

## WHAT STRESSES YOU OUT?

deadlines, relationships, school, homework, graduation, finals, college deadlines, work, , family, assignments during Spring Break, certain people at school, parents not giving space, especially right after school – youth need time to decompress, parents on their cases, probation, drama.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE STRESSED?

frustration, crying, punching the wall, irritated by everyone, feel like a dark cloud's overhead, can't sleep, sleep too much, can't concentrate, sensitive, grades get bad/worse, you feel drained, shut down.

atod  
violence  
self-harm

# STRESSED OUT

bad grades  
shut people out  
irritated

## HOW CAN ADULTS HELP YOU GET LESS STRESSED?

Try not to lecture too much especially if we already look stressed, LISTEN to my needs, GIVE ME SPACE but check in later, let me PROCESS, UNDERSTAND that sometimes I just want you to LISTEN not TALK, when I come to you, it doesn't always mean I want to talk, SMILE, say "It's okay".

## WHAT HELPS YOU DE-STRESS?

Listening to music (hip hop has nice beats, world music because it's different and I feel like I can escape, reggae is relaxing)	Having someone to talk to
Dancing	Knowing who I can turn to (best friend, siblings, parents)
Having a safe place to be around people, not necessarily to talk	Writing
	Art and creative outlets
	Church
	Balance between everything I have going on

# STRESS AND EDUCATION

## Challenge Success

Our children live in a high-stakes, high-pressure world. Success is measured very narrowly: by trophies, grades, test scores, and college admissions. Ironically, this chase for “success” leaves many children lacking the very skills needed to thrive in the 21st century: creativity, adaptability, and resilience. It also causes unacceptably high levels of stress and anxiety.

Challenge Success, modeled on the highly successful Stressed-Out Students Project at Stanford University, seeks to reduce this unhealthy pressure by informing, inspiring, and equipping youth, parents, and schools to adopt practices to expand options for youth success.

## SUGGESTIONS from the FISHBOWL

give students time off  
better planning of projects/  
assignments by teachers  
communication between teachers  
more options for electives  
more opportunities to develop  
coping skills  
parents talk to teacher/ be more  
active in schools  
question system: re-evaluate what’s  
happening in schools  
trade classes for non-college bound  
students  
peer counselors  
peer mediation classes  
more counselors  
free therapist  
more creative expression outlets

## WHY WORKING ON STRESS IS POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Youth are asking for help from adults!** Youth want support from parents, teachers, counselors, artists, neighbors, probation officers. They said it. But we can’t make stress disappear. *What can we do to help them learn positive strategies to cope and utilize their stress?* (Adult Role Models, Positive Family Communication, Family Support, Self Esteem)
- 2) Youth want to help each other succeed!** Youth want to help other students excel in school. Peer mediation, more electives, working with teachers and parents to work on more positive homework schedules are all strategies from the youth for the youth. (Positive Peer Influence, Creative Activities, Caring, Restraint, Resistance Skills, Personal Power)
- 3) Partnerships will make it happen!** Teachers working with students, parents working with teachers, communities working with school districts, school districts working with Departments of Education: all partnerships! (Caring Neighborhood, Caring School Climate,, Positive View of Personal Future)

# STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Shutting down. Irritability. Violence. Yelling. Crying. These were just a few of the reactions youth stated they had to stress at the fishbowls. **Joyce Walker’s article, “Adolescent Stress and Depression”** from 1986 talked about these reactions.

- Stress is a normal part of growing up. We all have to learn how to deal with difficult situations.
- Most youth respond to stress in positive ways: talking it out, problem solving, and finding people for support.
- Youth coped less with stress if they were experiencing
- emotional events like divorce, death of a friend or relative, and other life changes.

Although these connections to mental health are easy to make, understanding the ever-increasing culture of stress is a key step in creating more support in the high stress-inducing systems.

## STRESS AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

We feel stress physically. We feel worn down. We feel anxious. We sleep too much or too little.

Happiness and relaxation are physical too. When we exercise we feel a natural burst of good feelings.

Get Healthy San Mateo County’s new clearinghouse webpage for youth, [YSPACESMC.ORG](http://YSPACESMC.ORG), has a page dedicated to “Feelin’ Good About Yourself”. It talks about stress, self-esteem, body image, and other pages provide resources for physical activity and healthier eating.

On the site, there is a link to a report by **the Surgeon General on “Physical Activity and Health”** and it documents literature and research that suggests that regular physical activity helps people be more mentally healthy.