



What Is This Module About?

Have you ever been through stressful situations, like having to rush your work to meet an important deadline or attending an interview for a new job? How about being caught in a traffic jam?

How did you feel during those situations? What is your usual reaction? Were you challenged, irritated or threatened? Are you aware that such situations make you tense? And tensions, whether light or heavy, result in stress.

In this module, you will learn about the signs, types and causes of stress. You will also learn about its effects on your health and tips on how to cope with stress in order to live a happier and healthier life.

This module consists of three lessons:

Lesson 1 – *Stress: Do You Suffer from It?*

Lesson 2 – *Too Much Stress and Your Health*

Lesson 3 – *Manage Stress for a Healthier and Happier Life*



What Will You Learn From This Module?

After studying this module, you should be able to:

- ◆ enumerate the causes of stress;
- ◆ identify negative and positive kinds of stress;
- ◆ recognize symptoms of stress;
- ◆ describe the effects of too much stress on emotional and physical health; and
- ◆ discuss ways and means of reducing and coping with stress.



Let's See What You Already Know

Before you start studying this module, try answering the following questions to determine what you already know about this topic.

1. Stress is when you feel tension in your body. Tension, on the other hand, is when you feel mental, emotional or nervous pressure. Which of the following is not an emotion that you might feel when you are under stress?
 - a. very sad
 - b. thrilled
 - c. bored
 - d. nervous
2. Stress comes from different sources. Which of the following could be a source of stress?
 - a. death of a family member
 - b. winning in a competition
 - c. taking an examination
 - d. all of the above
3. When you do not worry, you do not have stress in your life. Is this statement right or wrong?
 - a. Right, because stress is always associated with worrying.
 - b. Wrong, because both sad and happy tensions like worries and excitements can cause stress.
 - c. Right, because it is only when you worry that you will be stressed.
 - d. Wrong, because worrying has nothing to do with stress.
4. Which of the following is a symptom of stress?
 - a. cold hands and feet
 - b. stomachaches
 - c. too much sweating
 - d. all of the above
5. Stress overload is when you get so much stress that your body becomes negatively affected. Which of the following is not a physical sign of stress overload?
 - a. frequent colds
 - b. change in appetite
 - c. back pains
 - d. swollen feet

6. What may happen to your behavior when you experience stress overload (too much stress)?
 - a. You become irritable and aggressive.
 - b. You always yawn.
 - c. You become critical and defensive.
 - d. All of the above
7. What may happen to a person who doesn't reduce the stress he has been experiencing for a long time?
 - a. He/she may become physically ill.
 - b. He/she may feel desperate enough to commit suicide.
 - c. He/she may end up hating everybody, even himself.
 - d. All of the above
8. Which is not a healthy way to reduce stress?
 - a. drinking alcoholic drinks
 - b. having enough sleep
 - c. exercising regularly
 - d. meditation
9. Relaxation can help reduce stress. Which of the following is not a good relaxation technique?
 - a. meditation
 - b. watching movies
 - c. going on vacation
 - d. smoking
10. Which of the following attitudes can help reduce stress?
 - a. believing in your own ability
 - b. expecting the worst to happen
 - c. underestimating your own capacity
 - d. pitying yourself

Well, how was it? Do you think you fared well? Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 44.

If all your answers are correct, very good! This shows that you already know much about the topics in this module. You may still study the module to review what you already know. Who knows, you might learn a few more new things as well.

If you got a low score, don't feel bad. It means that this module is for you. It will help you understand important concepts that you can apply in your daily life. If you study this module carefully, you will learn the answers to all the items in the test and a lot more! Are you ready?

You may now go to the next page to begin Lesson 1.

Stress: Do You Suffer From It?

In this lesson, you will learn what stress is, how it happens and why you get stressed. You will also learn to identify common **stressors** or causes of stress, and distinguish which of those are negative and positive. Recognizing stress and identifying its sources is the first step toward planning for a healthier and better way of handling stress.

After studying this lesson, you should be able to:

- ◆ recognize the symptoms of stress;
- ◆ explain the difference between positive and negative stress;
- ◆ identify the possible causes of stress; and
- ◆ accept that stress is a reality of life.

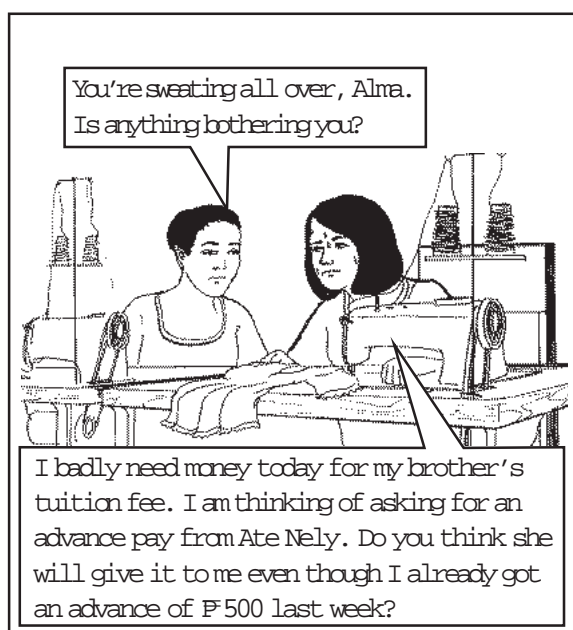


Let's Study and Analyze

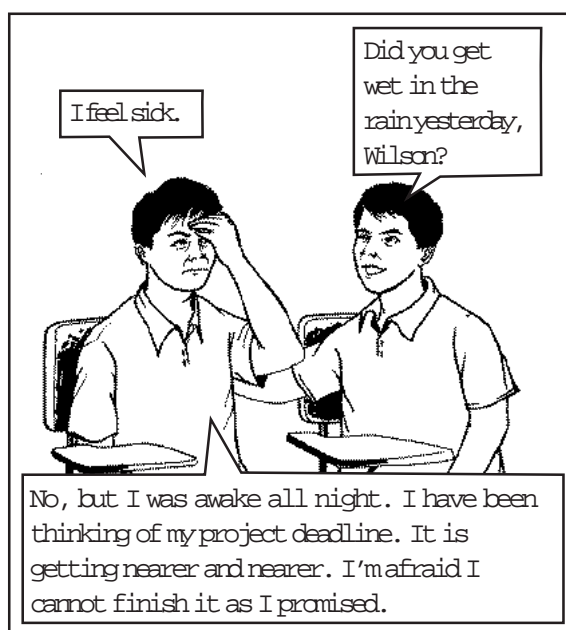
Stress is a common part of our everyday life. It often results from the different kinds of tensions we experience at any time of the day. Tensions are emotional, physical or psychological pressures that make us feel uneasy.

Below are some common life situations that show how and why persons suffer from stress. Study the dialogues and analyze the tension that each character experiences.

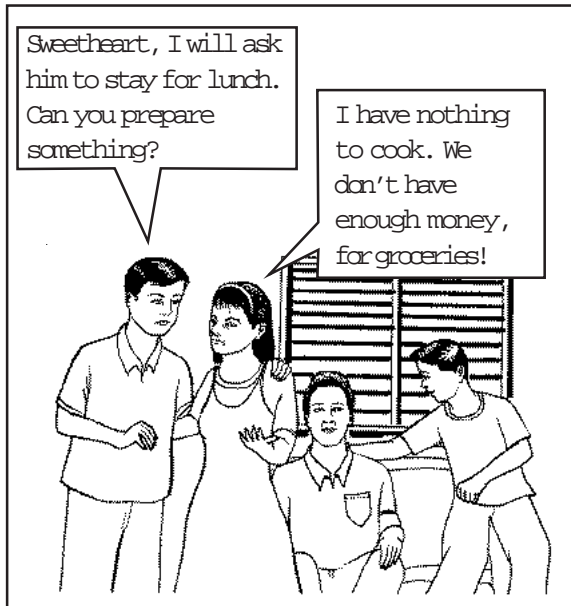
Situation 1



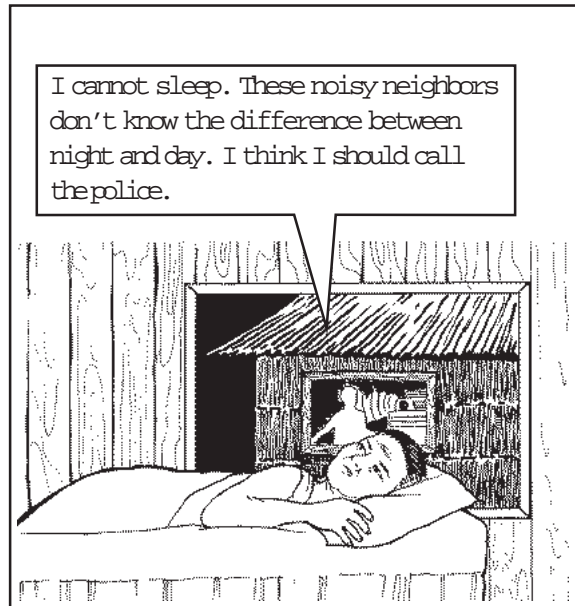
Situation 2



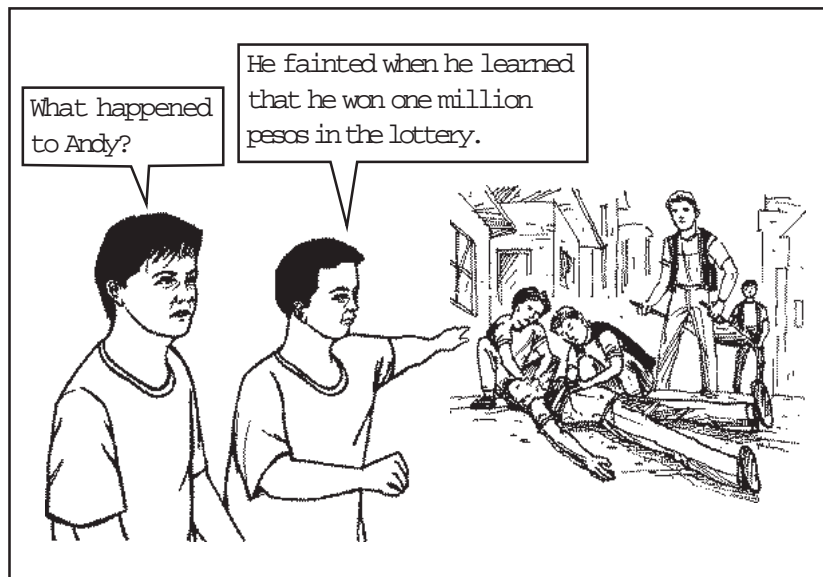
Situation 3



Situation 4



Situation 5



Let's Think About This

After analyzing each of the five situations, answer the following questions:

1. Identify the persons in the dialogues who experienced tension. How did each one feel?

2. What caused their tension?

Have you finished answering the questions? If so, compare your answers with the ones below.

1. The persons who experienced tension were Alma, Wilson and the wife in Situation 3. They were all uneasy and worried. The woman in Situation 4 was irritated, while Andy in Situation 5 was overjoyed.
2. They are all tense because they face difficult and unusual situations. Alma is worried about her financial problem; Wilson has to meet a deadline; the wife is uneasy and worried because she has to prepare some food for an unexpected visitor; the old woman was irritated with the loud noise from her neighbor's house; and Andy was overjoyed after winning in a lottery.

Are your analyses similar to the ones given? If yes, very good! If not, don't worry. Continue studying this lesson and you will learn a lot more.



Let's Learn

What is stress?

Stress is defined as physical, mental and emotional tension. Tensions, on the other hand, are the emotional, physical or psychological pressures you experience. They occur when the normal condition of your body is disturbed, like when you get thrilled when you hug someone special, or when you feel depressed for not being able to find a job. The feeling of being in control and relaxed is what we call the body's normal condition. But when you are thrilled or depressed, your normal condition is affected, you become tense and you lose some control over yourself.

Excitement and pressure can cause stress. When something good happens, don't you get excited? On the other hand, if you have so much work like for example, when you are meeting a deadline, you get pressured, right? Then you start to get worried, upset, tense or disappointed.

Can you think of events or situations in your life when you experienced tension, be it with excitement or pressure? If so, list them down below.

Here are some examples of situations when a person might experience stress:

- ◆ Your basketball team did not win despite having gone through rigid practice.
- ◆ You don't have money to buy a gift for your best friend's wedding.
- ◆ You are afraid to know the result of your medical examination.
- ◆ Your family temporarily stays in a dirty and crowded relocation area after a fire destroyed your house.
- ◆ You are late for an important appointment with a potential buyer for your woven baskets.

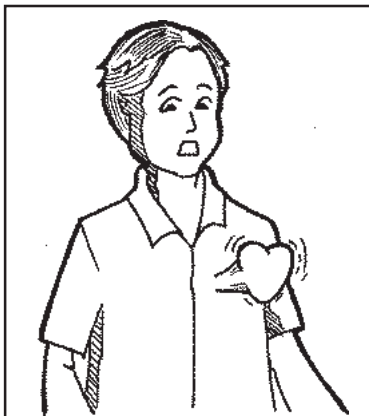
Stress is a common experience in our everyday life. Whenever you are challenged or threatened, very sad or overjoyed, you feel stress. You become aware of the stress when you feel something different in your body condition, like when your heart beats faster, or when your hands and feet become cold and sticky.



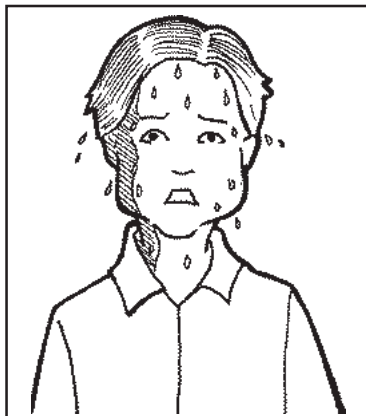
Let's Study and Analyze

Once you are under stress, your body immediately reacts. These reactions are called **symptoms of stress**. When you experience these symptoms, it does not mean that you are ill. These symptoms only warn you that there is some disturbance in the normal condition of your body.

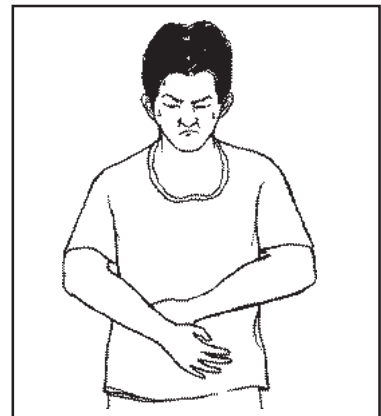
Some symptoms of stress are:



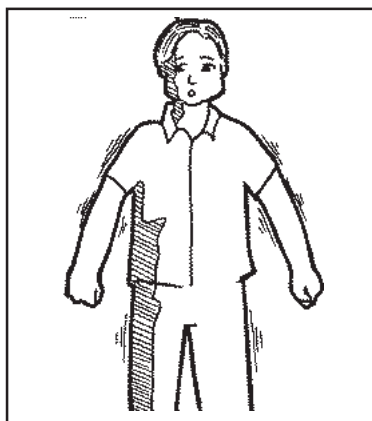
Rapid Heartbeat



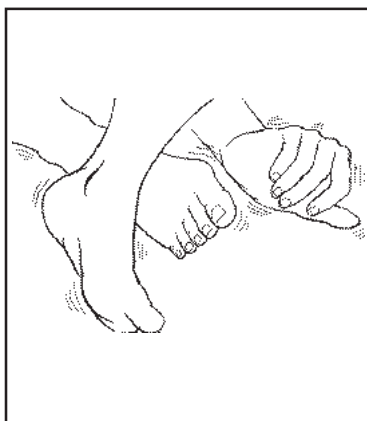
Increased Sweating



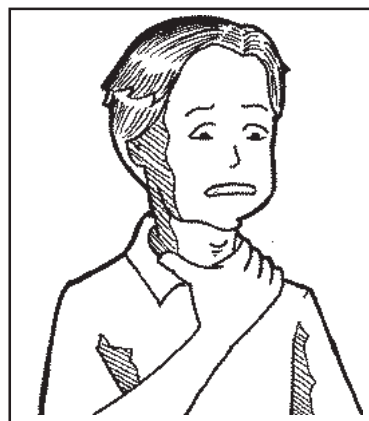
Stomach spasms



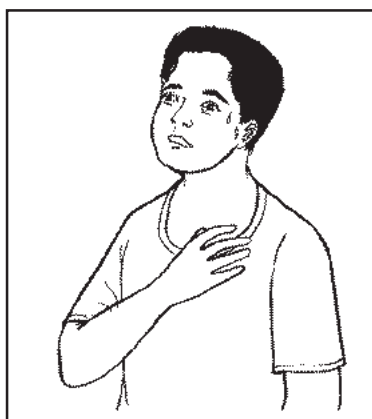
Tense Muscles



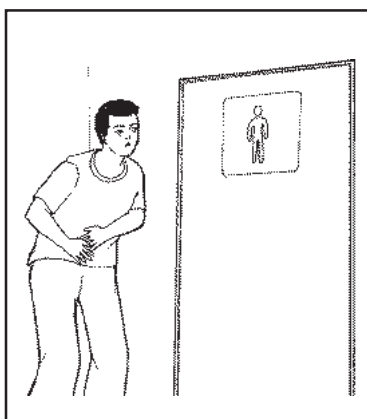
**Cold and Sticky Skin,
Hands and Feet**



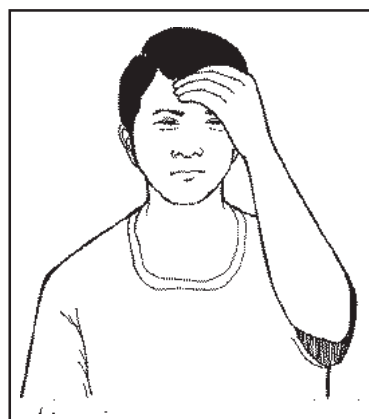
Dry Mouth



**Shallow or Rapid
Breathing**



A Desire to Go to the Toilet



Dizziness

You may experience one or more combinations of these symptoms. These symptoms may not all be present in every kind of stress. For example, when you are afraid of getting caught for a mistake, you may experience a combination of rapid breathing and cold and sticky skin, hands and feet. On the other hand, if you are looking forward to meeting someone special, your heart may beat faster, and you may also breathe faster.



Let's Think About This

After learning about the different symptoms of stress, reflect on your past experiences with stressful situations, then answer the following questions:

1. Were there any situations in which you experienced any of the symptoms described above? What were those situations? When did they occur?

2. Ask your friends if they ever experienced such symptoms. Ask them to describe the situations and the symptoms they experienced.

Were you able to answer the questions above? Some examples of situations that can bring about stress are the following:

1. You are about to leave your family for the first time to work in a distant place. You may feel sick as the day of your departure comes nearer. You may also experience stomach spasms and dizziness.
2. You have a heated argument with someone. You may experience rapid breathing and heartbeat, cold and sticky skin, hands and feet.
3. You forgot to bring something very important to work. You expect your boss to get angry with you. You might feel your muscles becoming tense and your mouth becoming dry.
4. You suspect that the man near you is a snatcher or a member of a hold-up gang. He is eyeing your bag, and you fear that he might try to rob you.



Let's Study and Analyze

Stress is not a disease; it is a normal part of everyone's life. If we don't experience stress, our life will be dull and boring. Imagine, you won't feel any excitement and pressure. Stress is not always unpleasant. In fact, some stress can move you to think better and work harder.

There are two types of stress: **negative** or unpleasant **stress**, which makes you feel helpless, angry, upset or distrustful, and may bring about negative behavior; and **positive** or pleasant **stress**, which inspires or challenges you and makes you more productive. Study the examples below.

| Positive Stress | Negative Stress |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because nobody wants to take responsibility, you are forced to lead your neighborhood in an inter-barangay cleanliness competition. 2. Your neighbors gossip about you. They say that you are not a good team leader. Because of this, you decided to prove them wrong. 3. Your family and friends are discouraging you from joining a singing competition. They say that you are no match to the other contestants. In spite of their discouragements, you still joined the contest to prove to them that you can win. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You have a deep misunderstanding with your friend so you decided to break up your friendship. 2. Your neighbor dumped his garbage in front of your house. You got irritated so you started shouting at your neighbor. 3. You witness a crime committed by an influential person in your community. You decided to keep quiet to protect yourself from harm. |

Do you agree with the examples of positive and negative stress on page 9? If not, that is normal. We react to similar situations differently. Some stress may have a positive effect on some people but may be negative on you, or the other way around.

Take, for instance, the second example of positive stress we gave on the previous page. What if, instead of proving that you are a good leader, you single out who among your neighbors started the gossip, then you start a fight with that person? Isn't it a negative kind of stress?

Now, take the first example of negative stress also listed in the table. What if, instead of forgetting about your friendship, you try to talk to your friend and solve your problems? Then you forgive each other and renew your friendship. Your stress becomes positive, right?

This means that stress can either be positive or negative depending on the person who handles it.



Let's Try This

Now that you have learned the difference between positive and negative stress, go back to the previous activity on pages 8–9. Analyze the stress you and your friends felt during the stressful situations you mentioned.

List down in the left column of the table below each stressful situation, and in the right column indicate if it's a positive or negative type of stress. Then, explain why you think it is a positive or negative type of stress.

| Stressful Situations | Type of Stress |
|----------------------|----------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Here are few examples of stressful situations and the type of stress each one causes.

| Stressful Situations | |
|---|---|
| 1. When you are about to leave your family for the first time to work in a distant place, you may feel sick as the day of your departure comes nearer. You may experience stomach spasms and dizziness. | Can either be challenged to positive stress if you are too strong |
| 2. When you get into a heated argument, you may experience rapid breathing and heartbeat, and cold skin, hands and feet. | Negative. With threatened by negative stress |
| 3. When you forgot to bring something very important to work and you expect that your boss will get angry with you, your muscles become tense, and your mouth becomes dry. | Negative. With thinking of the it is negative |



Let's Learn

What Causes Stress?

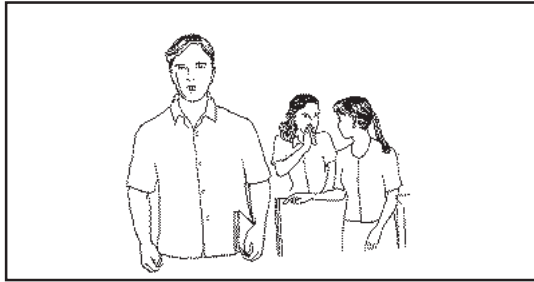
Any condition, situation or thing that causes stress is called a **stressor**. It can be the loud barking of dogs at night, the punishment you got after you are caught throwing garbage improperly, the arrival of an unexpected visitor and many others. Like stress, stressors can be both positive or negative.

Negative stressors make you feel helpless, angry, upset or distrustful, and may bring about negative behavior. **Positive stressors**, on the other hand, inspire or challenge you to set goals and make you more productive. Stressors can be positive or negative depending on the person who reacts to them.

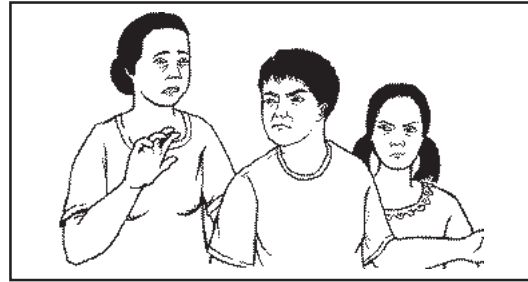


Let's Study and Analyze

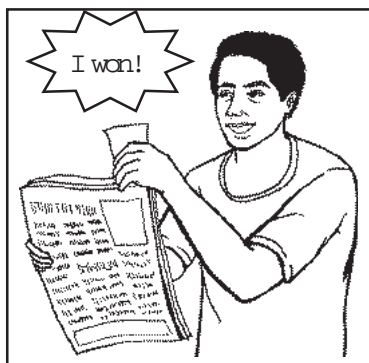
On the next page are several common stressors that we can encounter in our everyday lives. Analyze which of them are positive and negative. Put a large x-mark (X) on the drawing if it is a negative stressor. Put a check mark (✓) on it if it's a positive stressor. Explain your answer afterwards. There are no wrong answers as long as you can defend your answers well.



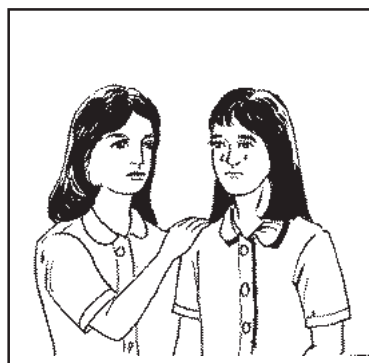
Neighbor who spreads gossip about you



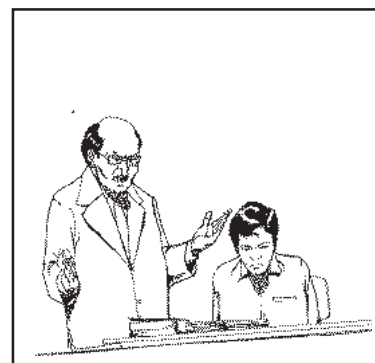
Disobedient sons and daughters



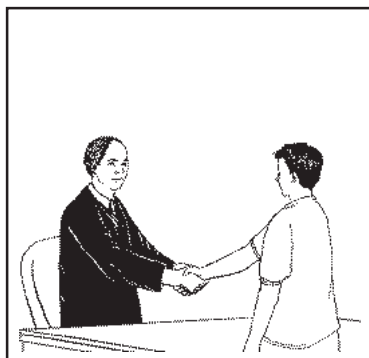
Winning in a lottery



Thought of losing a friend



Irritable boss



A promotion at work



A fire near your house



Overcrowded and messy room

Discuss your answers with your friends or family members. Do they agree with your answers? Explain to them why stressors can either be positive or negative, depending on the person who experiences them.



Let's Try This

Name some positive and negative stressors that you have experienced. Can you tell where those stressors came from?

1. List down in the left column the positive stressors that you have experienced and in the right column, the negative ones.

| Positive Stressors | Negative Stressors |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Ex. Meeting someone special | Ex. Failing an exam |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

2. Ask your friends and family members whether they face similar stressors in their life. Do they experience stressors that you don't experience? List down in the left column the positive stressors that they have experienced, and the negative ones in the right column.

| Positive Stressors | Negative Stressors |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Common stressors in life are financial and relationship problems. Both stressors are often negative in nature. However, there are persons who are good in handling such problems, and they learn how to deal with it in positive ways.

There are many causes of financial problems. Among them are a person's inability to budget his/her earnings, or his/her inability to get a job. Meanwhile, relationship problems may be experienced due to misunderstandings or undesirable attitudes of the persons involved.



Let's Learn

Where do stressors come from? What are the causes/factors that build up stressors?

Stressors come from **within the body** or from **outside factors**. Stressors from within the body are your thoughts, beliefs and decisions that cause tension. Examples are fear of not being able to fulfill a new responsibility because you don't believe that you can do it, the suspicion that your spouse is cheating on you, or doubt about passing a job interview.

On the other hand, stress may result from tensions from the environment. It may come from your family, friends and neighbors or from news on the radio or TV, or even environmental situations like a typhoon or flood.



Let's Remember

- ◆ **Stress** is a physical, mental or emotional tension on the body.
- ◆ The body's immediate reactions to stress are called **symptoms of stress**. These symptoms include:
 - rapid heartbeat;
 - stomach spasms or convulsions;
 - increased sweating;
 - tense muscles;
 - cold and sticky skin, hands and feet;
 - dry mouth;
 - shallow or rapid breathing;
 - a desire to go to the toilet; and/or
 - dizziness.
- ◆ There are two types of stress: **positive** and **negative**. Some stress may be positive to some people but negative to others. People react differently to similar situations.
- ◆ **Negative** (or unpleasant) **stress** makes you feel helpless, angry, upset or irritable, and it may even bring about negative behavior.
- ◆ **Positive** (or pleasant) **stress** inspires or challenges you and makes you more productive.



Let's See What You Have Learned

Answer the following questions:

1. Why do we feel stress?

2. What are the causes of stress?

3. How will you know that you are stressed?

4. Is stress always bad? Explain your answer.

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on pages 44–45.

Too Much Stress and Your Health

In this lesson, you will learn the effects of excessive stress on your health. Excessive stress happens when the pressure or tension put upon your body is too much for you to bear. It affects you physically, mentally and emotionally. It might result in behavioral problems and sickness such as heart disease, nervous breakdown, insomnia and many others.

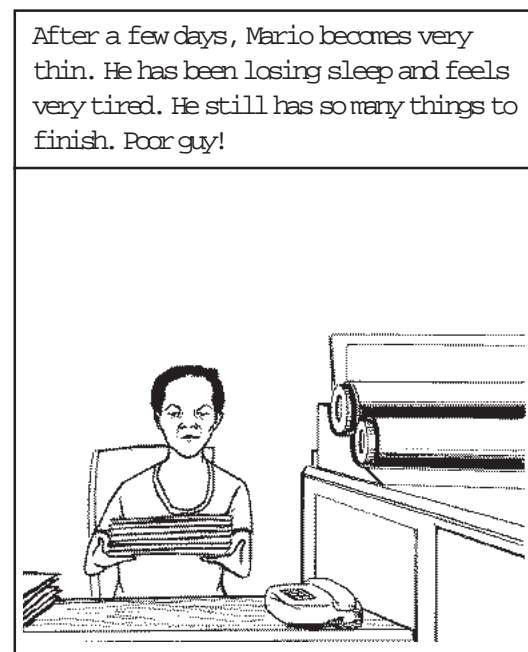
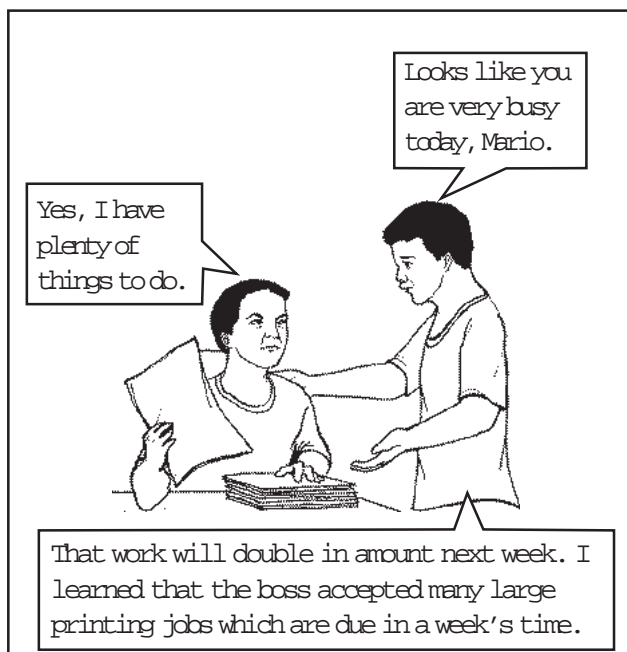
After studying this lesson, you should be able to:

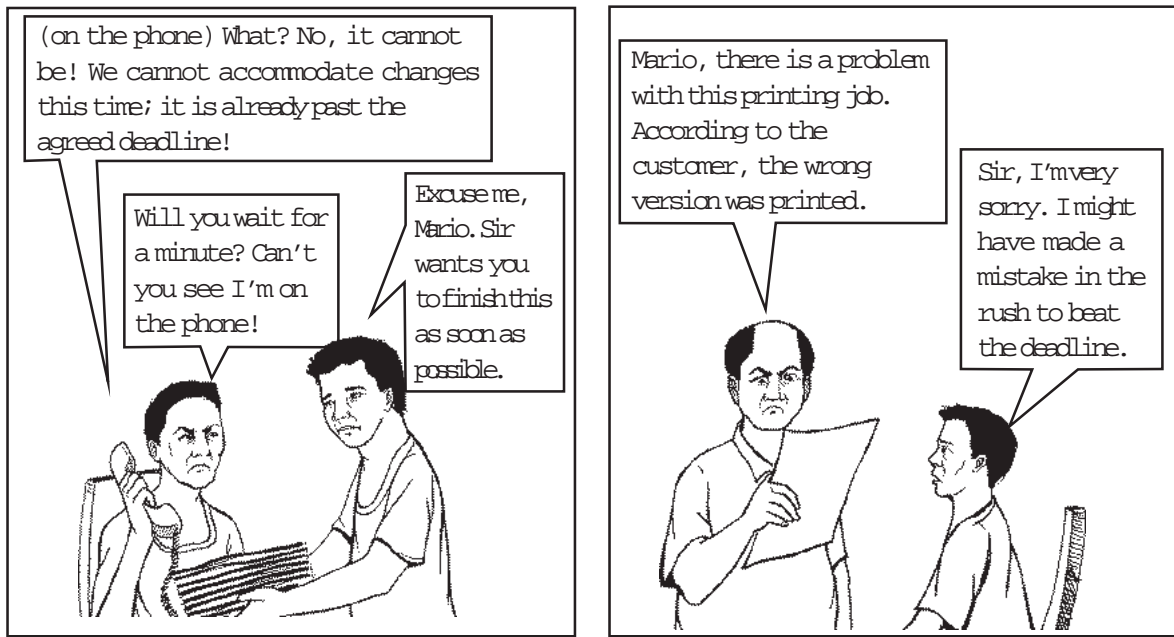
- ♦ enumerate physical and behavioral symptoms of excessive stress; and
- ♦ identify the effects of long-term excessive stress.



Let's Study and Analyze

Study the dialogues below. Find out the effects of stress on Mario's personality.





1. What signs indicate that Mario is suffering from stress?

2. How does stress affect Mario's relationship with his coworker?

3. How does stress affect Mario's performance at work?

Have you finished answering the questions? If so, compare your answers with the ones below:

1. Mario's health suffers due to stress. He has become thinner, and he is sleepless and tired. If his stress continues to increase, he may soon get sick.
2. Because of stress, Mario no longer gets along well with his coworkers, or even with their clients. He gets irritated very easily.
3. Mario's performance is negatively affected by stress. He easily gets irritated with their clients. Because of the pressure to meet the deadline, he committed a big mistake. He printed the wrong version of the project.

Are your answers similar to the ones above? If they are, good! If they are not, review the activity.



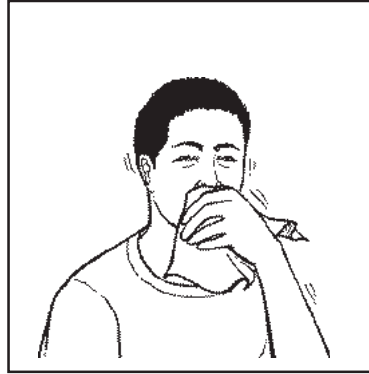
Let's Learn

When you are under too much stress, your body might not be able to handle it. You can easily recognize signs of too much stress if you examine yourself more closely. Study the illustrations that follow.

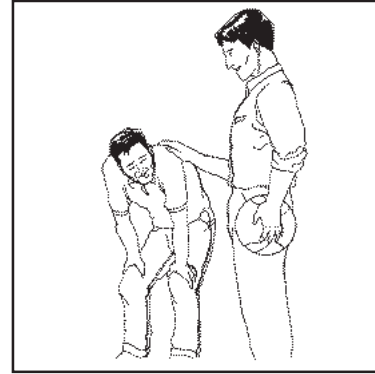
Physical Symptoms of Too Much Stress



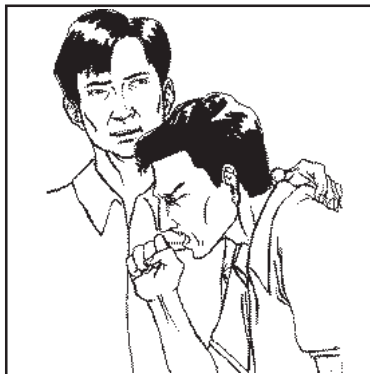
Loss of Appetite



Frequent Colds



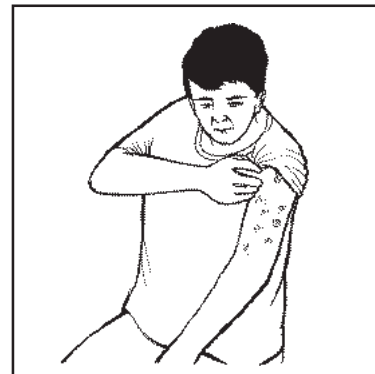
Shallow or Labored Breathing



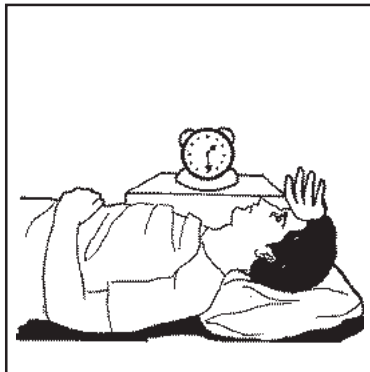
Upset Stomach, Indigestion and Vomiting



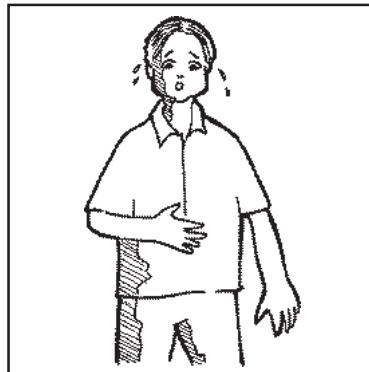
Headache



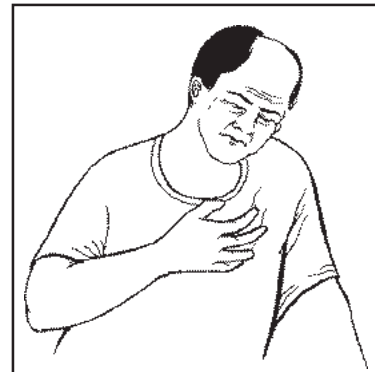
Skin Problems



Insomnia



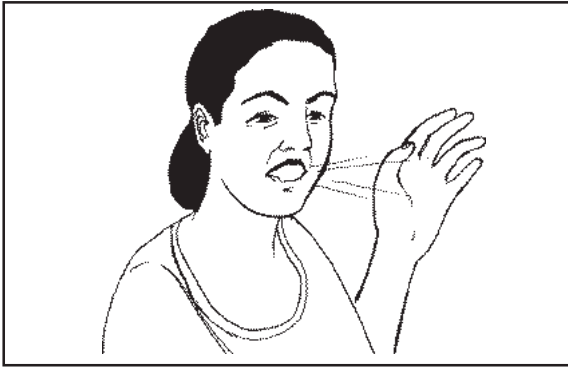
Constipation or Diarrhea



High Blood Pressure

Do you experience any of the symptoms above? Or does anyone in your family experience these symptoms?

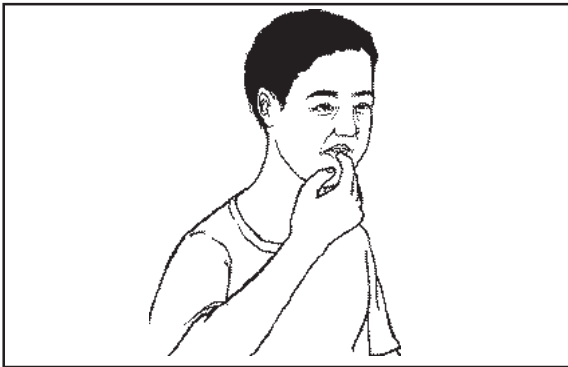
Behavioral Symptoms of Too Much Stress



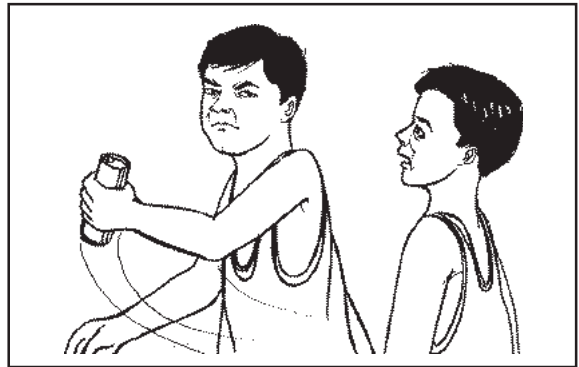
Talking Too Fast or Too Loud



Frequent Yawning



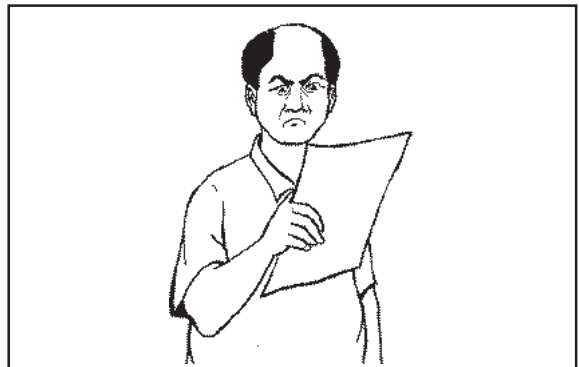
Nail Biting and Teeth Grinding



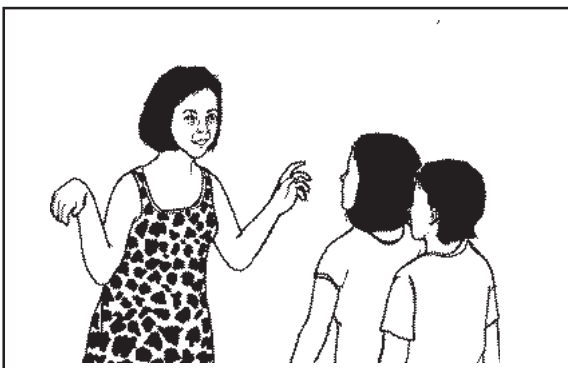
Irritable and Aggressive Behavior



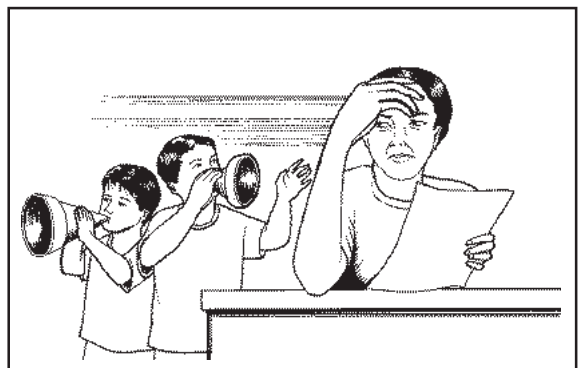
Defensiveness



Being Critical



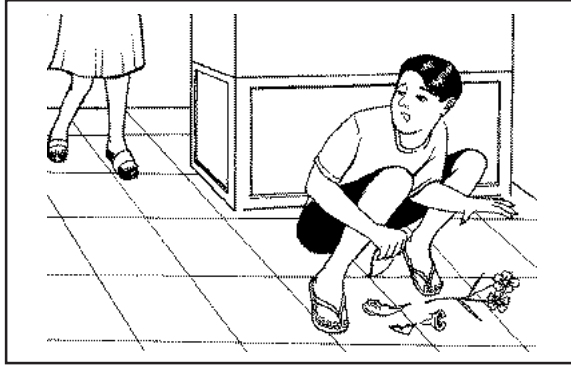
Overreacting



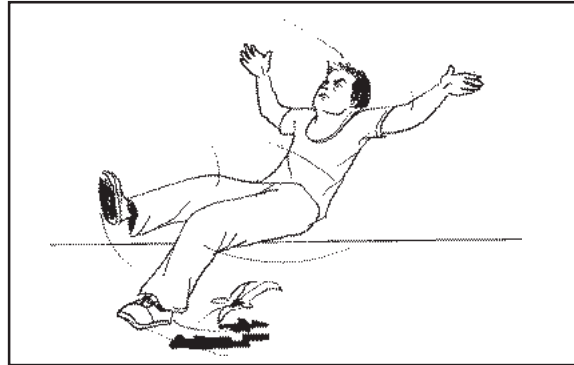
Inability to Concentrate

Which of the symptoms above have you observed in people around you?
Which of these symptoms have you experienced?

Here are some more behavioral symptoms.



Making More Mistakes



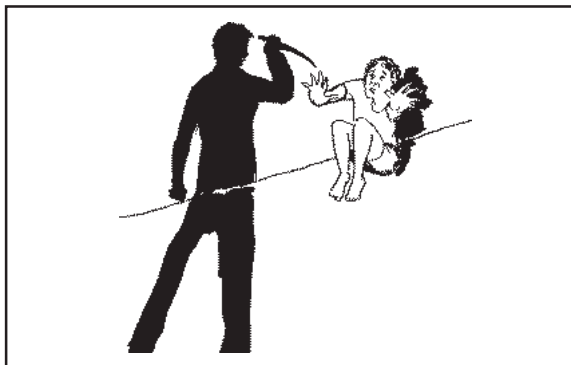
Being More Prone to Accidents



Having Nightmares



Forgetfulness



Feeling Victimized



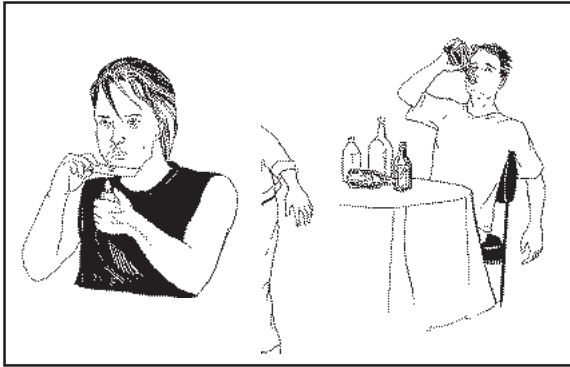
Relationship Problems



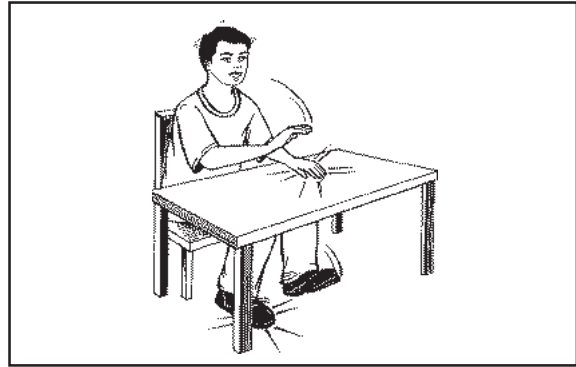
Constant Worrying

Try to remember as many of the stress symptoms above as you can. If you experience two or more of them often, you may be suffering from excessive stress. Observe yourself often to maintain your health!

Here are two more behavioral symptoms.



Extreme Smoking, Drinking and Use of Prohibited Drugs



Foot or Finger Tapping

Remember that not all these symptoms are present whenever you experience too much stress. You may experience two or more combinations of both physical and behavioral symptoms as a result too much stress.



Let's Try This

Have you been in highly stressful situations, or have you ever experienced stress for long periods of time? If yes, that means you were likely to be experiencing excessive or too much stress. Now, list down below some of the highly stressful situations you have experienced in the past. Then, identify the symptoms you felt during those highly stressful times. You may want to refer to the list of physical and behavioral symptoms of excessive or too much stress presented on pages 18–20.

Table of Too Much Stress

| Highly Stressful Situation | Behavioral Symptoms | Physical Symptoms |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Example:</i> Pressed to meet the deadlines of two consecutive projects | Headaches | Irritable and overreacting |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Did you finish filling up the table? Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 45.



Let's Try This

Study the situations below carefully. Then, identify the symptoms of too much or excessive stress that each character might suffer from. Write your answers in the blanks provided after each situation.

1. A farmer works very hard in the fields to get a good harvest. He panics when a sudden typhoon comes.

2. A mother is irritated because dirty clothes are piling up in their room. So, she decided to spend the whole day washing all the dirty clothes. A few hours later, her son accidentally bumped the clean laundry and it all fell on the ground. The clothes got dirty again.

3. A very nervous contestant thinks that she cannot win. While she is eating, somebody tells her that it is already her turn to sing.

4. A student who is trying hard to study her lessons gets irritated due to the noisy children playing outside their house.

5. A person cannot say “no” to other persons’ requests. She is then placed in a situation in which too much is demanded from her.

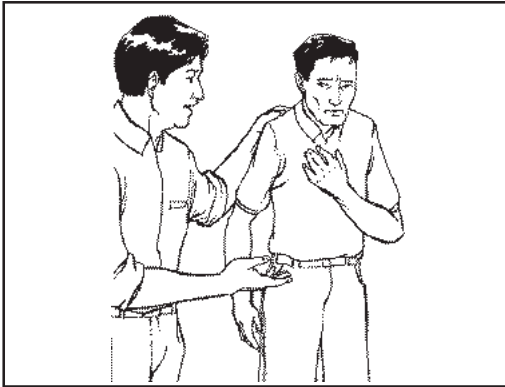
After you finish answering the exercise, compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 45. Did you get similar answers? If so, very good! If not, don't worry. Review the parts of the lesson that are not clear to you.



Let's Learn

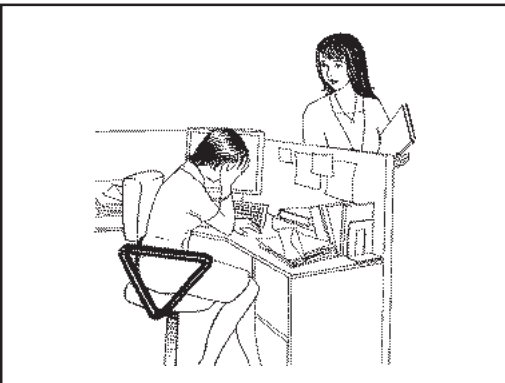
Being under too much stress for a long time can have harmful effects on your body. The following are some of the possible effects of being under too much stress for a long time.

Fatigue or Exhaustion



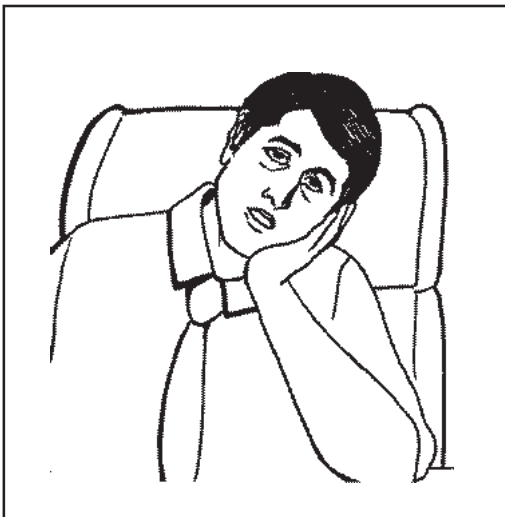
- ◆ Fatigue or exhaustion is a condition wherein you feel extremely tired all the time. You feel like you have lost all your energy. It happens when you drive yourself too much at work and you do not give yourself time to relax. It also happens when you keep on thinking about a problem without finding ways to solve it. You become tired by just thinking about it without finding a solution.

Deep Depression



- ◆ Depression starts when you fail to meet your goals and when you lose confidence in yourself. Examples are when you cannot accept your failure, or when you keep thinking of a particular incident when someone mistreated you. Also, depression may occur when you always blame yourself for the unhappy things that happen to you.

Burnout



- ◆ Burnout happens when you lose interest and motivation in life. This just means that a burnt-out person has already used up all his/her energy or exerted all his/her efforts. Examples are when you are so tired from working too hard that you just don't feel like working anymore. Instead, you just want to stay at home or in bed. Some people who are burnt-out lose their appetite and prefer to stay alone, rather than socialize with their friends.

Breakdown



- ◆ Breakdown is the worst stage in suffering from too much stress for a long time.

When you experience fatigue or exhaustion, deep depression (sadness), and burnout, and you still do not find ways to reduce your stress, then you may have a breakdown. A breakdown can be of two types: physical and emotional.

Physical breakdown means you get physically sick. This simply means that your body can no longer stand the tension it is experiencing. You might experience fever or other sicknesses that may prevent you from working.

Emotional breakdown, on the other hand, means you begin to engage in destructive behavior. Isn't it that when you are really tired you easily get irritated and frustrated? Such feelings can lead to more serious emotional conditions. Emotional breakdown can be self-destructive, at times leading to a big fight because of a small misunderstanding, or even to suicide.



Let's See What You Have Learned

Study the persons below who are experiencing excessive stress and then answer the questions that follow.

- A businessman with a business that is in financial trouble
- A person who cannot pay his debts
- A barangay captain who is being criticized by his community members for being incompetent and irresponsible
- A woman who has an alcoholic and abusive husband
- A man who has three jobs to support the education of his five children

1. What might be causing the stress for each of the persons above?

2. Why do they suffer from too much stress?

3. What will happen if they suffer from too much stress for a longer time?

Have you finished answering the questions above? If so, compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 46.



Let's Remember

- ◆ Too much stress or excessive stress happens when the tension experienced by a person is too much for him/her to bear.
- ◆ Excessive stress is harmful to your health physically, mentally and emotionally.
- ◆ Excessive stress experienced for long periods of time may lead to fatigue and exhaustion, deep depression, burnout and/or breakdown.

Manage Stress for a Healthier and Happier Life

In the previous lessons, you learned what stress is and the effects of excessive or too much stress on your physical, mental and emotional health.

In this lesson, you will learn effective ways of reducing stress in your life. Stress cannot be totally avoided but it can be reduced if you know how to handle it.

After studying this lesson, you should be able to:

- ♦ describe various ways to handle and reduce stress effectively;
- ♦ explain how to use time management to reduce stress; and
- ♦ demonstrate positive thinking and proper attitudes in solving problems.



Let's Study and Analyze

In Lesson 2, we read about the situation of Mario who was suffering from stress as an employee of a busy printing shop.

Study the dialogues below and find out how Mario tried to manage his stress.

| Incident | Mario's Reaction |
|--|---|
| <p>This print run is awful! Look at all the mistakes! Did you not include the corrections?</p> <p>If we don't satisfy our customers, we will lose them. And you will be out of work.</p> <p>I'm sorry.</p> | <p>I don't understand my boss. I just did what he told me. Why is it that when the clients complain, he puts all the blame on me?</p> <p>C'mon, Mario, just forget it. Drink and enjoy the night.</p> <p>Have another cigarette and you'll forget all about it.</p> |



Let's Try This

Answer the following:

1. What are the suggestions of Mario's friends on how to deal with his stress at work? Do you think their suggestions can help him?

2. If the suggestions of Mario's friends are not good, what can you advise Mario?

Are you done? Now compare your answers with the ones below:

1. Mario's friends encouraged him to drink and smoke in order to forget about his stressful situation. Such advice would not do Mario any good. Instead, they may worsen his problem, because too much alcohol harms the health, impairs good judgment and may further undermine one's performance at work. As long as Mario is under the influence of alcohol, he may temporarily forget about his problems, but they will remain unsolved.
2. I suggest that Mario talk to his boss and explain his stressful situation at work. Together, they may be able to work out practical ways of dealing with the situation.

When faced with stressful situations, a person can choose between healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with stress. In the case of Mario, he chose an unhealthy way — drinking and smoking.

Healthy ways of dealing with stress are behaviors that would help a person reduce his/her stress and eventually help in solving his/her problem. Examples are enjoying a healthy meal, watching TV to relax, singing or dancing, praying and talking about one's problems with friends. On the other hand, unhealthy ways of dealing with stress are habits that lead a person into more problems like smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages and taking drugs.

Later in this lesson, you will learn more healthy ways of dealing with stress.



Let's Learn

Below are eleven ways to handle stress and reduce it effectively.

1. Solve the problem.

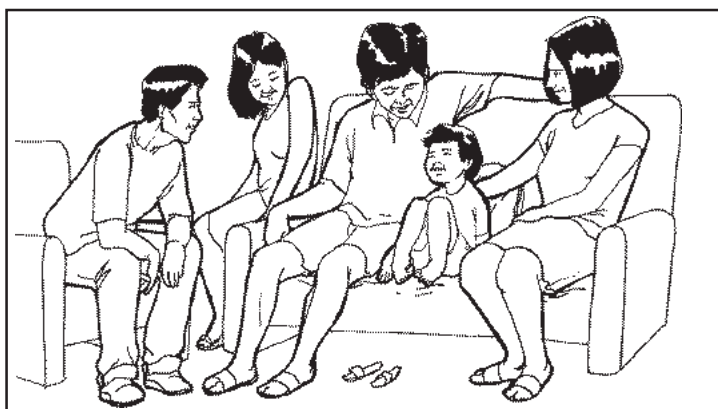


Find out what causes the stress. Is it because you cannot pay your credit to a store on the day you promised? Is it because you are worried about your brother's health?

Recognize what you can do. Will you feel relieved if you tell the person to whom you owe money that you will pay it as soon as you can? It's natural that she may get upset. If you explain to her why you cannot pay on the day you promised, she may understand you.

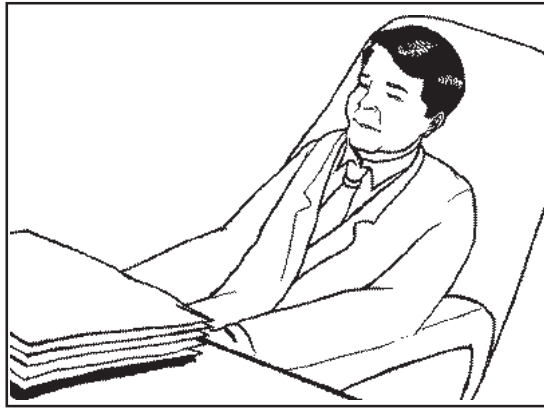
Don't you think it is better to bring your brother to the nearest clinic so you will have a clear idea of his illness? Early detection of illness can save him from further harm. Stop stress by acting on the problem, not by just thinking or worrying about it.

2. Ask help from family members and trusted friends.



If you cannot come up with a proper solution to your problem, your family members and trusted friends may be able to help you. Some of them can give you advice. When you are stressed, you need an outlet through which you can pour out your tensions. You can do so by talking about your problem with your family and friends. It's very possible that you'll feel better afterwards.

3. Relax and build your emotional reserves.



You don't have to push yourself too hard to solve your problem or finish your work. Take some time out to relax. Slow, deep breathing will help reduce tension. You can also try meditation. Techniques on proper meditation and deep breathing are discussed on pages 33–34.

Always be kind and gentle with yourself. Be a friend to yourself.

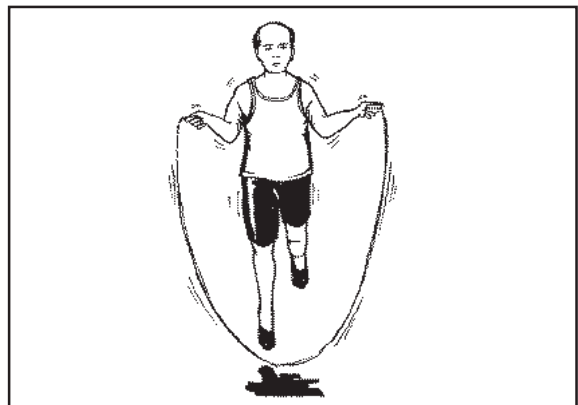
Some people are very impatient. They do more than one thing at a time. They are very ambitious and driven, and they find it difficult to relax. People who show these behaviors are more likely to suffer from stress-related illnesses. If you are one of these people, take the helpful tips below on how to become a “friend to yourself.”

Engage in simple healthy pleasures like:

- ◆ laughing
- ◆ listening to music
- ◆ enjoying a meal
- ◆ playing a game
- ◆ watching TV
- ◆ spending some quality time with your family and friends
- ◆ taking a swim

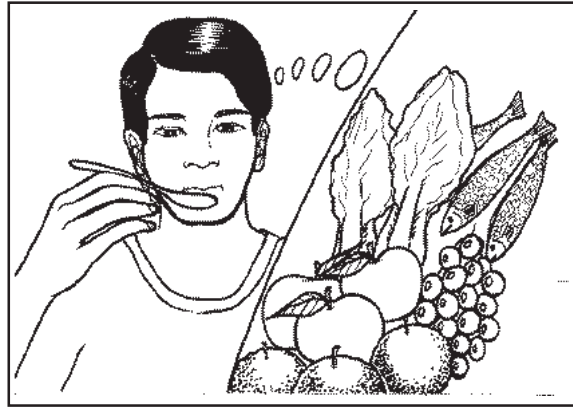
4. Exercise

Keep yourself fit in order to build physical reserves to fight or avoid diseases. You don't need to copy the complicated exercises like those shown on TV. Brisk walking, jogging, biking and swimming are some of the more enjoyable and most effective “stress-busting” exercises you can do.



5. Eat a well-balanced diet.

Eat more vegetables and fruits. Avoid drinking too much coffee because it will cause heart palpitations (rapid heartbeats). Also avoid unhealthy food items like junk food, too much sweets, etc.



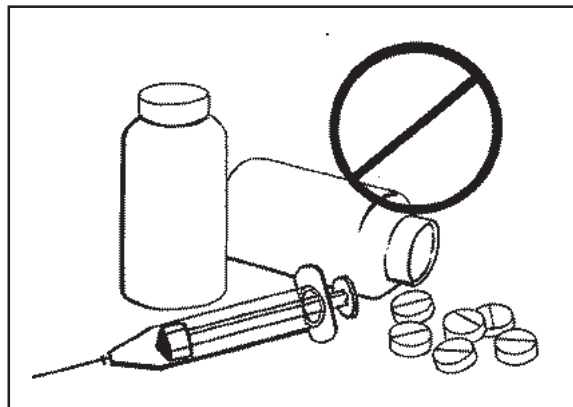
6. Get enough sleep.

Make sure you get about 8 hours of sleep every day. When you are properly rested, you will have enough energy to face challenges.



7. Avoid prohibited drugs, alcohol and smoking.

Avoid taking prohibited drugs, drinking alcohol and smoking. These will raise your heart rate, disturb your sleep, and cause you health problems. Abuse of prohibited drugs may lead to death.



8. Manage your time.

Learn to set goals and priorities. Do first what is most urgent or important.

You can find more time management tips on page 36.



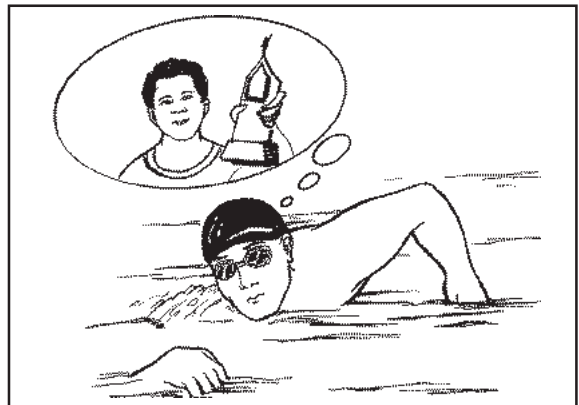
9. Strengthen your faith.

If everything goes wrong, find peace and comfort through prayers.



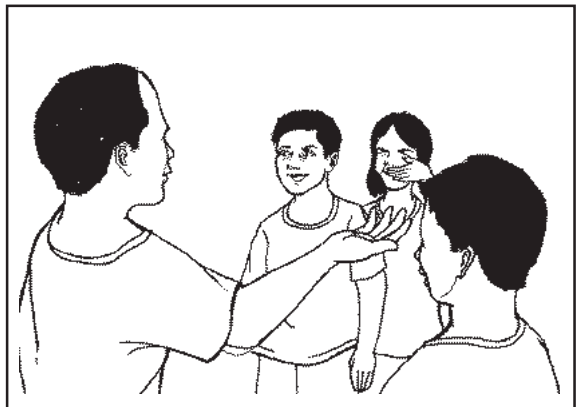
10. Have a positive attitude in dealing with stress.

Stop negative thinking and start building a good outlook in life. Negative thinking is when you think that you are no good and nothing will turn out well. Negative thinking is also worrying about something you don't really know or aren't sure of. Always feel confident about yourself. Believe in yourself because if you don't, how will others believe in you?



11. Build a sense of humor.

Bring humor into your everyday life. Laughter and smiles are a great medicine for stress. Think of the light or happy side of every situation. You can also try to cheer yourself and your friends up with jokes. No matter how corny your jokes may sound, as long as they make people laugh, they can help reduce stress.





Let's Try This

Below is a list of ways of handling stress. Identify which are healthy and which are unhealthy ways of handling stress. Copy each in the appropriate column in the table below.

- Pray for enlightenment.
- Set priorities.
- Criticize other people.
- Complain about the situation and do nothing else.
- Pretend there's nothing wrong, and ignore the problem.
- Use drugs to relieve tension.
- Get enough sleep.
- Believe in yourself.
- Smoke to relieve tension.
- Ask advice from friends.

| Healthy Ways of Handling Stress | Unhealthy Ways of Handling Stress |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Are you done? Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 46.



Let's Try This

What advice can you give to the five stressed persons in the activity on page 24? Give them advice on how to handle and reduce their stress effectively. Write your advice below.

Discuss your work with your Instructional Manager, co-learners, friends or family members. Did they agree with your advice? Why or why not? You may write down their comments below.



Let's Learn

When you are stressed, what can you do to reduce it? Below are some tips for relaxation to relieve the physical strains of stress. Deep breathing and meditation will help you feel better.

Here are the techniques:

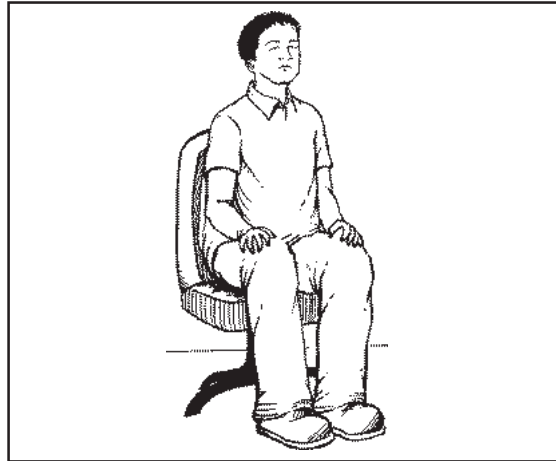
Deep Breathing

Inhale deeply and allow the lungs to breathe in as much oxygen as possible. With this step you begin to relieve tension. Put your hands below your chest, breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat this cycle three or four times.



Meditation

Sit in a comfortable position, place your hands on your lap, close your eyes, and begin to breathe slowly and deeply. Mentally focus on a peaceful or positive word, phrase or image. If other thoughts enter your mind, just relax, breathe deeply, and try again. Stretch and exhale after completing 5 to 15 minutes of meditation.



Let's Try This

Before proceeding to the next discussion, try and practice the techniques of deep breathing and meditation.

How did you feel after you tried the deep breathing techniques? How about after the meditation?

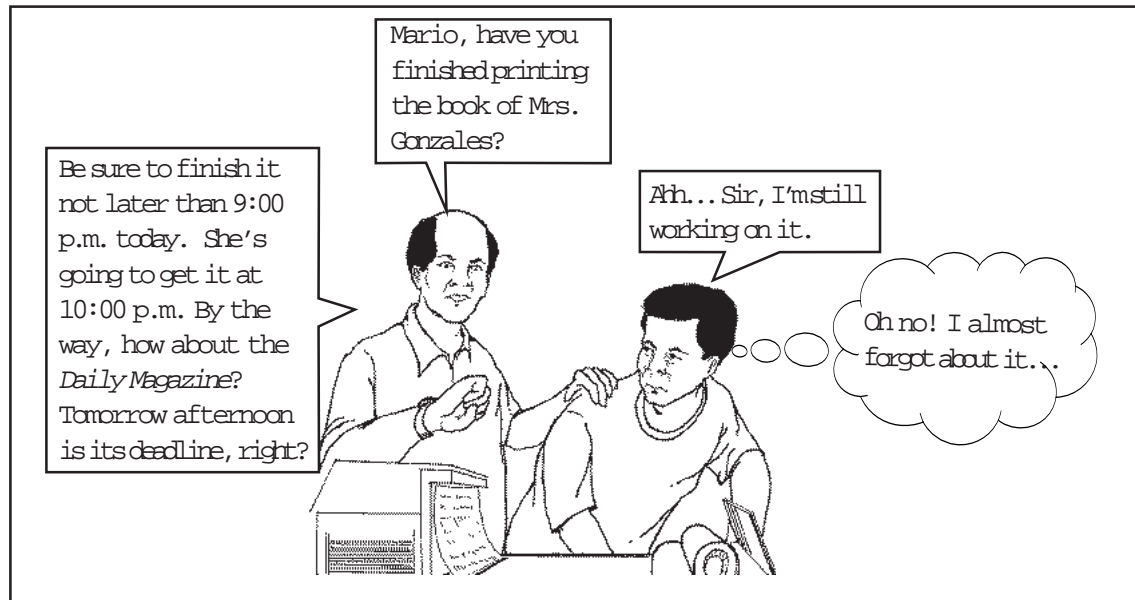
Deep breathing relaxes the body while meditation relaxes the mind. These two techniques are very effective in relieving stress. Stress management groups (professional help in stress management) highly recommend these techniques for relaxation.



Let's Study and Analyze

Let us return once again to the situation of Mario and his stressful situation at his workplace in a printing shop.

Read the dialogue, then answer the question below.



What do you think Mario should do in order to finish his task properly and promptly, and to avoid cramming again?

Cramming is a common experience to all of us, especially if we have to meet a scheduled deadline. When we cram, we rush things. We try our best to finish our work even if the quality of our output will suffer. When you do things in a hurry, you tend to forget many other important things.

Mario can still finish his job if he manages his time well. He should take things one at a time so that he won't be confused about the different printing jobs he has to finish.

If Mario will learn to manage his time properly, not only will he be able to finish all his tasks, he will also be able to prevent a potentially stressful situation from happening again.

The best way to prevent stress is to manage time well. The next section provides some helpful tips to do this.



Let's Learn

Time Management

If you don't know how to manage your time, you might forget to do some of your work. Then, at the last minute, you rush to do what you failed to do. Thus, you tend to commit more mistakes. Such a situation can give you stress.

Though stress cannot be totally avoided, some of it can be prevented, including stress that comes from unfulfilled tasks. If you finish your tasks on time, you will prevent stress caused by rushing to meet a deadline.

Here are a few tips on how to manage your time:

1. Set realistic goals.

Set realistic and achievable goals. If you think you cannot do a certain job or task, don't force yourself to accomplish it. Know your limitations and abilities. For example, if you are constructing a cabinet, don't push yourself too hard to finish it in one day when you know that it is quite impossible to do so. Try to finish it in two or more days, if necessary instead.

A good practice is to write down your activities or goals for the week. Once you have listed them, see if they are realistic or achievable.

I have written my goals in the left column of the table below. Write yours in the right column.

| <i>My Goals for the Week</i> | <i>Your Goals for the Week</i> |
|--|--------------------------------|
| I will pass my job interview on Monday. | |
| I will finish sewing the dress my niece will wear on her birthday. | |
| I will sew curtains for the coming fiesta. | |

2. Plan well.

Based on the goals I have written, I made an action plan. Try to make one for yourself.

| <i>My Action Plan for the Week</i> | <i>Your Action Plan for the Week</i> |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| I will prepare myself for the interview by rehearsing and having a good sleep. | |
| I will continue sewing the dress after I am done with the job interview. | |
| After finishing the dress of my niece, I will sew the curtain while I wait for my first day at work. If I am needed in the job immediately, I will sew the curtains during weekends. | |

3. Relax and follow your schedule.

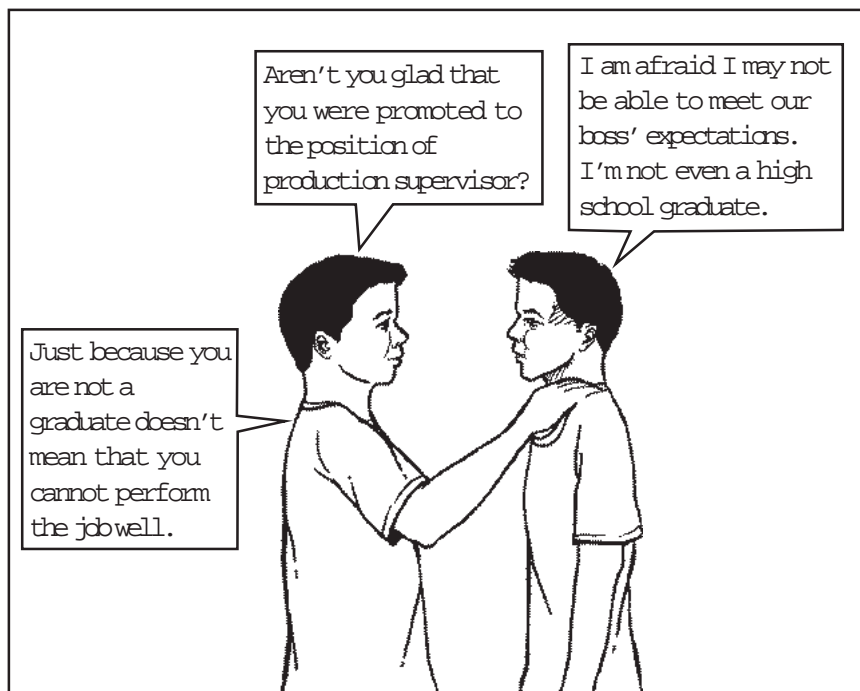
While I follow my schedule, I keep myself relaxed and happy. I have in the left column things I will do to relax. What will you do for relaxation? Write this down in the right column.

| <i>My Relaxation for the Week</i> | <i>Your Relaxation for the Week</i> |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| I will play games with my children when I get home from work. | |
| I will join my coworkers during snacks. | |
| I will watch TV before I sleep. | |



Let's Study and Analyze

Mario has learned to manage his time, and his boss noticed his improvement. To reward Mario for his good work in his last printing assignment, the boss decided to promote him. From production assistant, Mario was promoted to production supervisor. But Mario still seems to have problems. Study the dialogue on the next page and find out what these are.



What could be the best solution to this type of stress that Mario feels?

Should he back out from the challenge? What do you think?

Backing out from a challenge is not a good attitude. You have to believe in yourself. When you believe in your own ability, you can achieve things that you think you can't. It is because confidence in yourself will make you brave and eager to try your best.

At the same time, remember to set a realistic goal. Plan to do what you can realistically achieve or do, not what is beyond your abilities. Remember what you learned previously about time management.

Read on and find some more tips on how to project a positive attitude towards stress.



Let's Learn

Your attitude will help you reduce stress. Here are tips on how to project a positive attitude towards stress.

If stress cannot be prevented, you can still reduce it by preparing to face it. For example, suppose you are going to your first job interview, and you can't help feeling excited and afraid. Here are three ways of reducing the stress you feel:

- (1) Start imagining that the boss is already interviewing you. Then anticipate common questions such as those about your family background and your job experience. Practice answering the questions in your mind. That will surely help you when you are actually being interviewed.
- (2) Don't be too hard on yourself. Don't say you will never forgive yourself if you do not pass the interview. Remind yourself that other opportunities will come if you do not succeed in this one.
- (3) Believe in your own ability. Tell yourself you can do it.

(For more information on how to prepare for job interviews, you can read the NFE A&E module entitled *Are You Looking for a Job?*)



Let's Try This

What kept you busy these past few days? Analyze your daily routine, and identify possible causes of stress in the future. Then, think of what you will do to prevent or reduce such stress. You may want to review the eleven ways of handling stress that were discussed in the early part of this lesson before writing down your answer.

Discuss your answer with your Instructional Manager, colearners, friends, or family members. Did they agree with your answers? Why? Why not? Write down their comments in the spaces provided below.



Let's See What You Have Learned

How would you handle your stress in the situations below?

1. You are caught in a traffic jam and you are already late for work.

2. Your boss went out of town on business. Before he left, he told you to take charge of the office. He gave you a lot of orders and tasks to finish. After he left, you got worried about the many things he asked you to do.

3. An important person will visit you this weekend. You feel both excited and nervous. You decided to clean your house very well and cook some special dishes for him.

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on pages 46–47.



Let's Remember

Below are eleven ways of handling stress and reducing it effectively:

1. Solve your problem.
2. Ask help from family members and trusted friends if necessary.
3. Relax and build your emotional reserves. Involve yourself in some type of relaxation like:
 - ◆ deep breathing and meditation;
 - ◆ enjoying simple pleasures like watching TV; and
 - ◆ listening to music and playing games.
4. Exercise, for example: brisk walking, jogging, biking and swimming.
5. Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet.
6. Get enough sleep.
7. Avoid prohibited drugs, alcohol and smoking.
8. Manage your time well.
9. Strengthen your faith by praying.
10. Believe in yourself.
11. Have a sense of humor.



Let's Sum Up

- ◆ Stress is a physical, mental or emotional tension put on the body. It can either be positive or negative. We react to similar situations differently. That's why some stress is positive to some people, while it is negative to others.
- ◆ Stress is caused by factors within the body or by outside factors. It can also be caused by sad or happy situations.
- ◆ Excessive or too much stress can harm you physically and emotionally. It happens when tension put on the body is too much for it to bear.
- ◆ When you ignore the symptoms of too much stress and you do not find ways to reduce it, the following can happen: (1) fatigue or exhaustion, (2) deep depression, (3) burnout, and/or (4) breakdown. These are the effects of experiencing stress for a long time.
- ◆ Stop stress by solving the problem, not by just thinking about it.
- ◆ Talking out your problem with your family and friends helps relieve stress.
- ◆ Relaxation can effectively reduce stress. Some types of relaxation are deep breathing and meditation or enjoying simple pleasures like:
 - watching TV;
 - listening to music; and,
 - playing games.
- ◆ Other simple ways to handle stress and reduce it effectively are to:
 - eat healthy foods;
 - get enough sleep;
 - avoid prohibited drugs, alcohol and smoking;
 - exercise;
 - believe in yourself; and
 - pray.



What Have You Learned?

Study the story of Vivien below. Analyze the situation and answer the questions that follow.

Vivien is a single parent of a two-year-old boy. She is only 19 years old.

It has been a year since her boyfriend left her for another woman. Vivien quit her studies to work in order to raise her growing child. She now works hard as a waitress in a nearby restaurant. Fortunately, her mother stays with her to look after her child.

When she arrives home from work, she always tries to hide her fatigue so that she could still play with her baby. But still you can see in her face how stressed she is. She has lost a lot of weight and looks depressed.

1. What are the positive and negative stressors that Vivien faced?

2. What are the signs of stress that you see in Vivien? What are other signs of stress that Vivien may show in the future?

3. What are the physical and behavioral symptoms of excessive stress on Vivien? What other signs of excessive stress may she exhibit or experience?

4. Can you give Vivien some advice on how to manage stress? List down the things she can do.

Compare your answers with those in the *Answer Key* on page 47.



Answer Key

A. Let's See What You Already Know (*pages 2–3*)

1. (c) When you are bored, you are not under stress. Boredom is actually an absence of stress in life.
a, b and d are all emotions you feel when you are stressed.
2. (d) Death of a family member, winning in a competition and taking an examination are stressful situations, therefore these could all be sources of stress.
3. (b) If you do not worry, that doesn't mean you do not feel stress. Stress is not only caused by sad things that makes a person worry, happy things can also cause stress.
4. (d) Cold hands and feet, stomachaches and too much sweating are some of the symptoms of stress.
5. (d) Swollen feet is not a physical sign of stress.
6. (d) Getting irritable and aggressive, always yawning and becoming critical and defensive are some of the symptoms of stress overload.
7. (d) When a person is under a long-term stress overload, he/she is likely to become physically ill, commit suicide, and hate everybody — even himself.
8. (a) Drinking alcohol is not a healthy way to reduce stress because it will only add problems to your body.
9. (d) Smoking is not a good way to reduce stress. It can only add more stress because it harms your health.
10. (a) When you believe in yourself, you will be able to handle better the problems that come your way.

B. Lesson 1

Let's See What You Have Learned (page 15)

1. Stress is a normal feeling. We feel tension almost all the time, caused by excitement, nervousness, irritation, disappointment, fear or even extreme joy or sorrow.
2. Stress can be caused by both negative and positive stressors. Stressors could be events or things that make us feel either good or bad. Sad things like the death of a loved one make us feel lonely and sad. Good events such as birthday parties or passing an examination makes us happy and excited.

3. You will know that you are stressed when you feel some changes in your body condition. When you are excited, your heart beats faster and you sweat a lot. When you are stressed, sometimes you cannot sleep, or your hands, feet and skin are sticky, or you can't eat.
4. No. Stress is not always bad. Stress can be both positive and negative. Positive stress inspires or challenges you to do better. Negative stress, on the other hand, makes you upset and disappointed. It can make you lose sleep, feel sick, or make your hands and feet cold and sticky.

C. Lesson 2

Let's Try This (page 21)

| Highly Stressful Situation | Behavioral Symptoms | Physical Symptoms |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Pressed to meet the deadlines of two consecutive projects | Headaches | Irritable and overreacting |
| Losing a friend | Overreacting; loss of appetite; nightmares | Headache; insomnia |
| Being fired from a job | Irritable and aggressive; constant worrying; extreme smoking and drinking | Headache; high blood pressure |

Let's Try This (page 22)

1. The most likely thing to happen to the farmer is that he may make mistakes or get into accidents while fixing his things in the farm.
2. The most likely thing to happen to the mother is that she will become irritated and get angry at her child.
3. The most likely thing to happen to the contestant is that she might have indigestion. So, she could experience stomach pains and lose her concentration.
4. The most likely thing to happen to the student is that she will not be able to concentrate well and she will yawn frequently.
5. The most likely thing to happen to the person is that she will experience intense and frequent exhaustion because she always tries to please everyone.

Let's See What You Have Learned (pages 24–25)

1.
 - a. The businessman suffers from too much stress because he is worried about the unfavorable financial situation of his business.
 - b. That person is stressed because he is worried about his debts and does not know where to get money to pay them off.
 - c. The barangay captain is stressed because he might be upset about the criticisms concerning his leadership.
 - d. The woman is stressed because of the irresponsible and violent behavior of her husband when he is drunk.
 - e. The man is suffering from too much stress because he has to keep three jobs just to support his children. He is stressed physically and emotionally.
2. The persons in the exercise suffer from too much stress because they have problems which they may not be able to handle anymore. Too many worries can result in too much stress.
3. Persons who experience stress for long periods of time may get sick. They also don't behave like normal persons, or they manifest violent behavior.

D. Lesson 3

Let's Try This (page 32)

Healthy Ways of Handling Stress:

| Healthy Ways of Handling Stress | Unhealthy Ways of Handling Stress |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pray for enlightenment.2. Set priorities.3. Get enough sleep.4. Believe in yourself.5. Ask advice from friends. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Criticize other people.2. Complain about the situation and do nothing else.3. Pretend there's nothing wrong, and ignore the problem.4. Use drugs to relieve tension.5. Smoke to relieve tension. |

Let's See What You Have Learned (page 40)

1. I would try my best to calm down and relax. I would practice deep breathing. I would also think of happy memories or images to entertain myself while I'm trapped in a traffic jam. I would avoid thinking about my work because that will only upset me.
2. I would prepare a timetable indicating the things that I will do every day. That way, I can manage my time better. I would try to be as organized as I can and take the orders of my boss as a challenge.

3. First, I would try to relax for a while as I think of what I want to do. Then, I would make a time table so that I could organize properly the things I need to do. I will also try to clean the house with enthusiasm. I would be excited to meet this important person, and be motivated to clean the house and prepare special dishes.

E. What Have You Learned? (*page 43*)

1. Vivien faced the following stressors: the joy of having a baby and a kind mother, single parenthood, losing her boyfriend, the responsibility of earning a living and supporting a family. Vivien experiences all these considering that she is only 19 years old.
2. Vivien is experiencing fatigue. Maybe she may even have headache and dizziness brought by her exhaustion.
3. Vivien lost weight and looks depressed. This shows that she is suffering from too much stress.
4. The best thing that Vivien should do is to relax by doing deep breathing and meditation. She should also spend quality time with her mother and child so that she can feel that there is still hope for her family. A good relationship with the family members is very important, especially because the family is everyone's immediate source of help whenever there's a problem. Her relationship with her mom and baby could motivate her to work more and at the same time enjoy life.



Glossary

- Behavioral symptoms of stress** Signs of stress that are evident through the behavior and movement of a person
- Burnout** Loss of interest and motivation in life due to extreme exhaustion caused by working too much
- Cramming** Trying to accomplish a lot of things or activities within a very short period of time, usually at the last minute
- Deep breathing** Breathing from the diaphragm or chest
- Excessive stress** A condition when too much stress is put on your body, and the body cannot handle it anymore
- Meditation** Relaxing one's mind and muscles through deep and slow breathing
- Negative thinking** Looking at the dark or bad side of things
- Performance** Action; functioning; operation
- Physical symptoms of stress** Signs of stress that are evident on the physical appearance or looks of a person
- Positive thinking** Looking at the bright or good side of things
- Rehearse** To practice (what you are going to do or say, or a performance)
- Spasm** A sudden uncontrollable tightening of a muscle
- Stress** Physical, mental or emotional tensions
- Stressor** Any condition, situation or thing that causes stress
- Symptoms of stress** The body's immediate reaction to stress
- Tension** When the normal condition of your body is disturbed
- Time management** Planning and organizing time and activities to make a person more productive



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