



PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

January 2016

87%

Of local teens choose not to drink because they don't want to deal with the legal consequences

FACTS & STATS

FAQ's RESOURCES

PREVENTION EDUCATION INTERVENTION TREATMENT RECOVERY

NEXT MONTH:

Tobacco and
E-Cigarettes

Healthy Stress Management

Stress can be a reaction to short-lived situations, such as being stuck in traffic. It can also last a long time if you are dealing with relationship problems, a death in the family or other serious situations. Stress becomes dangerous when it interferes with your ability to live a normal life over an extended period. You may feel tired, unable to concentrate, or irritable. Stress can also damage your physical health. Stress that is left unchecked or unmanaged is known to contribute to high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, diabetes and suicide.

Warning Signs of Stress:

- Headache, muscle tension, neck and backache
- Upset stomach
- Dry mouth
- Chest pains, rapid heartbeat
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite or overeating "comfort foods"
- Increased frequency of colds
- Lack of concentration or focus
- Memory problems of forgetfulness
- Jitters
- Irritability
- Short temper
- Anxiety

By noticing how you respond to stress, you can manage it in more healthy ways. This will help your body correct itself, reducing the high cost and care of chronic, long-term health problems.

Tips for managing stress:

- ⇒ Understanding how you stress (how do you know when you're stressed?)
- ⇒ Identify your sources of stress
- ⇒ Learn your stress signals
- ⇒ Recognize how you deal with stress; do you make unhealthy choices to deal with stress (such as alcohol or drug use)
- ⇒ Find healthy ways to manage stress; meditate, exercise, or talk it out with family or friends; don't take on too much at once
- ⇒ Take care of yourself: eat right, get enough sleep, exercise regularly (take a walk, ride a bike, do a sport that enhances your mental & physical health). Take a break for yourself—read a book, listen to music, do something you enjoy!
- ⇒ [Reach out for support](#). Accepting help from friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. If you continue to feel stressed, you may want to talk to a professional, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

Parent Tips:

- ◇ Getting your teens to open up and talk can feel like a challenge. You want to put them at ease so that they feel safe talking with you. Reassure them that you want to offer support not punishment. Parents might consider scheduling a time to talk one-on-one on a regular basis, such as having lunch with your teen weekly or bi-weekly.
- ◇ Actively listen to what your teen has to say. Try to understand their perspective before offering suggestions. Sometimes your own anxiety can prompt you to try to fix everything. In many cases the best help you can offer is to listen attentively.
- ◇ If your teen tells you that they feel sad or upset, for example, tell them you are proud of them for sharing their feelings. Let them know you appreciate the courage it took for them to talk with you and for trusting you to help them. If your teen seems to need more help than you can provide, consult with an appropriate professional. You may start by talking to the school social worker or counselor.
- ◇ Teens can tell when you're not being genuine. If you are open, authentic and relaxed, it will help them to be the same.
- ◇ Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." It is alright to admit that you don't have all the answers. However, if your teen asks you something, you should make every effort to find an answer or someone who can help.

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Elaine Schram
1305 W. Oswego Rd
Naperville, IL 60560
630-961-2992 x1122
eschram@360YouthServices.org

