



Stress

Did you know that both positive and negative things can cause stress? For example, you might be thrilled that you're going to prom, but you also have to find the time and money to buy just the right dress, get your hair done, shop for shoes, and so on—challenging tasks if you live in a really small town far from any major shopping!

In the same way, your first job(s) can make you feel both pleased and pressured. For example, Megan got a part time job last summer at the local ice cream store. While she was nervous about doing everything the right way, the idea of having some extra cash was thrilling.

There's also a difference between emotional and physical stress. When you learn a new sport, you put additional demands on your body, and develop new muscles as an athlete. We say that's "stressing" your body—in a good way. However, going without sleep or food can drain your body and act as a negative stressor.

What are some other physical stressors teens experience?



Knowing how to relax can help your mind and body process everything that happened during the day. Relaxing before bed allows your metabolism to slow down, which helps you fall asleep faster. Down time fun with friends also helps alleviate stress and calm your nerves. That's why your VBF can literally improve your health!

At the same time, emotional stress can come from many "typical" teen experiences. Feeling frazzled about friends, having a crisis with your crush, or fighting with your family can all lead to feelings of emotional distress. Think about your top three sources of emotional stress, and list one word below that describes each one.





Stress

Creative activity



Certain kinds of music, a bubble bath, taking a nap, and many other behaviors can help you relax. Think of some things that you can put together as an "emergency" stress management kit for both you and your friends.

You can make this as elaborate or simple as you want. Some examples of things you might include are:

Photographs that make you feel good

Note cards with uplifting messages from your friends or yourself

Body lotion with a pleasant fragrance

Warm fuzzy socks that feel great on your feet

A journal to write about your feelings

Julie, nearly 15, says:



"Stress is the biggest problem me and my friends face. There's stress about doing all the right things so you'll get in college, stress to have the perfect appearance and right friends, and stress to get a boyfriend. It's really too much!"

Okay, Now You Say:



Do you agree or disagree with Julie?

On a scale of 1-10, if "1" is least stressed and "10" is most, how would you rate right now?

What helps you relax the most?

