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Teens and Stress



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A lifeline for kids and families

AGENDA

- **Who Is YES?**
- **Let's Talk Stress**
 - **What is it?**
 - **Signs & Symptoms**
 - **Consequences**
- **How Can Parents Help**
- **Q&A**

Who is YES

○ Serving Eastside Youth & Families with...

- Substance Abuse Treatment
 - Youth & Family Mental Health Counseling
 - Education & Prevention Programs
 - Parenting Support & Education
-
- Accepts insurance, Medicaid and offers sliding-fee scale
 - No one is turned away for inability to pay, thanks to generous donors
 - Leading provider in the region since 1968

YES Mission

Youth Eastside Services is a lifeline for kids and families coping with challenges such as emotional distress, substance abuse and violence. Through intervention, outreach and prevention, YES builds confidence and responsibility, strengthens family relationships, and advocates for a safer community that cares for its youth.

YES provides experts to help with...

- Emotional distress, trauma and grief
- Stress and anxiety
- Behavioral difficulties
- School-related problems
- Peer and family relationship issues
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Identity
- Substance abuse issues



Let's Talk Stress

- What is stress?
- Why are Teens stressed?
- How do parents know when the stress level is too high?
- What can parents do to guide their teenagers who are stressed?

What is stress?

- Stress is the body's way of reacting to an event that makes us feel threatened or unbalanced in some way. It is sometimes described as “fight or flight.”
- Everybody experiences stress and it is normal.
- Stress is a personal and subjective experience.

Where does stress come from?

- Deadlines/Expectations/Demands
- Busy schedules
- Relationship difficulties
- Perfectionism
- Unrealistic Expectation
- Negative self-talk

What are typical stressors for teens?

- Demands from school/academic achievement
- Parental expectations
- Extracurricular activities – over scheduling
- Social pressures/bullying
- Negative self-image and changes in their bodies
- Family conflict
- Divorce
- Death of loved one
- Unsafe living environments
- Family financial worries
- Worries about their future

Signs of stress

- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, muscle pain, fatigue
- Sleep problems – insomnia, nightmares and sleep disturbances
- Frequently staying up late to finish school work
- Drive for perfection, also known as overachieving
- Changes in eating habits
- Self-harm behaviors/suicidal ideation
- Irritability, moodiness, anger, depression
- Feelings of hopelessness or lack of motivation
- Drug or alcohol abuse or participation in high risk activities such as unprotected sex or extreme sports
- Withdrawal, loss of interest in social activities
- Your child/teen tells you they are stressed!!!

Negative Coping

- Negative self-talk
- Drugs or alcohol
- Self-harm/Suicide
- Keeping thoughts and feelings to self

Consequences

- Physical problems
 - high blood pressure, headaches, stomachaches and other digestive problems, facial, neck and back pain, insomnia and sleep disturbances. High levels of the major stress hormone, cortisol, depress the immune system.
- Behavior problems
 - aggression, anger outbursts, impulsivity
- Brain Development
 - Reduces brain's ability to process information effectively
 - Impedes learning, memory, and performance

Positive Coping

- Treating your body well:
 - Exercise
 - Getting a good night sleep
 - Healthy eating
- Talking to family, friends, counselors, teachers
- Deep breathing, relaxation, mindfulness
- Journaling
- Listening to music
- Positive self-talk
- Take a stand against over-scheduling
- Be realistic
- Learn to solve everyday little problems

How Parents Can Help

- Examine your attitude – do your expectations of your child/teen match their abilities and desires?
- Create a sense of order – consistent schedules and routines with activities, meals, bedtime, etc.
- Don't over schedule or over extend your teen
- Be a role model – How do you manage your stress?
- Be observant – recognize signs of stress and know what's not “normal” for your teen. Children and teens may use other words for stress – worried, angry, confused, annoyed. They may say negative things about themselves or others
- Be a good listener – Focus on the positive, praise effort and emphasize importance of practice, acknowledge that mistakes are okay and perfection is not the goal
- Help with stress reduction techniques
- Help your teen understand that it is okay to ask for help – consider counseling services

Stress Reducing Techniques

- Exercise – relieves muscular tension and nervous tension. Stimulates heart rate, circulation and the release of hormones that help the body reduce effects of stress naturally
- Breathe – deep breathing exercises, relaxation, mindfulness
- Get it out and talk – encourage your child/teen to express how they feel and then listen, listen, listen.
- Write – journaling can help teens express themselves and put stressful situations into perspective
- Sleep, Eat, Play – adequate sleep is important, eat healthy balanced meals, take time to do fun activities and spend quality time together



YES

YOUTH EASTSIDE SERVICES

www.YouthEastsideServices.org

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