



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS INITIATIVE

Toolkit for Families of Young Children

Reflection Activity #4: How Do You Relieve Parenting Stress?

Directions: Being a parent or caregiver to young children can be a wonderful experience, but it is also filled with times of great stress. Listed below are different things parents and caregivers do to cope with stress. Put a check mark next to each statement that applies to you. Complete this activity by yourself and try to be as honest as possible. Next, take time to reflect on the positive and possibly negative ways in which your stress-relieving tendencies impact your family. How effectively are you currently managing the stress of parenting? What changes could you make to positively manage your stress in the future? Share your results with your partner to further encourage one another in making these changes.

- 1. I smoke and/or drink alcohol in excess when I am under stress.
- 2. I exercise regularly when I am under stress.
- 3. I drink a lot of coffee or caffeine drinks when I am stressed out.
- 4. I get plenty of sleep when I am stressed.
- 5. I eat too much or too little when I am under stress.
- 6. I take time to relax when I am stressed out.
- 7. I abuse illegal drugs/prescription medication when I am under stress.
- 8. I try to keep a sense of humor and keep a positive perspective when I am stressed.
- 9. I watch way too much TV when I am under stress.
- 10. I spend time with family and friends when I am stressed.
- 11. I have angry outbursts and/or withdraw from people when I am stressed out.
- 12. I try to stay positive and reward myself for my accomplishments.

Odd statements (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) can be negative ways of coping with stress.
Even statements (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12) can be positive ways of coping with stress.