



PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

December 2016

89%
choose to be marijuana-free
(30 day data)

Conversation starter of the month— “How do you cope strong?”

FACTS & STATS
FAQ's
RESOURCES

PREVENTION
EDUCATION
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RECOVERY



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Positive Ways to Cope

Do our teens have to make a choice between play, success and happiness? Is there a way to help them manage their lives and remain happy and prepared for success? You want to ensure they are healthy and balanced, and not cram in activities to impress someone else.

First thing to do is to identify and address problems. A positive attitude is step one. People who cope by trying to fix problems tend to be emotionally healthier. When it comes to studying or chores, it is best to get the work done first. Because work or studying produces stress, many teens put it off and choose to do fun things first. The problem with that is they're not having fun because they are worrying about the work they're ignoring. And of course, the longer they put it off, the more they worry. The cycle is endless.

Three ideas can help students manage a lot of work:

1. Break the work into small pieces. Then do one small piece at a time, rather than look at the whole. As you finish each piece, the work becomes less overwhelming.
2. Make lists of what needs to be done. This will help them sleep because they won't worry about whether they can do everything. At the end of the day, they will have less to worry about as they check off the things they have finished. They will look at the same huge amount of work and realize they can handle it.
3. Timelines can help with big projects.

It is important to try to fix problems, but sometimes there is nothing they can do to change a problem. For example, they can't change the weather, so they shouldn't waste energy worrying about it. They can't change the fact that teachers give tests, so they just need to prepare instead of complaining about how unfair tests are. They can't change the fact that parents need to know where they go, so they need to prove they're responsible and deserve more freedom. People who waste their energy worrying about things they can't change don't have enough energy left over to fix the things they can. Also they need to learn when not to take things personally.

Taking care of one's body is an important part of coping strong.

- * If a student stressed about an assignment, but too nervous to sit down and study, exercise is the key. They will be able to think better after having used up those stress hormones.
- * Take time to relax—meditate, read, talk to a friend, color, do a puzzle or play with a pet. Taking time for yourself is important to coping strong.
- * Eat well—Eating well not only makes you healthier, it also keeps you alert throughout the day and mood steady.
- * Sleep well—Tired people can't learn as well and can be impatient and irritable. Taking time to relax before going to sleep, taking a hot bath or doing some deep breathing, going to sleep about the same time each day and planning time for a full night of undisturbed sleep are important. [The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends teens get 8 to 10 hours per day for optimum health.](#)

Lastly, contribute!

Young people who work to make the world better have a sense of purpose, feel good about themselves, and handle their own problems better. It's important to understand that they really can make a difference in other people's lives.

Parent Tips:

- ◇ We want our young people to be able to overcome challenges and bounce back. They will be more resilient if the adults in their lives believe in them unconditionally and hold them to high expectations.
- ◇ Teach them that it is ok to fail and recover. We learn from our mistakes. Praise the effort rather than the result.
- ◇ Recognize when your teen does something well. Help him to build social skills.
- ◇ Monitor your teen's progress. Let him earn more freedom by showing he is responsible.
- ◇ We might do our greatest good as parents by raising youth with a wide repertoire of positive coping strategies. It is important for our youth to learn to cope in a positive way with life's stressors.
- ◇ When resilience reaches its limit, recognize the symptoms:
 - * Fatigue/disinterest
 - * Sadness
 - * Irritability/anger
 - * Substance use
- ◇ [Seek professional help if needed.](#)

Source: Spring 2016 survey of 11,774 District 203 & 204 High School students. Survey and data analysis by CPRD at University of Illinois. A project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter, and District 203 & 204 parents. Funding in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)