



Stress and Anxiety

For Parents and Students



Why is this Conversation Important?

- 1 in 5 children between the ages of 13 and 18 have or will have a mental illness.
- 8% of these children will have an anxiety disorder
- 50% of all lifetime mental illnesses begin by age 14.
- Only 36% to 44% of children and adolescents with depression receive treatment.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens who are 15 to 24 years old.

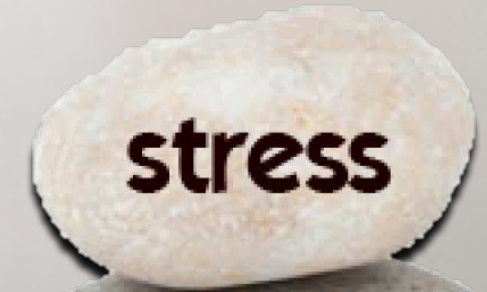


Possible Signs of Mental Illness in Children

- Struggling in school, more than is usual, difficulty concentrating.
- Bullying their peers.
- Avoiding friends and family.
- Frequent mood swings or intense emotions, like angry outbursts.
- Lack of energy or motivation.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Neglecting or obsessing with their appearance.
- Changes in diet, eating significantly more or less.
- Attempting to injure themselves.

How to Help

- Be Attentive
- Try to Understand
- Reach out for Help
 - In the Community
 - Your Child's School



Signs and Symptoms of Unresolved Stress in Children



STRESS

Physical

decreased appetite
headaches
chest pain
blurred vision
dry mouth
unusual perspiration
nightmares
sleep disturbances
vague stomach pain

Emotional

worries
inability to relax
clinginess
anger
crying
whining
inability to control emotions
hyperactivity
difficulty concentrating



How to Help with Stress

- Talk to your child, try to find the root of the stress.
- Cut back on activities, if needed.
- Reduce Chaos.
- Ensure your child is sleeping enough.
- Be a role model for handling stress.
- Again, try to be understanding and reach out for help if needed.
- Try relaxation exercises, coloring, reading, deep breathing.



Relaxation Techniques

- Deep Breathing
 - Breath in deeply through nose.
 - Hold for a moment.
 - Release slowly through mouth or nose.



**Sync your breathing with
this**

Relaxation Techniques (cont.)

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Face
 - Jaws
 - Arms and shoulders
 - Legs and feet



Relaxation Techniques (cont.)

- Laughter
 - Tell jokes
 - Take turns making silly faces
 - Watch a funny movie/show/clip



Relaxation Techniques (cont.)

- Exercise
- Music
- Meditation
- Cuddling



Warning signs of significant anxiety in children and teens:

- ❑ “What if” questions
- ❑ Avoidance
- ❑ Excessive need for reassurance
- ❑ Excessive physical complaints
- ❑ Sleep disturbances
- ❑ Difficulties with concentration, attention
- ❑ Perfectionism
- ❑ Excessive absence from school
- ❑ Easily distressed
- ❑ Lying



How to Help with Anxiety

- Do not just reassure and move on, instead FEEL
 - Freeze: Pause and take some deep breaths together.
 - Empathize: Make sure your child knows you understand.
 - Evaluate: Once your child is calm, try finding solutions.
 - Let Go: Let go of any guilt you may feel, you're doing a great job and you're giving your child the tools they need.



EMPATHY



How to Help with Anxiety (cont.)

- Teach your child to be a Thought Detective
 - Catch thoughts: Pinpoint anxiety based thoughts
 - “No one at school likes me.”
 - Collect evidence: To either support or negate thought. Emphasize the importance of facts and emotions.
 - Supporting: “I had a hard time finding someone to sit with at lunch today.”
 - Negating: “Emily and I do homework together, we’re friends.”
 - Challenge your thoughts: Using the evidence, teach your child to debate with themselves.

*You don't need to control
your thoughts.
But you can stop them
controlling you.*



How to Help with Anxiety (cont.)

- Checklist with smaller goals
 - After calming down, turn the “big scary thing” into smaller more manageable goals.
 - Paper due in two weeks.
 - Brainstorm topics.
 - Outline main ideas.
 - Rough Draft.
 - Second Draft.
 - Final Draft.
 - One big project becomes five manageable steps.



A photograph of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, both tied with thick, light-brown rope. The hands are positioned as if they are about to be released or are in the process of being freed. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

How to Help with Anxiety (cont.)

- Teach your child to focus on what is happening rather than what could happen.
- Don't just avoid the causes of anxiety.
- Teach them to be kind and forgiving of themselves. And practice this yourself too!

Anxiety Relief Techniques

- 5 4 3 2 1 Grounding.
 - 5 LOOK: for 5 things around you, say what you see out loud.
 - “I see a computer.”
 - 4 FEEL: Pay attention to your body, say 4 things you feel.
 - “I feel my hair on the back of my neck.”
 - 3 LISTEN: for 3 things around you, say aloud.
 - “I hear typing.”
 - 2 SMELL: Name 2 things you smell or focus on your two favorite smells.
 - “I smell garlic.”
 - 1 TASTE: Name 1 thing you taste, or focus on your favorite taste.
 - “I taste my toothpaste from brushing my teeth.”



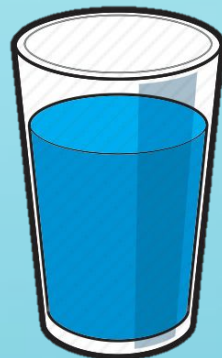
Anxiety Relief Techniques (cont)

- Create a Coping Skills box.
 - Bubbles
 - Stuffed Animal
 - Headphones
 - Gum/Candy
 - Calming Spray/Lotion
 - Activities/Games
 - Books
 - Bubble Wrap



Anxiety Relief Techniques (cont.)

- Breath!
- Think of your favorite things: song, movie, place.
- Name animals alphabetically.
- Drink some cold water.
- Squeeze something.
- Listen to Music.
- Do a Hook-up.





IS YOUR CHILD DEPRESSED?

Common signs of depression among kids include:

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger, or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Restlessness and agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide



A photograph of two young women sitting on a light-colored couch in a room. The woman on the left is wearing a white sweater and glasses, and she is holding the hand of the woman on the right. The woman on the right is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. In the background, there is a white bulletin board covered with various photos and papers. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a window nearby.

How to Help with Depression

- Just listen.
 - Be empathetic and understanding.
 - Validate their emotions.
 - Don't just try to solve the problem.

How to Help with Depression (cont.)

- Accentuate the positive.
 - Comment on the good things your child does everyday; taking a showering, doing their homework, interacting with the family.
 - Avoid talking about what disappoints you, likely they already feel disappointed.



How to Help with Depression (cont.)

- Seek treatment.
 - Therapy
 - Medication
 - Or Both



How to Help with Depression (cont.)

- Take care of yourself!
 - Lead by example.
 - Make time to do what you enjoy.
 - Happy Parent = Happy Child.

ROLE
model

happy
healthy
parents
make
happy
healthy
children.
-Dr. Miriam Stoppard

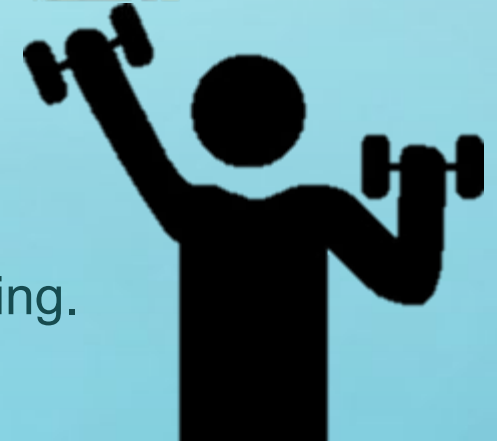
Depression Relief Techniques

- Try to stay connected.
 - Reach out to people you feel safe and comfortable with.
 - Make face-time a priority.
 - Care for a pet.
 - Join a support group, or see about creating one here.



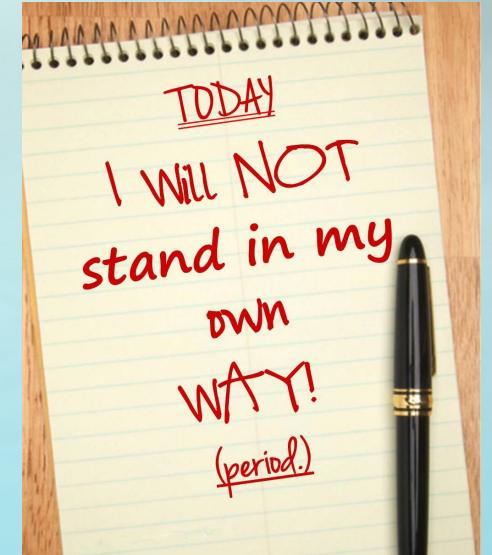
Depression Relief Techniques (cont.)

- Do things you enjoy.
 - Read, Draw, Listen to music.
 - Spend some time in nature.
 - Watch something funny.
- Support your health.
 - Aim for eight hours of sleep.
 - Practice daily relaxation techniques.
 - Eat more fruit, leafy greens, eggs, chicken, tuna, and salmon.
- Get Moving.
 - Do exercises that are rhythmic. Dance, yoga, weights
 - Get a work out partner.
 - When doing this, focus on how your body feels and is responding.



Depression Relief Techniques (cont.)

- Don't be your own worst enemy.
 - Challenge your negative thoughts.
 - List what you like about yourself.
 - Be proud of your accomplishments
- Celebrate your small victories.
 - You remembered to eat and drink water today.
 - You read that chapter.
 - You took a walk.



Resources

- www.adolescenthealth.org
 - Has a compiled list of:
 - Online Mental Health Resources.
 - Mental Health Networks
 - Mental Health Treatment Guides
 - And a Treatment Services Locator

