

THE BIG LITTLE NEWSLETTER FOR THE STUDY

ON THE PREVENTION OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AND TYPE 2 DIABETES IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Volume 6 Number 1 (Spring – Summer 2011)

Stress and youth

At each study visit, we ask QUALITY participants questions on their stress and anxiety. From the 14 questions on this subject, we discovered that the two main sources of stress for kids 8 to 10 years old (visit 1) were...

No, not relationships with parents!
No, not relationships with friends!
No, not health problems!

Relationships with siblings and school work were the two main sources of stress among youth. Of the 564 participants with siblings, 43% say that their relationship with their siblings is *a little bit, quite a bit or a whole lot* stressful. Amongst those who feel their sibling bonds are stressful, 11% say their relationship is *a whole lot* stressful.

For school work, the number of kids who said they were *a little bit, quite a bit or a whole lot* stressed is 44%. This is almost identical to the proportion of youth stressed by their siblings. But the stress level

appears to be lower from school work. Indeed, only 6% of kids say they are *a whole lot* stressed by their schoolwork.



At present, we don't know if the causes of stress will be the same at

your second visit. We will also be interested in seeing who is stressed. For example, is it the girls or the boys? The effects of stress on health will also be studied, as well as the strategies that help control stress, such as healthy lifestyle habits.

Finally, identifying the sources of stress is a good start. We can then find solutions to decrease and manage stress.

The Big little newsletter Team



The 4 elements that make us stressed are...

- 1- When we have little or no **CONTROL**
- 2- When something is **UNPREDICTABLE**
- 3- When it's **NEW**
- 4- When our **EGO** is affected

Have fun!

With the arrival of spring and the end of the school year, we often have new ambitions and new projects. Be it to improve in a subject at school, participate in a sport challenge or develop an artistic talent, all projects are challenging! Maybe after reading page 1 of the newspaper, and seeing the exercises on page 4, your goal will be to better cope with stress.



Here are a few tricks to make sure your goal is achieved. In order for your idea to become concrete, your goal must meet each of the following criteria:

- **S**pecific: what you really want to do, your ambitions, and not too general.
- **M**easurable: is the way you can see that there has been a change, that you are reaching your goal.
- **A**ttainable: appropriate, a challenge that is just big enough
- **R**ealistic: doable, possible
- **T**emporally defined: timeline, moment when your project will be completed

What word is created by the first letter of each criterion? **SMART!**

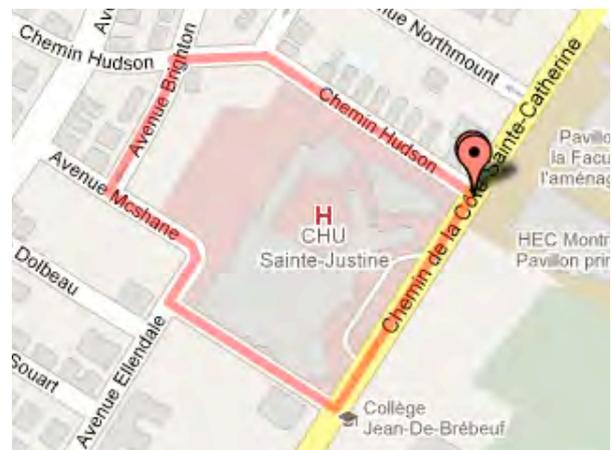
This is the mnemonic to help you remember the necessary characteristics of a good objective!

Here is a concrete example: "I want to participate in my neighbourhood bike challenge. I will have to travel all the streets in my city by bicycle, which totals 20 km. The challenge takes place on August 15th."

- **S**pecific: to be able to travel 20 km by bike
- **M**easurable: measure a 2.5 km course to guide me in my progression
- **A**ttainable: even if I have never done 20 km, I can gradually increase the distance
- **R**ealistic: Today, June 15th, I have 8 weeks left to train.
- **T**emporally defined: I will bike 3 times per week
 - Starting June 15th: 5 km
 - July 1st: 10 km
 - July 15th: 15 km
 - August 15th: 20 km

To measure the distances of your course, here is an interesting website:
<http://www.gmap-pedometer.com/>

Here, we see an example where your course would be around Ste-Justine Hospital, which is 1 km.



Another tip is to have short, medium and long term goals. That way, you will reach your goal while staying motivated because you'll be able to see your progression. For example, if you want to do volunteer work, identify 3 sub-goals.

Short term : Start by looking up different organizations close to your home that need volunteers and whose mission interests you.

Medium term : Your medium term objective could be to start getting involved 1-2 hours per week at the organization of your choice and learn how you can help.

Long term : You could decide to get even more involved by learning other tasks, and giving more of your time and by proposing some of your ideas.



What is your project?

Fill in your project's characteristics, to help you reach your goal

- **S**pecific: _____
- **M**easurable: _____
- **A**ttainable: _____
- **R**ealistic: _____
- **T**emporally defined: _____

Progression is the key to success, divide your goal into sub-objectives:

Short term: _____

Medium term: _____

Long term: _____

We wish you success in your projects for the coming weeks. Don't forget to stay determined and to surround yourself with people that can help you reach your goal.



Introduction to relaxation exercises



Several strategies can help manage stress. We can work on identifying the sources of stress (see page 1). We can also include periods of relaxation in our day.

Here are 4 popular methods:

Jacobson: Involves tensing and then relaxing the muscle groups of a given body part, to feel the subsequent relaxation. We can start, for example, by tensing and relaxing the muscles of our feet, our calves, our thighs, etc., all the way up to our face and scalp.

Schultz: Lying down, imagine that, progressively, every part of your body becomes warm and heavy, as if it could sink into the ground. This approach will lead to a state of relaxation where the body is warm and relaxed.

Breathing 4-4-8 : Concentrate on your breathing by breathing in from your nose for 4 seconds, holding your breath for another 4 seconds, and then breathing out through your mouth over 8 seconds. Repeat several times.

Physical activity: Some exercises, like yoga and tai chi, aim to bring attention to what is happening inside of yourself, while remaining aware of what is happening outside. Try an activity that interests you!

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