

# ***ESL Health Unit***

## **Unit Four Healthy Aging**

### **Lesson Three Managing Stress**



### ***Reading and Writing Practice Intermediate***

#### **Goals for this lesson:**

*Below are some of the goals of this lesson. Which ones are your goals too?  
Check (✓) them.*

- Know the warning signs of stress and depression and what you can do to manage stress and stay healthy.
- Talk about how stress and depression are understood and treated in different cultures



## **Reading Four - Stressed Out About Retirement**

*This story was generated by the course developer for instructional purposes.*

*Next read Rodrigo's story and answer the questions that follow with your classmates and teacher.*

My name is Rodrigo and I am from Brazil. I retired from my job about 2 years ago. I thought I would be able to enjoy hobbies and spend more time with my family, especially my wife and our grandchildren. I never realized how difficult it would be for me to adjust. I've spent my whole life working and I didn't know anything but my job. At first I thought I would enjoy the free time but I just sat around the house most of the day and watched television. My wife was always mad at me and we argued because we're not used to being together all the time. I napped a lot during the day and then couldn't sleep well at night. I also became forgetful and began eating too much.

During my routine checkup at the doctor's office, I complained to my doctor about not sleeping at night. She talked to me about stress and depression. She suggested that I get more exercise and do some regular activity to meet people. I agreed that I need to do something worthwhile during the day so that I don't feel so useless. So now I've joined a chess club that regularly meets in the park. I'm not very good but I enjoy the

mental activity. And I volunteer to help with my grandson's after school program. I plan sports activities and tutor children who have problems with math. I enjoy all of these activities and now I am again sleeping well at night.

*Questions:*

1. What stress did Rodrigo experience?
2. What symptoms of stress and depression did he have?
3. What advice does the doctor give Rodrigo?
4. What does he do to feel better?

## **Reading Five – Stress and Depression in a Loved One**

*Now read about Chui Ying who is caring for her depressed mother.*

I have an eighty-seven year old mother. She doesn't understand English. She always complains about her body aches, vertigo, etc. My father passed away in 1995. My father was educated in America, so his English was very good. My mother always depended on him and he took good care of her, and no complaints at all. We had no problems and were very happy. When my father died we were so sad. My mother suddenly lost the person she was depending on. Actually she lost control like a baby. And she's not too healthy. Every minute she wants somebody close with her, if nobody stays with her, she feels scared and cries.

She is always complaining about headache, pain in the stomach, muscle strain, sometimes she says her whole body aches, or she is dizzy and numb – I think she is depressed. The Doctor said she has arthritis pain and blood pressure. He just gives her some drugs to relieve the pain and for her blood pressure. But she complains every minute. That gives me so much stress! Of course I have to take good care of her. That's my obligation, but she is never satisfied. Actually I can't take good care of her like my father

did. Sometimes my husband complains I spoil her. I just tell him to shut up. I know that's impolite. I hope he understands how I feel.

*Story adapted from <http://www.bcnc.net/Stress/Elderly/Elderlyset.html>*

*Questions:*

1. What stress did Chui Ying's mother experience?
2. What symptoms of stress and depression does Chui Yin's mother have?
3. Why does Chui Ying feel stressed out?
4. If you were Chui Ying, what would you do?

## **Culture Box – Cultural Differences in Treating Depression**

### *What is Depression?*

Feelings of depression may be described as feeling sad, blue, unhappy, miserable, or down in the dumps. Most of us feel this way at one time or another for short periods. But true clinical depression is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended period of time.

Depression is generally ranked in terms of severity -- mild, moderate, or severe. The degree of your depression, which your doctor can determine, influences how you are treated. Symptoms of depression include:

- Sleep disturbances -- usually insomnia (for example, consistently waking up very early in the morning) but may be excessive sleeping
- A dramatic change in appetite, often resulting in either weight gain or weight loss
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-hate, and inappropriate guilt
- Extreme difficulty concentrating
- Agitation, restlessness, and irritability OR inactivity and withdrawal

from usual activities

- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- Low self esteem is common with depression. So are sudden bursts of anger and lack of pleasure from activities that normally make you happy.

### *Common Causes*

Depression often runs in families. This may be from heredity, learned behavior, or both. Even with a genetic predisposition, it is usually a stressful or unhappy life event that triggers the onset of a depressive episode.

Depression may be brought on by:

- Disappointment at home or work.
- Death of a friend or family member.
- Prolonged pain.
- Medical conditions such as hypothyroidism (under-active thyroid), cancer, or any chronic sickness.
- Drugs such as sedatives for sleep or anxiety and certain high blood pressure medications.

- Alcohol or drug intoxication or alcohol or drug withdrawal.
- Other factors that can contribute to feelings of depression include chronic stress (including childhood events like abuse or neglect), social isolation, nutritional deficiencies (such as folate and omega-3 fatty acids), sleep disturbances, cigarette addiction, and little exposure to daylight.

In the United States, depression is considered a sickness. Patients with symptoms are encouraged to get help from a medical professional. Treatment may include lifestyle changes, medication and counseling. Although some people in the United States are embarrassed to admit that they need help because they are depressed, many do get help.

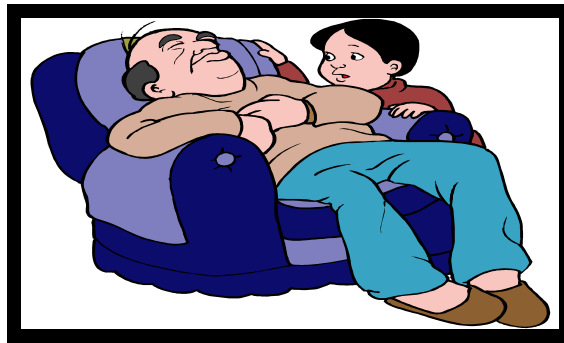
*Now answer the questions below with a partner.*

1. How is depression treated in your home country?
2. Are people embarrassed to admit they are depressed?
3. What would you do if a close friend or family member showed signs of depression?

# ***ESL Health Unit***

## **Unit Four Healthy Aging**

### **Lesson Three Managing Stress**



### ***Listening and Speaking Practice Intermediate***

#### **Goals for this lesson:**

*Below are some of the goals of this lesson. Which ones are your goals too?  
Check (✓) them.*

- Know the warning signs of stress and depression and what you can do to manage stress and stay healthy.
- Be able to use the phrases “both”, “too”, “so”, “either” and “neither” to describe and compare habits and preferences.

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**Lesson Three: Managing Stress**

## ***Listening and Speaking Practice***

### **Before You Listen!**

#### **How well do you handle stress?**

In modern society, most of us can't avoid stress. But we can learn to behave in ways that lessen its effects. Researchers have identified a number of factors that affect one's ability to deal with stress - among them are eating and sleeping habits, caffeine and alcohol intake, and how we express our emotions. The following questionnaire is designed to help you understand how well you can handle stress and to identify trouble spots. Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true of you. Be sure to mark each item, even if it does not apply to you - for example, if you don't smoke, circle 1 next to item six.

	Always		Sometimes		Never
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get seven to eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles, on whom I can rely.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than five alcohol drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5

11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5

To get your score, add up the figures and subtract 20. If you score below 10, this means you are excellent at handling stress. If you score over 30, this means you may have some difficulties handling stress. If your score is over 50, you have serious problems handling stress.

*Look through the questionnaire and circle those items where you scored a three or higher then answer the following questions:*

1. Which of these habits are easy to change? Why do you think so?
2. Which of these habits are not so easy to change? Why do you think so?

You can make yourself better able to handle stress by reviewing the items on which you scored three or higher and trying to change them. Concentrate first on those that are easiest to change - for example, eating a hot, balanced meal daily and having fun at least once a week - before trying to change those that seem more difficult.

Source: University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, August, 1985. Scale Developers: Lyle Miller and Alma Dell Smith of Boston University Medical Center.

## Listening Three - Healthy Bodies Fight Stress Better

**\*\*Note to teacher: Do **not** pass out the written message in the box below. Record it onto a cassette (if possible with someone to play the second role in the dialogue) and have students listen to the recording. Play once or twice before they begin to listen for specific information.**

*Listen to the following short lecture given by Dr. Mann on how to fight stress and then answer the questions that follow with your classmates and teacher.*

Everyone gets stressed. When stress strikes, you want your body to be able to handle it.

Stress can wear your body down, mentally and physically. But a healthy body can cope with stress better than an unhealthy one.

There are several important things you can do to keep your body healthy.

Basically, you need to live a healthy lifestyle. That means:

**First – you need to stay active.** Physical activity helps you stay healthy by keeping your bones and muscles strong, helping you sleep better, and fighting off chronic illness like diabetes and heart disease. Try to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week and more whenever you can.

**Second - you need to eat a healthy diet.** That means lots of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains, and less sugar, red meat, refined and processed foods, and saturated fats. If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to a drink a day if you're a woman and two drinks a day if you're a man. If you smoke, quit!

**Third - you need to have some fun.** We all have responsibilities and worries in our lives. But give yourself permission to take time to just relax and have fun, too. Do something you enjoy or have always wanted to do: take an art, dance, cooking, or language class; volunteer or simply meet friends for regular walks.

**Fourth – you need to keep a good attitude.** Focusing on the positive isn't always easy, but it's better for your health. Some things that could help include:

- **Laughing.** Laughing can make you feel better when you are under stress. Watching a funny television show or reading a funny book or newspaper column can relieve tension and help you forget about what's causing you stress.
- **Stay in the present.** Don't waste energy worrying about the past - it's over! Keep your mind on the present and try to enjoy each day.
- **Sharing your feelings.** Sometimes we feel we're burdening people with our problems if we bring up things that trouble us. But trusted friends are usually happy to listen. You also can confide in a family or clergy member or mental health professional. Keeping things to yourself can add to your stress.

**Finally, you need to get enough sleep.** Not getting enough sleep also increases stress and can make you less able to handle stressful situations. If you have trouble sleeping, there are some things you can try to help you sleep better. Try taking a bath before bed; avoiding alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and heavy meals near bedtime; and rearranging your

room to avoid distractions like light and noise. If these don't work and you still have trouble sleeping for three weeks or longer, talk to your doctor, a sleep disorder expert or mental health professional.

*Now answer the questions.*

1. Dr. Mann makes five suggestions for living a health lifestyle. What are they?

2. Dr. Mann says that it is important to keep a good attitude. What does

Dr. Mann mean by attitude?

3. What are the three things Dr. Mann says will help you keep a good

attitude?

### **Talk About It!**

*Before we begin, let's think about how to use the easily confused words*

*“both”, “either”, “neither”, “nor”, “too” and “so”.*

Expression	Example
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both ... and ...	I like both swing dancing and Latin dancing.
either ... or ...	Janelle said she wants either to take a swing dancing class or a Latin dancing class.
Too	Janelle likes swing dancing and I do too.
So	Janelle likes swing dancing and so do I.
not ... either	Janelle doesn't like to swim. I don't like to swim either.
Neither/nor	Janelle doesn't like to swim. Neither do I./Nor do I.

**Activity One:**

*Read the following stress profiles for Andris and Katia and then writing and talk about what these two old friends have in common using the words “both”, “either”, “neither”, “nor”, “too” and “so”.*

Andris is active and enjoys many activities now that he is retired. Since his wife died five years ago, he has tried not to stay at home alone every evening. He likes to help his friend Katia who is disabled and doesn't have a family member living close by. He goes shopping for her at the Polish

markets and then she cooks for him. He sometimes stays with her to drink tea, watch concerts and sports on television, or just talk about their families and friends. He also likes to go to weekly social gatherings at his church.

He also visits his son and daughter-in-law at least once a week but sometimes these visits stress him out. They are always arguing and his grandchildren are not well behaved. This upsets Andris but he doesn't want to criticize his son so he doesn't say anything.

Actually he prefers Katia's company. Unfortunately all of the rich food Katia makes for him is beginning to show on his waistline. During his last doctor's visit, the doctor suggested that he lose weight. Andris admits that he needs to take better care of himself but he is more concerned about getting enough sleep. Lately, he's been waking up often at night and only getting about 4 or 5 hours of sleep. Since he's frequently tired during the day, he's been drinking a lot of coffee and tea before he goes somewhere, especially if he's driving at night. He's tried drinking his favorite apricot brandy before bed but that hasn't helped.

Katia has limited mobility since she fell and broke her hip two years ago.

She lives in an old house with many steps and it's difficult for her to go outside and run errands. She relies on friends to help her with her shopping. She likes to cook and eat hot meals regularly. She especially enjoys cooking Polish food for friends who come to visit her. Even though she spends a lot of time at home, she still has hobbies she enjoys. She likes music and enjoys seeing concerts on television. She also follows her sports teams.

Since she lives alone and her family lives far away, she spends a lot of time talking on the telephone. She tries to stay in touch with her daughter and nephews but it's difficult because sometimes they are too busy to call her. She and her daughter don't always agree about everything and sometimes they argue on the phone. When that happens, Katia will ignore her daughter for weeks. She prefers to spend time with Andris and her friends from church. A special van picks her up to take her to church once a week.

Lately, Katia has been worrying about her weight. Her doctor suggests that she learn how to make healthier meals but she can't imagine giving up the Polish food that she loves to make. Her doctor would also like her to exercise more. She's heard about special videos that show exercises she could do from a chair in her living room but she's not sure how to get one.

**Activity Two:**

*Now write sentences about Andris and Katia. When you are finished discuss your answers with your classmates and teacher.*

1. both...and...

2. either...or...

3. too

4. so

5. not...either

6. neither

**Activity Three:**

*Now think about what you have learned about managing stress during this unit. Read through Andris and Katia's profiles again. What suggestions can you give to each of them to improve their health and reduce stress? Write down your ideas and then share them with your teacher and classmates.*

Suggestions for Andris:

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Suggestions for Katia:

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***ESL Health Unit***

**Unit Four  
Healthy Aging**

**Lesson Three  
Managing Stress**



## *Real Practice*

### *Intermediate*

#### **Goals for this lesson:**

*Below are some of the goals of this lesson. Which ones are your goals too? Check (✓) them.*

- Know the warning signs of stress and depression and what you can do to manage stress and stay healthy.
- Talk about how stress and depression are understood and treated in different cultures

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### **Lesson Three: Managing Stress**

#### ***Real Practice!***

#### **Keeping a Stress Journal**

You may not know what is causing your stress, exactly how your body responds to stress, or how you cope with stress. To find out and to help you formulate positive ways to deal with stress, use a journal to keep track of each time you feel stressed. Write down:

- What may have triggered the stress; guess if you aren't sure.

- How you felt and behaved in response to the stressful situation (symptoms of stress).
- What, if anything, you did to cope with the stressful situation.

Here's a sample of what a stress journal might look like.

<b>Day and Time</b>	<b>Stressful event</b>	<b>Reaction (symptoms, thoughts, behaviors)</b>	<b>Coping response</b>
Tuesday, 6:00 AM	Went to fix a cup of tea but we are out of tea.	Yelled at my husband for drinking the last cup of tea without telling me.	Nothing or not sure.
Tuesday 10:00 AM	Can't find a seat on the crowded bus.	Think terrible thoughts about all of the young people sitting who won't give up the seat.	Complain about it later to my neighbor.

Tuesday 4:00 PM	Argue with my daughter on the telephone.	Begin getting a headache.	Take two painkillers and make a cup of tea.
Wednesday, 4:00 PM	The TV station doesn't show my favorite program (Oprah) because they are talking about a snow storm.	Think angry thoughts about the dumb people at the television station and the people in my city who are so obsessed with snow.	Eat a donut and read the newspaper.

Look over your notes to learn how often you are feeling stressed and how you are coping. Ask yourself which ways of coping with stress work best and which don't work or have other effects you do not like. The more notes you take, the more you can learn about your stress patterns. Keeping the journal for 1 to 2 weeks is best, although taking notes for even 1 or 2 days can be helpful.

*A Thematic Unit for Intermediate Level ESL Teachers  
Intermediate Level, Unit Four: Healthy Aging  
Lesson Three: Managing Stress*

## Checklist for Learning

### Vocabulary Log:

*In the space below, write down all of the new words you learned during this lesson that you want to remember. Try to separate your list of words into nouns (person, place or thing), adjectives (describing words) and verbs (action words). For extra practice use them in sentences of your own.*

#### *New words I learned during this lesson:*

*Nouns:*

*Adjectives:*

*Verbs:*

### What can you do?

*Below are some of the language goals you worked on during this lesson. Check (✓) what you learned from this lesson. Add more ideas if you wish.*

*I learned to...*

- Know the warning signs of poor nutritional health and what you can do to improve your diet.
- Understand the difference between count and non-count nouns
- Be able to use the phrases “used to”, “be used to” and “get used to” to compare the past to the present.

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