

Part III. What Do I Do About Stress

Teens can decrease stress with the following behaviors and techniques. By using these and other techniques, teenagers can begin to manage stress.

Talk to one or both of your parent or an adult you can trust (such as pastor, school counselor). A school counselor or principal or a health care person in your School based health center. If you feel unsafe with anyone do not engage with that person. Call 988 especially if you feel you “just can’t take it anymore”.

- Exercise and eat regularly.
- Get enough sleep and have a good sleep routine.
- Avoid excess caffeine (high energy drinks, coffee, in any form) which can increase feelings of anxiety and agitation.
- Avoid illegal drugs, alcohol, marijuana and tobacco these only delay dealing with the problem.
- Learn relaxation exercises (abdominal breathing and muscle relaxation techniques).
- Develop assertiveness training skills. For example, state feelings in polite, firm, and not overly aggressive or passive ways: (“I feel angry when you yell at me.” “I feel safe, heard when you are not talking so loud.”)
- Rehearse and practice situations which cause stress. For example, practicing what you will say to someone in front of a mirror or with a person you know will give you honest feedback, or you can take a speech class if talking in front of a class scares you or make you feel sick or nervous.
- Learn practical coping skills. Relaxation and breathing exercises to relax, daily physical exercise, self-discipline, writing poetry. For example, break a large task into smaller, more achievable tasks.
- Decrease negative self-talk: challenge negative thoughts - with alternative, neutral, or positive thoughts; My life will never get better” can be transformed into “I may feel hopeless now, but my life will probably get better if I work at it and get some help.” or “All things are possible to them that believe and I am one of them that believe”
- Learn to feel good about doing a competent or “good enough” job rather than demanding perfection from yourself and others.
- Take a break from stressful situations. Activities like listening to music, talking to a friend, drawing, writing, art, or spending time with a pet, working out at the YM/WCA, a sport or physical activity can reduce stress.
- Build a network of friends who help you cope in a positive way.
- Become involved in group that may be offered at your school that helps you to understand the sources of your stress and learn healthy ways to cope.

Call or Text 988 for Support Now or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

- HELP IS a Call or TEXT AWAY you or a friend of yours talk about or show signs mentioned above fairly frequently, you are probably overly stressed. The School-based Health Center staff urge you to talk with a professional school counselor, one of the staff at the school-based health center, your parent ,or other qualified mental health professional. If none of these are available and you or someone else you know struggling or in crisis Need Support Now? Help is available. **Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

Modified from source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Helping-Teenagers-With-Stress-066.aspx