

## Stressed Out? You're Not Alone. So How Do You Deal?



Rick Mansfield, far left, a clinician at the Family Service Bureau of Newark, talks to students in the Academic Enrichment for Older Youth Program.

How do you deal with stress? Some people vent their frustrations verbally while others isolate themselves in silence. Others will turn to a short-term distractions, such as shopping, food, alcohol or illegal substances.

Stress was a hot topic at a recent workshop held for students in the Academic Enrichment for Older Youth Program at New Community Workforce Development Center. Rick Mansfield, a clinician at the Family Service Bureau of Newark, led a workshop with students as part of the Prevention, Education and Intervention Program (PEI). PEI is designed to provide educational workshops to increase awareness and knowledge of substance abuse as well as provide gender-specific intervention services for identified at-risk minority males between ages eight to 15.

The program promotes a healthy, substance-free future for youth and is provided under the umbrella of Substance Abuse Services at FSB, an affiliate of New Community.

“An obstacle is something that comes between you and what you want to accomplish,” Mansfield said. Oftentimes, obstacles that arise create frustration, conflict and pressure—all of which can produce stress.

One young woman said that she sometimes isolates herself from other people—“just a little bit”—as one of her main ways to deal with stress.

Many people try to relieve stress through short-term fixes that may feel good temporarily but harm them later. A good question to ask yourself when considering stress relief options, according to Mansfield, is, “Which one is going to get me closer to what I really want to do?”

For example, he said, some students get stress out taking tests.

If you have test anxiety, Mansfield said, “Go into it as prepared as you can possibly be.”

People have common ways of dealing with stress, such as emotional insulation or intellectualization, he said. Repression, or pretending that something never happened, can even cause depression or anxiety.

“If you’re looking for a constructive way to deal with stress, that’s not always going to be the answer,” Mansfield said.

### Defense Mechanisms When Dealing With Stress

- **Repression:** pretending that something never happened, selective remembering. Can cause anxiety or depression.
- **Emotional insulation:** distancing yourself in order to protect yourself from disappointment.
- **Intellectualization:** replacing an emotional reaction with logic or rationalization.
- **Regression:** using old patterns of behavior that you have long outgrown.