TOOL BOX
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT CAUSES IT?
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
WHAT CAN BE DONE?
BUT FIRST.....
“The non-specific response of the body to any demand whether it is caused by or results in pleasant or unpleasant conditions.”

*Dr. Hans Selye*

- Engineering - something that deforms the material
- Medicine – something that puts pressure on your biological or psychic system that makes you feel abnormal

...a threat to the body’s equilibrium. It’s a challenge to react, a call to adapt.

*Dr. John Ratey, MD
Harvard Medical School*
STRESSORS
Teen Stress

Teens feel the pressure

“I think stress is a problem for teenagers like me... because when you get a certain age, you start worrying about certain things, like, when your puberty comes, your body starts to develop more, and then you get to worry about school, your families, and what most people think about you.”

Girl, 14

You may have caught yourself thinking, “Teen stress? Wait until they're older—then they'll know stress.”

Yet teen stress is an important health issue. The early teen years are marked by rapid changes—physical, cognitive, and emotional. Young people also face changing relationships with peers, new demands at school, family tensions, and safety issues in their communities. The ways in which teens cope with these stressors can have significant short- and long-term consequences on their physical and emotional health. Difficulties in handling stress can lead to mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety disorders.

What is stress? It is the body’s reaction to a challenge, which could be anything from outright physical danger to asking someone for a date or releasing stored glucose to increase the body's energy. This physical response to stress kicks in much more quickly in teens than in adults because the part of the brain that can calmly assess danger and call off the stress response, the prefrontal cortex, is not fully developed in adolescence.

The stress response prepares a person to react quickly and perform well under pressure. It can help teens be on their toes and ready to rise to a challenge.

The stress response can cause problems, however, when it overreacts or goes on for too long. Long-term stressful situations, like coping with a parent's divorce or being bullied at school, can produce a lasting, low-level stress that can wear out the body's reserves, weaken the immune system, and make an adolescent feel depleted or beleaguered.

THINGS THAT CAN CAUSE YOUTH STRESS

- School pressure and career decisions
- After-school or summer jobs
- Dating and friendships
- Pressure to wear certain types of clothing, jewelry, or hairstyles
- Pressure to experiment with drugs, alcohol, or sex
- Pressure to be a particular size or body shape. With girls, the focus is often weight. With boys, it is usually a certain muscular or athletic physique.
- Dealing with the physical and cognitive changes of puberty
- Family and peer conflicts
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Family and peer conflicts
Being bullied or exposed to violence or sexual harassment
Crammed schedules, juggling school, sports, after-school activities, social life, and family obligations
**BRAIN AND NERVES**
Headaches, feelings of despair, lack of energy, sadness, nervousness, anger, irritability, increased or decreased eating, trouble concentrating, memory problems, trouble sleeping, mental health problems (such as panic attacks, anxiety disorders and depression)

**SKIN**
Acne and other skin problems

**MUSCLES AND JOINTS**
Muscle aches and tension (especially in the neck, shoulders and back), increased risk of reduced bone density

**HEART**
Faster heartbeat, rise in blood pressure, increased risk of high cholesterol and heart attack

**STOMACH**
Nausea, stomach pain, heartburn, weight gain

**PANCREAS**
Increased risk of diabetes

**INTESTINES**
Diarrhea, constipation and other digestive problem

**REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**
For women—irregular or more painful periods, reduced sexual desire. For men—impotence, lower sperm production, reduced sexual desire

**IMMUNE SYSTEM**
Lowered ability to fight or recover from illness
Increased cholesterol and fatty acids in blood for energy production systems

Increased blood pressure

Localized inflammation (redness, swelling, heat and pain)

Increased production of blood sugar for energy

Decreased protein synthesis; intestinal movement (digestion); immune and allergic response systems

Increased metabolism; e.g., faster heartbeat, faster respiration

Faster blood clotting

Increased stomach acids
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Body
- headaches
- frequent infections
- taut muscles
- muscular twitches
- fatigue
- skin irritations
- breathlessness

Mind
- worrying
- muddled thinking
- impaired judgement
- nightmares
- indecisions
- negativity
- hasty decisions

Emotions
- loss of confidence
- more fussy
- irritability
- depression
- apathy
- alienation
- apprehension

Behavior
- accident prone
- loss of appetite
- loss of sex drive
- drinking more
- insomnia
- restlessness
- smoking more
YERKES-DODSON LAW

Performance vs. Stress level graph:
- Lame: Inactive & bored
- Motivated: Healthy tension & Optimum stress
- Peak performance: Focused
- Fatigued: Stress overload
- Exhaustion: Burn-out & breakdown
- Panic Anxiety Anger
- Sick: Disease
dear stress,
let's break up.

me
...Just desserts spelled backwards

STRESSED
Breathe
QUESTIONS
THANK YOU
ONLINE SOURCES

- **American Institute of Stress**

- **Haleo**
  http://haleo.co.uk/wordpress/whats-stress-got-to-do-with-it/

- **John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**
  https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-adolescent-health/_includes/_pre-redesign/Teen_Stress_Standalone.pdf

- **John Ratey** http://johnratey.com