

PURPOSE

To increase self-awareness, as students learn to identify emotions and behaviors in relation to their hormones and health habits.

To identify positive ways to respond to and manage stress.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand what can influence our emotions (hormones, peers, social media) at this stage of development.
2. Continue to chart biomarkers and note emotional changes throughout the cycle.
3. Identify positive ways to respond to stress, in order to increase self-confidence and support healthy relationships.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Lesson 8 teenFEMM powerpoint
- Worksheet: Hormones + Self Awareness + Answer Key
- Worksheet: When I Feel Stressed
- Case Study: Harper

VOCABULARY

- **Hormones:** Chemical signals that travel in the bloodstream, directing the activity of every system in the body.
- **Self-Awareness:** Having a strong understanding of who you are, how you feel and think, and the reasons for your actions.
- **Social media:** Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- **Habit:** Something you do so often that it becomes natural to you.
- **Body image:** How a person sees her own body and the feelings that go along with this perception, both positive and negative.
- **Health Pillars:** Nutrition, exercise, and sleep are three essentials in maintaining good health.

- **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.

PREPARATION

- ☐ Print the **Worksheet: Hormones + Self Awareness** for each student.
- ☐ Print the **Case Study: Harper** to read out loud to the class.
- ☐ Print the **Worksheet: When I Feel Stressed** for each student.

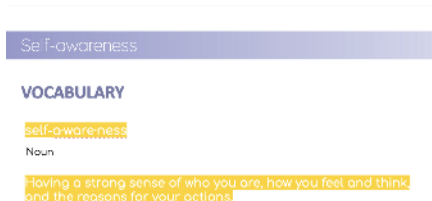
PROCEDURE

Step 1 (5 minutes): Review *Social Media Journal* + Introduce Concept of Self-Awareness

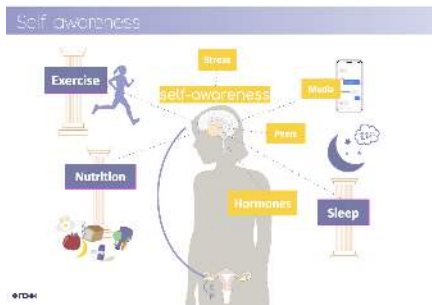


Discuss with students the *Social Media Journal* from the previous class.

Did you fill in your **Social Media Journal** last week? How did it go? What did you notice about your mood after spending time on social media? Did you feel more or less confident after spending time on social media? Did you have more positive or negative thoughts about your appearance or body? Did you feel more or less grateful for the things in your life?



What is **self awareness**? Self awareness means to have a strong understanding of who you are, how you feel and think, and the reasons behind your actions.



Part of self-awareness is understanding how our hormones, nutrition, exercise, sleep (or lack of) can all contribute to our mood. There are other factors, too, like who you spend your time with and how much time you spend online. All of these things play a big role in your emotional and physical health. Having the self-awareness to check-in with ourselves about how we are feeling or why we are behaving in a certain way, is a sign of maturity in a person.

Step 2 (5 minutes): *Worksheet: Hormones + Self-Awareness*



Hand out the **Worksheet: Hormones + Self Awareness**. Give students a couple of minutes to answer the questions. Then, review the answers together as a class, using the following slide or with the **Answer Key** provided in the materials.

Answers | Hormones + Self-awareness

When estrogen is rising you may find that you have more energy and feel more social.

At the end of a cycle, when both Estrogen and Progesterone are falling, it can be hard to feel really low energy or feel more irritable.

Answers

1. In the OVARY

- a) The growing egg and follicle produce estrogen. This phase is circled in blue.
- b) After ovulation, the now empty follicle, the corpus luteum, produces progesterone. This phase is circled in gray.
- c) Estrogen is lowest (after menstruation) before the egg+follicle start to grow.
- d) Estrogen is highest around the time of ovulation.

2. In the HORMONAL GRAPH

- a) You are *most likely* to feel more irritable when both estrogen and progesterone are dropping at the end of the cycle. *Circled on the slide.* It is normal to feel a little bit more emotional and tired since hormones impact every part of your body.
- b) You are *most likely* to feel more energetic and social when estrogen is rising. *Circled on the slide.*

3). In the CERVIX

During menstruation, hormones are low. Both estrogen and progesterone.

Dry indicates progesterone (low, but still higher than estrogen).

Moist is estrogen.

Slippery is high estrogen.

Dry is progesterone.

Charting is a great habit to build self-awareness. A habit is something you do so often that it becomes natural to you. For example, after charting for multiple months, you may know about yourself that in the middle of the cycle, when estrogen is high, you have a lot of energy and want to make plans. Then, at the end of your cycle, when both estrogen and progesterone are dropping, you may know that you have less energy and are more sensitive emotionally and so you need to get 8-10 hours of sleep to support your emotional health. This won't be the same for everyone, so charting helps you become self-aware of your unique patterns.

Can you think of something else that impacts your health? *Technology.*

Step 3 (5 minutes): Self-Awareness and Technology



Technology gives us lots of opportunities to have fun and connect. Technology can help us learn new things about the world around us. These are some of the “pros” when it comes to technology. But technology also has its downside, or “cons”, too. Technology often has the effect of making us *disconnect*. It can distract us from things we need to do (maybe homework?) and it can negatively impact our relationships if we’re not really giving our full attention to the person in front of us.

There are other health risks when it comes to technology, too.

1. Skipping meals to keep scrolling



When you skip a meal, your body sees this as a mini-emergency and produces the stress hormone cortisol. This causes irritability (hangry, anyone?) emotional changes and fatigue. This isn’t good for your brain, mood or body.

2. Staying up late on your phone



Lack of sleep affects your ability to pay attention, learn, and remember things in school. This can have very real effects on your body and brain. It can also make you feel more anxious and overwhelmed. Turn off auto-scroll in advance, in your settings on TikTok, Instagram, etc.

3. Screen time impacts your body image

Self Awareness and Technology

Be Aware

Spending so much time on Instagram, Tik Tok, etc. that you start to feel like your body doesn't measure up.

Have you ever felt this before? Did you know that 1 out of 3 girls feels worse about themselves after time online? That's not cool.

Make things do things, play sports, enjoy music, and be with people who love you. **You are valuable, just as you are.** And you have more to give the world than your Instagram feed.



Spending time on a screen, whether it's Instagram, Tik Tok or watching shows, impacts your body image. Body image is how a person sees her own body and the feelings that go along with this perception, both positive and negative. Did you know that 1 out of 3 girls feels worse about themselves after time online? Spend time offline: make things, play sports, enjoy music, get out in nature and be with people who love you. You are valuable just as you are.

Time online can be "toxic" for body image



This is a very normal time in your life to be thinking more about your body as it grows and changes. But, each person grows at her own pace, depending on genetics and healthy choices. What does body image have to do with mood and your health? *Stress.*

Step 4 (10 minutes): Stress: Internal and External; Positive and Negative Responses

Self-awareness and Stress

VOCABULARY

stress

Noun

The body's response to:



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Stress is the body's response to physical, mental or emotional pressure. As a teenager, stress can be as a result of grades, sports, siblings, peers, etc. As adults, stress might be about finances, a job, taking care of family things, etc. Stress is something that happens to *everyone* 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 spur us to study for the test. However, if we get too overwhelmed by our stress, we can put off studying for the test until the night before, which ends up negatively impacting our sleep and performance on the test the next day. This, in turn, tells our brain to ***stress out about tests even more!!*** In this scenario, we make the stress worse with avoidance. So, what do we do when we are feeling stressed?

The first thing is to *identify* the stress. Let's look at two kinds of stress.

1. **Internal stressors** are thoughts or behaviors that create stress.

Self-Awareness and Stress

There are two kinds of **Stress**.

1. INTERNAL STRESSORS

Thoughts or behaviors that create stress.

When our mindset or expectation is "all or nothing," this can cause us stress.



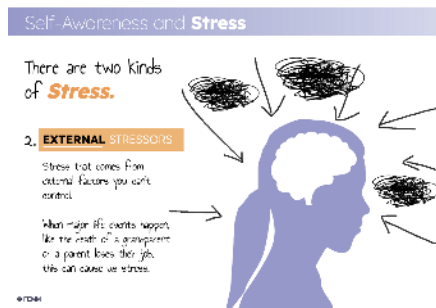
I'm a failure. Because I'm not good at this I'll never be good at ANYTHING!

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For example, 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 feel stressed when the teacher announces that

everyone in the class has to give a presentation.

2. **External stressors:** stress that comes from external factors you can't control.



This could be the death of a grandparent or a parent losing their job. These kinds of stressors come from outside of ourselves. We can't control the external stressor; but we **CAN** choose how we respond to it.

There are negative and positive ways to respond to stress.



Negative self-talk and self-criticism can come easily when we're down. However, it doesn't actually help. Talk to yourself like you would talk to a friend. If a friend ran for student council and lost, you wouldn't think or say to them: "You shouldn't even have tried." You'd say, "I heard it was really close! You should try again next year as you'd be so good at it!" Why don't we talk that way to ourselves?

Self-Awareness and Stress

NEGATIVE responses to **Stress** seek temporary distraction

EXAMPLES

1. Criticizing yourself (**negative self-talk**)

2. Becoming aggressive or even violent (yelling at someone, throwing or kicking something)
3. Eating too much or too little
4. Smoking
5. Drinking alcohol
6. Associating the family members or friends who actually want what's best for you



Negative coping responses to stress seek temporary distraction but actually make the stress and the situation worse. For example, both alcohol and smoking **increase stress hormones** in the body. So if you think they take the edge off - think again as, in reality, once the drugs wear off, your stress levels will be even higher than they were before. If you are going through a stressful time, talk to a trusted family member or adult in your life.

Self-Awareness and Stress

POSITIVE responses to **Stress** build long-term resiliency

EXAMPLES

1. Getting enough sleep
2. Eating healthy foods
3. Exercising or getting outdoors to enjoy nature
4. Spending time with family members and friends who want what's best for you
5. Singing, playing music or dancing
6. Playing with a pet
7. Making and following through with an action plan



Positive coping responses to stress build long-term resiliency. The situation may be difficult, but by practicing healthy ways of dealing with stress, you are actually teaching your brain and your body how to stay calm despite the storm; practicing habits of resiliency will support your mental and physical health for your whole life. Positive ways to deal with stress include finding an outlet like making things, art, listening to music, going outdoors or exercising, talking to family and friends who want what's best for you. All of these activities produce endorphins in the brain, which are mood-lifting and **stress-reducing hormones**.

Step 5 (5 minutes): Case Study: Harper

Let's read about a situation that happened this week with Harper.



Read the **Case Study** aloud to the class and then discuss the following questions:

1. What are some of the external and internal stressors that Harper was feeling?

Possible answers:

External stressors: *She had a tough math test at school that day... all of her friends thought it was easy... the teacher told her she should consider getting some extra tutoring support... Camden started running through the kitchen with his friend being so loud and telling the stupidest jokes!* These are all examples of external stressors that Harper is experiencing.

Internal stressors: *...no one else she knew seemed to have to go to a tutor or do extra work, she was the only stupid one... Nobody else had to do chores...*

These are all examples of Harper's internal stressors: her thoughts and behaviors that are causing stress. These thoughts are untrue (other people do have to do chores... everyone needs help with something... it's mature to accept support and do extra work to get good grades). Additionally, as she continues to compare her life to an idealized representation of the lives of others on social media, she feeds her internal stressors which causes her to feel worse about her life.

2. How could Harper have better handled the situation?

Possible answers:

Harper could have recognized her brother was being extra silly with a friend over and therefore chosen to leave them alone. She could have talked to her Mom. Even talking

through her emotions and thoughts would have made her feel better and calmed her down after a stressful day. She could have gone for a walk or done an activity that was mood-lifting and stress-reducing.

Step 5 (5 minutes): Worksheet: When I Feel Stressed



Hand out the **Worksheet: When I Feel Stressed**. Give students a few minutes to reflect and write down their responses. Ask students if they'd like to share any responses.

CONCLUSION



If you are charting your cycle, making good choices when it comes to nutrition, exercise, and sleep, then you will grow and develop at the pace that is right for you! If you have questions or want to talk about your experience, ask a trusted family member or adult in your life about their experiences instead of comparing yourself to what you see online.

Course Summary

The boys in your grade have completed their grade 8 teenMEN course as you have been working through this course. Although their changes are different from yours, hormones are also playing a major role in the boys' body and brain development during puberty. It

is important to remember that everyone goes through puberty. It's helpful to have a little bit more understanding for each other as you navigate these changes.

This brings us to the end of our teenFEMM grade 8 course. I hope that you have learned some new things about your cycle and your health, and are feeling more confident about yourself as you go through this amazing stage of growth in your lives. It is a great idea to keep charting- on paper or in the free FEMM App online if your parents are ok with it - so that you have a unique health record for yourself as you become the woman you are meant to be. Remember the impacts of nutrition, exercise, and sleep on your developing mind and body, and that your ovulatory cycle is an important window into your own health and strength as a young woman! As you become more aware of these hormonal changes and how they impact how you think and feel, you will be better equipped to face all of the exciting new adventures life has in store for you.

REFERENCES

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