# Stressors and Responses

**Directions:** Give an example of how a person might respond positively and negatively to each stressor. A positive response would help the person handle the stress, and a negative response could make the stress worse or cause other problems for the person.

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| **Stressor** | **Positive Response** | **Negative Response** |
| Preparing for final exams | Using effective study techniques like spaced repetition and self-testing | Procrastinating due to avoidance coping, which leads to last-minute cramming and increased anxiety. |
| Navigating peer relationships | Practicing active listening and assertive communication to resolve conflicts. | Engaging in rumination, which can exacerbate feelings of stress and conflict. |
| Balancing extracurricular activities | Prioritizing activities and using a time-management strategy like scheduling. | Overcommitting, leading to burnout due to chronic stress. |
| Disagreeing with parents | Using I-statements to express feelings without escalating the argument. | Responding with defensiveness or anger, which can create a cycle of reactive stress. |
| Dealing with a romantic relationship | Using problem-focused coping to address relationship issues. | Withdrawing and using avoidance behavior, which may strain the relationship. |
| Hearing a mean rumor about a friend | Confronting the situation with clear, calm communication. | Reacting impulsively or spreading counter-rumors, which can perpetuate social stress. |
| Being assigned a task you don’t know how to do | Seeking help or learning through growth mindset strategies. | Feeling helpless and avoiding the task, aligning with learned helplessness. |
| Handling social media pressures | Taking breaks from social media to practice mindfulness and reduce stress. | Comparing oneself negatively to others, leading to lower self-esteem and more stress. |
| Facing health issues | Seeking support from friends or mental health professionals and focusing on self-care. | Isolating oneself, which could lead to increased depression. |
| Planning for future education and career | Setting realistic, achievable goals and using goal-setting theory for motivation. | Overthinking and worrying without actionable steps, linked to anticipatory anxiety. |

# Stress Management Plan

**Directions:** Describe three stressors you face in your life. Then…

* Suggest at least one negative response you might have to each stressor and explain why it would not be an effective way to handle the stress.
* Describe at least two positive responses that would help you manage each stressor. Be specific.
* Identify which stress-management technique would be most effective with each of these stressors and explain why you chose it.

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| **Stressor 1: Preparing for exams** | **Stressor 2: Balancing extracurriculars** | **Stressor 3: Social media pressures** |
| Negative Response: Avoiding studying and binge-watching TV instead | Negative Response: Taking on too many activities and neglecting rest | Negative Response: Scrolling through negative comments or comparing to peers |
| Why it’s not effective: ineffective due to increased anxiety and lack of preparation | Why it’s not effective: leads to burnout | Why it’s not effective: lowers self-esteem |
| Positive Responses: Creating a structured study schedule (time-management technique).  Using deep breathing before study sessions (reduces physiological arousal). | Positive Responses: Learning to say no to unnecessary commitments (assertive communication).  Allocating specific time slots for relaxation (time-blocking method). | Positive Responses: Setting daily limits on screen time.  Engaging in activities that boost self-worth outside of social media. |
| Stress-management technique: Progressive muscle relaxation to relieve pre-exam tension. | Stress-management technique: Mindfulness meditation to maintain awareness and reduce stress. | Stress-management technique: Digital detox to reset and focus on in-person interaction |
| Why would it be effective: Reduces physical stress and helps maintain focus. | Why would it be effective: Helps in staying present and making conscious decisions. | Why would it be effective: Reduces external comparisons and promotes personal reflection. |