



# TEENS AND STRESS:

What is it?

Why does it happen?

How can I help myself or find help?



A Guide By Teens, For Teens  
In the City of Carson, California

Prepared by the:  
UCLA/RAND PRC's Youth Community Advisory Board  
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Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of  
the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

## Preface

During the 2010-2011 school year, teens from the Cities of Carson and Santa Monica worked together on the UCLA/RAND PRC's Youth Community Advisory Board (YCAB) with PRC staff to raise awareness of teen stress as a community-wide health issue. The YCAB members wanted to positively impact their respective communities by creating a tool to improve how teens cope with stress. Dealing with school, work, extracurricular activities, preparing for college, and social pressures from friends and family were identified as significant stressors for teens. YCAB members learned how to recognize stress, how it affects teens, and healthy coping strategies. They learned about asset mapping as a strategy for building healthier communities and then put it into practice by identifying resources within themselves, their families, and their communities. Finally, they used all their knowledge and energy to create this resource guide pamphlet for other teens coping with stress.

This resource guide features background information about stress and how it relates to teens. The guide differentiates good and bad stressors, and describes how bad stress can impact aspects of one's life by affecting a person's mood, body, relationships, school performance, and other activities. The teens' resource guide includes a city map with community "assets" where people can engage in stress-relieving activities. They highlighted parks, libraries, museums, shopping malls, and other sites of interest. In addition, they identified a number of online assets available to teens from any geographic community that includes mental health hotlines and websites relating to stress, healthy coping, and finding psychosocial support.

This guide will be distributed to schools and community centers recommended by the YCAB members, so that more youth in LA County can benefit from their work.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the following members of the **2010-2011 UCLA/RAND PRC Youth Community Advisory Board (YCAB)** who identified teen stress as a community-wide health issue and who took such pride in creating a resource manual so that other youth can benefit from their work.

<b>Student Name</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>
Josef Alejandrino	Torrance High School	10 <sup>th</sup> grade
Luigi Alejandrino	Torrance High School	9 <sup>th</sup> grade
Nikki Bell	Santa Monica High School	10 <sup>th</sup> grade
Angelica Carambas	Harbor Teachers Preparatory Academy	11 <sup>th</sup> grade
Julio Escarce	Santa Monica High School	9 <sup>th</sup> grade
Asher Gardner	Santa Monica High School	12 <sup>th</sup> grade
Emma Gardner	Santa Monica High School	9 <sup>th</sup> grade
Elizabeth Johnson	Santa Monica High School	11 <sup>th</sup> grade
Owen Kneeland	Santa Monica High School	12 <sup>th</sup> grade
Kelly Park	Narbonne High School	11 <sup>th</sup> grade
Jared Stinson	Carson High School	9 <sup>th</sup> grade
Jacklyn Suarez	Torrance High School	10 <sup>th</sup> grade
Nathan Suarez	Harbor Teachers Preparatory Academy	11 <sup>th</sup> grade
Jessica Van Arsdol	Santa Monica High School	12 <sup>th</sup> grade
Virginia Velasquez	Harbor Teachers Preparatory Academy	11 <sup>th</sup> grade

We offer special thanks to the parent sponsors who supported the YCAB members (Dana Bart-Bell from Santa Monica and Paz Velasquez from Carson) and the UCLA/RAND PRC staff who serve as mentors to the YCAB and oversee their activities including: Rebecca Dudovitz, MD, MSHS and Raymond Perry, MD, MSHS, YCAB liaisons and third-year fellows in the UCLA Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program; and Jennifer Hawes-Dawson, BA, the Center's Community Liaison.

## **WHAT IS STRESS?**

Stress is how a body and mind respond to changes—new or different situations, people in your life, or feelings that you have. Stress can be good or bad. Good stress sometimes helps you to prepare for certain situations, might make you excited, or might help you to perform better.

On the other hand, when stress is bad, it can affect your mind and your body in ways that are harmful. Bad stress is unhealthy and can make you feel lousy, worrisome, or depressed. Bad stress can make it hard to do well in school, to focus on other activities, and to have good relationships with people who you care about.

## **WHAT CAUSES STRESS IN TEENS?**

During teenage years, a lot of things are happening and changing. As we go through school, get involved in activities, get jobs, and manage relationships with our friends and family members, many things might cause stress. Some of the more common causes of stress in teens are:

- School work
- Preparing for college and/or future jobs
- Family problems
- Making friends
- Peer pressure to do certain things and not do other things
- Not getting enough sleep
- Sports, music, or other activities
- Boyfriend or girlfriend problems
- High expectations from yourself, your parents, teachers, or coaches

## **WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF BAD STRESS?**

The signs of stress can be different for everyone. They can be physical (things you feel in your body) or mental/ emotional (things you feel in your mind). Some examples of signs of stress are:

- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Muscle aches
- Getting angry or annoyed more quickly than usual
- Not being able to sleep
- Eating more or less than usual
- Feeling sad
- Feeling frustrated
- Not being able to concentrate

## WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP WHEN I AM STRESSED AND DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

[www.teenlineonline.org](http://www.teenlineonline.org) - a resource for teens and by teens, with a lot of information on a variety of teen issues, including stress

[www.child.net/teenla.htm](http://www.child.net/teenla.htm) - links and contact information for helpful resources for Los Angeles area teens in stressful situations, as well as a list of fun activities to do in the LA area

[www.pickthebrain.com/blog/relaxation-technique/](http://www.pickthebrain.com/blog/relaxation-technique/) - a list of helpful relaxation techniques for when you're feeling stressed

[www.thetrevorproject.org/](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/) - dedicated to providing crisis and suicide prevention services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, or questioning teens

[kidshealth.org/teen/](http://kidshealth.org/teen/) -- information on many health issues for teens, including stress and mental/ emotional health

### PHONE HOTLINES:

California Youth Crisis Line (24 hours a day/7 days a week)

1-800-843-5200

Cedars Sinai "Teens Helping Teens Hotline" (only 6pm-10pm nightly)

1-800-852-8336 (1-800-TLC-TEEN)

LA County Department of Mental Health Hotline (24 hours a day/7 days a week)

1-800-854-7771

National Suicide Hotline (24 hours a day/7 days a week)

1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE)

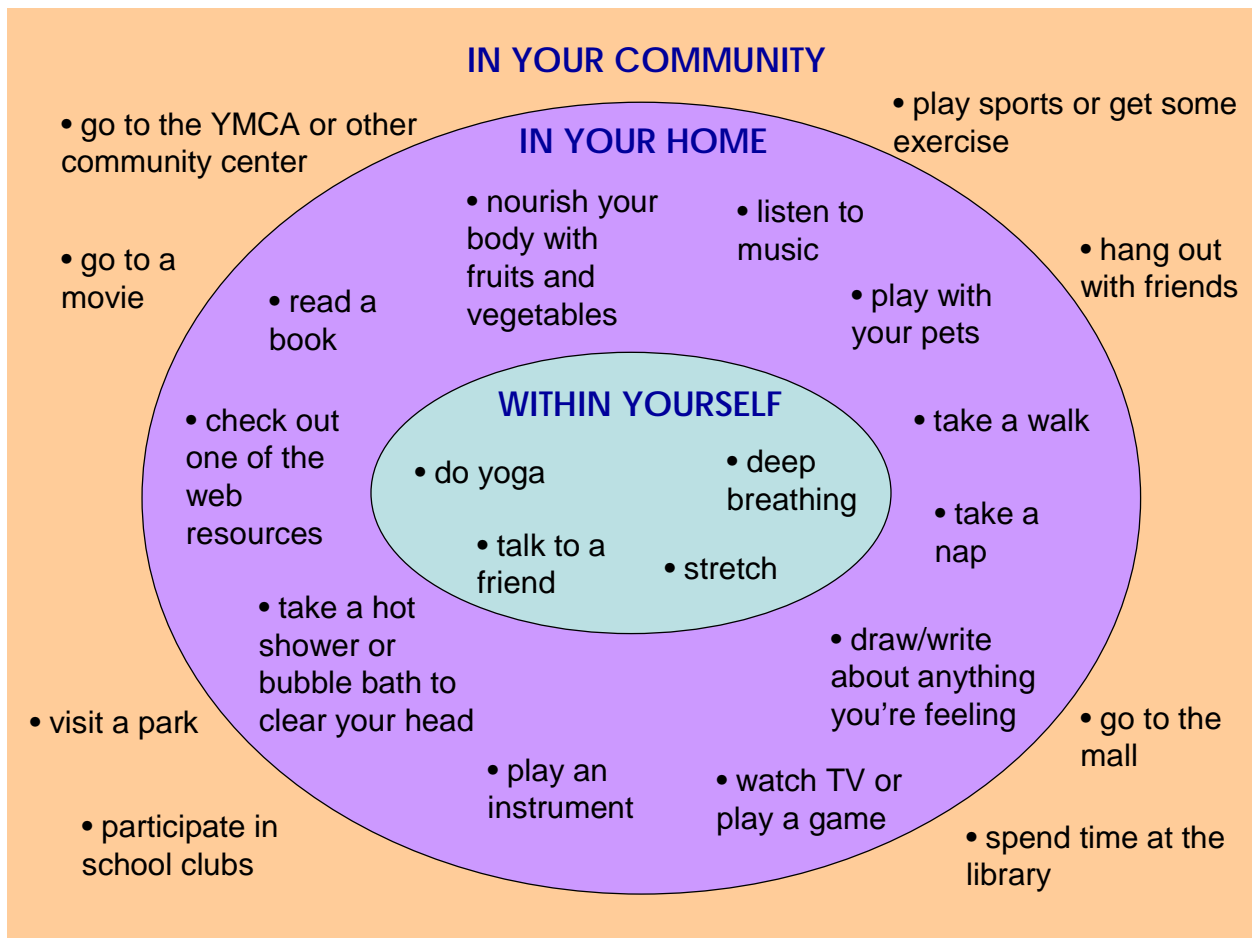
# WHAT CAN I DO WHEN I'M STRESSED OUT?



The picture below gives you some helpful ideas.

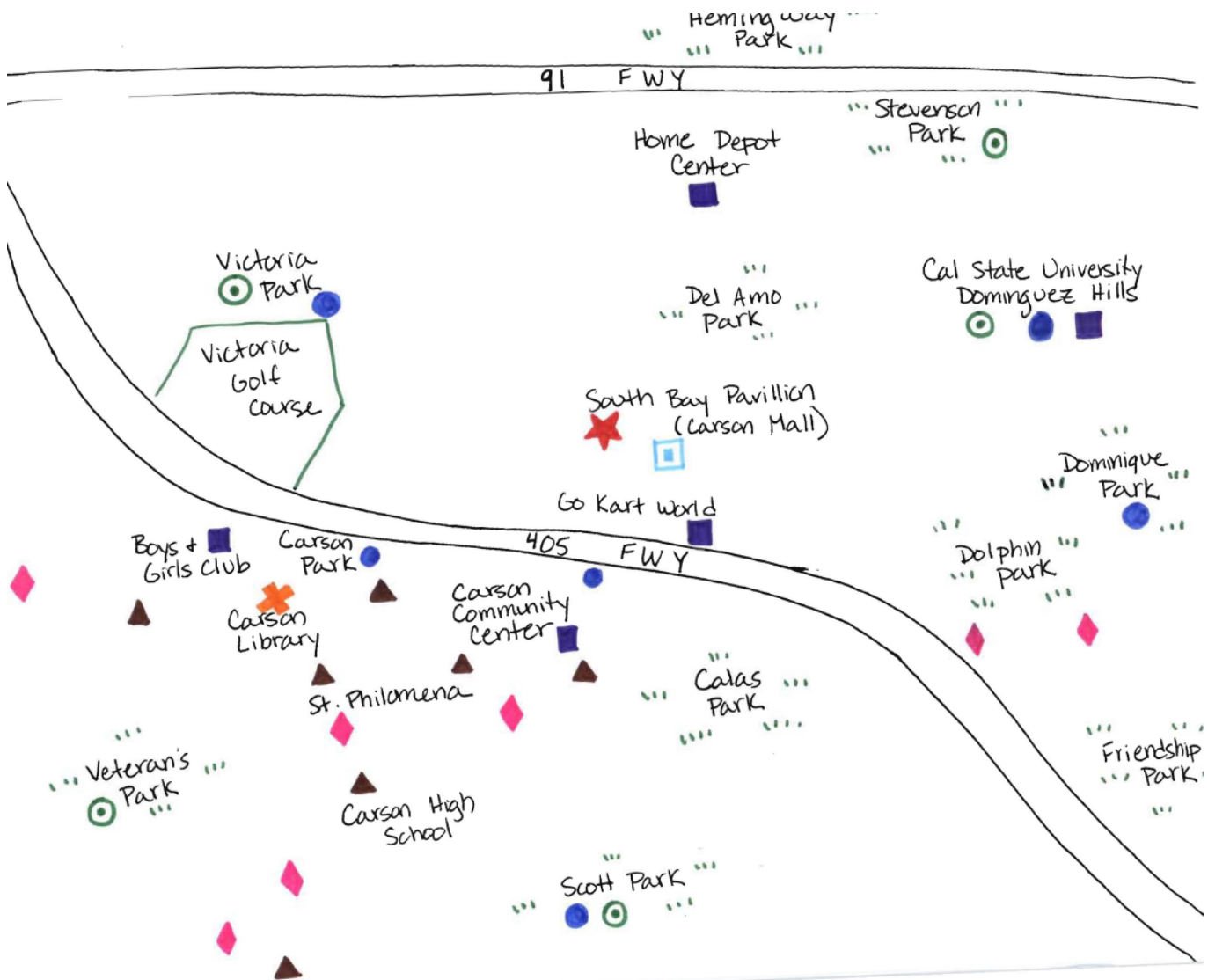
**WITHIN YOURSELF:** These activities can be done anywhere and are designed to help you let go of your stress.

**IN YOUR HOME:** These activities can be done when you are confined to your house or room or are by yourself.

**IN YOUR COMMUNITY:** These activities can help you cope with stress and lets you explore some of the resources and programs your community has to offer. For more specific resources in YOUR community, see the map attached!



-  **FAMILY/TEEN CENTERS:** Places where adults and kids can enjoy outdoor activities and have fun
-  **SWIMMING POOLS:** For recreation and swimming lessons
-  **PLAZAS:** Places to relax, eat, shop...
-  **MALL:** Hang out with friends and clear your head
-  **LIBRARY:** A quiet place to read
-  **SPIRITUAL PLACES**
-  **ATHLETIC COMPLEXES**
-  **FARMER'S MARKET:** Fresh produce is sold every Thursday at the Southbay Pavillion



## Here are some details about a few of the places on the map:

City of Carson Parks offer lots of fun activities for teens:

- Swimming pools for swim lessons, lifeguard training, or just for fun!
- Dance and Cheer Classes
- Sports Leagues for Teens
- Bingo Games
- Cooking Classes
- Exercise classes and fitness equipment at Veteran's Sports Complex
- For more details, check out:  
[http://ci.carson.ca.us/content/department/pub\\_service/parks\\_rec.asp](http://ci.carson.ca.us/content/department/pub_service/parks_rec.asp)
- Phone (City Hall): (310) 830-7600

### South Bay Pavilion Mall

- Tons of shops and restaurants for everyone
- Address: 20700 Avalon Blvd, Carson, CA
- Phone: (310) 366-6629

### Go Kart World

- Has several race tracks for go karts and bumper cars, as well as arcade games and food
- Address: 21830 Recreation Road, Carson, CA
- Phone: (310) 834-3700

### Boys and Girls Club of Carson

- Offers activities in sports and fitness, arts, music, leadership training, and health awareness for kids and teens
- Located at Carson High, Main Street Clubhouse, Bonita Elementary, and Towne Elementary
- Phone: (310) 522-0500
- Website: <http://www.bgccarson.org>



## More about the UCLA/RAND Prevention Research Center and the Youth Community Advisory Board

### UCLA/RAND Prevention Research Center Mission:

To conduct prevention research that: (1) address the needs of children, adolescents, young adults, and their families; (2) builds empowering relationships with community partners in Los Angeles and beyond; and (3) directly benefits communities and/or transforms local, state, and national policies. *UCLA/RAND PRC is one of 37 centers selected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to work with communities on new ways to promote health and prevent disease.*

### UCLA/ RAND Youth Community Advisory Board (YCAB)

**Mission:** The YCAB was established in 2003 to provide a dynamic setting where high school students in the Los Angeles area can help health researchers from the UCLA/RAND Prevention Research Center develop and implement research projects that will benefit adolescents locally and nationally.

**Activities:** The UCLA/RAND YCAB is an exciting opportunity for high school students to:

- Serve as “teen advisors” to researchers from UCLA and RAND who work on health promotion projects
- Take part in different PRC research projects each year (such as nutrition and physical activity projects)
- Voice their ideas and opinions about different adolescent health issues in a small group setting (15-20 youth)
- Improve their leadership, communication, and critical thinking skills
- Meet and work with UCLA and RAND faculty, staff, and graduate students
- Take part in other Center projects and activities – for example, this summer three “teen advisors” and a parent volunteer represented our Center at the Usher Youth Leadership Conference in Atlanta

We can be reached at:

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