



## **Life Skills – Coping with Stress**

### **The Stress Tree**



**Aim of the Game:** To list down personal stress and identify its causes.

**Learning Objectives:**

- To graph the causes and effects of stress
- To discuss ways and means to eliminate both stress and the causes of stress.

**Structure:**

Individual work and then plenary discussion

**Time:**

15-30 minutes

**Materials:**

Each Scout needs: A piece of paper, pen and crayons (optional)

**Method:**

- First ask the Scouts about the things (people, places, events) that make them tense, nervous or overly excited. Allow a short time for some answers and then explain that these things are the causes of stress, sometimes called stressors.
- Ask the Scouts what they think could cause these stressors? Allow a short time for some answers.
- Explain that most of the time, the stressors are only on the surface or the immediate causes of stress and that, in reality, there are more underlying and root causes of these stressors. • Give an example: A boy thinks that he gets nervous during mathematics lessons, but in reality the mathematics lesson is not the main cause, it is because he is a little afraid of the maths teacher. However, this is just another underlying cause - the boy is afraid of the maths teacher because he is behind in the class as he was absent from school for a few days in the previous month and so this is the actual root cause. Try to illustrate this:

Afraid of mathematics lesson ... Afraid of mathematics teacher ... Has fallen behind in mathematics.

- Allow time for some questions and clarifications. Point out that identifying the root causes of the stressors will help to address the real problems and in the process eliminate the immediate stressors.

- Provide each Scout with the necessary materials and ask them to draw five circles and then inside each one write the name of something that causes them stress.
- From the circles, ask the Scouts to draw branches and twigs downwards, and label them as "immediate" causes of the stressors.
- From these branches and twigs, ask the Scouts to draw the main trunk, which they think branches downwards, and label as "underlying" causes of the stress.
- From the trunk, ask the Scouts to draw roots and label them as "root" causes of their stresses.
- Allow 15 minutes for the Scouts to complete their drawing.

Sample drawing: My Stress Tree – see pdf

**Evaluation:**

- What can you say about the activity?
- What did you discover and learn from drawing your stress tree?
- How important is it for young people like you to live a stress-free life?
- What can you do to "cut down" the stressors?