

HA!



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Identify Problem: Coping with stress at a young age can be difficult. One of the easiest ways to deal with stress is through laughter.

Setup & Discuss: (Tell the students the week before to be prepared with the funniest jokes they know.)

Have you ever laughed so hard you cried? Leaving you with a cleansed feeling after you regain yourself. Laughter is a physical and emotional release.

The benefits of laughter are far more than just a good laugh. Laughter reduces the level of stress hormones like cortisol, epinephrine (adrenaline), dopamine and growth hormone. It also helps increase the level of health-enhancing hormones like **endorphins**, and **neurotransmitters**. Laughter increases the number of antibody-producing cells and enhances the effectiveness of T cells. This means a stronger immune system and a healthier body.

Laughter will also bring the focus away from anger, depression, stress, or guilt.

Find Humor in Your Life: Instead of complaining about troubling situations and trials, try to laugh about them. If something is so frustrating or depressing it's ridiculous, realize that you can "look back on this situation and laugh." Think of how it will sound as an amusing story you could tell to your friends, and then see if you can laugh about it now. With this attitude, you may also find yourself being more lighthearted and silly, giving yourself and those around you more to laugh about. Approach life in a more lighthearted way and you'll find you're less stressed about negative events, and you'll achieve the health benefits and the mental health benefits of laughter.

Exercise: 1&2

1) Give everyone a chance to tell their funniest joke.
And/or play this game:

- a. Have everyone lay on the floor on their back so that everyone's head rest on another persons belly
- b. Set a mock "serious" tone

- c. Optional: Eyes closed
- d. The challenge is NOT to laugh
- e. The first person of the chain starts the challenge by loudly saying “HA” the second person in the chain follows with a “HA HA” then the third with a “HA HA HA” and so on...
- f. The group tries to see how far the "HA" gets along the line before someone begins laughing
- g. After a few attempts, this generally descends into uncontrollable laughter

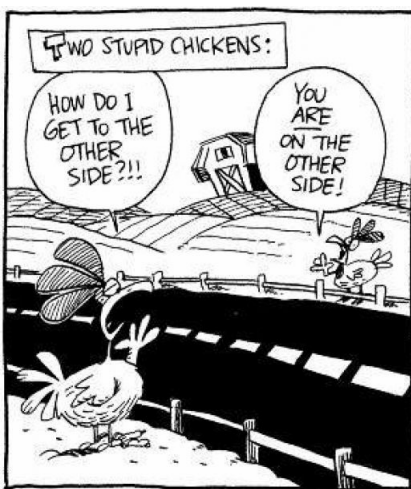
Questions and Discussion:

- Do you feel better than you did before, now that you have laughed?
- Why do you think laughter is so helpful in reducing stress?
- Did you forget about your problems for a little while?
- How can we help others control their stress with laughter?

Identify skills:

Reducing stress
 Positive group interaction
 Relationship building
 Laughter

Jokes:



1. These three strings want to go to a bar but the bartender doesn't allow strings inside. They decide to go for it. The first string goes in, sits down and orders a soda. The bartender says "Are you a string?" and he says "Yes. I'm sorry" and leaves. The 2nd string decided to be a little more sly. He goes in and sits at the end of the bar in the smoke and shadows. But the bartender sees him and throws him out too. The 3rd string has a plan. He ties himself in a knot, messes up his hair and goes in. He sits down right in the middle of the bar, looks the bartender in the eye and orders a soda. The bartender says "No way. Aren't you a string?????" and the 3rd string says "Nope. I'm a frayed knot."
2. A prince had a curse put on him when he was a little boy. He could only speak two words every year. But, if he didn't speak for a whole year, he would then be able to speak 4 words the next year and so on.

One day he met a princess named Josie and he wanted to say "My Princess".

The next year he saw her he wanted to say "My princess, I love you".

The third year he saw her he wanted to say "My princess I love you, will you marry me?" But, the young prince, now growing older knew he would have to wait a couple more years.

So, on the fifth year, excited to finally present his question, he visited the princess.

He approached her respectfully and asked, "JOSIE, MY PRINCESS. I LOVE YOU. WILL YOU MARRY ME?"

And the princess said, "Pardon?"

Source:

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