

Angie

A Self-Exploration Workbook to Help Children  
Understand Stress and "Weather" Stressful Situations



# STRESS OUT

WRITTEN BY  
**Nicole Cleveland, M.Ed.**

# STRESS OUT

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214 Kale Road  
New Bern, NC 28562  
Phone: 1-800-448-2197  
Fax: (215) 956-9041  
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## Dedication

**"To my sweet family for  
helping me handle my stress  
while writing this book in the  
hopes of helping others."**

# Introduction

*Stress Out* helps children to understand how they react to stress, what causes them stress, and teaches children ways to help control stress so that stress doesn't control them.

In a perfect world, children would see the adults in their world respond to stressful situations in calm, confident, and positive ways. However, it is obvious through news stories and headlines that we do not live in a perfect world. People are losing control in stressful situations, and sometimes in detrimental, destructive, or dangerous ways.

Unfortunately, children often feel stressed out. What they may not be as familiar with is what it feels like to be calm and in control. Children need to know that there are healthy ways to handle stressful situations. If children practice these techniques, they will be able to use them when needed. Learning how to handle stress is an important life-skill that will not only help children now, but throughout their lifetimes.

Children are never too young to learn how to get their ...

**STRESS  OUT**

*Stress Out*

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# A Message From the Author

*Stress Out* can be used with small groups, in individual counseling, or as classroom guidance sessions.

Stress surrounds us all, and everyone has some degree of stress in their lives. Therefore, the ability to control stress so that it doesn't control you is imperative to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

It is important that children learn basic techniques that can be applied in a variety of situations and to a variety of stress levels. Whether a child's stress is caused by turmoil at home or health, school, social, or emotional issues, the ability to manage stress and become familiar with using stress-reducing techniques will allow him or her a sense of empowerment over those situations.

Reproduce the entire workbook or select those pages you feel are most appropriate for the children who will be completing the workbook. Upon the completion of *Stress Out*, children will have developed more confidence in managing stressful situations and feelings.

Nicole Cleveland

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# ASCA Standards for *Stress Out*

<b>ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>
Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.
A:A2 Acquire Skills for Improving Learning
A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed
<b>PERSONAL/SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge
PS:A1.1 Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person
PS:A1.2 Identify values, attitudes and beliefs
PS:A1.4 Understand change is a part of growth
PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings
PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior
PS:A1.8 Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it
PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets
PS:A1.11 Identify and discuss changing personal and social roles
PS:A2 Acquire Interpersonal Skills
PS:A2.1 Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities
PS:A2.3 Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences
PS:A2.6 Use effective communications skills
PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listening and nonverbal behavior
Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.
PS:B1 Self-knowledge Application
PS:B1.1 Use a decision-making and problem-solving model
PS:B1.2 Understand consequences of decisions and choices
PS:B1.3 Identify alternative solutions to a problem
PS:B1.4 Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems
PS:B1.5 Demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions
PS:B1.9 Identify long- and short-term goals
PS:B1.10 Identify alternative ways of achieving goals
PS:B1.11 Use persistence and perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills
PS:B1.12 Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals
Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.
PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills
PS:C1.6 Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help
PS:C1.7 Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices
PS:C1.10 Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict
PS:C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events

PRE- AND POST-TEST FOR  
**STRESS OUT**

**Directions:** Read each sentence, then choose a word from the Word Bank to complete each sentence.

**WORD BANK**

worry  
upset stomach  
control  
support system

guilty  
relieve stress  
school

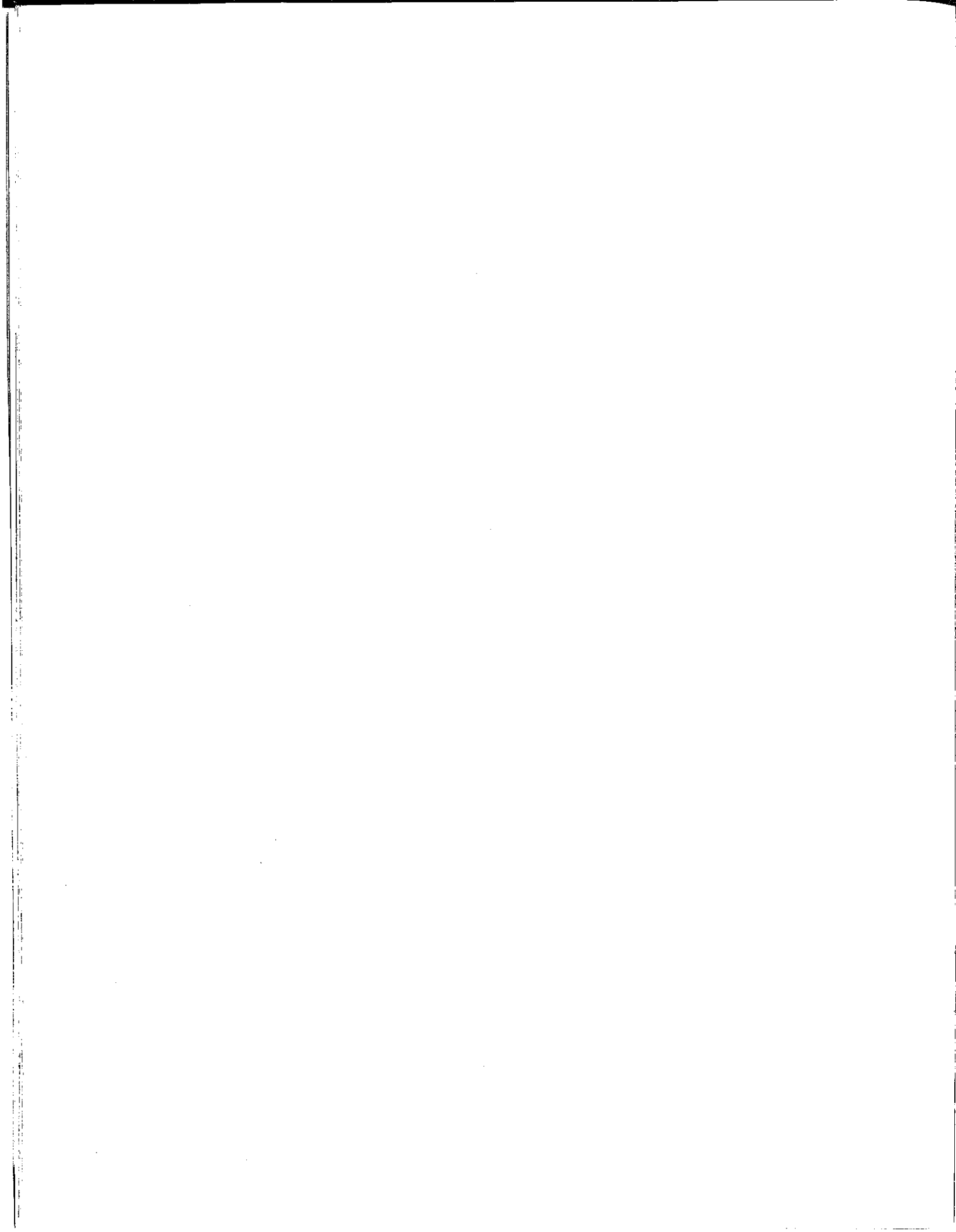
exercise  
thinking  
positive

1. When you \_\_\_\_\_ about something, you might feel stressed out.
2. Stressful situations can occur in \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Sometimes stress can cause an \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Drinking water can help to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ can help control stress.
6. One way to manage stress is to be in \_\_\_\_\_ of your life.
7. People who you can count on to help you during stressful or difficult times are known as your \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Feeling \_\_\_\_\_ about a situation is one emotional reaction to stress.
9. A situation will be less stressful if you focus on the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ before reacting to an problem or situation can help conquer stressful feelings.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**STRESS**

**OUT**

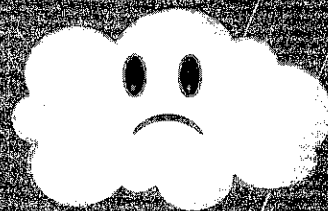
# What is Stress?

Stress is something that causes strong feelings of worry or anxiety.

Some stress is a normal part of life. We need stress to motivate and challenge us. But too much stress can be overwhelming.

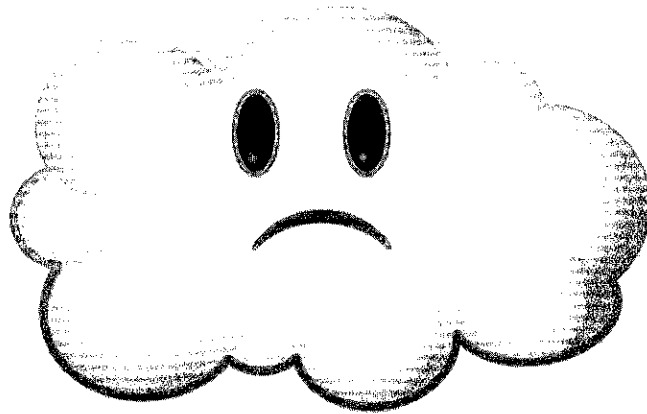
When stress becomes overwhelming, you may feel

sad,  
hurt,  
scared,  
or even  
angry.



This is the type of stress you are going to learn about.

**Stress can come from many situations  
and occur in many places.**

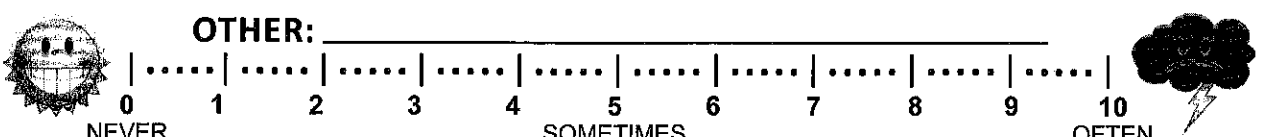
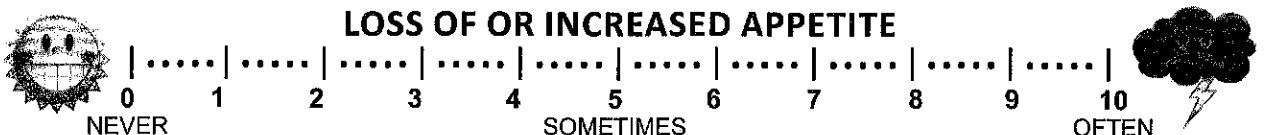
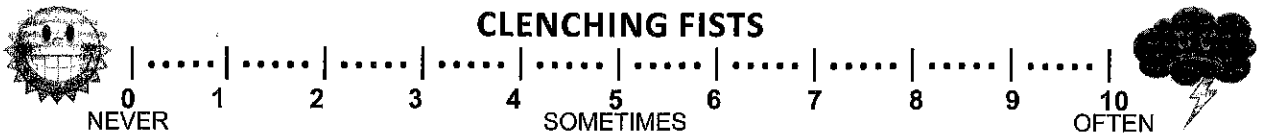
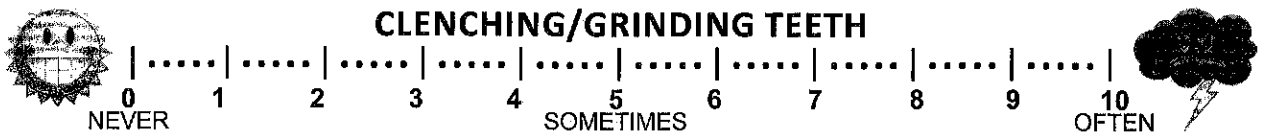
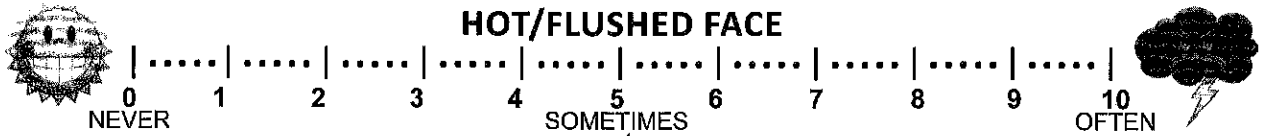
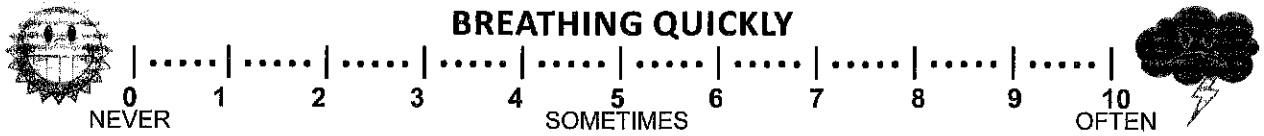
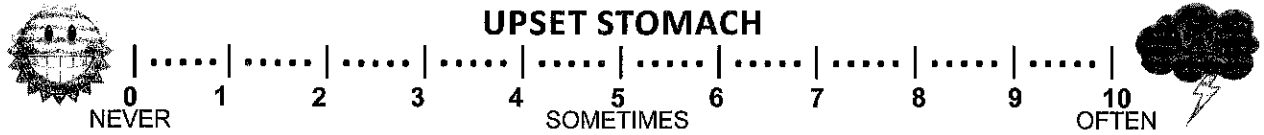
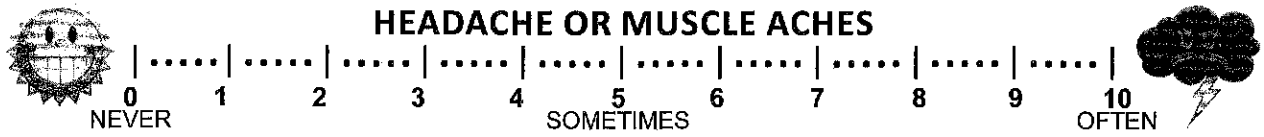
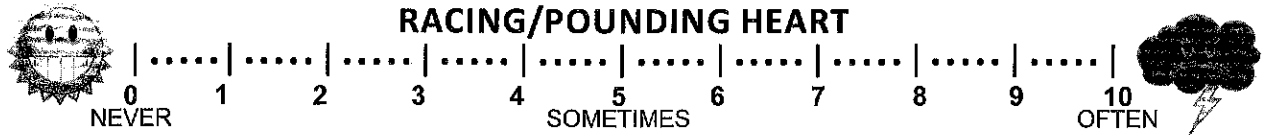


**Fear, worry, and other stressful feelings  
can affect how you live your life.**

**To better deal with stress, you first  
need to learn to recognize the  
signs and symptoms of stress.**

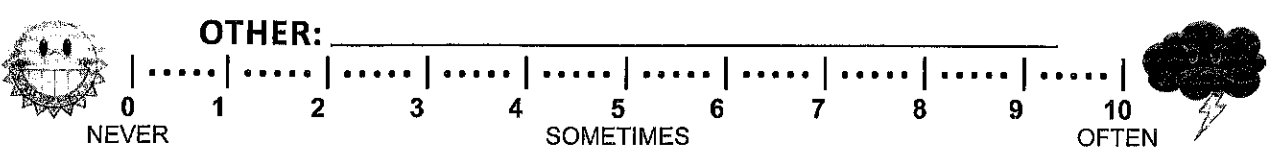
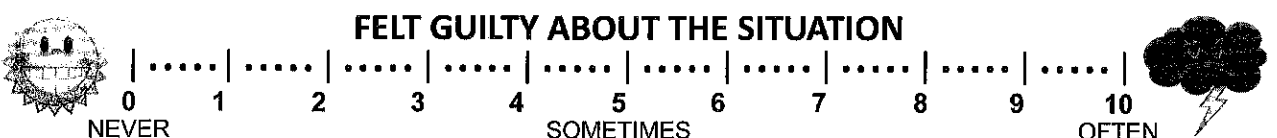
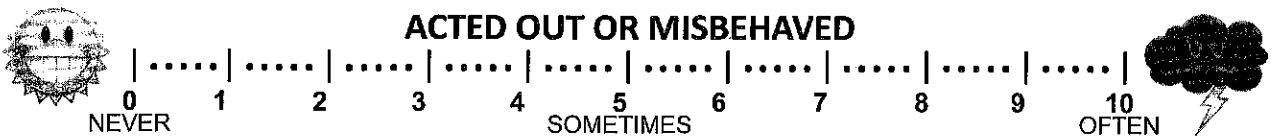
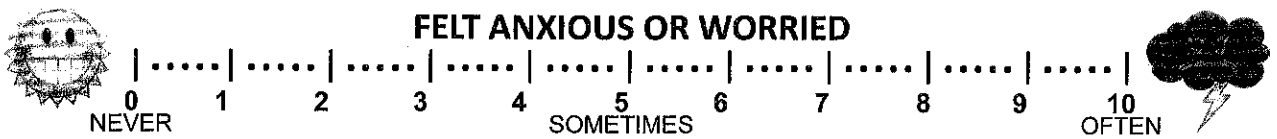
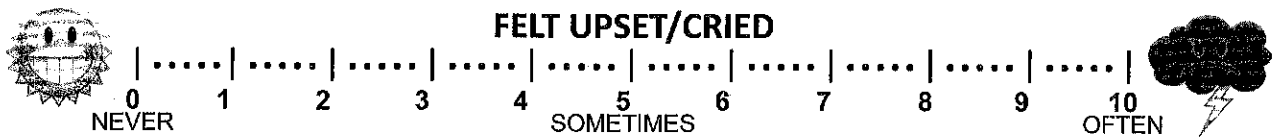
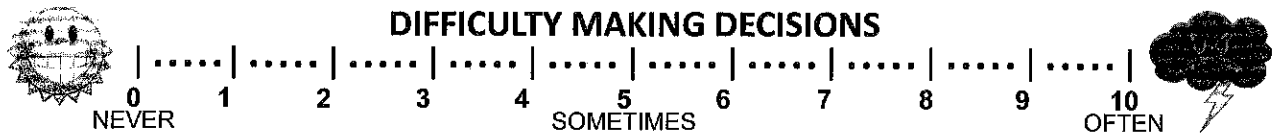
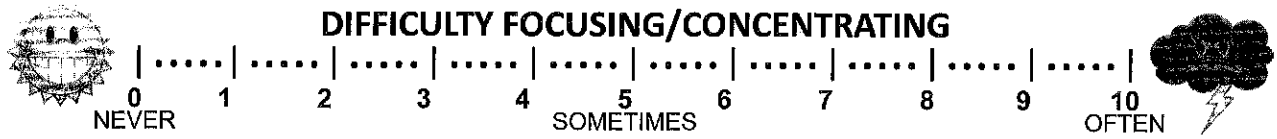
# Sometimes we have physical reactions to stress.

Look at the possible physical reactions to stress listed below. Have you ever had any of these reactions when you were stressed? Mark an **X** on the line to indicate how often you have each reaction.



# Sometimes we have emotional reactions to stress.

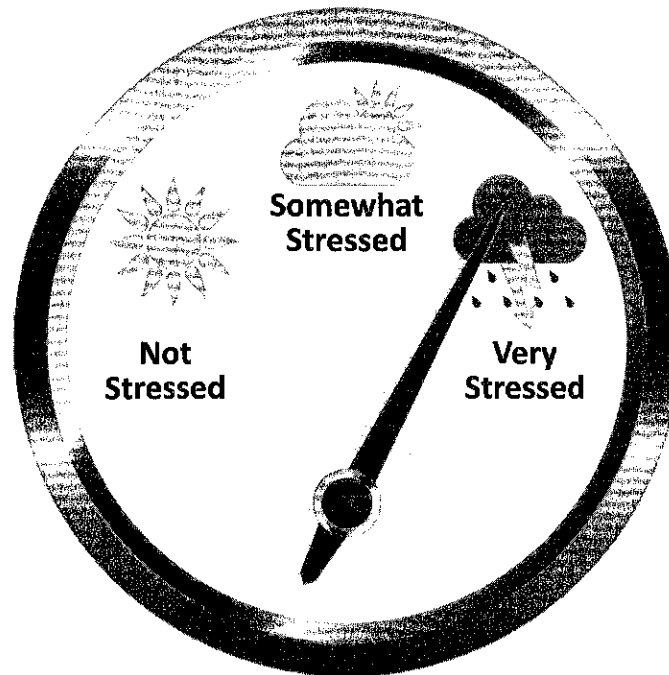
Look at the possible emotional reactions to stress listed below. Have you ever had any of these reactions when you were stressed? Mark an **X** on the line to indicate how often you have each reaction.



You have learned to recognize your physical and emotional signs of stress.  
Now let's explore what might cause you to feel stressed out.

A weather barometer measures  
rising and falling atmospheric pressure.

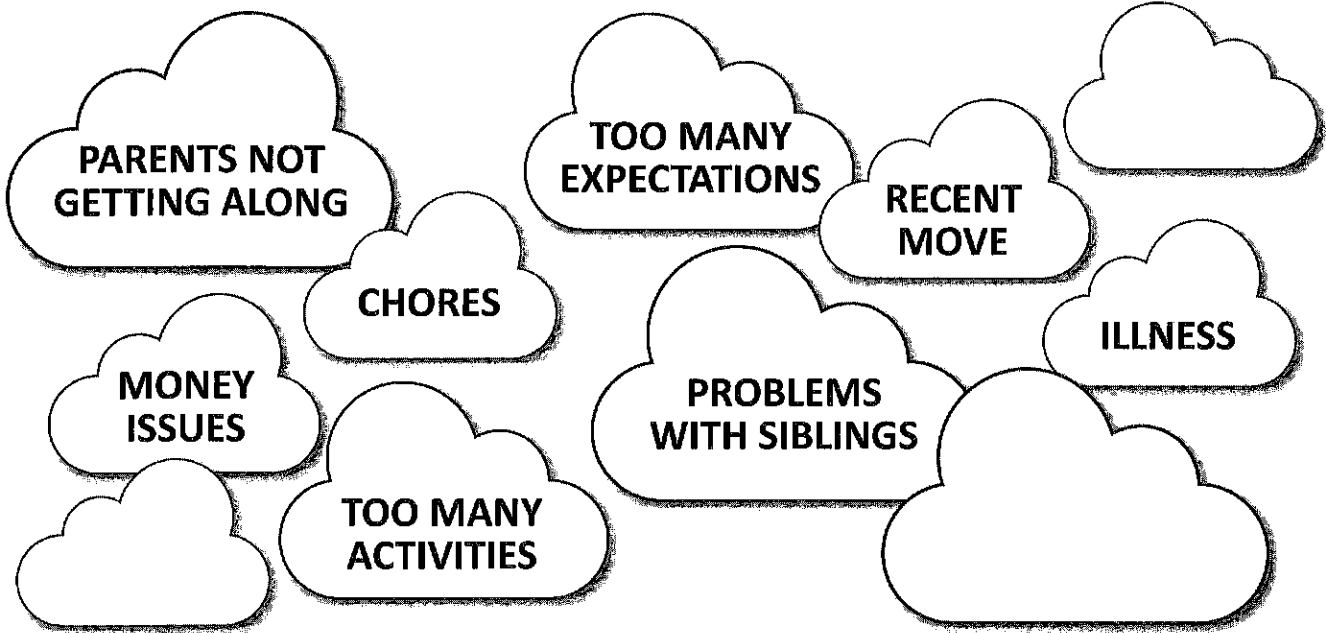
A stress barometer measures situations that  
might make YOU feel pressured or stressed.



Let's explore how you  
**“weather”**  
situations that might be stressful ...

# Stress at Home/In Community

Read the situations listed below. Color the cloud of each situation that causes you stress at home or in your community. If there are other situations that cause you stress at home or in your community, write them in the blank clouds.



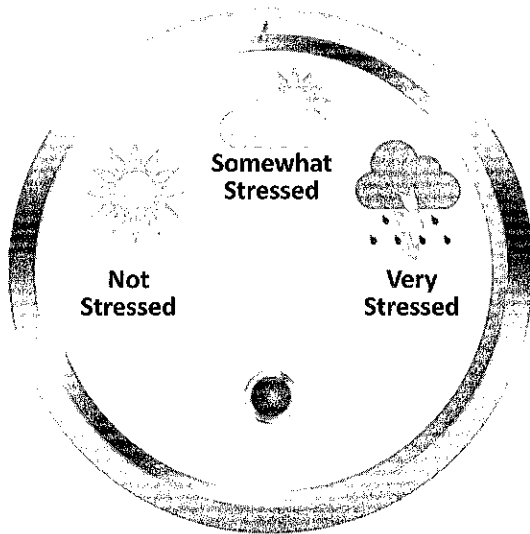
What is the biggest stress you experience at home or in your community? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it your biggest stress? \_\_\_\_\_

Where in your body do you feel this stress the most? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the stress feel like? \_\_\_\_\_

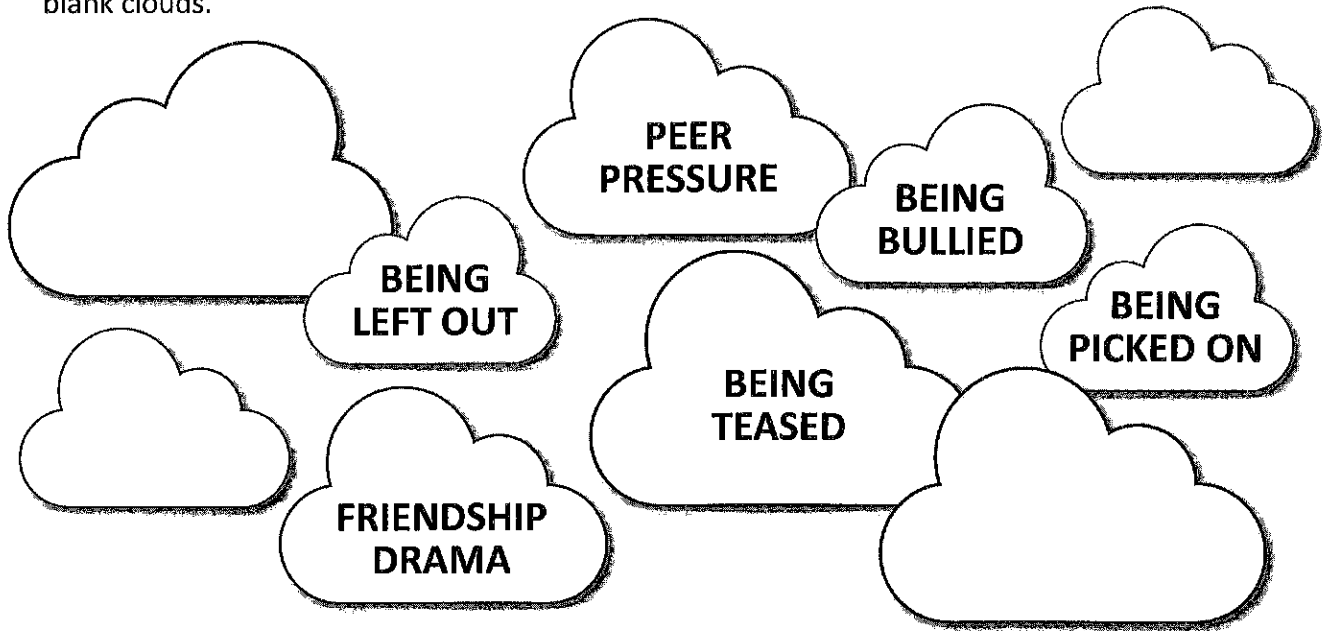
Draw a pointer on the stress barometer to show how your biggest stress at home or in your community makes you feel.





# Stress with Peers

Read the situations listed below. Color the cloud of each situation that causes you stress with your peers. If there are other situations that cause you stress with your peers, write them in the blank clouds.



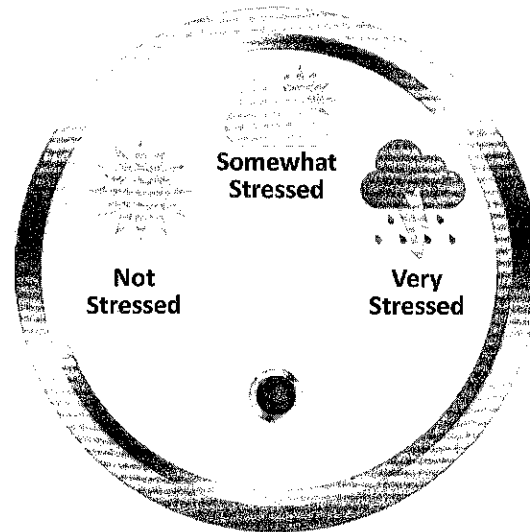
What is the biggest stress you experience with your peers? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it your biggest stress? \_\_\_\_\_

Where in your body do you feel this stress the most? \_\_\_\_\_

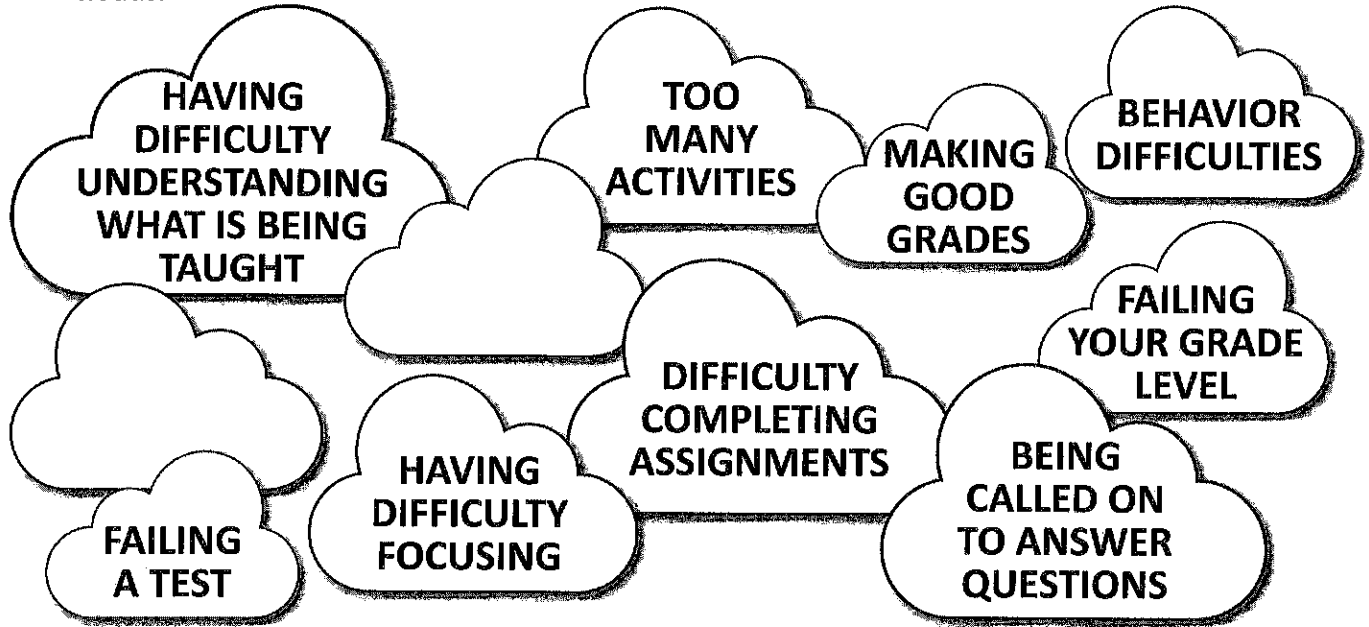
What does the stress feel like? \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a pointer on the stress barometer to show how your biggest stress with your peers makes you feel.



# Stress at School

Read the situations listed below. Color the cloud of each situation that causes you stress at school. If there are other situations that cause you stress at school, write them in the blank clouds.



What is the biggest stress you experience at school? \_\_\_\_\_

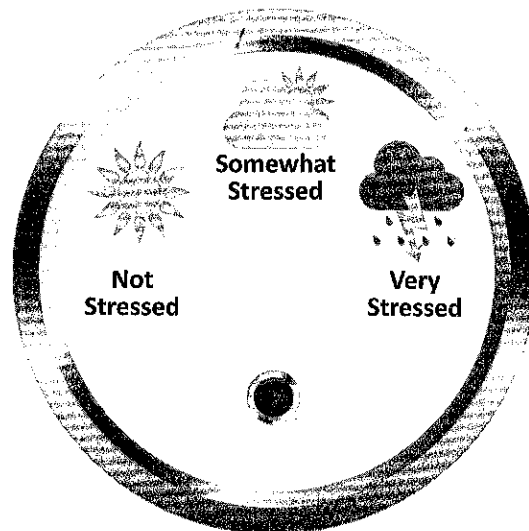
Why is it your biggest stress? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where in your body do you feel this stress the most? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the stress feel like? \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a pointer on the stress barometer to show how your biggest stress at school makes you feel.



You've thought about what stresses you at home, with peers, and at school.

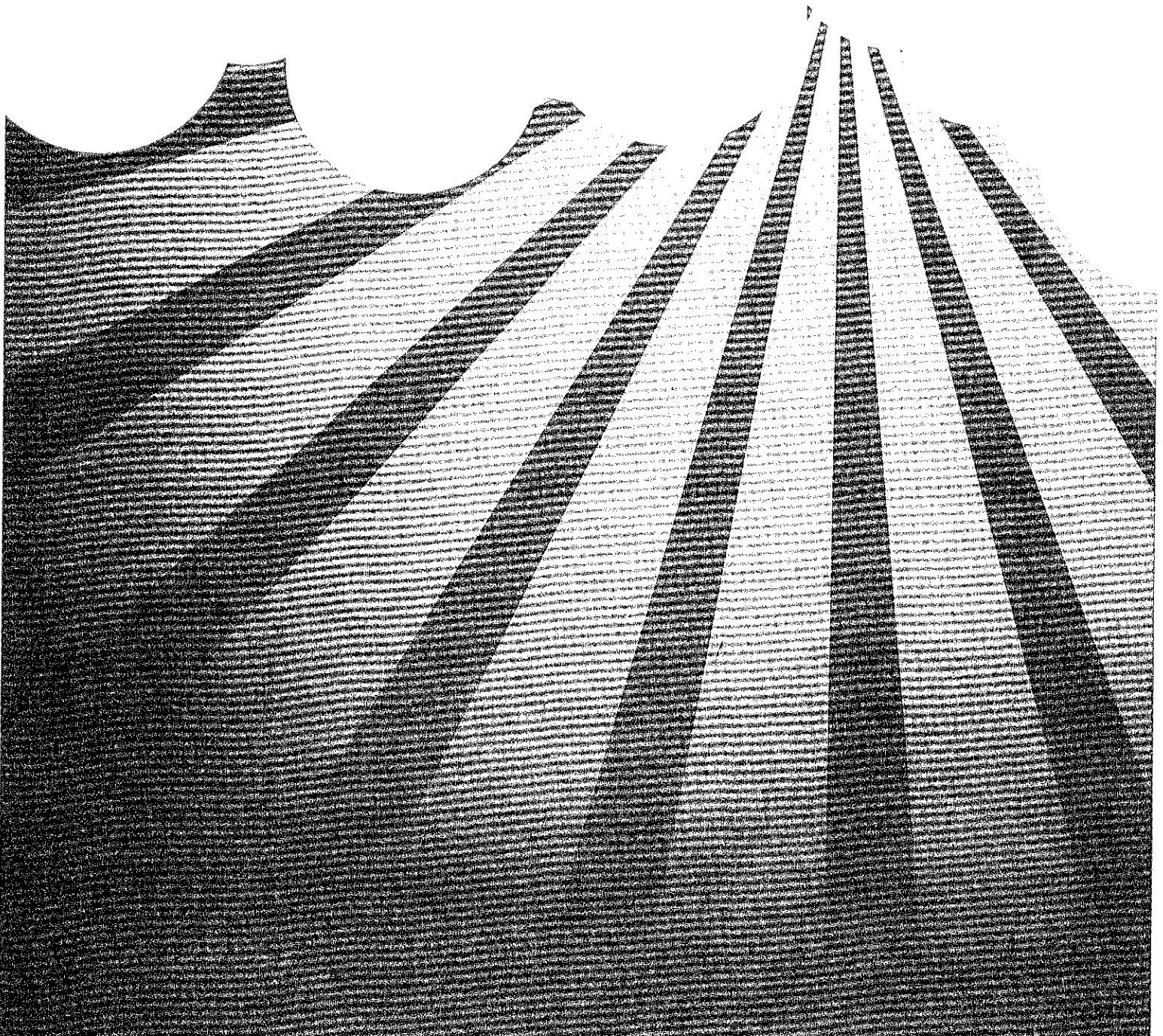
You've also thought about how you react to stress and how it makes you feel.

Now let's work on not stressing out, but rather getting the ...



**STRESS**  
**OUT!**

# Lets start with **Staying Positive ...**





# Every Cloud has a Silver Lining

The common expression “every cloud has a silver lining” means that even in difficult situations there may be a brighter side to the problem. So remember, stressful or hard times are like dark clouds that block the sun. And every cloud has a silver lining, so don’t feel defeated or hopeless. Things can change for the better. Look for the “silver linings” when problems are causing you to feel stressed.

**Do not let stressful feelings control your life.**

# Focus on yourself, your home, and school.

Write a sunshine (something positive) you are experiencing on each sun.  
In each cloud, write a difficulty or negative situation you are experiencing.

The worksheet features four rows of shapes for journaling. Each row consists of a sun on the left and a cloud on the right. The suns are filled with a dark, textured pattern, while the clouds are empty white shapes with black outlines. The rows are arranged in a staggered, descending pattern from top-left to bottom-right.

"How we perceive a situation and how we react to it is the basis of our stress. If you focus on the negative in any situation, you can expect high stress levels. However, if you try and see the good in the situation, your stress levels will greatly diminish."

Catherine Pulsifer, author of quotations and sayings

What do you think Catherine Pulsifer means by this quote? \_\_\_\_\_

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When something stressful happens to you, is it easier to see the good or the bad in the situation? \_\_\_\_\_ Why do you think this is so?

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**Write about a time you focused on what was negative about a situation.**

A time I focused on the negative was \_\_\_\_\_

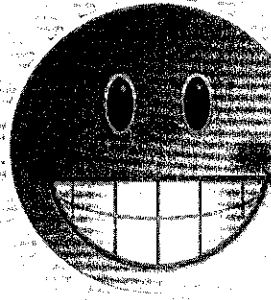
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I felt \_\_\_\_\_



**Write about a time you focused on what was positive about a situation.**

A time I focused on the positive was \_\_\_\_\_

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I felt \_\_\_\_\_



You have learned it is important to not let stressful feelings control your reactions.

Now it is important to identify the best ways to deal with stressful situations.

There is one thing you must always consider before you choose the best way to deal with a stressful situation—the time and place you are when it occurs.

## **Stop and think!**

**Ask yourself:**

***“Is this the right time to deal with my situation?”***

***“Is this the best place to deal with my situation?”***

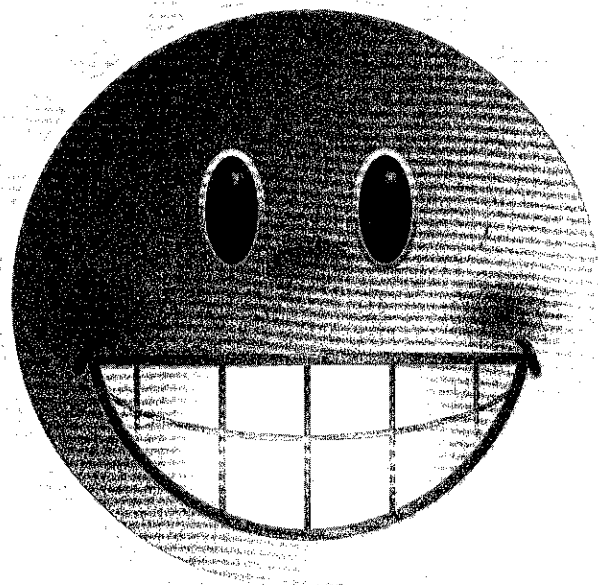
Sometimes it is better to take a deep breath, wait, and evaluate the situation.

**Ask yourself:**

***“How important is this?”***

***“Will this matter in the long run?”***

Now let's explore  
**techniques**  
**you can use**  
**to relieve**  
**stress ...**



# Bubble Breaths

Take a long, slow breath in through your nose for a count of 5. Then slowly exhale, blowing your breath out for a count of 5. Then, if you have bubbles to use, blow them. Try and blow the biggest bubble you can. While you can't blow bubbles in your classroom when you are stressed, you can practice the bubble breath technique anywhere at any time!

REMEMBER:

**STRESS OUT**

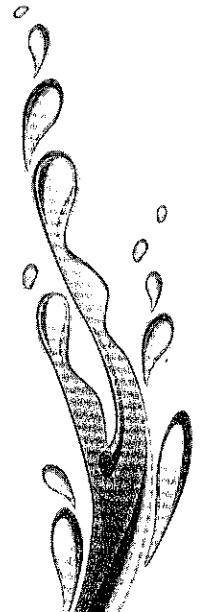
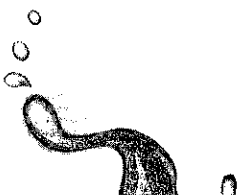
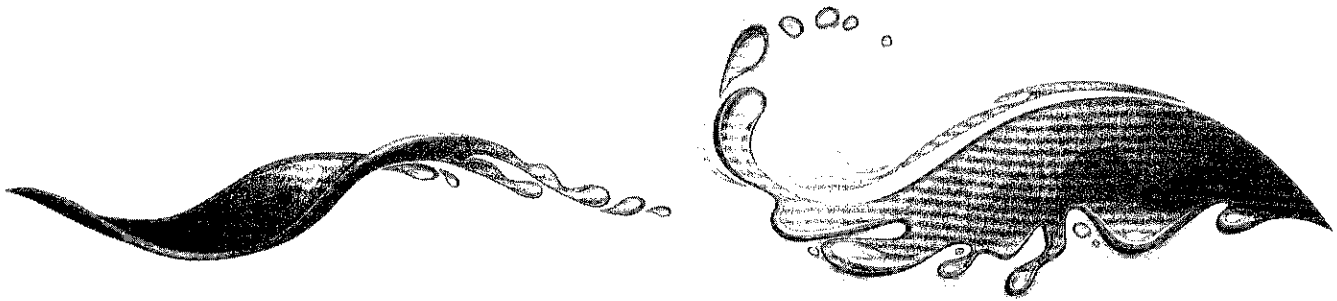
Blow  
your stresses  
away!

What is  
stressing you out?

Why is this  
stressing you out?

# Water

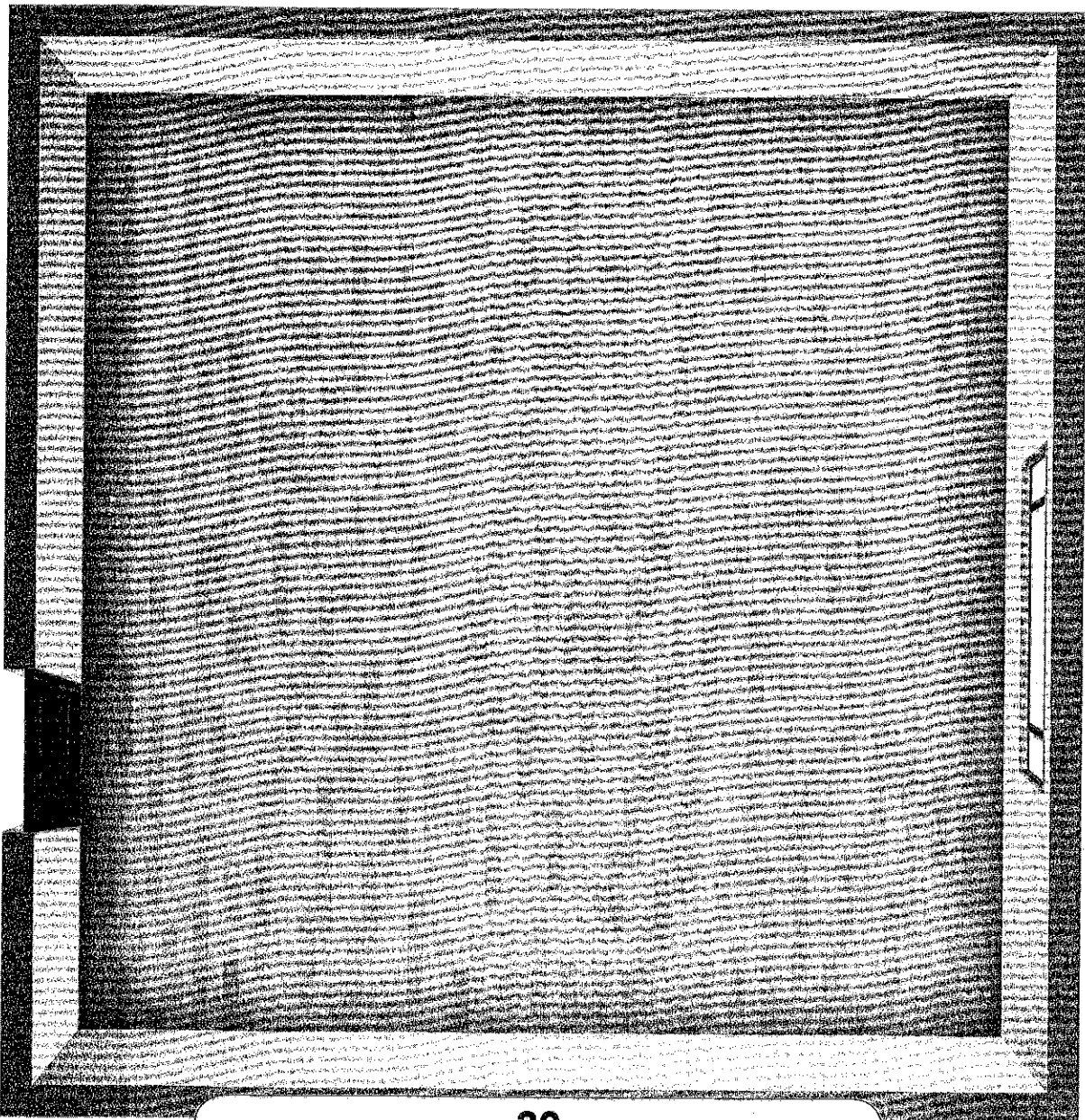
A drink of water is beneficial in combating the cortisol levels that rise when you are stressed out. Staying hydrated helps in stressful situations, as does picturing a calm scene with water. Close your eyes and picture waves at a beach. What do the waves sound like? What do they look and feel like? You can picture rain drops, a peaceful river or lake, or the cool waters of a swimming pool. Water can be a huge stress reliever! Right now, go and get a drink of water. Then draw a peaceful water scene below. Put this picture in the place where you feel the most stress as a reminder of how water can help to calm you down.



# Sleep

Getting enough sleep can help you to better handle stress. At bedtime, make sure your room is as peaceful as possible. Turn off all the lights, the TV, and your computer and cellphone. Checking your email or watching your favorite TV show might seem harmless enough, but the light emitted by these devices can disrupt your sleep cycle.

In the space below, design your perfect, peaceful bedroom. What kinds of blankets and how many pillows would you put on your bed? What else could you put into your room to make it comfortable? Make sure your bedroom isn't messy or cluttered. A clean, clutter free room will be more peaceful.



# Music

Listening to calm, peaceful music or music with meaningful lyrics can be a great stress reliever.

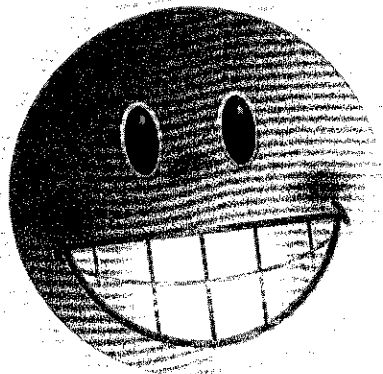
**LIST YOUR FAVORITE SONGS ON THE CELLPHONE.**



[A large, dark, rounded rectangular area representing a smartphone screen. It contains a grid of small, illegible text boxes, likely representing a list of songs. At the bottom right of this area is a speaker icon with sound waves emanating from it.]

# Exercise

Go for a bike ride, shoot some hoops, swim, jump rope, hula hoop, practice yoga, throw the football, run, or go for a walk. Exercise is powerful stress reducer. Take advantage of all of the other benefits that come with exercising, too. List your three favorite ways to exercise, then draw a picture of you doing your favorite one.



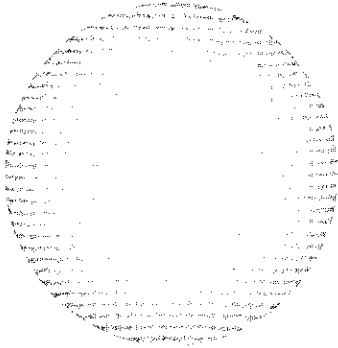
1

2

3

# Pets

Playing with a pet can really lower cortisol/stress levels. Draw a picture of your pet or a pet you would like to have that might help you feel calm and peaceful.





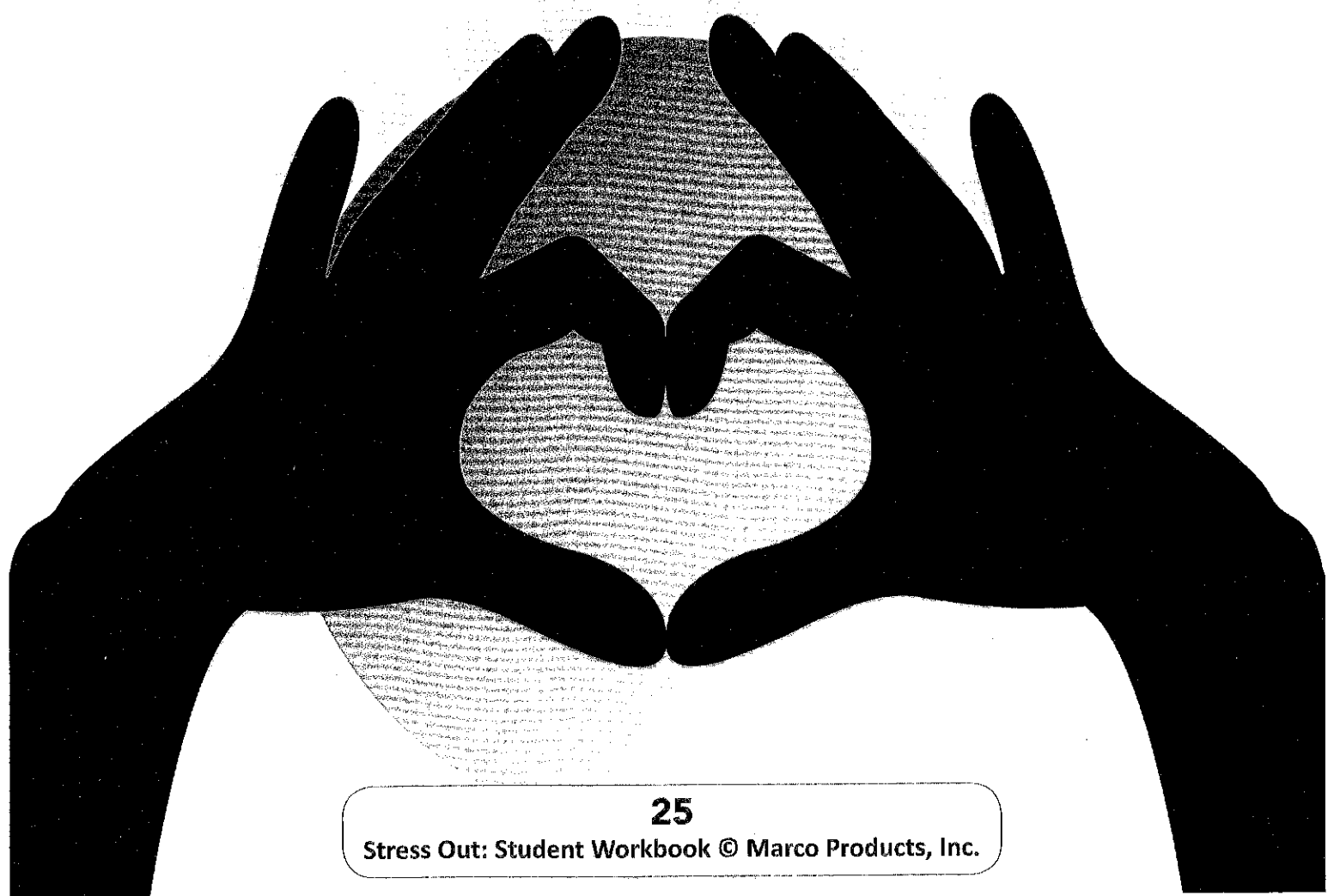
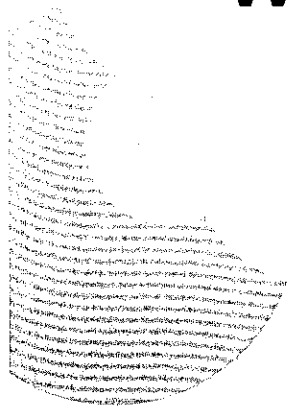
# Self Expression and Communication

Self expression and communication are great ways to relieve stress. Expressing your feelings and thoughts by talking, writing, drawing, singing, or dancing can help you get your stress out!

This is your page to express yourself. Think about how you are feeling and try to draw those feelings.

# STRESS OUT

The support of friends and family can also help you “weather” stressful times.



"My friends and family are my support system. They tell me what I need to hear, not what I want to hear and they are there for me in the good and bad times. Without them I have no idea where I would be and I know that their love for me is what's keeping my head above the water."

**Kelly Clarkson, singer and song writer**

What do you think Kelly Clarkson means about her friends and family being her support system?

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What is a support system?

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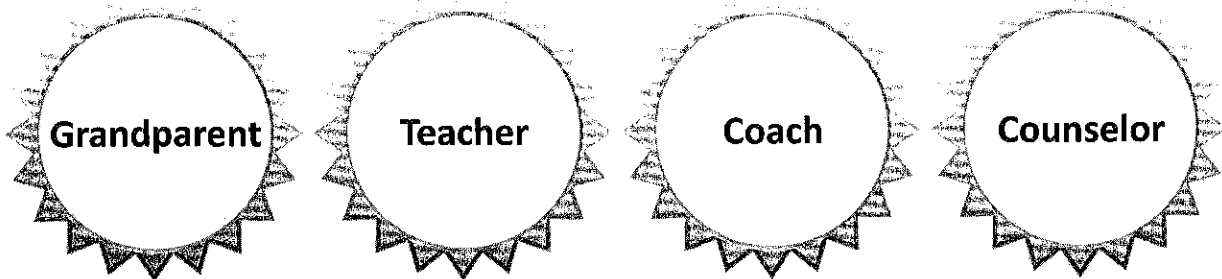
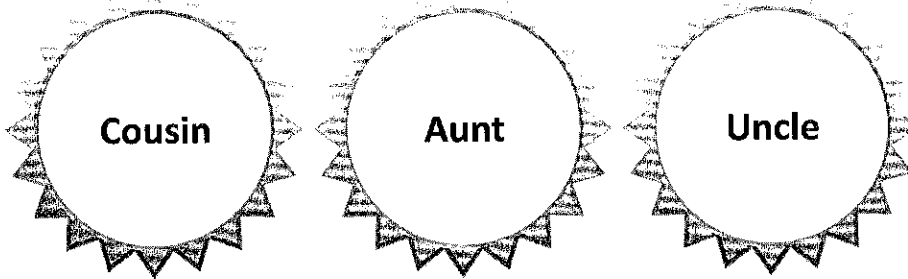
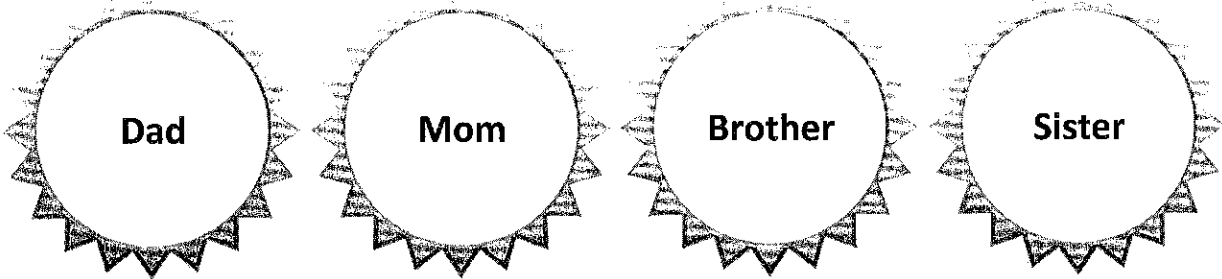
Why is a support system important?

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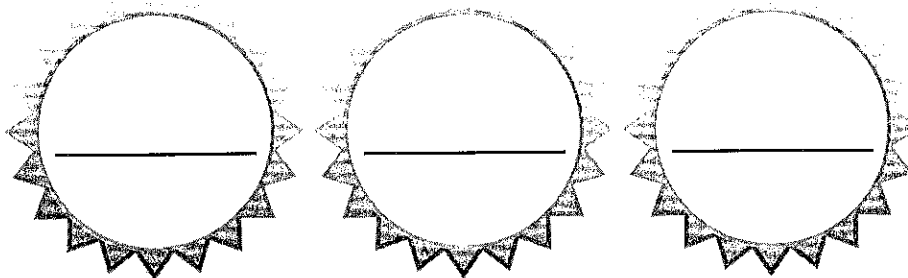
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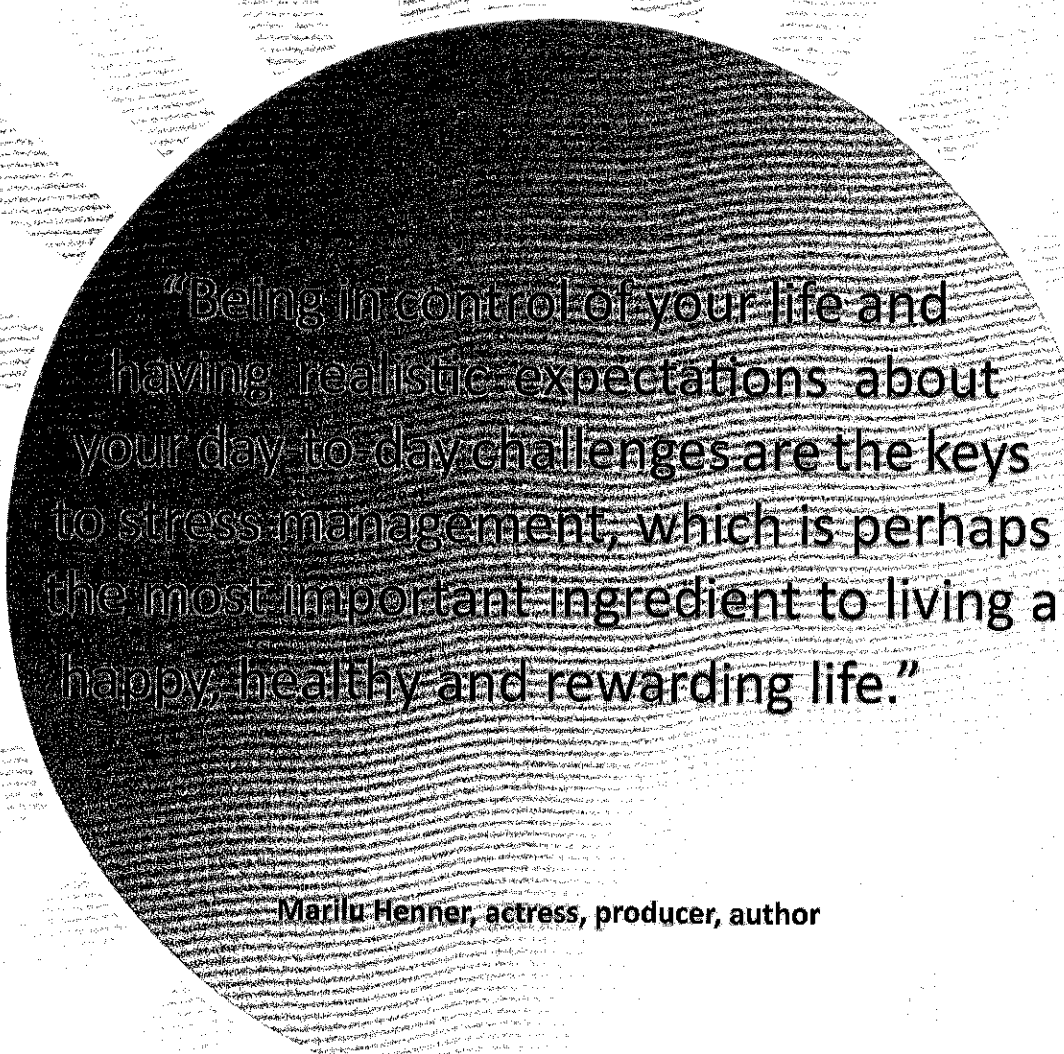
# My Support System

Look at the names below. If you believe you can count on the person to support you, color the sun yellow.



Is there anyone else that is part of your support system?





**“Being in control of your life and having realistic expectations about your day-to-day challenges are the keys to stress management, which is perhaps the most important ingredient to living a happy, healthy and rewarding life.”**

**Marilu Henner, actress, producer, author**

What do you think Marilu Henner meant when she said:  
“Being in control of your life”?

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SO NEXT TIME YOU ARE STRESSED OUT,

**Remember:  
Conquer your  
stressful feelings!**

**S = Stay Positive**

**T = Think Before Reacting**

**R = Relaxation Techniques**

**E = Exercise**

**S = Self-Expression**

**S = Support System**

OH ... STRESS UT!

NOT IN, JUST UT.

STRESS UT!

DON'T SCREAM, DON'T SHOUT.

STRESS UT!

NO NEED TO POUT.

STRESS UT!

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO ...

STRESS UT!

IT'S UP TO YOU.

