

HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS



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What is stress ?

- The way our body and mind react to life changes

- Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events.

- It's the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness.



- Teenagers, like adults, may experience stress everyday and can benefit from learning stress management skills.

- Most teens experience more stress when they perceive a situation as dangerous, difficult, or painful and they do not have the resources to cope.



Some sources of stress for teens might include:

- school demands and frustrations
- negative thoughts and feelings about themselves
- changes in their bodies
- unsafe living environment/neighborhood
- taking on too many activities or having too high expectations
- family financial problems
- problems with friends and/or peers at school
- separation or divorce of parents
- death of a loved one
- chronic illness or severe problems in the family
- moving or changing schools



- Some teens become overloaded with **stress**.
- When it happens, inadequately managed stress can lead to
 - anxiety,
 - withdrawal,
 - aggression,
 - physical illness.



- When we perceive a situation as difficult or painful, changes occur in our minds and bodies to prepare us to respond to danger.
- This response includes;
 - faster heart and breathing rate,
 - increased blood to muscles of arms and legs,
 - cold or clammy hands and feet,
 - upset stomach and/or
 - a sense of dread.



- The same mechanism that turns on the stress response can turn it off.
- As soon as we decide that a situation is no longer dangerous, changes can occur in our minds and bodies to help us relax and calm down.
- This "relaxation response" includes;
 - decreased heart and breathing rate and
 - a sense of well being.



You can decrease stress with following behaviors and techniques :

- *Get some sleep*

Between homework, activities and hanging with friends, it can be hard to get enough sleep, especially during the school week. Ideally, adolescents should get nine hours a night. To maximize your chance of sleeping soundly, cut back on watching TV or engaging in a lot of screen time in the late evening hours. Don't drink caffeine late in the day and try not to do stimulating activities too close to bedtime.



- ***Focus on your strengths***

Spend some time really thinking about the things you're good at, and find ways to do more of those things. If you're a math ace, you might tutor a younger neighbor who's having trouble with the subject. If you're artistic, take a photography class. Focusing on your strengths will help you keep your stresses in perspective



- ***Engage in physical activity***

Physical activity is one of the most effective stress busters. That doesn't mean you have to go for a jog if you hate running. Find activities you enjoy and build them into your routine such as hiking, biking, skateboarding or walking. The best types of physical activities are those that have a social component. Whether you're into team sports, or prefer rollerblading with a friend or two, you're more likely to have fun — and keep at it — if you're being active with friends.



- ***Do things that make you happy***

Besides physical activities, find other hobbies or activities that bring you joy. That might be listening to music, going to the movies or drawing. Make a point to keep doing these things even when you're stressed and busy.



- ***Talk to someone***

It's so much easier to manage stress when you let others lend a hand. Talk to a parent, teacher or other trusted adult. They may be able to help you find new ways to manage stress. Or they may help put you in touch with a psychologist who is trained in helping people make healthy choices and manage stress.



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