
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Stress Management Skills for Students



**March
2013**

INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

As students move through each grade, school requirements continue to get more challenging. Many students experience higher levels of stress. Learning to manage stress is a valuable skill helps students in high school and college, and later throughout their life and careers.

We can't make the world less stressful, but we can develop healthy responses to stress. One of the most important is learning to view stress as challenging, not threatening.

"The key to reducing distress is providing students with a feeling of control over their education, information about what to expect, and feedback regarding what can be done to improve their performance. Students who do not feel helpless will adopt their own coping strategies."

<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-926/stress.htm>

Without these skills, chronic or high stress could lead to serious health problems. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), "anxiety is a normal reaction to stress and can actually be beneficial in some situations. For some people, anxiety can become excessive."

Excessive anxiety can lead to mental disorders such as phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorders or depression that may become disruptive and require treatment. It also contributes to a high dropout rate in college. Too much stress is also physically unhealthy. Left untreated, it can contribute to serious ailments, such as cardiovascular disease.

http://www.nimh.nih.gov/statistics/1ANYANX_child.shtml

If you suspect that your child is having difficulty managing stress levels, your school counselor or physician are good resources. These tips from WebMD.com can be part of the parent and student toolbox for recognizing and managing stress-related anxiety.

<http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/coping-school-stress?page=3>

Warning signs of stress

Dangerous stress responses, such as cutting themselves or expressing hopelessness or despair need to be taken seriously. Even younger kids can show signs of stress through reluctance to attend school, stomach or headaches.

Organization and time-management skills

Prevent stress by building confidence. Help your child learn good time management and organizational skills. Planning ahead and finishing on time will help them handle school and homework demands without anxiety.

(Over)

Homework tips

Help kids tackle homework by using a planner for assignments, finding a quiet place free from distractions and getting help from school when needed. Make sure the classes aren't too hard, and students aren't overbooked with extracurricular activities.

Healthy sleep and exercise habits

Too little sleep makes stress worse. Adolescents need about 9 ½ hours per night. Little or no exercise also makes stress levels rise. Adding some activity to the day will keep the stress from building up.

Easing parental pressure

Pressuring your kids to excel in school often only makes stress worse. A lower-key approach by parents can help ease kids' stress.

Fun and leisure

All work and no play makes kids...stressed out. Preserve time on weekends and even after school, if possible, for unstructured time to relax and play. School goes by fast. Having fun lowers stress levels and helps kids keep it in perspective.

See more tips on student stress reduction

Stress Reduction Techniques for Students

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/22757-stress-reduction-techniques-students/>

Stress Management: How to Reduce, Prevent and Cope with Stress

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm

Coping with Stress

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/coping_with_stress_tips.html