



Figure 1

Relationships can be a source of stress, especially when these relationships include frequent conflict. *How did you handle the last argument you had with your parents or caregivers?*

Peers. Relationships with friends and family can also generate stress, at least at times. Stress caused by interpersonal relationships can result from rejection, exclusion, negative peer pressure, or loneliness. Other factors that sometimes cause relationships to end, such as moving to relocate to a new school. The loss of peer relationships can also cause stress.

School

Many high school students feel pressured to do well in school. They may worry about their grades, upcoming tests and quizzes, and completing homework assignments. Students have to balance the demands and expectations of different teachers, which can be overwhelming at times.

Academic pressure can be especially intense for students who are applying to highly competitive colleges. While staying on top of their academic classes, these students must take standardized tests and complete college applications that can be lengthy. They must balance schoolwork with other activities such as after-school jobs and sports practices. The feeling of having too much to do in too little time can create considerable stress.

Environment

People also experience stress caused by their environment, including the physical aspects of the environment in which they live. Some teenagers live in homes that are crowded and noisy. Coping with noise, a lack of privacy, and clutter can increase stress levels.

Health in the Media

Can Social Media Cause Stress?

Many teenagers think of social media as a good way to stay connected with friends and family. Being socially connected in this way can reduce stress, but it can also create stress. In one study, researchers asked college students about their use of Facebook and



how it made them feel. Some students reported that using Facebook made them anxious. In fact, the more Facebook "friends" they had, the more likely they were to feel stressed by social media.

Having to respond to friend requests created stress for many students—10% of them reported that they disliked receiving the requests. In addition, 63% of the students said they put off replying to a friend request. Rejecting friend requests caused 32% of students to feel guilty and uncomfortable.

People may also feel anxious about what they post on Facebook. For example, if people want to be viewed as cool and mature, they may worry excessively about how others interpret their posts. They may worry about having fewer "friends" than other people and about being left out of the social activities posted by others. People may worry that their own lives are less interesting and less exciting than those of their peers. All of these factors may help explain why Facebook can create stress.

Thinking Critically

1. Do you think social media causes the same level of stress for all teenagers, or are some more bothered by it than others? Explain your answer.
2. What are some strategies that could help you and your friends avoid stress associated with social media?
3. Do you think Facebook has the potential to reduce stress? Consider ways in which Facebook could decrease levels of stress.