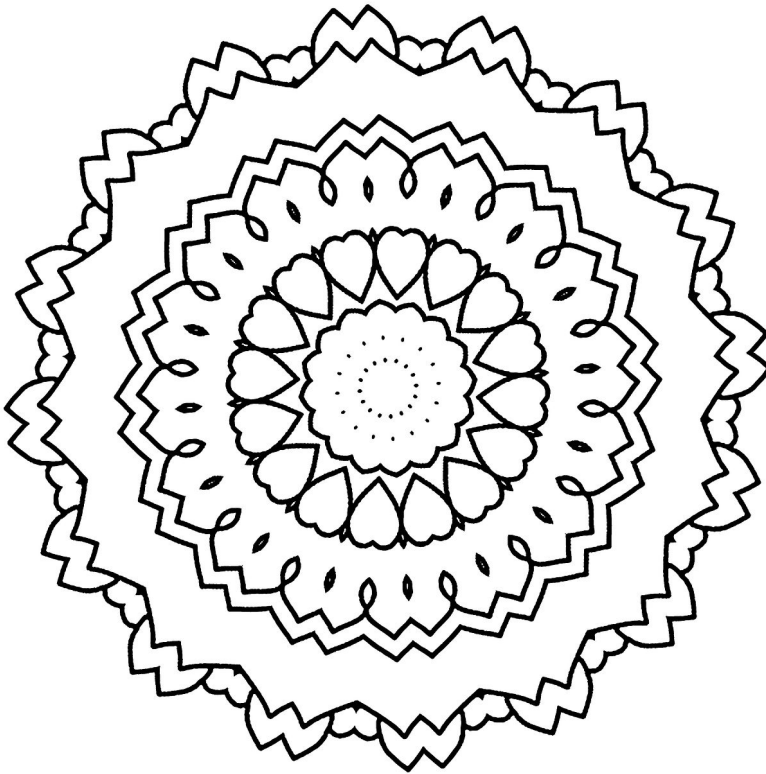


Improving Well Being

YouthZone Life Class Workbook



In this time of uncertainty, it is important to be mindful of how you are processing the changes in your life and to take steps to ensure and to improve your personal well being. In this packet, you will find tools to process your emotions as well as information on how stress affects you. Please fill out the checklists and charts.

Stress and the body

Stress is a powerful emotion that you can feel affect your body. The more aware you are of stress, the better you will be able to react to and manage it. Study the image on the following page and answer the following questions.

1. What was the most surprising piece of information? Why?

2. Where do you feel stress in your body?

3. How does stress contribute to high blood sugar?

headaches

Stress can trigger and intensify tension headaches.

increased depression

Chronic stress can wear you down emotionally and lead to depression.

heartburn

Stress increases the production of stomach acid, which could lead to heartburn or make it worse.

insomnia

Stress makes it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep, which can lead to insomnia.

rapid breathing

When you're stressed, the muscles that help you breathe tense up, which can leave you short of breath.

weakened immune system

Long-term stress weakens your immune system's defenses, leaving you more vulnerable to infections.

risk of heart attack

Over time, an increased heart rate and high blood pressure damage your arteries, which could lead to a heart attack.

high blood sugar

Stress causes your liver to release extra sugar (glucose) into your bloodstream, which over time puts you at risk for type 2 diabetes.

pounding heart

Stress hormones make your heart pump faster so that blood can quickly reach your vital organs and limbs.

high blood pressure

Stress hormones tighten blood vessels, which can raise your blood pressure.

fertility problems

Stress interferes with the reproductive system in both men and women, and may make it harder to conceive.

stomachache

Stress affects your body's digestive system, which can lead to stomachaches, nausea, and other tummy troubles.

erectile dysfunction

Your brain plays an important part in the process of getting an erection. Stress can interfere with this process.

low sex drive

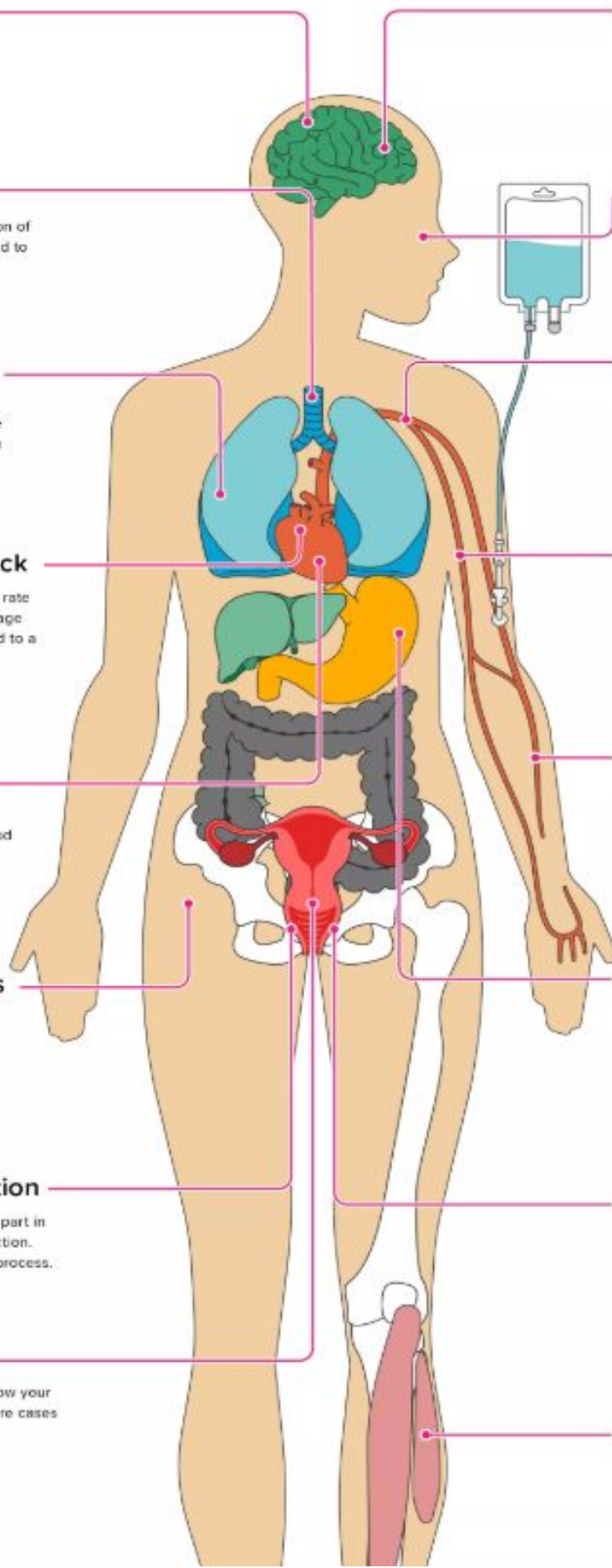
Stress — and the fatigue that often comes with it — can take a toll on your libido.

missed periods

Fluctuating hormones can throw your menstrual cycle off, or in severe cases stop it altogether.

tense muscles

Stress makes muscles tense up, and chronic stress can lead to tension-related headaches and backaches.



Music Mindfulness

Music is a powerful tool of self care. Did you know, for example, that the right musician actually boost your immune system, raise your mood, and even promote healing after a surgery? Sounds amazing, but the music that plays through your headset, computer, or other device can counteract feelings of depression and tune you into a happier state of mind. This assignment will let you discover how music plays you as much as you play it.

Instructions:

You are going to create a Music-Mood Inventory in the space below. This is an opportunity for you to find out how music alters how you feel. To do this, you will rate your mood as you listen to different kinds of music. Experiment with different kinds of music and see how each shifts your mood.

Mood Before What were you doing? On a scale of 1-10 (10 great, 1 not well) how are you feeling?	Type of Music List artist and song name	Mood after How has your mood changed? Use the 1-10 Scale

(source:mindfulnessexercisess.com)

Meditation

Meditation is a time you give yourself to slow the world down and check in with yourself. All you really need is a quiet place and a few minutes. Choose one of the meditations below. Try to not allow outside thoughts to interrupt and really focus on the prompt. The first time you do this, you may feel silly or it may feel like a few minutes is an eternity. But as you work at this, it will become easier and more rewarding. ***Write a one page essay about your experience meditating.***

For Listening

Remember a time when a friend listened to you. Who was that friend? How did that make you feel?

Think of your favorite song. Can you hear it? If it has words, what do they say? How does this song make you feel? Why is it one of your favorites?

In the next moment, listen to all the different sounds in the room. How many can you hear? Where are they coming from? Which sounds do you find pleasant?

Strength

Imagine that in the future, you can do something very well. Maybe you skateboard, dance, or play guitar. Picture yourself feeling strong and confident doing this activity.

Some people say that hardship makes a person stronger. Why do you think they say this? Have you had hardships that make you stronger?

Hal Borland said, "If you would (like) to know strength and courage, welcome the company of trees" What did he mean?

Stillness

Imagine you're camping and a great thunderstorm rolls in. You're with a small child and she is frightened. Can you find stillness in yourself that would help this child? What would you do and say to help her feel safe?

Take the next minute to listen to your breath. See if you can follow your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Imagine your favorite color and picture yourself breathing that color in and out. What does that color mean to you?

Imagine a time when you wanted to befriend a frightened or shy animal. Think of how still you became and how you carefully encouraged the animal to trust you.

Grounding

Picture a large old tree with big branches. Sit with your back against the tree and watch the things around you.

Imagine yourself sitting on a large, warm rock on the top of a mountain. It is a beautiful and clear day and you can see for miles. Where are you and what can you see?

Imagine a tunnel that goes deep into the ground. Travel that tunnel into a small cosy room deep inside the earth. What is in the room? Who is there? Notice how it feels to be in this room.

What Works Checklist

It is important to know what works for you. Everyone is different and what may be relaxing to one person (camping, for example) may be distressing to someone else. As long as you are not hurting yourself or others, there is no right or wrong way to care for yourself. Check off all activities on the next page that make you feel more calm and happy in your body. Sometimes, it helps to be reminded what works for you.

COPING TOOLS: What Helps Me

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read A Book or Magazine  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ride a Bike or Skateboard  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hug or Climb a Tree  | <input type="checkbox"/> Create Origami  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journal or Write a Letter  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook or Bake  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use Kind & Compassionate Self-Talk  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for Help  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a Collage or Scrapbook  | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to Someone You Trust  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rest, Nap or Take a Break  | <input type="checkbox"/> Weave, Knit or Crochet  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go on a Hike, Walk or Run  | <input type="checkbox"/> Build Something  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take Good Care of the Earth  | <input type="checkbox"/> Get a Hug  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink Water  | <input type="checkbox"/> Visualize a Peaceful Place  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play a Board Game  | <input type="checkbox"/> Stretch  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do Something Kind  | <input type="checkbox"/> Make Art  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make and Play with Slime  | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Positive Affirmations  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discover Treasures in Nature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Take Slow, Mindful Breaths  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a Shower or Bath  | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean, Declutter or Organize  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise  | <input type="checkbox"/> Use Aromatherapy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drink a Warm Cup of Tea  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cry  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgive, Let Go, Move On  | <input type="checkbox"/> Try or Learn Something New  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Yoga  | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to Music  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden or Do Yardwork  | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a Stress Ball or Other Fidget  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jump on a Trampoline  | <input type="checkbox"/> Get Plenty of Sleep  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuddle or Play with Your Pet  | <input type="checkbox"/> Kick, Bounce or Throw a Ball  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Gratitude  | <input type="checkbox"/> Take or Look at Photographs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do a Puzzle  | <input type="checkbox"/> Eat Healthy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blow Bubbles  | <input type="checkbox"/> Play Outside  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smile and Laugh  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sing and/or Dance  |

Self Care Chart

Keep this someplace where you can easily keep track of your efforts to care for yourself. Dont be too hard on yourself if you cant do each task every day but do your best to do as many as possible. You'll be amazed at the change in your mood.

	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su
Slept 8+ Hours							
Ate 3 meals							
Spent Time in Nature							
Participated in Physical activity							
Drank a lot of water							
Did something creative							
Spent time in nature							
Thought Positive Thoughts							
Sat quietly without my phone for ten minutes							
Did an act of Kindness							

Coloring Pages

Often, self care can look a lot like doing not a lot. Coloring book pages can be a great way to unplug and destress. Choose one (or all) to color.

