

Stress Intervention Plan – Steven

Steven is a 19 year-old, full-time undergraduate freshman. Although Steven has many close and supportive male friends, he has always been shy and awkward around women. While in high school, his buddies twice set him up on a blind date. Both times did not end well. Steven felt severe anxiety days leading up to each date. He would play the date through in his head, imagining the worst each time. He became fixated on all the things that could go wrong, from the time he picked his date up to the time he took her home. By the time he actually picked up his date, he was a literal “basket case”. His normally clear skin became dotted with pimples, marring his otherwise good looks. His mouth became so dry, the resulting bad breath could not be eradicated no matter how much mouthwash he used. Perhaps most embarrassing was the gassy bloating he experienced throughout the date. Focused on his physical symptoms, Steven was unable to follow the conversation, nor could he think of anything to say when he did manage to listen. Now in university, Steven sees his love life as a dismal failure. He is worried that his stress and anxiety around dating will mean that he will never find a life partner. He has come to you for help.

Steven comes from a middle class family with strong middle class values. His parents divorced when he was 12. Nevertheless, he remains close to both and the bonds between them are strong. Steven has one brother (3 years older) and a sister (1 year younger). All three of them are close knit.

Physically, Steven appears to be physically fit, but in reality he gets very little regular exercise. His diet has never been great, and it has grown worse since moving into the dorms. Most weeks, his diet is made up of rice, pasta, Mountain Dew, and cookies. Although still in his first semester, he has already had two colds.

Steven works on campus, as part of the grounds crew. He is an efficient worker, praised by his supervisors. As such, they have no problem with him working on homework once his responsibilities have been met. This gives Steven time to hang out with his buddies and participate in his hobbies which include golf Frisbee, photography, archery, playing the guitar, and bowling. Although not very good at golf Frisbee, Steven is very skilled in his other interests.

Steven has come to you for help. His goal is to feel relaxed with few if any physiological symptoms of distress by the time his next blind date rolls around – in about a month’s time.