

Plain Talk

About

Handling

STRESS



an informational text
by Louis E. Kopolow, M.D.

1 You need stress in your life! Does that surprise you? Perhaps so, but it is quite true. Without stress, life would be **dull** and unexciting. Stress adds **flavor**, challenge, and **opportunity** to life. Too much stress, however, can seriously affect your physical and mental **well-being**. A major challenge in this stress-filled world of today is to learn how to **cope** with stress so that it does not become too much.

2 What kinds of things can cause too much stress in our lives? We often think of major **crises** such as natural disasters, war, and death as main

sources of stress. These are, of course, stressful events. However, according to psychologist Wayne Weiten, on a day-to-day basis, it is the small things that cause stress: waiting in line, having car trouble, getting stuck in a **traffic jam**, having too many things to do in a **limited** time.

Identify Main Idea and Details

What is the main idea of paragraph 2?



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dull boring

flavor an exciting quality

opportunity a chance to advance or meet a goal

well-being the condition of your body and mind

cope face difficulties and try to overcome them

crises emergencies

traffic jam cars and trucks blocking the road and causing delays

limited having only a certain amount of something



3 Reacting to Stress

While you can't live completely free of stress and distress, you can **prevent** some distress as well as **minimize** its **impact**. By recognizing the early signs of distress and then doing something about them, you can **improve** the quality of your life and perhaps even live longer.

Helping Yourself

4

When stress does occur, it is important to recognize and deal with it. Here are some suggestions for ways to handle stress. As you begin to understand more about how stress affects you as an individual, you will come up with your own ideas of helping to **ease** the tensions.

Identify Main Idea and Details

What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

prevent stop from happening

minimize lessen

impact effect

improve make better

ease make less difficult

5

Try physical activity.

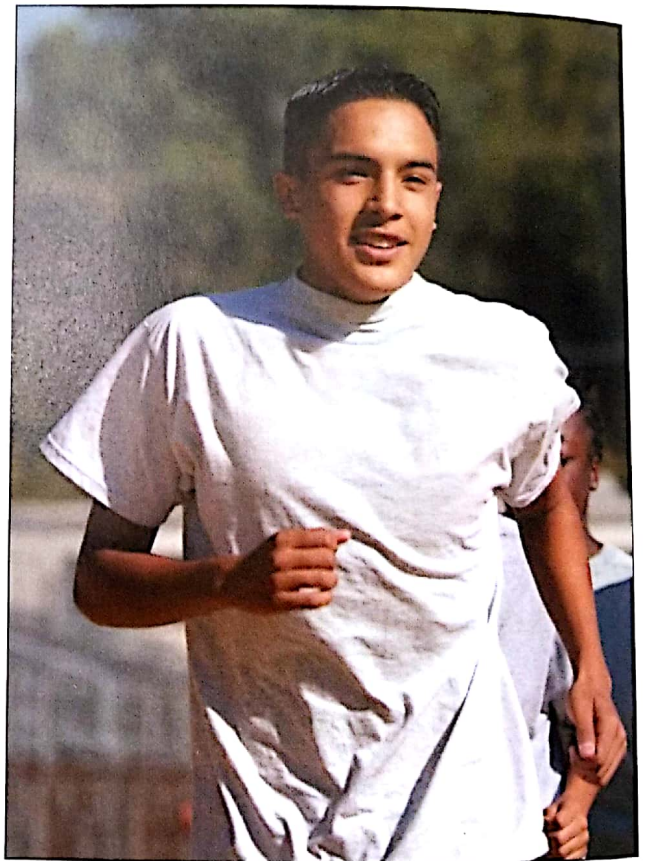
When you are nervous, angry, or upset, **release** the **pressure** through exercise or physical activity. Running, walking, playing tennis, or working in your garden are just some of the activities you might try. Physical exercise will relieve that “up tight” feeling, **relax** you, and turn the **frowns** into smiles. Remember, your body and your mind work together.

Identify Main Idea and Details

Here is the main idea of paragraph 5: Physical activity can help lower stress. What details support this main idea?

Share your stress.

It helps to talk to someone about your concerns and worries. Perhaps a friend, family member, teacher, or **counselor** can help you see your problem in a different light. If you feel your problem is serious, you might seek **professional** help from a psychologist, **psychiatrist**, **social worker**, or mental health counselor. Knowing when to ask for help may **avoid** more serious problems later.



release let something go

pressure tension; a feeling of being pushed to do things

relax stop being nervous, tense, or angry

frowns when you pull the eyebrows down and make your mouth tight; usually shows anger or sadness

counselor someone who gives advice

professional related to a job

psychiatrist a doctor who treats mental problems

social worker a person who works with others to help make their lives better

avoid stay away from

Know your limits.

7 If a problem is beyond your control and cannot be changed at the moment, don't fight the situation. Learn to accept what it is—for now—until such time when you can change it.

Identify Main Idea and Details

How does the section heading of this paragraph relate to the main idea?

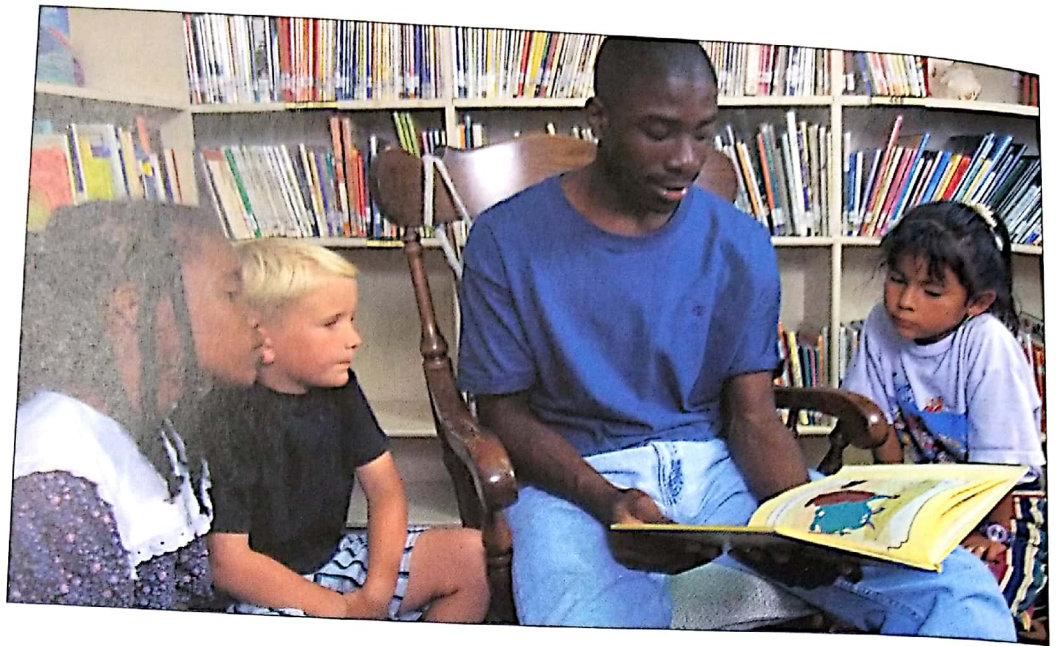
Take care of yourself.

8 You are special. Get enough rest and eat well. If you are **irritable** and **tense** from **lack** of sleep or if you are not eating correctly, you will have less ability to deal with stressful situations. If stress **repeatedly** keeps you from sleeping, you should ask your doctor for help.



irritable easily bothered by things
tense nervous, jumpy

lack not enough of something
repeatedly over and over again



9 **Make time for fun.**

Schedule time for both work and **recreation**. Play can be just as important to your well-being as work; you need a **break** from your daily **routine** to just relax and have fun.

10 **Be a participant.**

One way to keep from getting bored, sad, and lonely is to go where it's all happening. Sitting alone can make you feel **frustrated**. Instead of feeling sorry for yourself, get involved and become a participant. Offer your services in neighborhood or **volunteer**

organizations. Help yourself by helping other people. Get involved in the world and the people around you, and you'll find they will be **attracted** to you. You will be on your way to making new friends and enjoying new activities.

Identify Main Idea and Details

What is the main idea of paragraph 10? How does the section heading help you identify the main idea?

schedule plan activities by date and time
recreation fun things to do
break a change from something usual
routine a series of things someone does regularly

participant a person who takes part in something
frustrated feeling bothered by something
volunteer when people help other people for no pay
attracted interested in

Check off your tasks.

11 Trying to take care of everything at once can seem **overwhelming**, and, as a result, you may not **accomplish** anything. Instead, make a list of what tasks you have to do, then do one at a time, **checking them off** as they're completed. Give **priority** to the most important ones and do those first.

Must you always be right?

12

Do other people upset you—particularly when they don't do things your way? Try **cooperation** instead of **confrontation**; it's better than fighting and always being "right." A little **give and take** on both sides will **reduce** the **strain** and make you both feel more comfortable.

Identify Main Idea and Details

What is the main idea of paragraph 11?

Things To Do Today

1. Finish homework. ✓
2. Go to baseball practice. ✓
3. Clean room.
4. Do my laundry.
5. Help with dinner.

overwhelming too much for you to deal with

accomplish finish, complete

checking them off putting a check next to the tasks with a pen or pencil

priority the tasks that are the most important and require attention

cooperation the act of working with someone toward the same goal

confrontation the act of facing something difficult or dangerous

give and take when people on both sides of a conflict listen to each other and accept some of each other's ideas

reduce lessen

strain difficulty

13

It's OK to cry.

A good cry can be a healthy way to bring **relief** to your **anxiety**, and it might even prevent a headache or other physical **consequence**. Take some deep breaths; they also release tension.

14

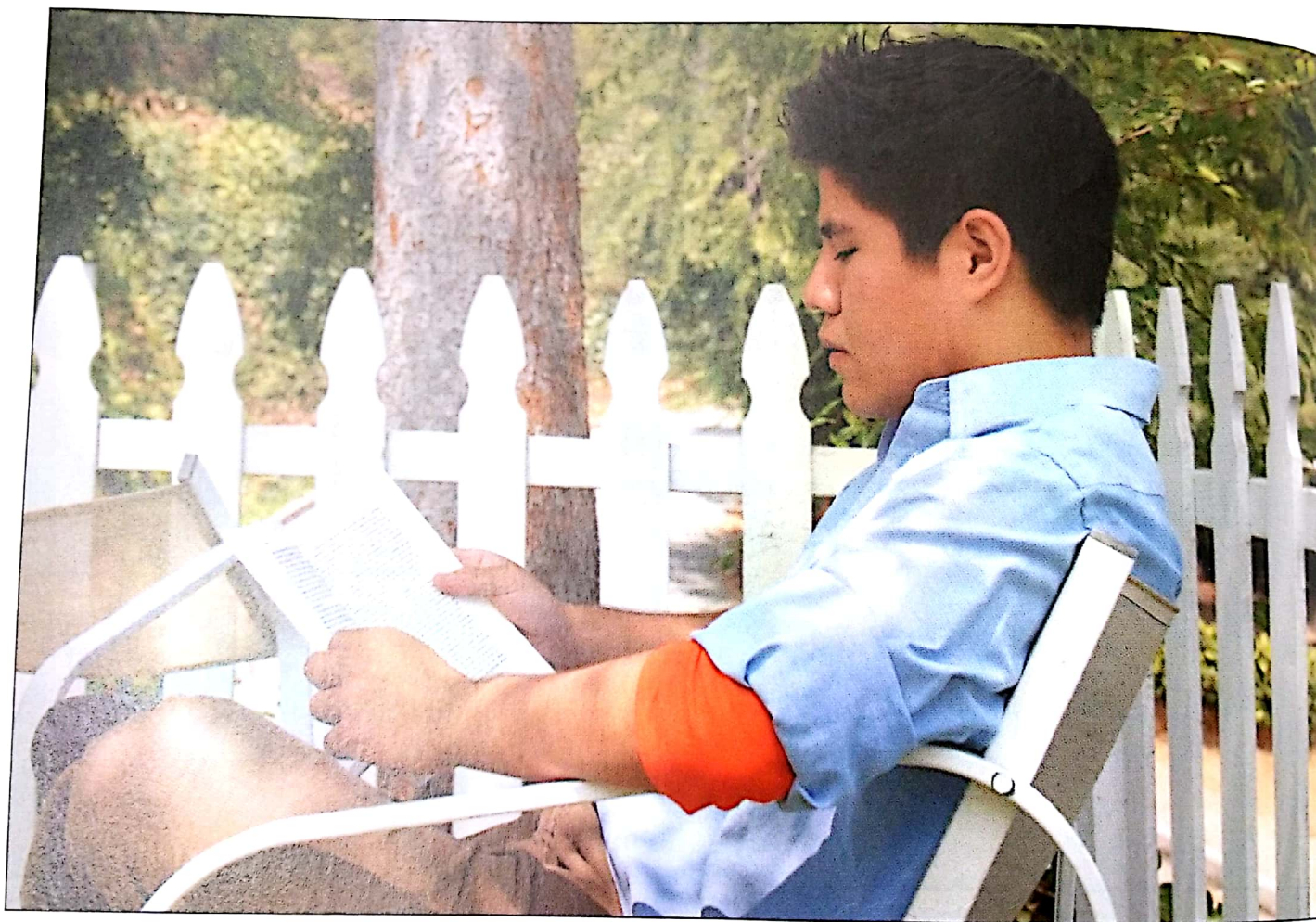
Create a quiet scene.

You can't always run away, but you can "dream the **impossible** dream." A quiet country scene painted mentally,

or on a **canvas**, can take you out of the **turmoil** of a stressful situation. Change the scene by reading a good book or playing beautiful music to create a sense of peace and **tranquility**.

Identify Main Idea and Details

What is the main idea of paragraph 14? Which details support the main idea?



relief the taking away or lessening of pain
anxiety worry, nervous fear about what will happen in the future
consequence result
impossible not able to be done

canvas cloth stretched over a wooden frame for painting pictures
turmoil disorder, chaos, often with mental suffering
tranquility peace, calmness

15 The Art of Relaxation

The best strategy for avoiding stress is to learn how to relax. Unfortunately, many people try to relax at the same **pace** that they lead the rest of their lives. For a while, **tune out** your worries about time, **productivity**, and “doing right.” You will find **satisfaction** in just *being*, without **striving**. Find activities that give you pleasure and that are good for your mental and physical well-being. Forget about always winning. Focus on relaxation,

enjoyment, and health. Whatever method works for you, be good to yourself. If you don't let stress get **out of hand**, you can actually make it work for you instead of against you.

Identify Main Idea and Details

What is the main idea of paragraph 15? Which details support the main idea?

pace speed of an activity

tune out ignore, not pay attention to

productivity how much a person can do in a certain time

satisfaction pleasure because of having enough

striving working hard for something

out of hand out of control

About the Author

Louis E. Kopolow, M.D.

Louis E. Kopolow is a psychiatrist. He is also a college teacher. He teaches others who want to be psychiatrists. Kopolow also runs counseling centers for men in Washington, D.C. These centers help men deal with questions, stress, and problems in their lives.

► Why do you think Louis E. Kopolow wrote “Plain Talk About Handling Stress”? To teach you how to handle stress? To teach you how to avoid stress? Explain.

Beyond the Reading

Reading Comprehension

Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)

"Right There" Questions

1. **Recall Facts** According to the author, do we need some stress in our lives?
2. **Recall Facts** What does the author say is the best strategy for avoiding stress?

"Think and Search" Questions

3. **Identify** Name two ways that stress can be good for you.
4. **Identify** Name three things that can cause stress on a day-to-day basis.
5. **Identify Steps in a Process** The author tells how to deal with having too many tasks. What steps does the author suggest?

"Author and You" Questions

6. **Identify the Main Idea** Which of these sentences is the main idea of the selection?

- a. Crying can help you release tension.
- b. Dealing with stress can help you have a better life.
- c. All stress is bad.

7. **Paraphrase** Explain one of the author's suggestions for handling stress. Use your own words.

"On Your Own" Questions

8. **Connect to Your Experiences** How do you handle stress in your life?
9. **Find Similarities and Differences Across Texts** Look up "Turkish Delight" in the table of contents of this book. Reread that selection. How is its text structure the same as or different from this chapter?



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Build Reading Fluency

Adjust Your Reading Rate to Scan

When you scan, you adjust your reading rate to read fast. Scanning means glancing at the text for key words to help you answer questions. Work with a partner. Read aloud key words as you look for information. Write your answers on a piece of paper.

1. What is one way to handle stress?
2. Who are three people you can share your stress with?
3. What is one way you can take care of yourself?
4. What is the title of the paragraph on "fun"?
5. What is the title of the paragraph about priorities?

Listen, Speak, Interact



Talk About Dealing with Stress

The selection suggests ways to deal with stress. How can you use these suggestions in a real-life situation?

1. Work with a small group.
2. Choose a stressful situation that you have experienced.
3. List ways that you could deal with the stressful situation. Use paragraphs 5–14 of the selection to help you.

Examples of Stressful Situations

You have too many things that you have to do.

You have just had an argument with your best friend.

You are waiting in a very long line at the store.

4. Think of ways you could act out dramatically the stressful situation and ways to deal with it.
5. Share your presentation with the class. Make sure to use words from the selection in your presentation.

Elements of Literature

Use Headings to Find Information

Informational texts often have **headings**—titles that come before a section or paragraph. Headings tell readers where to find information in a text.

“Plain Talk About Handling Stress” has two kinds of headings. One kind is general and appears before a group of paragraphs. The other kind is more specific and appears before one paragraph. Both kinds are in boldface.

Helping Yourself (page 211)

Try physical activity. (page 212)

On a piece of paper, match the information with the head that you would use to find it.

Information You

Want to Find

1. How can I help others?
2. How can I lower my stress?
3. How can I relax?
4. Who can I talk to about stress?

Heads

- a. **Helping Yourself**
- b. **The Art of Relaxation**
- c. **Be a participant.**
- d. **Share your stress.**



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