

Managing Stress and Coping with Loss

LESSON 1 Understanding Stress

BIG Idea

Stress can affect you in both positive and negative ways.

Study Coach

K-W-L Chart Make a three-column chart. In the first column, list what you **k**now about stress. In the second column, list what you **w**ant to know about this topic. As you read, use the third column to summarize what you **l**earned.

K	W	L

READING CHECK

1. Define What is perception?

● **Before You Read**

Stress can affect your body in many ways. On the lines below, describe a time when you were stressed. What caused the stress? What was your body's reaction?

● **Read to Learn**

What is Stress?

Feeling stress is a natural part of life. Stress is the reaction of the body and mind to everyday challenges and demands. Stress can appear quickly or build up slowly.

Sometimes you cannot avoid stress. How much the stress of an event affects you depends on your perception of it. **Perception** is the act of becoming aware through the senses. For example, a fight with a friend may be more stressful if you believe that the friendship is ruined. If you think you can work it out, you may feel less stress.

Your reaction to stressful events also depends on your experiences. If you enjoy playing in a band, performing a solo may not cause stress. If you are not confident in your abilities, performing a solo will cause more stress. ✓

How does stress affect you?

Stress can be positive or negative. Positive stress can motivate you. For example, you might work harder if you have a deadline approaching. Negative stress gets in the way of your ability to perform. It might cause you to feel impatient, frustrated, or even angry. Negative stress can harm your health. The first step toward dealing with stress is to understand the causes of it.

Causes of Stress

A **stressor** is anything that causes stress. People, objects, places, events, and situations can all cause stress. Stressors can also be real or imagined. The table below lists some common stressors for teens.

Your Body's Response to Stressors

Stress activates your nervous system and your endocrine system. This response is automatic. The stress response involves three stages:

- **Alarm.** Your mind and body go on high alert. This reaction is also known as the “fight-or-flight” response. The “fight-or-flight” response prepares your body either to defend itself or to flee from a threat.
- **Resistance.** If a stressor continues, your body adapts and reacts to the stressor. You may briefly experience more strength and endurance at this stage.
- **Fatigue.** When exposure to stress is prolonged, you feel both physically and mentally tired. ✓



READING CHECK

- 2. List** What are the three stages of the body's stress response?

Picture This

- 3. Describe** How do the stressors listed affect you?

Stressors for Teens

Life Situations	Environmental	Biological	Cognitive (Thinking)	Personal Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School demands • Problems with friends, bullying • Peer pressure • Family problems, abuse • Moving or changing schools • Breaking up with a girlfriend or boyfriend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsafe neighborhood • Media (TV, magazines, newspapers, Internet) • Natural disasters • Threat of terrorist attacks • War • Global warming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the body • Illness • Injury • Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor self-esteem • Personal appearance • Not fitting in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking on a busy schedule • Relationship issues • Smoking • Using alcohol or other drugs



Stress and Your Health

Prolonged stress can take a toll on your body. A physical reaction that results from stress rather than from an injury or illness is a **psychosomatic response**. Some of the physical effects of stress include:

- Headache.
- Weakened immune system.
- High blood pressure.
- Clenching of the jaw or grinding of the teeth.
- Digestive disorders.

Picture This

4. Describe Have you ever been in a situation when you felt the physical symptoms of stress? What happened and how did you feel?



Patrick Olear/PhotoEdit

Physical Symptoms

- Dilated pupils
- Increase in perspiration
- Faster heart rate and pulse
- Rise in blood pressure
- Rapid breathing
- Narrowing of arteries to internal organs and skin
- Increased blood flow to muscles and brain
- Increase in muscle tension
- Release of blood sugar, fats, and cholesterol

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