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## **1. EXPLAIN TEEN ADVISORS** (3 minutes)

**Hello, we're Teen Advisors** and we're glad to be here with you today! Teen Advisors are sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have committed to be positive role models and to live lives of integrity. Every one of us has signed a drug-free contract, promising to abstain from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and inhalants. Many TAs also make commitments to be sexually abstinent until marriage. There are over 500 of us in the Columbus area who are committed to being drug-free role models, and hundreds more across the nation.

**You may be wondering what Teen Advisors is all about — what is it that we actually do?** Well, first of all, we're not just some drug-free club, and we don't look down on people who do drink or do drugs. We don't think we're better than anybody else just because we sign a contract. Our mission is to influence our peers to make positive decisions with their lives. We reach out to others with love & encouragement. We don't judge or condemn people for making wrong decisions, but we try our best to influence them to make the right ones.

**At school, Teen Advisors talk with the freshmen about things** that high school students have to deal with. Outside of school, we form a support group of teenagers who have similar standards. Three times a year, we go on the most incredible weekend retreats together. Every month, we have huge parties with all the other Teen Advisors from around the city. We get to form lots of great friendships with students from all the other high schools, and we have really fun events together. By standing together & supporting one another, we are able to keep our commitments, and (hopefully!) we can be an encouragement for you to make good decisions in life!

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## **2. INTRODUCE THE TOPIC** (3 minutes)

**Right now, we need one volunteer from the class to come join us up front.** Alright, this volunteer is going to demonstrate for you how difficult it can be to juggle all the stressors we have in life, by trying to keep their balloon in the air (*volunteer begins juggling balloon*). Right now, the TAs are holding more balloons, each representing a cause of stress in life. We need you all in the class to call out some of the causes of stress in your life, and as you do, the TAs will begin adding their balloons one-by-one. Our volunteer has to try and keep all the balloons up in the air at once. (*Ask freshmen to call out causes of stress; TAs begin adding their balloons. If the class is quiet, ask the TAs to call out different causes of stress: school, home, friends, health, finances, extra-curricular activities, etc.*). With each new cause of stress, it becomes very difficult to keep all of them up in the air at once! (*volunteer stops juggling and may return to their seat*).

**Let's give our volunteer a round of applause! Stressors come in all sizes;** some are small, and some are huge! Stress can come from the negative things and the positive things in our lives. Today, we want to talk about the issue of stress and come up with some solutions for how to deal with it.

**We are here today because we have been freshmen before,** and because we know what it's like to be stressed out in high school. We're here to tell you that you are not alone and that there are helpful solutions for dealing with stress. We're here because we care about you, and we want you to experience the best life possible as a teenager!

**Right now, we are going to introduce ourselves to you** with our name, grade, and one cause of stress in our lives.

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### 3. ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

**Now we are going to break you up into small groups.** The TAs will split up into your groups to help lead the discussion in each group. **Now, your TA group leaders are going to you in discussing two questions together in your small groups.** You'll have about 5 minutes to discuss your answers to these questions together in your groups. Your group will need to select a freshman spokesperson to share your group's responses to these questions with the rest of the class.

#### ***Small Group Discussion Questions:***

1. What are the main sources of stress at our particular high school? What stresses you out the most about our high school?
2. Do you have any anxieties about your life in high school, school related or not (for this year, or for the coming 3 years)? What are they?

*(After about 5 minutes, remind everyone to choose a freshman spokesperson. Have the freshman stand up front or where they are and share their group's answers.)*

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### 4. GATHER QUESTIONS (5 minutes)

Now that we have introduced and discussed the topic of Stress in High School **we want to give you the chance to ask us a question.** We are not experts but are a little older and might be able help if you are wondering about something. We are passing around 3X5 note cards and you can right any question you might have concerning stress and high school. This are anonymous, so Please don't write you names on these. We will be answering these a little later. We will now give time to write.

*( After a couple minutes, collect the cards and give them to the adult listeners. )*

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### 5. SHARING (7 minutes)

**In a few minutes, we are going to answer the questions about Stress & High School** that you all wrote down for us on the back of your small group handouts. But first, several Teen Advisors are going to briefly share on one source of stress in their life, and how they are dealing with it.

*(The TA Adult Listener will return the class's question note cards to you at end of this "Sharing" segment.)*

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### 6. QUESTION & ANSWER (10 minutes)

**Right now, each TA is holding 2-3 questions from this class about Stress** – these are the questions that you all anonymously wrote down for us on your note card. The TAs will randomly read a question, and then discuss their answers to your questions. 2-3 TAs will be commenting on each question, discussion-style. We aren't experts, so our answers may not be perfect, but what we want to share with you is our best advice from our experience.

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## 6. **CLOSING** (2 minutes)

**Stress can be looked at as our ability to adjust to change in our lives.** Moving from middle school to high school is a big change and it might be stressing you out. The truth is that we all have stressors in our lives, some which are out of our control. It is also true however that we can take actions to alleviate stress or make it worse. After each of my statements I want you guys to shout out if you think it will make things better or worse.

1. **Getting a enough sleep at night .** ( Better ) Yeah, when you're tired everything feels ten times worse.
2. **Waiting to the last night to do that 8 page research paper.** ( Worse ) A lot of us are guilty of procrastination and we need to realize how it only hurts us in the end. Spreading out the work helps you avoid those 3am freakout sessions.
3. **Acting like your parents don't understand your stress and getting mad at them about it.** ( worse ) I mean your parents probably understand stress better than even you do, don't shut them out of the situation.
4. **Talking to your friends, family someone about what's stressing you out.** ( Better ) Verbalizing our responsibilities can help us put things in perspective.
5. **Taking a rest day every now and again.** ( Better ) You have to give yourself time to relax and unwind.

**As TAs, we are here for you,** not only during these Classroom Sessions, but all throughout the year. If you ever need someone to talk to, we are here! Stop us in the hall or grab one of us after school.

**You all have been great listeners! We are now passing out pens with the Teen Advisors Website on it . Here you can find great resource dealing with common Teen issues, for example stress in high school. Thanks for letting us spend this time with you today!**

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### Facts & Information about STRESS

- Stress is our ability to adjust to changes in life.
- Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to stress because practically everything in their lives is in a constant state of change: their bodies, their minds, their emotions, their friends, their families...
- Negative things cause stress:
  - academic difficulty*
  - fight with parents or siblings*
  - arguments with friends*
  - changing schools*
  - personal failure*
  - financial pressure*
  - moving to a new area*
  - death of a loved one*
  - parents' separation or divorce*
  - personal injury or illness*
- Positive things cause stress, too:
  - traveling*
  - holidays, Christmas, birthdays*
  - promotions / elections to new positions*
  - weddings & births*
  - church activities*
  - playing on sports' teams*
  - extra-curricular activities*
- A common source of stress is being over-committed; being involved in too many activities; having the inability to say "no" to opportunities & commitments.
- Stressors come in all sizes. Some are huge and seem insurmountable. Others are small and manageable, but they can add up rather quickly if we're not careful.
- Another common source of stress is feeling like you have to please everybody. It's impossible to please everyone, thus attempting to do so creates enormous amounts of stress! Remember that while it is important to do what is right and have integrity, we are never going to please everyone all of the time.
- Procrastination is one source of stress that is totally avoidable. Don't put off responsibilities until the last minute. When you procrastinate, you guarantee some major stress for yourself. Do things as early in advance as possible.
- Here are some great ways to deal with stress:
  - Exercise! Go for a run or a walk.*
  - Go outdoors and breathe in some fresh air.*
  - Do something you really enjoy doing.*
  - Take a hot bath.*
  - Eat healthy & regularly.*
  - Take a nap or go to bed early.*
  - Read a magazine or a book – something YOU want to read.*
  - Listen to your favorite CD.*
  - Watch a funny movie or TV show.*
- Laugh as much as you possibly can. Laughter is medically proven to have healing effects on the human body – from pain relief to cell regeneration to increased blood-flow. Laughter literally is good medicine!

### Frequently Asked Questions about STRESS

1. What are some ways to relieve stress?
2. I know I need to prioritize my time better, but how do I do that?
3. How do you get your parents to understand your stress?
4. What is a practical way to handle stress in the middle of a situation?
5. How do you juggle school, work, sports, family, friends, etc. all at once?
6. With a very packed schedule how do I make time to relax?
7. I'm stressed out about my future. What should I do?
8. My parents are so demanding, how can I deal with the stress they put on me to be perfect?

# STRESSED?

## Here are some good ways to relieve stress in your life:

1. **Get some exercise at least 3 times a week.**
2. **Get adequate sleep – most people need about 8 hours of sleep per night.**
3. **Talk things over with a friend – verbalizing our responsibilities helps put them into perspective.**
4. **Do something you love! Make time in your schedule to do the things you enjoy doing.**
5. **Live one day at a time – many of the things we worry about never happen!**
6. **Don't procrastinate – waiting to the last minute causes more stress.**
7. **Set a time limit on your worries – refuse to let worrying consume your day.**
8. **Learn to say “no” if you tend to take on too much.**
9. **Eat healthy & regularly (avoid junk food & caffeine when you're stressed).**
10. **Laugh as much as you can!**

## Helpful Study Tips:

- Plan ahead (and don't procrastinate!) so that you can avoid those stressful “all-nighter” study sessions.
- For maximum retention, study for 20 minutes at a time; then take a 5-minute break.
- Study difficult (or boring) subjects first.
- Be aware of the best time of day for you to study (a time when you are best able to focus and concentrate).
- Choose a regular place to study.
- Study in a quiet place where you can concentrate.
- Notice how others misuse time and try to avoid making the same mistakes.

## Easy Strategies to Raise Test Scores:

- As soon as you get a test, quickly jot down from memory any relevant names, dates, or formulas in the margin of the paper.
- Briefly glance over the entire test first.
- Thoroughly read over ALL of the instructions.
- Know how many questions are on the test.
- Know how much time you have to take the test.
- Decide how much time you have to answer each question.
- Understand the penalties for incorrect answers & for answers left blank.
- Answer the easiest questions first...
- ...next, answer the questions which are worth the most points...
- ...then, answer the most difficult questions last.
- On essay tests, read all the questions first.

**Thanks For Listening Today and Remember  
Teen Advisors are always here to help!**

