

Family Education & Support Youth Program

Name of the Topic Area: Session Two - Stress Management

Duration: 60 Minutes

Module learning objectives:

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify situations that cause feeling of stress.
2. Identify fight or flight responses to stress.
3. Identify feelings and or behaviors that are responses to stress.
4. Determine and discuss positive and healthy ways to cope with stressful situations.

Methodologies:

1. Use “How we Handle Stress” handout.
2. “How Stress Affects Us” handout and poster size chart paper.
3. “STRESS!!!!,” “Please look back at your lists of stressful things” handout and or “What Stresses Me Out” and poster sized chart paper.
4. Stress Busters” handout, chart paper, collection of small reinforcers.
5. Role Play Activity to review healthy strategies to cope.
6. Sculpture Activity (Part One of Two).
7. Sentence completion exercise.

Preparation for sculpture activity *

1. Prepare self-hardening clay.
 - a. Combine 4 cups of flour and 1 cup of salt in a large bowl. Slowly add about 1 cup of water and combine to form a large ball.
 - b. Knead the ball until it is smooth and no longer falls apart, adding water as needed.
 - c. Continue preparing batches until there is enough for each member to have approximately 1 cup.
2. Arrange a workspace and line with newspaper.

Facilitator’s Actions:

1. Provide overview of session:
 - a. Ask members to give opinions on what stress means to them.

2. Facilitator reviews how stress causes a fight or flight response. Use “How we Handle Stress” handout. Ask members what they think the cat will do.
 - a. Ask members to call out examples of situations that cause them stress.
 - b. Write down three or four of those situations on chart paper and indicate other situations will be needed later.
 - c. Explain that we react to most situations in a fight or flight response.
 - i. Provide examples of fighting responses, e.g. shouting, slamming doors, pushing, etc. Provide examples of fleeing responses or responses where we “run away from the problem,” e.g. avoiding the person, situation, or place.
 - a. feelings bottled up inside - symptoms related to depression, anxiety, etc. (use words on the members’ level).
 - b. sadness, hopelessness, etc. (depression), anxiety
 - d. Use “How Stress Affects Us” handout to describe effects of stress.
 - e. Use “STRESS!!!!” handout to help members identify their own sources of stress. The sources of stress are written in the yellow box. Ask members to go down each item and think of how they typically respond. If the response closer to “fight” draw a line from that item to the red or “fight” box, e.g. “When my brother messes with my stuff, I usually yell at him to stay out of my things.” If the response is closer to “flight,” draw a line from that item to the “flight” box, e.g. “When people are talking about me behind my back, I usually feel really upset and walk away from them.”
 - i. Optional – depending on the age range of your group, and if the group would benefit from these exercises, use one or both “Please look back at your lists of stressful things” handout and / or “What Stresses Me Out” handouts to help members further identify problem situations and members’ typical responses.
3. Stress Reduction Strategies. Use “Stress Busters” handout.
 - a. Ask members to write on the left column a list of healthy ways to cope with stress.
 - b. Ask members ONE AT A TIME to call out a strategy. For each appropriate strategy, toss or hand a small reinforcer (choose the type of reinforcer based on the age and developmental level of the group) to the respective member and write the strategy on chart paper (slowly enough that the facilitator can write them), and as a whole group, discuss the strategies.

- c. Tell members you have a number in mind of total strategies to be listed. If the group reaches that number, they will get a prize (slightly larger reinforcers). The group will always reach the number (with encouragement from the facilitator.)
4. Role-play activity
 - a. Divide members into two groups. The first group enacts a given stressful situations common the age of the group. The second group enacts the same situation with the main character utilizing healthy strategies to cope with them.
5. Sculpture Activity (Part One of Two)
 - a. Have group members work with clay to create a "self-sculpture." The facilitator will ask each group members to create a representational sculpture, or they may use different aspects of their self-concept to create an abstract figure (for example, a group members may choose to sculpt the sun to convey warmth.)
 - b. The clay figures will harden and be painted during the next session.
6. Close session
 - a. Facilitator leads group in sentence completion exercise, "One thing I learned during today's group is _____. Before the next meeting, what I will try to do differently is _____".

Materials:

1. Chart Paper & Pens, handouts, reinforcers, 4 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, 1 cup of water, a large bowl, and newspaper (to line tables), assorted snacks and beverages.

* Activity adapted from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory SEDL website.