



A MOMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH 2020

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2020

COLLEGE PLANNING 101

Tips to Manage Stress and Anxiety During the Application Process!

Relax, breathe, and get organized!

Find an organization tool that works best for you. There are several apps and calendars that can ease the stress and help you put your planning in motion.

Prioritize!

Prioritize tasks and set realistic goals for yourself. Try ranking your tasks by difficulty with their designated time commitments.

Take Breaks!

Even Rome wasn't built in a day!

Schedule regular check ins with yourself to

- 1) Check on your progress and to
- 2) Check on you!

Realistic expectations!

Make realistic choices balanced with your "dream" schools. Research 5-7 schools of interest to you.

Don't sweat the small stuff!

Try not to worry about things out of your control and don't compare yourself to your friends or other people. Focus on you!

Seek help!

Take advantage of your district resources, including attending college related events and seeking assistance from your counselors.

COPING WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Causes of Stress and Anxiety in Children

- Lack of structure during the break
- Disrupted routines
- Decreased/Increased Social Engagement
- School deadlines
- Family stressors
- Fear of the unknown
- Previous traumatic experiences (unresolved trauma)

Symptoms of Stress and Anxiety in Children

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Tired/Fatigued
- Irritable
- Angry/Outbursts
- Disengaged/Isolated/Withdrawn
- Disrupted sleeping patterns
- Disrupted eating habits
- Increased physical symptoms
- Substance use

COPING WITH GRIEF THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

For some, the holidays can be a nostalgic experience, filled with joy and excitement. This is a time where most families gather together, engaging in anticipatory traditions, while creating memories to last a lifetime. For others, the holidays may be a somber reminder that a loved one is no longer with us or is not able to be present due to other circumstances.

Here are some tips to help support a grieving child through the holidays:

- ✓ Make plans ahead of time and consider including your child in the planning process if appropriate
- ✓ Be flexible with your child and yourself, and be able to adjust your plans
- ✓ Talk with your child about their loved one(s), including listening to and answering any questions or concerns that may arise
- ✓ Create items of memorabilia and share favorite memorable traditions to honor and commemorate loved ones
- ✓ Incorporate new traditions and experiences to honor and commemorate loved ones
- ✓ Give children the opportunity to express themselves during this time whether it be through music, art, dance, writing a letter, etc.
- ✓ Engage in acts of service, kindness, or gratitude to help support others as well as your child's overall wellbeing

HOW TO COMBAT HOLIDAY STRESS AND BUILD RESILIENCE

- Plan ahead
- Be flexible
- Maintain routines
- Set realistic expectations for you and your family
- Prioritize and communicate needs
- Schedule time for breaks, rest and relaxation
- Set boundaries when needed
- Be aware of signs of anxiety and stress
- Limit time on social media and technology use
- Enjoy uninterrupted time doing your favorite activity
- Model healthy coping skills
- Encourage your child to practice self care
- Use this time to try new hobbies
- Be intentional about how you spend this time
- Find simple ways to connect with others
- Communicate and encourage reciprocity
- Practice gratitude
- REST!

BE HAPPY. BE BRAVE. BE DRUG FREE.

Increased use of substances can:

- Affect the growth and development of teens, especially brain development.
- Occur more frequently with other risky behaviors
- Contribute to the development of adult health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders.
- The use of alcohol, or other drugs in adolescence can lead to problems in adulthood and increase the chances of continued use and developing an addiction to drugs or alcohol.
- Issues surrounding mental health can lead to substance use. Substance use and abuse should never be used as a coping strategy or to self medicate.
- The use of substances can cause and increase the severity of mental health symptoms.

<https://cdc.gov>

Symptoms of Substance Abuse

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES, SUCH AS:

- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities)
- Using substances in physically hazardous situations such as while driving or operating a machine
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Unexplained change in personality or attitude
- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness
- Lacking of motivation
- Appearing fearful, anxious, or paranoid, with no reason

PHYSICAL CHANGES, SUCH AS:

- Bloodshot eyes and abnormally sized pupils
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Deterioration of physical appearance
- Unusual smells on breath, body, or clothing
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination

SOCIAL CHANGES, SUCH AS:

- Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts, and hobbies
- Legal problems related to substance use
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems
- Using substances even though it causes problems in relationships

TIPS ON TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

- ✓ Keep lines of communication open and show compassion
- ✓ Have regular talks about healthy vs unhealthy medication
- ✓ Encourage your child to be active and involved in school and outside of school
 - ✓ Set clear expectations and stick to them
 - ✓ Be a role model and set a good example
 - ✓ Check in regularly with your child
- ✓ Introduce healthy ways to manage stress and to cope with life experiences
 - ✓ Be supportive and listen to your child
- ✓ Build your child's self esteem and encourage them to advocate for themselves

IF YOU SUSPECT A PROBLEM, SEEK HELP.

<https://mentalhealth.gov>

NOVEMBER MENTAL HEALTH EVENTS

November 6th - International Stress Awareness Day

November 13th - World Kindness Day

November 19th - National Parental Involvement

MINDFULNESS MOMENT

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 Grounding Technique

In your safe space, be intentional and bring into awareness...

5 things you can see

4 things you can feel

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste

Practicing mindfulness techniques often can help improve your overall well-being.