What is Stress?
Stress is the way we react or respond physically, mentally, and/or emotionally to various conditions, changes, and demands of life. The stress we experience is rooted in the “fight or flight” response, during which our bodies undergo physical changes that prepare us to respond to an exciting or dangerous situation. Once the situation has passed or is under control, our stress response subsides, allowing us to relax.

However, the constant demands of academic or personal life can prevent us from becoming fully relaxed and can lead to stress overload.

Are you stressed?
Symptoms include:
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased anxiety
- Frustration
- Moodiness
- Restlessness or fatigue
- Change of behavior

You’re Not Alone...
55% of teens express a moderate level of stress during their last school year. 27% expressed an extreme amount of stress.
59% stated that managing their time to balance all activities is a very significant stressor.
40% say they neglect their responsibilities at home because of stress.
As a result of stress, 40% of students reported feeling irritable/angry, and 36% reported being anxious/nervous.

What are you stressing about?
- Heavy course load / Grade performance
- Exams / Testing
- Family turmoil or loss at home
- Work schedules
- Social obligations
- Relationships
- Appearance issues

HOLD UP: Effective Coping Skills
Hardiness: Hardiness means becoming physically, mentally, and emotionally stronger so that when a stress occurs you are “fit” to cope with it.

Outlook: The ability to cope with stress is partially determined by a person’s outlook or attitude. People have the ability to develop attitudes about life that make it less stressful and more enjoyable.

Listening to your body: One of the first steps in learning how to deal with stress more effectively, is to learn to recognize as early as possible when you are becoming stressed about something. Your own body is probably the most important indicator that you are becoming stressed.

Decrease stress: While stress is inevitable, there are actions that can be taken that will reduce the levels of stress in our lives.

Unburdening yourself: When we worry about things excessively, think negatively, and set unrealistic expectations for ourselves or others, we are burdening ourselves with extra stress. Therefore, if we change those thoughts and beliefs, we increase our ability to manage our stress effectively.

Problem solving: Many of the stresses we face cannot (or should not) be avoided. Therefore, it is important to know how to be proactive and deal with stressful situations directly.
**The Road to Wellness**

**Attitude:** A positive attitude is everything! The way you think and feel can make a difference in how you react to events.

**Healthy Eating:** Good nutrition gives your body the fuel it needs to combat stress.

**Physical Activity:** Can provide immediate stress relief. And energize your body.

**Relax:** Relaxing can help you manage stress and improve concentration.

**Sleep:** Sleep is critical to a healthy life. Not getting enough sleep affects everything from our immune system to our ability to learn and remember information.

**Healthy Relationships:** Changes in relationships can be a source of stress and leave you feeling socially isolated. At the same time, talking to a supportive friend or family member can make the day seem longer and your tasks seem more difficult.

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**Time management tips**

**Make a “To Do” List Every Day.** Put things that are most important at the top and do them first. If it’s easier, use a planner to track all of your tasks. And don’t forget to reward yourself for your accomplishments.

**Use Spare Minutes Wisely.** Get some reading done on the bus ride home from school, for example, and you’ll kill two birds with one stone.

**Find the Right Time.** You’ll work more efficiently if you figure out when you do your best work. For example, if your brain handles math better in the afternoon, don’t wait to do it until late at night.

**Communicate Your Schedule to Others.** If phone calls are proving to be a distraction, tell your friends that you take social calls from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. It may sound silly, but it helps.

**Become a Taskmaster.** Figure out how much free time you have each week. Give yourself a time budget and plan your activities accordingly.

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**Don’t Waste Time Agonizing.** Have you ever wasted an entire evening by worrying about something that you’re supposed to be doing? Was it worth it? Instead of agonizing and procrastinating, just do it.

**Keep Things in Perspective.** Setting goals that are unrealistic sets you up for failure. While it’s good to set high goals for yourself, be sure not to overdo it. Set goals that are difficult yet reachable.