



## Killer B's – The Effects of Stress and the Body, Brain and Behavior

Stress can adversely affect each one of us in unique ways. Consider three areas that are often impacted by stress – *The Killer B's for Negative Responses to Stress*:

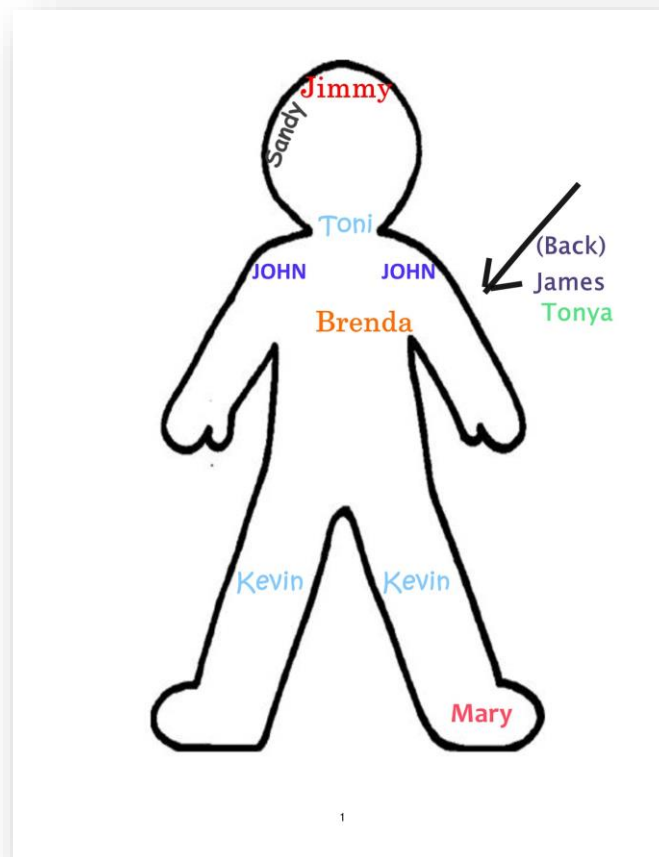
**The Body** – Some people experience stress in their neck, others in their shoulders. Some experience it in their stomach or digestive system and others feel it in their chest, heart and breathing. Stress can take a toll on just about any body part or body function

**The Brain** – Stress makes some people anxious, others angry, and still others depressed. Stress can make some people tired and it can keep other people awake. Stress makes some people's mind race while others shut down.

**Behavior** – Some people get high when they are stressed. Others smoke too much. Some people verbally can be aggressive and mean, while others are more physical. Some people isolate while others cannot stand to be alone when stressed. Some people look for a fight and some would rather run away.

### Group Activity – Identifying Your Killer B's

**Body – Directions** – Draw a large body on the board for everyone to see. Take turns as a group going up to the board and identify where stress impacts your body by putting your name on the places where you feel stress the strongest in your body.



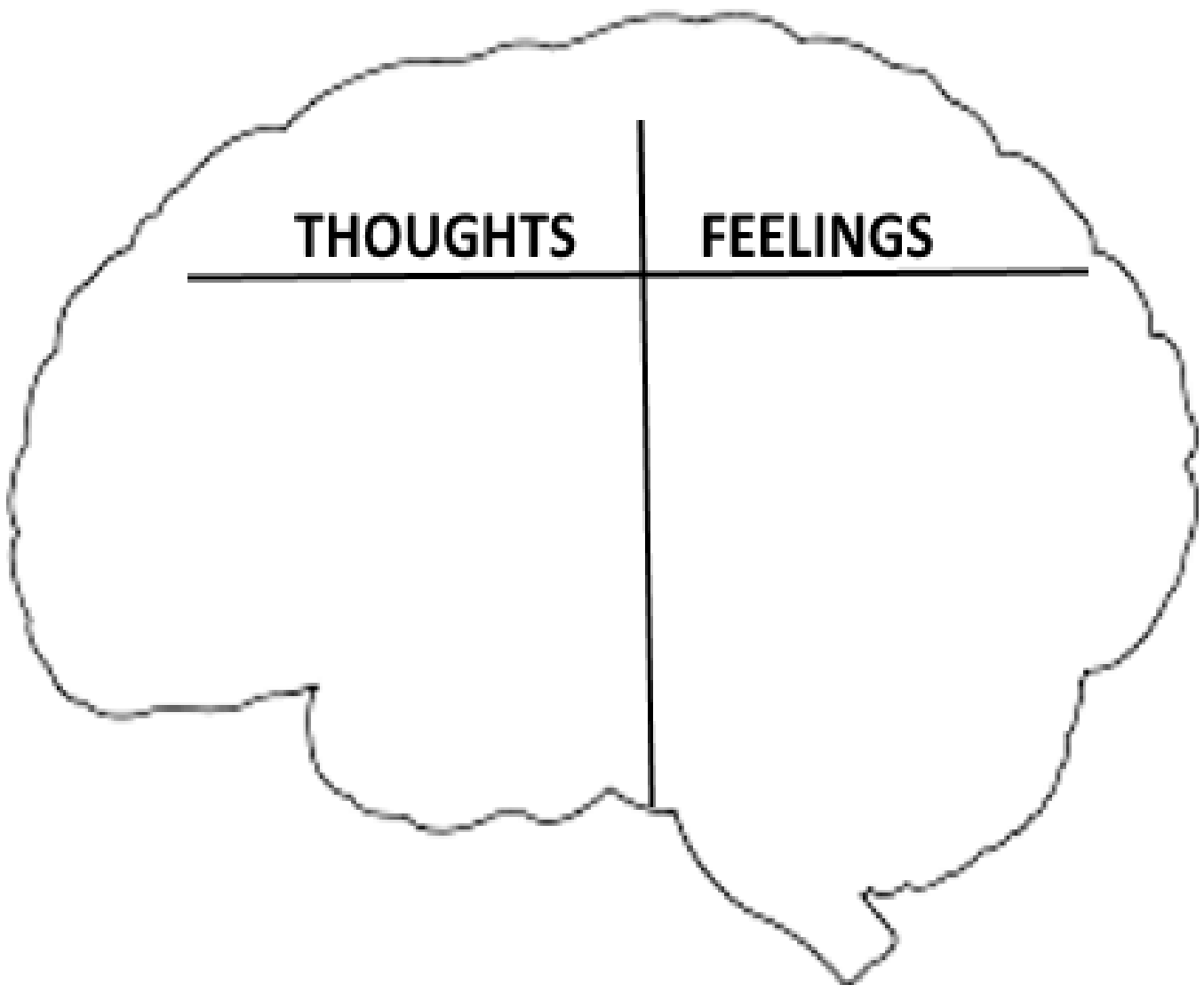
When the group is done with the diagram discuss how stress affects your body



**Brain – Directions** - Now identify and discuss how unchecked stress can negatively affect your brain in two main ways: Your thinking and your feelings. A good way to talk about stress and thinking is to come up with some specific thoughts that may come through your mind. For feelings, remember to use a specific feeling word to describe. Fill out the chart below with your stress related thoughts and feelings. Some examples provided to help.

<u>Examples of negative stress related thoughts:</u> "I can't take it" "I'm going to freak out on someone" "Get me out of here!"	<u>Examples of stress related negative feelings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overwhelmed</li><li>• Irritated</li><li>• Frustrated</li></ul>
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Fill out below:



When complete – Discuss how stress affects your brain by impacting your thoughts and feelings



**Behavior – Directions** – Circle below any negative behaviors that you need to watch out for if you are not careful and stress gets the best of you:

Fight – Verbal	Fight – Physical	Isolate	Use/abuse drugs
Drink alcohol	Smoke more cigs	Insomnia	Sleep too much
Avoid eating	Eat too much	Impulsive decisions	Frozen- Can't decide
Work too much	Quit working	Run from problems	Complain, self-pity
Stop taking medication	Overuse medication	Gossip	Tease or bully others

Other? – List here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Switching to the Positive – What works for the Killer B's?**

At this point hopefully collectively as a group, with help from the counselor you all already positive strategies to relieve stress in your body and your brain and you can identify some positive behaviors to take place of the negative ones. Discuss as a group what works for you to relieve stress in the following areas:

**The Body** – How do you relieve your stress-vulnerable body areas? What works?

**The Brain** – How do you cope with negative thoughts and feelings when you feel yourself getting stressed?

**Behavior** – What are positive behaviors that you can focus on when you feel like acting out in a negative way?

**Share your answers with one another as a group. The counselor may elect to bring some additional information on stress management tools for the group as well. (Physical, extreme exercise and dietary suggestions should be consulted with a doctor first before trying. Group should refrain from giving medical advice)**

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**Closing plan:** What is at least one new thing in each area (Body, Brain, & Behavior) that you may try in the future going forward that was discussed in this group?

BODY \_\_\_\_\_

BRAIN \_\_\_\_\_

BEHAVIOR \_\_\_\_\_