

Adolescent Stress: How Parents Can Help

Examples of typical stress in adolescents are generally short-term, situational and expected. Usually, adolescents are able to manage typical stress effectively. Some common situations that adolescents may deal with are transitions to new classes, assessments, homework, organizing time and relationships.

Distress can be more difficult for adolescents. Examples of distress can be a loss (relationship or death), rejected by peers in person or electronically, severe academic issues, family issues or financial concerns.

Parents can help their teen manage their stress.

- 1) **Help by cutting back on overextended extracurricular activities.** You can help them prioritize their activities. Sometimes it helps to have some down time to process things going on in their life.
- 2) **Brainstorm ways to incorporate stress relieving coping skills.** Some ideas could be music, hanging out with friends, writing, reading, drawing, positive self-talk or exercise.
- 3) **Help them incorporate positive sleeping and healthy eating schedules.**
- 4) **Set limits for screen time.** Though video games and other screen time can be calming, too much time can be counterproductive. Put cell phones, tablets or computers in an agreed upon place in the home so it's away from your teen's sleeping quarters. Many teens are "connected" 24/7 and deal with very distressing things throughout the night or early morning hours. This also affects their sleep.
- 5) **Finally, please remember that as much as it seems like your teenager doesn't want to communicate, please keep the line of communication open.** Let them know you are available any time to talk. Give them encouragement for even small things they do. Be very respectful using firm, but kind, choices and logical consequences if necessary.

***If you notice any unusual changes in behavior, sleeping or eating patterns, please contact a mental health professional, the school's Guidance Counselor or School Social Worker.**

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