

## The Good Stress


Chances are students are feeling some degree of stress as they are multi-tasking, studying and getting ready for finals, meeting deadlines, and trying to find the balance with academics and extracurriculars.

**Is stress ALWAYS bad?** There is something known as 'good stress'. Making students aware of good stress is powerful. We can shift from asking students to stress less, to asking them to 'stress better':

- **Research shows that stress itself is 'stressful'.** Thoughts of "I'm stressed" can create even more stress. Stop highlighting only the negative consequences of stress. A certain amount of stress is ok. Cultivate Good Stress. Start with the right mindset. If you are primed to think of stress as debilitating, it will be. If your mindset is that stress can be positive, you can feel more energetic, productive, and less fatigued.
- **Stress can help us retrieve the necessary resources to reach a goal.** As stress increases, so too can performance. The goal is to learn how resources/solutions can help with 'stressing better'. Resources/solutions that may help reduce your stress?
  - \*Making time well before a test/final to study\* (#1 issue for students)
  - Making a to-do list and checking off when each task is completed
  - Breaking studying time/projects into smaller pieces.
  - Communicating with the Teacher. Avoiding communication is stressful!
  - Checking out the MAC website for study strategies.  
<https://sites.google.com/marist.com/big-mac/home>
  - Taking better care of yourself by eating more nutritiously, getting enough sleep, exercising to help with focus, and using calming strategies.
- **The goal of 'stressing better' is not for students to think they should NEVER be stressed.** Daily challenges will arise, and students may feel stressed. Empowering students to put together a contingency plan will help. Students can identify the problem, visualize their end goal, and then envision obstacles (roadblocks) that are preventing them from reaching their goal. Next, based on the roadblocks, students can brainstorm solutions and act on the solution. Students can self-reflect and look back to see what they have learned, in order to be able to generalize solutions to other situations.  
Work through I.D.E.A.L, a 5 step problem-solving process, as part of the contingency plan. IDEAL allows a student to identify the problem, roadblocks, and brainstorm solutions. Stress may decrease when a solution is in place. The results of stress may be empowering for a student and may provide positive change.

# I. D. E. A. L.

Problems happen! Become an IDEAL problem solver!

<b>I</b>	<b>Identify the problem.</b> Define it clearly. What is my goal?
<b>D</b>	<b>Define the roadblocks.</b> When does it happen? What is getting in the way of me reaching my goal? <b>[this will help you get to a solution!]</b> 
<b>E</b>	<b>Explore possible solutions.</b> What are my options? What else could I try? Solutions should be based on addressing the roadblock.
<b>A</b>	<b>Act on the BEST solution.</b> Is it safe? Reasonable? Does it help me reach my goal?
<b>L</b>	<b>Look back and learn.</b> How did it work? Outcome? Where else might I use a similar solution?