

**PURPOSE**

To expand students' knowledge of the importance of effectively dealing with stress for the benefit of their health and wellbeing.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand how the brain and testosterone impact our emotions.
2. Understand what stress is.
3. Understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy ways of managing stress.
4. Understand how healthy reactions to stress improve our health and wellbeing.

**MATERIALS & RESOURCES**

- **Lesson 8 teenMEN** powerpoint
- **Entry Ticket Activity + Teachers' Answer Key**
- **Worksheet: When I Feel Stressed**
- *Scripts for situations of conflict*

**VOCABULARY**

- **Hormones:** Chemical signals that travel in the bloodstream, directing the activity of every system in the body. The body has many different hormones, produced in different parts of the body.
- **Hormonal feedback:** When a hormone that has been produced in the body feeds back to the brain to either increase or decrease its own production.
- **Testosterone:** The main male hormone, produced in the testes.
- **Stress:** The body's response to physical, mental, or emotional pressure.
  - **Internal stressor:** Thoughts or behaviors that create stress.

- **External stressor:** Stressors that come from external factors that you cannot control.
- **Conflict resolution:** the process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.
- **Scripts:** Things that we have practiced saying so that they come to mind easily when needed.

### PREPARATION

- ☐ Print and cut out the **Entry Ticket Activity** squares into 18 cards.
- ☐ Print the **When I Feel Stressed Worksheet** for each student.

### PROCEDURE

#### Step 1 (5 minutes): Entry Ticket Activity: True or False Cards

Hand out one or two **Entry Ticket Activity** cards to each student, depending on the number of students in the class.

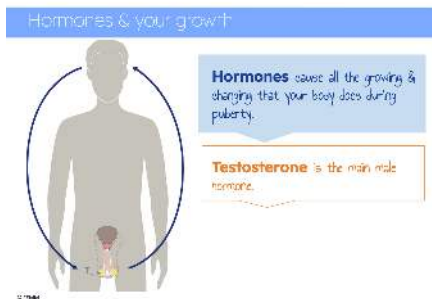


Once students have answered the question on their card, have them read the question aloud for the class to answer. Check answers using the short answer key provided at the bottom of the document or, for more in-depth answers, use the **Teacher's Answer Key** provided in the materials.

#### Step 2 (5 minutes): Review Hormones and Technology

##### Do you remember what controls the activity of every system in the body?

Yes, hormones! **Hormones** are directed by your brain. They cause all of the growth and development that your body does during puberty.



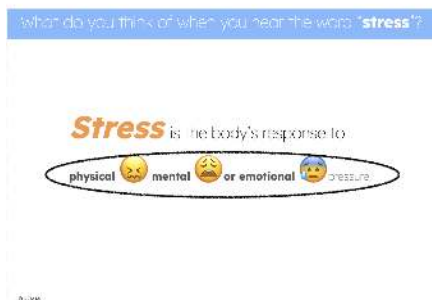
Testosterone and all of your other hormones are affected by what you eat, how much sleep you get, whether you exercise, etc.

Briefly discuss the **Health Checklist: Media Edition**. What did you notice? Did anything surprise you about your technology use? Did you spend more time online than maybe you thought? Are there any habits you'd like to change to be healthier?



### Step 3 (5 minutes): Stress: Internal and External

Something else that impacts our hormones is stress. **Stress** is the body's response to physical, mental, or emotional pressure. When our body is under stress, it can start to react in a variety of ways.



First, it's important to know that stress is something that happens to *everyone* and at all

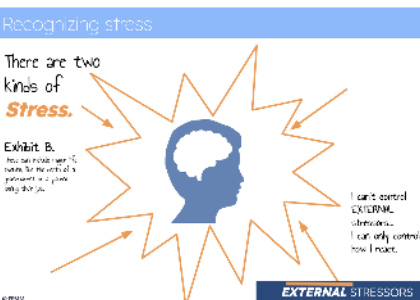
stages of life. Also, not all stress is bad! If there's a test coming up and we feel stressed about it, that can motivate us to study for the test. However, if we get too overwhelmed by our stress, we might put off studying for the test and then stay up way too late studying the night before, which ends up negatively impacting our sleep and performance on the test. In this scenario, the problem is that we made our stress worse, with avoidance.

So, what *we do when we are feeling stressed* is an important life skill. How can we help ourselves to manage stress? The first thing to do is *recognize* the stress.

**1. Internal stressors** are stressors that come from within ourselves. When our mindset or expectation is “all or nothing,” this can cause us stress.



If we think we either have to be *perfect* at public speaking or else we're *a failure* at public speaking, we are going to stress ourselves out when the teacher announces that everyone in the class has to give a presentation. Internal stressors are usually driven by our thoughts or behaviors.



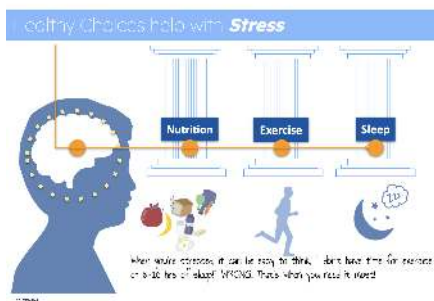
**2. External stressors** are stressors that we have little or no control over. These can include major life events, like the death of a grandparent or a parent losing their job.

These kinds of stressors come from outside of ourselves, which is why they are called external. We can't control external stressors; but we CAN choose how we react.

### Step 3 (10 minutes): When I Feel Stressed Worksheet

Stress is a part of life. We are all going to have times where we are very stressed. We will have other times where we are less stressed. It's important to remember when we are going through a difficult time that **it won't last forever!**

Especially in times of stress, don't forget what YOU can do:



- Exercise and eat nutritious food. This helps keep our body more resilient to stress.
- Get enough sleep: *especially* when you feel stressed!
- Look out for that negative self-talk and try to replace it with more positive statements. This helps us work on our mindset and those internal stressors.
- Listen to upbeat music, write, draw or be outside in nature.
- Make sure you have friends, and most importantly, a trusted adult, that you can talk to when things are hardest.

Remember: NOBODY gets there alone. EVERYBODY needs support, encouragement and help.

#### Healthy Choices Help with Stress

Maturity doesn't mean going it alone. 🙋

Maturity does mean 🗨️ communicating what you're feeling and talking with a trusted adult when things are hard.

NOBODY gets there alone. EVERYBODY needs support and encouragement.

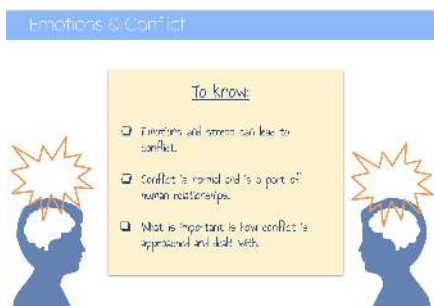
Hand out the **When I Feel Stressed Worksheet** to each student.



Give students a couple of minutes to think about and write down their responses. Discuss any questions as a class.

### Step 4 (10 minutes): Conflict Resolution + Scripts

Stress can have an effect on our emotions. Sometimes, our emotions and our stress can lead to conflict.



**Conflict** basically means that you disagree with someone about something. Dealing with conflict is a normal part of human relationships. Sometimes, we have conflicts with our parents or siblings. Other times, we have conflict with our friends. Conflict can lead to positive change, but we must handle it with care.

**Conflict resolution** is an important skill to build. Conflict resolution is when two or more individuals find a solution to their issue. Here are three steps in trying to resolve conflict:



1. **Recognize (name) your emotions.** Try to name the emotion (s) you are feeling. When you can name the emotion: sad, angry, disappointed, hurt, etc. you can better communicate your needs without threatening or punishing others.
2. **Listen well.** Really try to understand their perspective on the issue. Ask questions. Really try to use your power of imagination to try and understand things from their view.
3. **Stick to the facts!** Don't bring up old problems that are not relevant to what is going on right now. Remain calm and be respectful when you are addressing the person with whom you are having conflict. Be specific about what is bothering you and how it made you feel.

It's easier to practice resolving conflicts before you are in the middle of one that's gotten out of hand. **Scripts** are phrases that you have practiced before a real-life situation comes up, so that you know what to say or do. Let's see if we can brainstorm some scripts for dealing with conflict in different situations:

| Scripts for conflicts with friends                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Scripts for conflicts with friends                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Where:</b> back of the school bus</p> <p><b>Scene:</b> Raph scratches Mateo's sunglasses off his head. Mateo tries to scratch them back, but Raph has a firm grip and won't give them to Mateo. Mateo says he's going to post something that "everyone at school is very interested in seeing" about Raph...</p> <p>What could you say to your friend to stop making this conflict?</p> | <p><b>Where:</b> Classroom</p> <p><b>Scene:</b> Two guys in your class, Mikey and Omar, are beside you, talking in a really mean way about another guy, Julian, who doesn't have many friends...</p> <p>What could you say to stop that and help Julian?</p> |

**Note:** Allow students to come up with some ideas for what to say in each scenario. Provide guidance where necessary.

### **Scenario #1:**

*You're on the bus with two friends. Raph snatches Mateo's sunglasses off his head. Mateo tries to snatch them back, but Raph has a firm grip and won't give them to Mateo. Mateo says he's going to post something that "everyone will be very interested in seeing" about Raph. This is getting bad... fast!*

*What can you do to help your two friends?*

*"Raph, just give them back." (Direct approach.)*

*"Mateo, don't do something you'll regret doing to Raph later." (Empathetic approach.)*

*"You guys, come on, I want to show you my new Rubik's cube!" (Distraction approach.)*

### **Scenario #2:**

*You're in your classroom. Two guys in your class, Mikey and Omar, are beside you, talking in a really mean way about another guy, Julian, who doesn't have many friends.*

*What can you say to stop them and help Julian?*

*"Knock it off. Leave Julian alone." (Direct approach.)*

*"Hey guys, Julian would probably feel pretty bad if he heard you." (Empathetic approach.)*

*"Do you guys want to come shoot hoops with me?" (Distraction approach.)*

### **Scenario #3:**

If there are certain things around the house that you often get in conflicts with your parents or siblings about, what are they?

**What scripts could help you to find a solution that works for you and your parents?**

Remember:

1. *Know your emotions.*
2. *Listen well.*
3. *Stick to the facts.*

Stress and conflict are normal parts of life. It is the way that we choose to manage stress and deal with conflict that makes us mature individuals.

### CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

#### Part 1: Everyone goes through puberty!

The girls in your grade have completed their grade 6 teenFEMM course as you have been working through this course. Although their changes are different from yours, hormones are also playing a major role in their body and brain development during puberty. It is important to remember that all kids go through puberty, and hopefully you all will have a little bit more understanding for each other as you navigate these changes. Through puberty, the pathways in the girls' brains will continue to develop, they will grow taller, their bodies will grow and develop, they will grow more body hair, and their reproductive organs will mature. You are both going through these incredible changes, and with a little bit of extra focus on making good choices to support your bodies and minds through this process, you will grow into mature, healthy adults.

#### Part 2: End of teenMEN grade 6

This brings us to the end of our teenMEN grade 6 course. I hope that you have learned some new things about your health, and are feeling excited to be going through this amazing stage of growth in your lives. I hope you continue to consider the impacts of sleep, nutrition, and exercise on your developing mind and body, and remember that your hormone health will impact the rest of your body's health.

#### Part 3: Conclusion of Lesson 8

Our emotions are affected by our hormones. Sometimes, we will find ourselves in conflict with others. This is normal. We can use certain skills to become excellent at conflict resolution. This helps us, our family, our friends, and our community. Part of growing up and becoming a mature person is taking responsibility for ourselves. This may mean practicing the habit of going to bed on time or preparing our clothes the night before. Maturity is about making choices that lead to good health, habits and relationships in life.

### REFERENCES

- Kallianta, M.K., Katsira, X.E., Tsitsika, A.K., Vlachakis, D., Chrousos, G., Darviri, C., & Bacopoulou, F. (2021). Stress management intervention to enhance adolescent resilience: a randomized controlled trial. *EMBnet Journal*, 26, <https://doi.org/10.14806/ej.26.1.967>
- Rubenstein, J.L. & Feldman, S.S. (1993). Conflict-resolution behavior in adolescent boys: Antecedents and adaptational correlates, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 3(1), 41-66, [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327795jra0301\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327795jra0301_3)