

# DEALING WITH MUSCLE TENSION



- Stress can lead to inflammation that irritates the nervous system causing constriction of blood vessels. This constriction results in reduced blood flow and oxygen to the muscles. Lack of oxygen diminishes the ability of the muscles to recover and heal from stress and inflammation.
- Meditation and the resulting relaxation response significantly improves blood circulation allowing the muscles to recuperate, reproduce cells, and heal damaged tissues leading to reduced tension.
  - \* Self-awareness [e.g., being aware of muscle tension] precedes self-control.

## Self-regulation strategies to reduce muscle tension

### *Stretching*

Aids in relaxing tense muscles associated with stress and eases lower back pain.

Increases blood flow and supply of nutrients to muscle tissues and cartilage.

Increases flexibility and joint range of motion making tasks involving lifting and bending become easier and less tiring.

### *Stay hydrated*

Dehydration leads to fewer nutrients such as electrolytes reaching the muscles. This can lead to cramping and increased tension.

### *Frequent breaks*

About every 30 minutes of sitting at desk, working, or studying get up and move around

### *Head/Neck Massage*

See this method at <http://www.wikihow.com/Image:Reduce-Neck-Tension-Step-13.jpg>

### *Heat/Ice*

Use ice for inflammation and swelling if you have an injury

Use heat to warm and loosen the muscles and reduce tension

## Stretching Mechanics

Hold each stretch 15-30 seconds and stretch each side of your body.

Focus on a *pain free* stretch. If you feel pain, you have gone too far.

Do not bounce as bouncing can cause small tears leading to scar tissue and increased pain.

Relax and breathe freely.

### *Neck and Chin Stretches*

Stretch the chin to the chest, ear to shoulder and chin to armpit allowing the opposite hand to gently pull into the stretch. Stretch both sides of neck.



## Shoulder Stretches

### Corner Stretch (A)

- Stand facing a corner and place one foot in front and forearms and elbows on the wall about shoulder height
- Lunge into the corner and hold for 10-15 seconds then switch to other foot and repeat
- You can adjust the height of your elbows as needed to get a better stretch
- By placing the arms above your head you will feel a stretch of your deltoid muscle to the bottom of your scapula

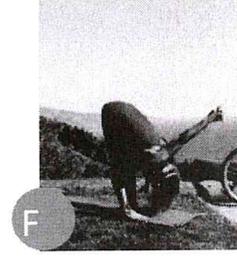
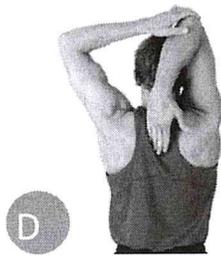
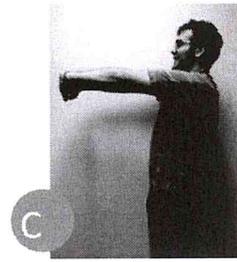
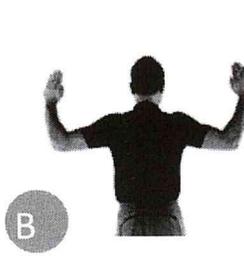
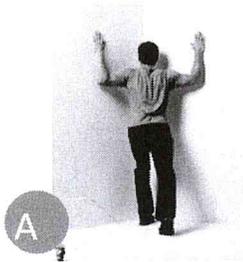
### Shoulder blade squeeze (B)

- Hold arms above head with elbows at shoulders and squeeze shoulder blades together as if trying to crack a nut

### Forward arm extension stretch (C)

- Hold your arms out in front, lace the fingers together and then turn the palms away from you.

### Other stretches (D, E, & F)

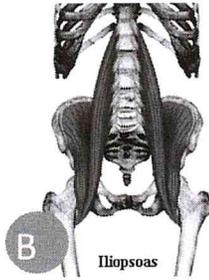
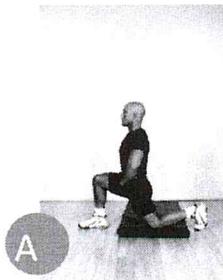


## Low Back and Hip Stretches

### Knee rocks, child's pose or prayer position, hip flexor

- Knee rocks: <http://www.professionalphysicaltherapy.com/exercises/low-back/knee-rocks/>
- Child's pose or prayer position: <http://www.professionalphysicaltherapy.com/exercises/low-back/muslim-prayer-stretch/>
- Hip flexor to stretch psoas muscle (A=stretch; B=psoas muscle)

\*When the psoas muscle is tight, it increases tension in lower back



## **Engaging your Mind in Counting or Spelling**

Try your own variation of "counting sheep". Engage your mind in something unimportant like spelling or counting backwards can help you relax. The secret is to numb your brain by making it perform a dull, boring task.

## **Abdominal Breathing**

Most of us don't breathe as deeply as we should. When we breathe deeply and fully, involving not only the chest, but also the belly, lower back, and ribcage, it can actually help our parasympathetic nervous system, which controls relaxation. Close your eyes, and try taking deep, slow breaths, making each breath even deeper and slower than the last. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. You can try making each exhale a little longer than each inhale.

## **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

Progressive muscle relaxation is easy to do. Lie down or make yourself comfortable. Starting at your toes, tense all the muscles as tightly as you can. Then, after tensing, completely relax your muscles. Continue to do this for every muscle group in your body, working your way up from your feet to the top of your head.

## **Visualization**

Close your eyes and imagine a place or activity that is calming and peaceful for you. It could be a beach of warm sand, or your childhood bedroom, or the image of yourself golfing or horseback riding. Concentrate on how relaxed this place or activity makes you feel, and "remain" in this imaginary place until you can completely wind down from your day.

## **Guided Relaxation**

Guided relaxation can be very helpful in learning relaxation techniques. It involves a script that you follow step by step to relax. It may include a combination of deep breathing, muscle relaxation and visual imagery. Listening to a script before bed is a good way to incorporate several techniques. An example of guided relaxation is autogenic training, specific exercises that can make your body feel warm, heavy, and relaxed.

## **Meditation**

Meditation has been proven to induce deep relaxation, which can in turn reduce insomnia. Meditating involves being "mindful" or in the present moment by passively focusing on breathing, a word, an object, or your body's own sensations. As thoughts come into your mind notice them without judging, rejecting, or dwelling on them and allow them to drift away like smoke or leaves in a stream.

## **Stress and Anger Management**

Stress and anger from your day can stay with you and plague your mind consciously or *unconsciously*, making it hard to relax at night. Managing your time effectively, handling anger and stress in a positive way, spending time with other people, exercising, and maintaining a positive outlook, can stop stress and anger from disturbing your sleep.

For Relaxation Audio Files see:

<http://caps.byu.edu/relaxation-recordings> or <http://cccbiofeedback.blogspot.com/>

## Common Issues of Children/Teens

When there are common mistakes with ineffective parenting many symptoms later lead to serious risk factors. It is a lot easier for a child to place blame on themselves with problems within the family system versus blame on their parents or others. And remember positive attention and negative attention is still attention.

**Shame and guilt-** children feel a sense of guilt when things go wrong. Shame is brought on by others and guilt is brought. Feelings of shame and guilt are connected of feelings of self-hatred and self-loathing.

**Low self-esteem and worth-** common things that happen within childhood is that children feel that parents are not proud of them, don't like them or they cannot meet expectations in school. When expectations are set too high with a child and they are not emotionally ready low self-esteem and worth coincide. Also low self-esteem and worth stem from any form of abuse.

**Idealization and devaluation-** children idealize their parents at a young age. They are god like creatures and cannot do wrong. However some parents (especially addicts) should not be idealize. This leads to gravitating towards unhealthy people especially with a significant other. Also sometimes children tend to devalue the healthy parent as a defense mechanism. This tends to happen much with divorced parents as well as step parents.

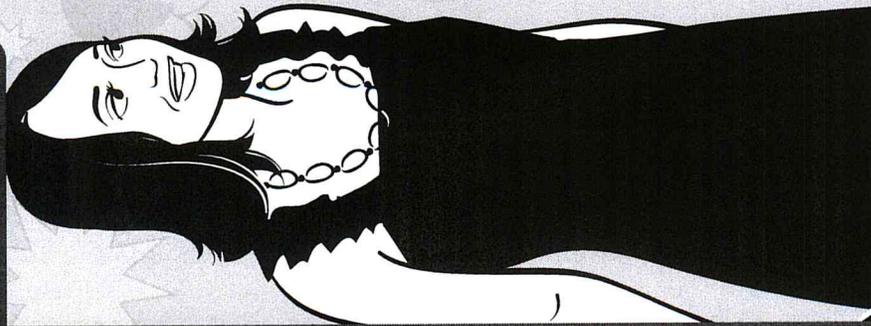
**Anger issues-** Children when they internalize everything and hate themselves also become aggressive in their acts. This is with destructive behavior, hitting and biting. Also when they get older they tend to snap or have black out rages.

**Trust and mistrust-** The people who let you down the most and don't meet your needs have a significant impact with trust and mistrust. They are loyal to the undeserved or put up a wall. They meet someone for the first time, show the worst side of them to see if the person still sticks around. Or they meet someone for the first time and let the person do bad things because of the fear of losing them.

**Boundary issues-** these issues are as stated above. A boundary is an imaginary wall that should be put up that coincides with good morals and values of yourself. Unhealthy boundaries can be the loyalty as stated above, high risk sexual behavior or even doing drugs with a significant other.

**Dependent and anti-dependent-** when children cannot depend on the people that they should trust growing up then they develop unhealthy relationships later in life. This is putting too much emphasis on another person for their own happiness or putting up that wall of mistrust so we don't let anyone in.

**False self-** the creation of the false self happens as a defense mechanisms. This is usually the toughest person act. This can lead to personality disorders.



# Pushing Pause

Science shows that by pausing, you can help shape your destiny through self-control

"OMG! Did I really just send that text?"

Most people have said something that they wish they could take back. And if they had paused to think about it first, they probably would have acted differently. Pausing doesn't pay off just when you speak. Scientific studies have shown that making a habit of pausing before you do something can actually have a big impact on how your life turns out.

**THINKING IT THROUGH: THE TEEN BRAIN CHALLENGE**  
In making decisions we rely on two areas of the brain: 1) the *limbic system*, which creates and processes emotions, and 2) the *prefrontal cortex*, which governs logical thought. The type of decision, how we feel about it, and how prepared we are to handle it helps determine which brain area has the most influence.

But our age also plays an important role. Thinking through the consequences of one's actions is actually harder for teens because the prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until around age 25. This is why teens often feel an intense emotional drive to act impulsively—it's how their brains are structured!

Though this tendency to act without considering the outcomes can lead to problematic situations, impulsivity during the



developmental years evolved because it makes teens more open to new experiences and ideas. This openness helps teens become independent adults.

### TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

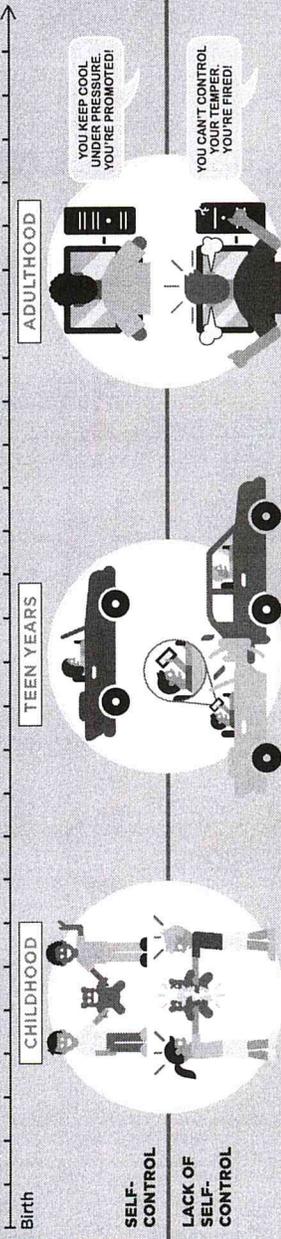
The key to making impulsivity work for you—instead of against you—is to train your brain by practicing pausing. This doesn't mean you stop taking risks or being open to new experiences. But you won't know if the risk is worth it until you think it through. Deciding to take a risk based on logic shows self-control, not impulsivity.

What are different ways to pause? You might take a deep breath, count to 10, or ask, "Is this worth it?" Different strategies work for different people. Whatever works for you, keep doing it!

By practicing pausing, you can actually change your brain. This means that over time, pausing, instead of immediately reacting, becomes your "natural" response. And with this change, people are on their way to enjoying the life rewards that come with high levels of self-control—even if they weren't natural-born pausers!

### PAUSING PAYS OFF

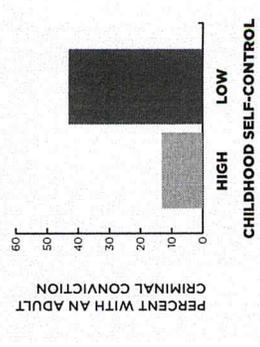
Throughout our lives, there are opportunities where our level of self-control can directly and immediately influence important outcomes.



### High Self-Control = Bankroll

Pausing, paying attention, and not giving up are all key parts of self-control. Long-term scientific studies have linked a person's self-control when they were younger to how successful they became as adults. One study followed the behavior of nearly 1,000 children born in the same year in Dunedin, New Zealand, for 32 years!

Through this research, scientists have shown that individuals with high self-control have better grades, stronger relationships, and greater income levels. Those with low self-control over time are more likely to be in trouble with the law, as well as have health problems, including drug addiction.



SOURCE: PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. SAMPLE SIZE = 972

► More Info: For additional facts about drugs and drug abuse, visit [scholastic.com/headsup](http://scholastic.com/headsup) and [teens.drugabuse.gov](http://teens.drugabuse.gov).

# Teens and Decision Making

## Dear Teacher:

As a teacher of teens, you're aware that your students are going through important developmental stages as they mature into accomplished, independent adults. During this time, it is critical for them to understand the concept that *different areas of the brain mature at different rates*, a fact that has profound functional and behavioral implications.

This latest installment of *Heads Up* reports on important research, which shows that the teen brain is "under construction"—and how this fact impacts decision making. Students will gain insight into how rushed decisions—acting quickly before thinking something through—result from the influence of feelings and emotions (rooted in the more mature limbic system of teens) over *logic* (rooted in the yet-to-mature prefrontal cortex).

The information within this issue can help teens see the value of taking a moment to think before they act as a means to making smarter and more rational decisions. These steps can help protect them against making "bad" decisions, such as using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, all of which carry serious risks of health and other consequences.

I urge you to share this important article with your students, and hope you will use the thought-provoking activities below to help your students apply what they've learned in their daily lives.

Sincerely,



Nora D. Volkow, M.D.  
Director of NIDA



## In This Installment

The latest science on:

- How decisions happen differently in the teen brain versus the adult brain
- Why emotions have an edge over logic in teen decision making
- How teens can "shape" their brains by choices and actions

## More Information

- For facts about drugs and the body, visit [www.scholastic.com/headsup](http://www.scholastic.com/headsup) and [www.teens.drugabuse.gov](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov)
- For help with a drug problem, go to [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov), or call 1-800-662-HELP

## Lesson Plan & Activities

### NATIONAL STANDARDS

**Science** (NSES, NRC): Life Science: Regulation and Behavior; Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Risks and Benefits

**Language Arts** (IRA/NCTE): Evaluation Strategies; Evaluating Data

### KEY CONCEPTS

Recent scientific discoveries show that while one's brain reaches maximum size somewhere between ages 12 and 14, development continues all the way through one's early twenties. A key area of development is the **prefrontal cortex**, the brain region responsible for planning and sizing up risks and rewards. This area is not fully matured in adolescents—as a result, the faster-maturing **limbic system**, the emotional control center, gains an edge during decision making.

### BEFORE READING

- Have students brainstorm examples of decisions that a person might make. Ask them to identify **emotional** versus **logical** aspects of each decision.

### COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

- Use the reproducible on the back of this page to reinforce key information presented in the article.

### CRITICAL THINKING

- How might the science of adolescent brain development explain the fact that teens can be more influenced by the immediate emotional rewards of a choice, and less concerned with consequences—even though they may logically recognize these consequences?
- How is synaptic pruning affected by choices and actions?

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

- When faced with a spur-of-the-moment decision, why can pausing for a moment make a difference?

### WRITING PROMPT

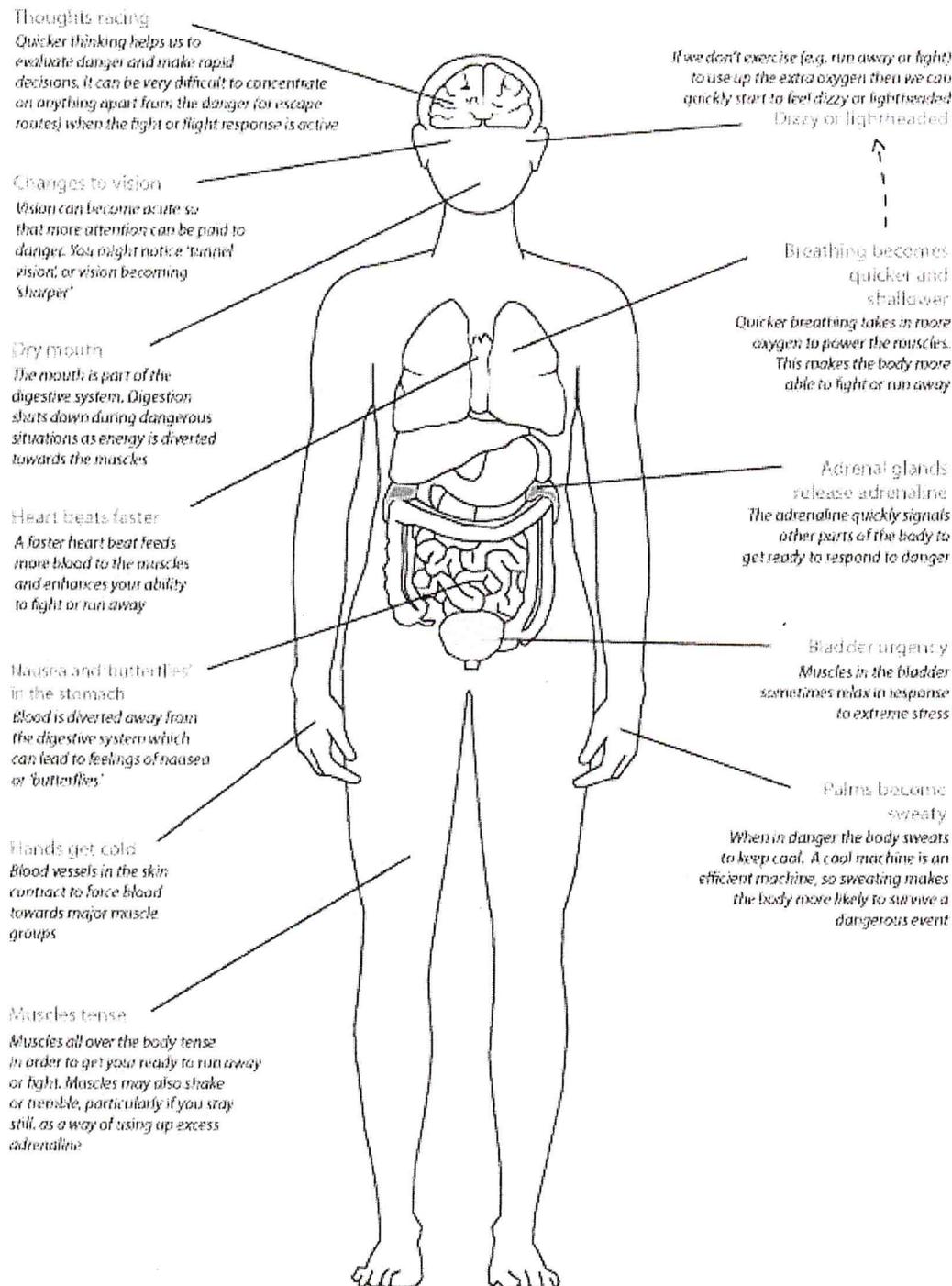
- Have students list choices and behaviors they find challenging and rewarding, and identify the desired short- and long-term benefits of each.

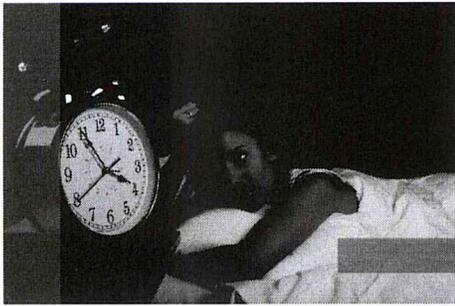
ANSWERS TO REPRODUCIBLE: 1. teens; 2. brain; 3. neurons, neurotransmitters; 4. prefrontal cortex; 5. axons, dendrites; 6. synapse; 7. b; 8. a; 9. a; 10. b; 11. a. 12. a; 13. c. ANSWERS TO STUDENT MAGAZINE: 1. d; 2. b; 3. a; 4. c; 5. e.

For printable past and current articles in the **HEADS UP** series, as well as activities and teaching support, go to [www.drugabuse.gov/parent-teacher.html](http://www.drugabuse.gov/parent-teacher.html) or [www.scholastic.com/HEADSUP](http://www.scholastic.com/HEADSUP).

## Fight Or Flight Response

When faced with a life-threatening danger it often makes sense to run away or, if that is not possible, to fight. The *fight or flight response* is an *automatic* survival mechanism which prepares the body to take these actions. All of the body sensations produced are happening for good reasons – to prepare your body to run away or fight – but may be experienced as uncomfortable when you do not know why they are happening.





# Insomnia Busters

## Impact of Insomnia

Individuals suffering from insomnia report lack of energy, irritability, poor performance at work, memory difficulties and concentration problems. Insomnia can compromise the immune system. There is some evidence to suggest that the stress response found in insomniacs is a risk factor for heart disease and diabetes. Psychological conditions such as depression or anxiety have been shown to commonly occur with insomnia. It is not always clear which is the trigger and which is the outcome, but treating insomnia effectively reduces these health risks.

<http://www.sleepaus.on.net/insomniainformation.html>

## Insomnia Busters

- Go to bed and wake up the same time every day, as much as possible, even on weekends. Consider the Lord's counsel "...retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated." (D&C 88:124).
- If you are a night person who naturally falls asleep after midnight, take the over-the-counter supplement Melatonin 3-4 hours before you plan to go to sleep and turn on bright lights in the morning to help reset your sleep clock. (Ancoli-Israel, S., *All I Want is a Good Night's Sleep*)
- Begin to slow down and reduce your physical and mental activity about 1/2 hour before your usual bedtime. Do things which are restful or even monotonous.
- Relax your body before your usual bedtime like soaking in a warm (not hot) tub or massaging sore muscles.
- Reducing core body temperature increases sleepiness. Warming up your periphery by taking a warm bath or wearing socks to bed can help reduce core temperature. (Ancoli-Israel)
- Put your alarm clock out-of-sight. Watching the clock is counterproductive to getting to sleep. (Ancoli-Israel)
- Do not deliberately try to fall asleep. Listen to your body and let it be in charge of that process
- Use a sleep inducing relaxation technique when in bed.
- If you do not fall asleep in 10-15 minutes, get up and do something restful which requires minimal mental and physical energy. Go back to bed when your body gets sleepy. Repeat this procedure until you fall asleep..
- Get out of bed in the morning once you wake up. Avoid lying in bed in the half-awake state.
- Find something to look forward to getting up for each morning.
- Avoid napping during the day. Instead refresh yourself by doing a 15-20 minute relaxation exercise.
- Do not use your bed for reading, eating, studying, or resting. Lie on your bed only when you are ready to sleep
- Do not panic if your usual sleep pattern is interrupted. Trust your body to handle the situation.

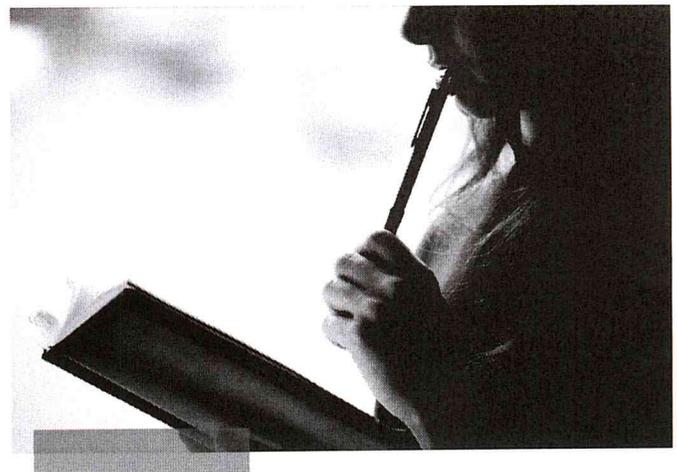
- Avoid discussing disturbing topics or watching disturbing news late in the evening.
- Prepare ahead for the next morning by gathering together all of the things you will need before going to bed
- Keep a pencil and paper by your bed to write down ideas or tasks you want to remember.
- Increase your physical activity/exercise during the day. Avoid strenuous exercise in the evening
- Avoid late night munchies.
- Reduce the caffeine in your diet.
- If you wake up during the night use a relaxation technique to help you get back to sleep

*Some ideas were adapted from How to Relax - A Holistic Approach to Stress Management by J. Curtis and R. Detert*

## Keeping a Sleep Diary

A sleep diary can be a helpful way to keep track of your sleeplessness. Although a sleep diary is not a cure in itself, awareness of your sleep patterns can help you discover the cause of your insomnia. The details can be important, and a sleep diary might reveal that your pre-bedtime behavior is thwarting your chance for a good night's sleep.

- Time you went to bed and woke up
- Total sleep hours
- Quality of sleep
- Times that you were awake during the night and what you did (e.g. stayed in bed with eyes closed or got up, had a glass of milk and meditated)
- Amount of caffeine you consumed and times of consumption
- Types of food and drink and times of consumption
- Feelings - happiness, sadness, stress, anxiety
- Drugs or medications taken, amounts taken and times of consumption



[http://www.helpguide.org/life/insomnia\\_treatment.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/insomnia_treatment.htm)

## Relaxation and Sleep

When practiced during the day, relaxation counters daily stress responses. This reduces the likelihood that stress hormones will be elevated at night. When practiced at bedtime or after waking in the middle of the night, relaxation helps turn off negative sleep thoughts, quiet the mind, and relax the body.

[http://www.holisticonline.com/Remedies/Sleep/sleep\\_ins\\_relaxation.htm](http://www.holisticonline.com/Remedies/Sleep/sleep_ins_relaxation.htm)

## Relaxation Training:

In general, the more relaxed you are before bed, the better your sleep will be. Aside from engaging in quiet activity before bed, the following relaxation and stress management techniques can help you enter a more relaxed state. Consistent practice will help you to relax even when you are thinking about a stressful event.

**HEADS UP  
REAL NEWS  
ABOUT DRUGS  
AND YOUR BODY**

**STUDENT ACTIVITY REPRODUCIBLE** ○ ○ ○

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Teens and Decision Making: A Quiz

Use what you've learned from reading the article to answer the questions below.

### Fill in the Blank

1. Acting before thinking something through happens more often in \_\_\_\_\_ than in adults.
2. Decisions stem from a series of events in the \_\_\_\_\_, which happen almost instantaneously.
3. Specialized cells called \_\_\_\_\_ talk with each other by way of electrochemical impulses and chemical messengers called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Since the limbic system matures earlier than the \_\_\_\_\_, it is more likely to gain an upper hand in decision making. This imbalance helps to explain a teen's inclination to rush decisions.
5. Inside the brain, information travels through a network of neurons, which have thread-like fibers called \_\_\_\_\_ and branch-like structures called \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the small space between an axon and a dendrite where information is exchanged.

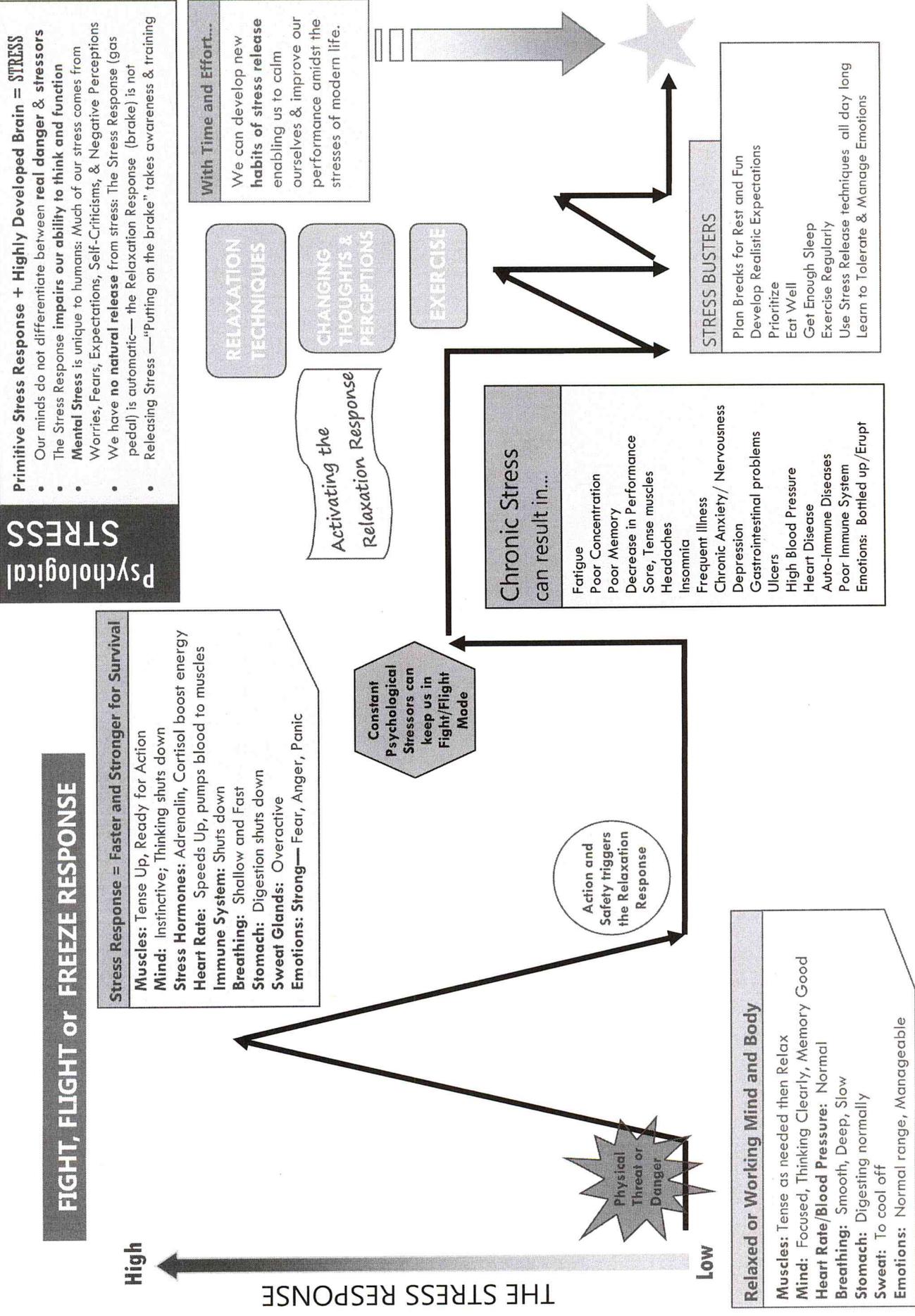
### True or False

7. The brain reaches its maximum size between ages 5 and 7.  
(A) True      (B) False
8. Brain development continues through a person's early twenties.  
(A) True      (B) False
9. Myelination boosts the brain's efficiency because it increases the speed of a signal traveling down an axon by up to 100 times.  
(A) True      (B) False
10. Synaptic pruning increases the number of synapses.  
(A) True      (B) False
11. Teens have the potential, through their choices and the behaviors they engage in, to shape their own brain development.  
(A) True      (B) False

### Multiple Choice

12. The prefrontal cortex, a key brain region located directly behind your forehead, is an important control center for:  
(A) thinking ahead and sizing up risks and rewards.  
(B) coordinating motor responses and keeping your balance.  
(C) mounting an emotional response to stimuli.  
(D) responding to loud noises.
13. The limbic system, a part of the brain that matures earlier than the prefrontal cortex, plays a central role in:  
(A) sports.  
(B) speaking foreign languages.  
(C) emotional responses.  
(D) thinking ahead.

# STRESS and the MIND/BODY CONNECTION



# STRESS and the MIND/BODY CONNECTION

## Psychological STRESS

### Primitive Stress Response + Highly Developed Brain = STRESS

- Our minds do not differentiate between **real danger & stressors**
- The Stress Response **impairs our ability to think and function**
- **Mental Stress** is unique to humans: Much of our stress comes from Worries, Fears, Expectations, Self-Criticisms, & Negative Perceptions
- We have **no natural release** from stress: The Stress Response (gas pedal) is automatic—the Relaxation Response (brake) is not
- Releasing Stress —“Putting on the brake” takes awareness & training

### FIGHT, FLIGHT or FREEZE RESPONSE

#### Stress Response = Faster and Stronger for Survival

- Muscles:** Tense Up, Ready for Action
- Mind:** Instinctive; Thinking shuts down
- Stress Hormones:** Adrenalin, Cortisol boost energy
- Heart Rate:** Speeds Up, pumps blood to muscles
- Immune System:** Shuts down
- Breathing:** Shallow and Fast
- Stomach:** Digestion shuts down
- Sweat Glands:** Overactive
- Emotions: Strong**— Fear, Anger, Panic

Constant Psychological Stressors can keep us in Fight/Flight Mode

Action and Safety triggers the Relaxation Response



High

Low

THE STRESS RESPONSE

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

CHANGING THOUGHTS & PERCEPTIONS

EXERCISE

**With Time and Effort...**  
 We can develop new **habits of stress release** enabling us to calm ourselves & improve our performance amidst the stresses of modern life.

Activating the Relaxation Response

### Chronic Stress can result in...

- Fatigue
- Poor Concentration
- Poor Memory
- Decrease in Performance
- Sore, Tense muscles
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Frequent Illness
- Chronic Anxiety/ Nervousness
- Depression
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Ulcers
- High Blood Pressure
- Heart Disease
- Auto-Immune Diseases
- Poor Immune System
- Emotions: Bottled up/Erupt

### STRESS BUSTERS

- Plan Breaks for Rest and Fun
- Develop Realistic Expectations
- Prioritize
- Eat Well
- Get Enough Sleep
- Exercise Regularly
- Use Stress Release techniques all day long
- Learn to Tolerate & Manage Emotions

### Relaxed or Working Mind and Body

- Muscles:** Tense as needed then Relax
- Mind:** Focused, Thinking Clearly, Memory Good
- Heart Rate/Blood Pressure:** Normal
- Breathing:** Smooth, Deep, Slow
- Stomach:** Digesting normally
- Sweat:** To cool off
- Emotions:** Normal range, Manageable

## *Calming Suggestions and Coping Techniques*

- ⓐ Write with a special pen and paper
- ⓐ Practice something you are good at
- ⓐ Touch a smooth stone, bead, "worry stone", koosh-ball, or stress-ball
- ⓐ Listen to music
- ⓐ Get out of your head and in touch with your hands
- ⓐ Fix something, clean your house, straighten closets...hobbies
- ⓐ Heighten your sense of touch
- ⓐ Take a brisk walk, get some exercise, stretch
- ⓐ Notice your surroundings, feel the wind, look at the trees, notice your senses
- ⓐ Take a bath
- ⓐ Touch jewelry; twist a ring, fiddle with a chain
- ⓐ Take a break; eat or drink something slowly, notice textures and smells
- ⓐ Chew on bubblegum
- ⓐ Look at a favorite picture, notice the details
- ⓐ Take care of plants
- ⓐ Take deep breaths from the belly. Pay attention to your breath going in and out
- ⓐ When sitting, put both feet on the ground. Feel the pull of gravity on your body through your feet. Imagine that you're a tree sending your roots deep into the Earth. Imagine the roots reaching down through your legs, through the bottom of your feet into the Earth, all the way to the center where they're firmly planted
- ⓐ Be with people
- ⓐ Never underestimate the power of a deep breath
- ⓐ Apply a very cold face cloth to your face. Try laying down with the cloth on your forehead
- ⓐ Think beyond this moment, this too shall pass
- ⓐ Visualize your image of a "safer space"
- ⓐ Spend time with pets
- ⓐ Deal with what's going on using your rationale and sense
- ⓐ Sit on the floor and place palms down on the floor feeling the solid ground
- ⓐ Take some time for yourself in your bedroom or a quiet room
- ⓐ Read a magazine or book
- ⓐ Make a collage
- ⓐ Write in a diary or journal
- ⓐ Write about what's bothering you and create the "perfect ending"
- ⓐ Watch TV or your favorite movie
- ⓐ Make a phone call
- ⓐ Run cold water on your hands
- ⓐ Play a game; cards, board games, video games, etc.
- ⓐ Speak with clergy, staff or other professionals
- ⓐ Bake or cook something
- ⓐ Make a poster with your favorite quote and positive things that make you feel powerful
- ⓐ Knit or crochet
- ⓐ Keep a notebook near your bed. If something is bothering you and you can't sleep, jot it down and forget about it until the morning! (as long as it isn't jeopardizing your safety)

**SELF- ESTEEM WORKSHEET**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SLS1301C – Life Career Planning

**DEFINE SELF -ESTEEM:**

List 10 adjectives, positive or negative that YOU think describe you. Ex. I am creative. I am stubborn.

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

**List 4 of your strengths:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

**List 4 of your weaknesses/challenges:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

List 5 “put downs” (sarcastic statements) you tell yourself or hear others say about you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

## Letting Go of Bad Behaviors

**Ego:** Like other people I wear a mask. I use sarcastic behavior in a sticky situation. I use reverse psychology when my sister tries to give me advice. I am afraid that other people will find out who I really am and so I must put on a facade. In recovery I realize that I cannot do this alone. If I am operating with false pride the chances are that I will also refuse help from others, the very help that will save my life. I realize that I must accept constructive criticism, a challenging sponsor and commit.

**Sex:** Reaching a balance with sex has always been a problem for me one way or another. Sometimes I had too much, sometimes I had too little; sometimes I was immoral and sometimes I was prudish about the whole thing. I realize that I need to be realistic about sex and learn to reach a balance with myself in order to maintain a healthy relationship with a significant other in the future. However "taking a chastity" vow and "letting it all hang out" are both a little extreme. In the process of recovery I learn that I must reflect on my morals and values and see how it matches up to my sex life.

**Resentment:** Resentments mark the places where I see myself as a victim. Occasionally I feel buried under my resentments. They drain my energy each day as I think of them. My insides have often felt corroded from bitterness. I thought resentment would prevent me from being hurt again. It affected every relationship I had. But living my life under these heavy burdens of rage and resentment are hurting me. In my recovery I am no longer a victim and no longer hold hostility that perpetuates pain.

**Blaming:** In my active addiction it wasn't uncommon to ask myself why do these things always happen to me? However it dawned in my process of recovery that if these things are always happening to me then possibly somehow I bring it on myself. I realized that I am unconscious of what I am doing (wrong) until, slowly, eventually I manage to dig myself out of the negative results. I feel as if I seek out to be hurt on a regular basis. But in recovery I realize that blaming others for my problems and indulging in self-pity doesn't move myself along.

**Hating God:** I use to conceive of God as a punisher. I thought that he was always looking for someone to punish or blame. I thought that the awful happenings in my life were God's way of hurting me because I had messed something up. I felt victimized by God. I had lived this way growing up and it carried it into my adult life. It took pain to appear mature, successful, grown up and in charge. Inside however I felt like a scared little kid completely out of control. Today though I know that I need God to grant me courage to ask for help rather than indulge in feelings of self-pity based on fear.

### Here are Some Suggested Journal Assignments:

Draw a picture of a house that is a representation of yourself signifying what people see on the outside and what they people would see differently on the inside. Write down the behaviors that you will change in relation to both the inside and outside in terms of self care below the drawing.

Draw a line down the center of a paper. On the left list the times that you acted like a big shot. On the right write down all the fears and insecurities that you were trying to cover up.

# Causes of STRESS

Sometimes causes of stress are hidden. Take this opportunity to seek and find!

## WORD SEEK

G C T F U C F Y R R O W K T H L A V  
N G E C T J Q D N U C Q H Q Y Q G L  
X A N X I N O L D I C R M G K M U Q  
R M S I N L E I X I E H K D R J K R  
X R U O T X F M L A V O I R E I B T  
F H I E R S W N T L J O C L O A E A  
R S L J S I U S O N N R R P D W T F  
E L S S O L Y R M C I E G C L R F H  
B Q L I W C T L T M R O S Z E H E S  
T L F D Y D G V R S P I P S P G A N  
Z B A A R R J E E E I G Z P S J N M  
E T E Z M S N X S D G M F E A J I E  
L G V W D I U M I Q B N C B P S D X  
N J N Q H A L E N C A N A N X G I K  
G X R A L W Y Y Y B A N V U L E S D  
W G X I H E N K U N N P Z E X R J L  
F O T P H C B S I W B U D I B B U G  
U Y Q F T J E F B P R K S T H M T U

The following words are hidden in the puzzle:

ABUSE  
ANGER  
CHANGE  
CHILDREN  
CONFLICT

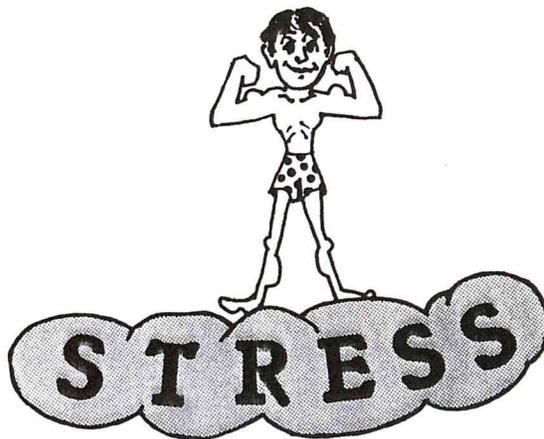
DEATH  
DISAPPOINTMENT  
DIVORCE  
FAMILY  
FEAR

FINANCES  
GRIEF  
ILLNESS  
LOSS  
MISTRUSTING

NOISE  
SEXUALITY  
THREATS  
WORK  
WORRY

# SELF-CONTRACT

How I'm Going to be  
"On Top Of"  
**STRESS!**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

#1 When I see that I \_\_\_\_\_  
Stress Symptom (s)

I will \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#2 When I see that I \_\_\_\_\_  
Stress Symptom (s)

I will \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#3 When I see that I \_\_\_\_\_  
Stress Symptom (s)

I will \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#4 When I see that I \_\_\_\_\_  
Stress Symptom (s)

I will \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#5 When I see that I \_\_\_\_\_  
Stress Symptom (s)

I will \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# SAYING "NO"

## YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO!

DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE SAYING "NO" TO....

- \_\_\_ A. your mother? (e.g., who continuously needs rides to the doctor/pharmacy/beauty salon) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ B. door to door people? (e.g., Girl Scouts selling cookies/salespeople/fundraisers/religious enthusiasts/charity solicitors) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ C. a friend? (e.g., who wants you to use drugs/alcohol with him or her/wants to borrow money) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ D. a neighbor? (e.g., who wants you to watch her five children "just for an hour") \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ E. your children? (e.g., who want... new toys/more allowance/the car) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ F. a fellow worker? (e.g., asks you to help him fix his car/go shopping with her/contribute for a gift) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ G. your spouse? (e.g., who wants to buy his or her "dream car" which you feel is too much money at this time) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ H. your boss? (e.g., asking you to stay late) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ I. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ J. \_\_\_\_\_

### GUIDELINES TO SAYING "NO":

Be honest, open and direct.

Don't make excuses.

By saying "no" you're gaining self-respect.

### EXAMPLE FORMATS...

No, I am unable to do that today. Maybe you can...

No...to be honest, I don't want to...

# Motivators



## WHAT MOTIVATES ME?

Rank: #1 = most motivating to #12 = least motivating

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ enjoyment/fun             | _____ personal achievements     |
| _____ family and/or friendships | _____ physical health           |
| _____ independence              | _____ power                     |
| _____ material objects          | _____ professional achievements |
| _____ mental health             | _____ security                  |
| _____ money in the bank         | _____ status                    |

Who can you tell that your #1 is a high-ranking motivator? \_\_\_\_\_

What benefit might you derive? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who can you tell that your #2 is a high-ranking motivator? \_\_\_\_\_

What benefit might you derive? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who can you tell that your #11 is a low-ranking motivator? \_\_\_\_\_

What benefit might you derive? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who can you tell that your #12 is a low-ranking motivator? \_\_\_\_\_

What benefit might you derive? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Human Sexuality

A Symmetrical judge  
Ready with pleasure to unconsciously measure  
Breasts and hourglass figurines and features  
That our scanning eyes see  
And our minds print and save

There's more  
Pecs, abs and genetics  
Play that sexual selectional role  
To determine the sexually superior  
Sinful as we lust and crave endlessly  
Pain as it takes and eats mercilessly  
You can only desire more,  
as your mind is lost in lust's bottomless trap hole  
less isn't printed in your physical programing  
You body is only yours to portray  
We give mental excuses and names for dismay  
Words such as love still relies on chemistry  
All this and more is human Sexuality

Dynamic images saved in our in-box  
Sometimes to be used and misused  
Created in our own imaginative time paradox  
For mentally created fantasies  
Whether we sleep and dream them  
Or Meditate into mental reality  
Images are always there used as data in our mental realm  
Be you "good" or bad

You can't erase desire  
Your pleasure torments your morals  
Your lust and neurons correspond in your penis ends  
or clitorises  
You play with butterfingers to answer  
Your body corresponds  
Nitric oxide rushing through your veins to reach your reacting neurons  
Your sensual realm becomes reality in your mind  
as you stroke relentlessly and your neurons respond  
to the rush and the gush with the flow of juices  
while you gush and you blush, your strength reduces  
now you groan and moan to your attacks abuses  
Pause  
Your realm goes blank  
"aaaaahhhhhhhhhhh"

This is life's science game,  
Given the name  
Human Sexuality

## Sparky

-For Sparky, school was all but impossible. He failed every subject in the eighth grade. He flunked physics in high school, getting a grade of zero. Sparky also flunked Latin, algebra and English. He didn't do much better in sports. Although he did manage to make the school's golf team, he promptly lost the only important match of the season. There was a consolation match; he lost that, too.

-Throughout his youth Sparky was awkward socially. He was not actually disliked by the other students; no one cared that much. He was astonished if a classmate ever said hello to him outside of school hours. There's no way to tell how he might have done at dating. Sparky never once asked a girl to go out in high school. He was too afraid of being turned down.

-Sparky was a loser. He, his classmates...everyone knew it. So he rolled with it. Sparky had made up his mind early in life that if things were meant to work out, they would. Otherwise he would content himself with what appeared to be his inevitable mediocrity.

-However, one thing was important to Sparky - drawing. He was proud of his artwork. Of course, no one else appreciated it. In his senior year of high school, he submitted some cartoons to the editors of the yearbook. The cartoons were turned down. Despite this particular rejection, Sparky was so convinced of his ability that he decided to become a professional artist.

-After completing high school, he wrote a letter to Walt Disney Studios. He was told to send some samples of his artwork, and the subject for a cartoon was suggested. Sparky drew the proposed cartoon. He spent a great deal of time on it and on all the other drawings he submitted. Finally, the reply came from Disney Studios. He had been rejected once again. Another loss for the loser.

-So Sparky decided to write his own autobiography in cartoons. He described his childhood self - a little boy loser and chronic underachiever. The cartoon character would soon become famous worldwide. For Sparky, the boy who had such a lack of success in school and whose work was rejected again and again, was Charles Schultz. He created the "Peanuts" comic strip and the little cartoon character whose kite would never fly and who never succeeded in kicking a football, Charlie Brown.

## **Paint Brush**

I keep my paint brush with me  
Wherever I may go,  
In case I need to cover up  
So the real me doesn't show  
I'm so afraid to show you me,  
Afraid of what you'll do--that  
You might laugh or say mean things.  
I'm afraid I might lose you.

I'd like to remove all my paint coats  
To show you the real, true me,  
But I want you to try and understand,  
I need you to accept what you see.  
So if you'll be patient and close your eyes.  
I'll strip off all my coats real slow.  
Please understand how much it hurts  
To let the real me show.

Now my coats are all stripped off.  
I feel naked, bare and cold,  
And if you still love me with all that you see,  
You are my friend, pure as gold.

I need to save my paint brush, though,  
And hold it in my hand,  
I want to keep it handy  
In case somebody doesn't understand.  
So please protect me, my dear friend  
And thanks for loving me true,  
But please let me keep my paintbrush with me  
Until I love me, too.

*Bettie B. Youngs*

## **Please Hear What I'm Not Saying**

Don't be fooled by me.  
Don't be fooled by the face I wear.  
For I wear a mask, a thousand masks,  
masks that I'm afraid to take off,  
and none of them is me.  
Pretending is an art that's second nature to me,  
but don't be fooled.  
I give you the impression that I'm secure,  
that confidence in my name and coolness is my game,  
that the water's calm and I'm in command,  
and that I need one.  
But don't believe me.  
My surface may seem smooth but my surface  
is my mask, ever-varying and ever-concealing.  
Beneath lies no complacency.  
Beneath lies confusion and fear and aloneness.  
But I hide this, I don't want anybody to know it.

I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed.  
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,  
a nonchalant sophisticated facade, to help me pretend,  
to shield me from a glance that knows.  
But such a glance is precisely my salvation.  
My only hope, and I know it.  
That is, if it's followed by acceptance,  
if it's followed by love.  
It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself,  
from my own self-built prison walls,  
from the barriers I so painstakingly erect.  
It's the only thing that will assure me  
of what I can't assure myself,  
that I'm really worth something.  
I don't like to hide.  
I don't like to play superficial phony games.  
I want to be genuine and spontaneous and me,  
but you've got to help me.  
You've got to hold out your hand  
even when that's the last thing I seem to want.  
Only you can wipe away from my eyes  
the bland stare of the breathing dead.  
Only you can call me into aliveness.

Each time you're kind and gentle and encouraging,  
each time you try to understand because you really care,  
my heart begins to grow wings, very small wings,  
very feeble wings,  
but wings!

With your power to touch me into feeling  
you can breathe life into me.  
I want you to know that.

Who am I, you may wonder.  
I am someone you know very well.  
For I am every man you meet,  
and I am every woman you meet.

*Jill Zevallos-Solak*

Adult children of alcoholics guess at what normal behavior is.

Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty following a project through from beginning to end.

Adult children of alcoholics lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.

Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty having fun.

Adult children of alcoholics judge themselves without mercy.

Adult children of alcoholics take themselves very seriously.

Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty with intimate relationships.

Adults children of alcoholics over react to changes over which they have no control over.

Adult children of alcoholics constantly seek approval of affirmation.

Adult children of alcoholics usually feel that they are different from other people.

Adult children of alcoholics are super responsible or super irresponsible.

Adult children of alcoholics are extremely loyal, even in the face of evident that loyalty is undeserved.

Adult children of alcoholics are impulsive. They tend to lock themselves into a course of action without giving a serious consideration to alternative behaviors or possible consequences. This impulsively leads to confusion, self-loathing and loss of control over their environment. In addition, they spend an excessive amount of energy cleaning up the mess.