**Small Group Lesson:** Stress Management

**Objective:** To determine the difference between good stress and bad stress

*What is stress?*Stress is mental tension that causes several physical reactions. When we feel stress from fear, anger, or other feelings, our bodies prepare

for "fight or flight." This means that we prepare to confront or get away from what is causing us to be upset. Our bodies do this by increasing our heart rate,

blood pressure, breathing, and other physcial responses. Once we deal with what is causing the stress, then these physical reactions slow down and we can relax

again. However, if we can't or don't take care of the cause of our stress, then we remain tense.

 By the way, **stress** isn't always a bad thing. Below are some examples of when stress can be good and when it can be bad.

Good Stress:

* practicing for a competition in sports
* learning music for a recital
* studying for a test, etc.

Bad Stress:

* when it interferes with your health or
* How you function or
* Causes you to not think clearly, etc.

When held too long, stress can cause us to develop serious physical illnesses. For example, long-held tension is known to be one of the causes of

* ulcers
* hyper-tension
* asthma
* hives
* depression and other illnesses

        Long-term stress can also cause peolpe to:

* lose their abilities to think clearly and make good decisions
* become depressed and need help from a professional doctor, psychologist, or counselor

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