

Lesson #6

Understanding Stress

Objectives

- Summarize personal stressors at home, in school and with friends
- Explain the body's physical and psychological responses to stressful situations

Journal Entry Question

- Complete these questions....
 - What is stress?
 - When I'm stressed I feel?

How the Body Responds to Stress

Alarm Stage

- “Fight or flight”—the body prepares to fight or run away from a perceived threat.
- Heart rate and breathing increase.
- Muscles tense. Pupils dilate. Senses become more alert.
- Blood sugar levels increase.
- Digestion slows.

Resistance Stage

- The body tries to restore a state of balance or equilibrium.
- Body functions return to normal if the stress is dealt with.
- If stress continues, body adapts in an attempt to reduce the effects.

Exhaustion Stage

- When stress is constant or continual, the body can't return to normal.
- Person becomes physically ill. Long-term physical problems related to stress include:
 - Digestion problems—stomach aches, constipation or diarrhea
 - High blood pressure
 - Heart disease, cancer, stroke
 - Skin problems, such as acne
 - Lowered immune system function—colds, flu and other infections
 - Organ failure and death
- Long-term stress can also lead to mental health problems, such as anxiety disorders or depression.