrate by tossing a ball, waiting a while, then tossing three in rapid succession, then explain that another ball did not come out for 5 hours. Then at different intervals throughout the day, a ball would randomly pop out for you to catch.





# Coping with Stress

**Healthy**

**Unhealthy**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## *Stress Pyramid*

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_\_\_