



PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

November 2016

98% of students say their parents feel it is wrong to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them- (yep- so keep talking!)

Conversation Starter of the month- "What do you do to cope with stress?"

FACTS & STATS

FAQ's

RESOURCES

- PREVENTION
- EDUCATION
- INTERVENTION
- TREATMENT
- RECOVERY



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How to Model Coping Strong

Stress—just the word may be enough to set your nerves on edge. Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively or recover from stressful events quicker than others. It's important to know your limits when it comes to stress to avoid more serious health effects.

Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. Many things can trigger this response, including change. Changes can be positive or negative, as well as real or perceived. They may be recurring, short-term, or long-term and may include things like commuting to and from school or work every day, traveling for a yearly vacation, or moving to another home. Changes can be mild and relatively harmless, such as winning a competition, watching a scary movie, or riding a rollercoaster. Some changes are major, such as a marriage or divorce, serious illness, or a car accident. Other changes are extreme, such as exposure to violence, and can lead to traumatic stress reactions.

Not all stress is bad. We all have a stress response, which can be life-saving in some situations. The nerve chemicals and hormones released during such stressful times, prepare us to face a threat or flee to safety. When you face a dangerous situation, your pulse quickens, you breathe faster, your muscles tense, your brain uses more oxygen and increases activity—all functions aimed at survival. In the short term, it can even boost your immune system.

However, with chronic stress, those same nerve chemicals that are life-saving in short bursts can suppress functions that aren't needed for immediate survival. Your immunity is lowered and your digestive, excretory, and reproductive systems stop working normally. Once the threat has passed, other body systems act to restore normal functioning. Problems occur if the stress response goes on too long, such as when the source of stress is constant, or if the response continues after the danger has subsided.

There are at least three types of stress, all of which carry physical and mental health risks:

- ◆ Routine stress related to the pressures of work, family and other daily responsibilities.
- ◆ Stress brought on by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce or illness.
- ◆ Traumatic stress, experienced in an event like a major accident, assault or natural disaster where one may be seriously hurt or in danger of being killed.

Of all the types of stress, changes in health from routine stress may be hardest to notice at first. Because the source of stress tends to be more constant than in cases of acute or traumatic stress, the body gets no clear signal to return to normal functioning. Over time, continued strain on your body from routine stress may lead to serious health problems.

The effects of stress tend to build up over time. Taking practical steps to maintain your health and outlook can reduce or prevent these effects.

So how do I model coping strong? Your teens learn from watching you.

- ⇒ Get proper health care for existing or new health problems.
- ⇒ Stay in touch with people who can provide emotional and other support. Ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations to reduce stress due to work burdens or family issues, such as caring for a loved one.
- ⇒ Recognize signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- ⇒ Set priorities—decide what must get done and what can wait, and learn to say no to new tasks if they are putting you into overload.
- ⇒ Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- ⇒ Avoid dwelling on problems. If you can't do this on your own, seek help from a qualified mental health professional who can help you.
- ⇒ Exercise regularly—just 30 minutes a day of walking can boost mood and reduce stress.
- ⇒ Schedule regular times for healthy and relaxing activities, such as listening to music, playing with a pet or doing a puzzle.
- ⇒ Explore stress coping activities, such as meditation, yoga or deep breathing.

Source: Spring 2016 survey of 11,774 District 203 & 204 High School students. Survey & 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)