

Self-observer

Sometimes negative thoughts and feelings can become too much to handle; so much so that we can't do what needs to be done!

Self Observer is a strategy that has been used in US military training in Iraq to train soldiers to be mentally fit in order to better manage stress while doing a very stressful job. Train yourself to be a Self-Observer of your senses (Touch & Hearing) and breath by using "The Chair"

Let's give it a try...

Find something to sit on. Now, feel your feet on the ground (Pause for a few seconds). Feel your legs (Pause for a few seconds). Feel the support of the chair on your back (Pause for a few seconds). Feel your arms resting on your lap (Pause for a few seconds). Now, become aware of the sense of hearing (Pause for a few seconds). What sounds do you hear from far away? Do you hear any sounds that are close to you? Finally, become aware of the feeling of your breath moving into your body... and out (in... and out)

With "The Chair", you are training yourself to turn your attention away from negative thoughts and feelings by directing your focus to your senses (Ex. Feeling of the chair) and your breath.

Support & better choices

Having the right tools can help us make **better choices** about the way we deal with our stress. When you are stressed, eating well, getting enough sleep and making sure to exercise can really help manage stress!

It's also okay to ask for help! Having **support** is very important. This support can be one person or many people (ex. A friend, a brother or a sister, a school guidance counselor or a teacher)

Did you know, support can also come in the form of a helpful website or a hotline? **Check out our list of helpful resources on the back of this pamphlet!**



HELPFUL RESOURCES

To learn more about StressOFF Strategies, visit: <http://cemh.lbpsb.qc.ca/SOS4Teens.htm>

THOUGHT CHALLENGE

- **MoodGYM:** <https://moodgym.anu.edu.au>
MoodGYM is a free, fun, interactive program consisting of a number of different modules. These are designed to be completed in order. The modules explore issues such as: Why you feel the way you do; changing the way you think; changing 'warped' thoughts; knowing what makes you upset; assertiveness and interpersonal skills training

RELAXATION

- For a step-by-step guide to **Muscle Relaxation**, visit: <http://www.realage.com/mood-stress/treating-anxiety-yourself-progressive-muscle-relaxation>

SELF-OBSERVER

- For more information about **Self-Observer** (sometimes called **Mindfulness**), visit: <http://www.get.gg/mindfulness.htm>

GENERAL STRESS & COPING RESOURCES

- **Mind Your Mind:** <http://www.mindyourmind.ca>
Mind Your Mind is an award-winning site for youth by youth. It is a place where you can get info, resources and the tools to help you manage stress, crisis and mental health problems.
- **TeensHealth:** http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/
TeensHealth is a safe, private place for teens who need honest, accurate information and advice about health, emotions, and life. TeensHealth is accessible 24 hours a day so you can get the doctor-approved information you need to make educated decisions – or help a friend who needs advice.

Need immediate help?

1 800 668 6868
KidsHelpPhone.ca

Kids Help Phone



StressOFF Tool Kit

For any questions about the StressOFF Strategies Program

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What is Stress?

Stress is psychological and/or physical strain, or tension, as a result of circumstances, events, or experiences that are **viewed** as challenging or difficult

Who is Stressed?

45% of teens aged 13-17 say they are stressed

Here in Montreal, students from **15** schools, including your school, reported on their experience of stress:

27% of students surveyed indicated *moderate/high levels of stress*



How does stress show itself?

Psychologically

- Negative thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Low self esteem
- Always thinking the worst is going to happen

Physically

- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Muscle pain
- Stomach upset or pain

Behaviorally

- Avoiding things
- Anger problems
- Making poor choices (ex. Risk taking)
- Overeating or not eating enough

StressOFF Strategies can help you manage **psychological**, **physical** and **behavioral** signs of stress



Strategies

Stop,
Thought
challenge
RElaxation
Self-observer
Support &
better choices

Stop

Thought

Take a deep breath. Are your thoughts really true? Or are they just 'thoughts'?

Let's give it a try...

Situation: You didn't do well on your math test

Your thought: "I'm not good at anything"

Thought challenge: Is this really true? I did well on my History test...

More helpful thought: "Okay, so I didn't do as well as I would have liked on this test, but I did well on my history test!"

"For the next math test, I need to start studying sooner, and then I will do better"

RElaxation

Relaxation can mean different things to different people (listening to music, taking a walk) **BUT...** What happens when you begin to feel stressed (ex. You are in an exam), and you can't turn to your usual ways of relaxation?

You can try **Muscle Relaxation!** It's a completely private strategy - no one will even be able to tell that you are using it!

Muscle Relaxation is a strategy used to decrease physical stress by tensing and then relaxing each muscle group in your body.

Let's give it a try...

Start with your fists. Tense/tighten them as hard as you can for 10 seconds. Relax them completely. Next, tense your arms as tightly as you can. Hold for 10 seconds. Relax them completely. Do this for your shoulders and neck, back and stomach. Don't forget your legs and feet! And finally, take a deep breath in, and let all the muscles in your body relax.