

Chapter 4

Managing Stress and Coping with Loss

1. Understanding Stress
2. Managing Stress
3. Coping with Loss and Grief

#Onedaylwokeup #Doppitup

Lesson 1 — Understanding Stress

What Is Stress?

Stress is the reaction of your body and mind to everyday challenges and demands. Everyone experiences it. What makes the difference is how you *perceive* the situation. **Perception** — the way you interpret what's happening — plays a huge role. Two people can face the same situation and have completely different stress responses based on how they see it.

Stress isn't always bad. Positive stress can push you to study harder, perform better, and rise to a challenge. Negative stress is what happens when it interferes with your ability to function.

What Causes Stress?

A **stressor** is anything — real or imagined, expected or sudden — that triggers a stress response. Common teen stressors:

- ■ **Life situations** — School (83% of teens cite it as top stressor), peer pressure, family problems, breakups, moving, changing schools
- ■ **Biological** — Body changes during puberty, illness, injury, disability

- ■ **Cognitive (thinking)** — Poor self-esteem, worrying about appearance, feeling like you don't fit in
- ■ **Personal behavior** — Taking on too much, relationship conflicts, using alcohol or drugs
- ■ **Environmental** — Unsafe neighborhoods, natural disasters, climate anxiety, world events
- ■ **Social media** — Constant comparison, cyberbullying, pressure to get likes — linked to stress for ~60% of young people. Unlike most stressors, it follows you everywhere, including into your bedroom at night.

Your Body's Response: Fight or Flight

1	<p>Alarm</p> <p>The hypothalamus signals the pituitary gland → adrenal glands release adrenaline. Heart rate spikes, pupils dilate, muscles tense. Your body is ready to act.</p>
2	<p>Resistance</p> <p>If the stressor continues, your body adapts and may perform at a higher level briefly.</p>
3	<p>Fatigue</p> <p>If stress goes on too long, your body runs out of steam and loses its ability to cope.</p>

Prolonged stress can lead to a **psychosomatic response** — a physical reaction caused by stress rather than an actual injury or illness. Effects include headaches, high blood pressure, weakened immunity, digestive problems, and bruxism (jaw clenching). Teens rate their daily stress at **5.8/10** on average — higher than the adult average of 3.8.

Lesson 2 — Managing Stress

Chronic stress is stress tied to long-term problems that feel out of your control. It can last for months. You can't eliminate stress, but you can absolutely manage it.

Strategies to Avoid or Limit Stress

- ■ **Use refusal skills** — Before saying yes to something new, ask if you have the time and energy. If it'll add to your load, it's okay to say no.
- ■ **Plan ahead** — Managing your time well reduces last-minute panic. For tests, study a little each night rather than cramming.
- ■■ **Think positively** — Reframing a stressful situation as a challenge instead of a threat can lower your stress significantly.
- ■ **Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drugs** — These feel like relief but actually increase stress and create new problems.

Strategies to Reduce Stress When It Happens

- ■ **Practice relaxation** — Deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, stretching, warm bath, laughing — all can trigger a genuine **relaxation response**.

- ■ **Redirect your energy** — Go for a run, ride your bike, shoot some hoops, work on a creative project, or write in a journal.
- ■ **Seek support** — Talk to someone you trust — a parent, friend, teacher, or counselor. A different perspective can make any problem feel more manageable.

Building Resiliency Through Healthy Habits

■ Sleep	Teens need 8–10 hours per night. Too little makes it harder to concentrate and regulate emotions.
■ Physical activity	Regular exercise releases built-up tension, boosts mood, and helps you sleep better.
■ Good nutrition	Eating a variety of healthy foods keeps your brain functioning under pressure. Caffeine and sugar can make stress worse.

Lesson 3 — Coping with Loss and Grief

Acknowledging Loss

Loss is a universal human experience — grief is a natural and normal response. Acknowledging your feelings instead of pushing them away is the first and most important step toward healing.

The 8 Stages of Grief (Kübler-Ross)

1	Denial or Numbness It's hard to believe the loss is real
2	Emotional Release You recognize the loss; often involves crying
3	Anger Feeling powerless and like life isn't fair
4	Bargaining Wishing you could change things or make deals to undo the loss
5	Depression Deep sadness, isolation, or hopelessness
6	Remorse Replaying what you could have done differently
7	Acceptance Coming to terms with the loss — reaching closure

8

Hope

Memories become less painful; you begin looking ahead

After a **traumatic event** — accident, natural disaster, violent assault, or suicide — reach out to family, friends, or a mental health professional, and gradually return to your normal daily routines to restore stability.

Chapter Vocabulary

Lesson 1

Perception	The way you become aware of and interpret what's happening around you through your senses and experiences
Stressor	Anything that causes stress
Psychosomatic response	A physical reaction that results from stress rather than from an injury or illness

Lesson 2

Chronic stress	Stress associated with long-term problems that are beyond a person's control
Relaxation response	A state of calm achieved through relaxation techniques that counteracts the stress response

Lesson 3

Stages of grief	A variety of emotional reactions that surface as a person makes sense of how a loss affects them
Closure	The acceptance of a loss
Coping	Dealing successfully with difficult changes in your life
Mourning	The act of showing sorrow or grief following a loss
Traumatic event	Any event that has a stressful impact sufficient to overwhelm your normal coping strategies