

IS YOUR CHILD STRESSED OUT?

ARE YOU FEELING STRESSED OUT TOO?

Everyone experiences stress in one way or another, and children and adolescents are no different. It is also not uncommon for stress to become contagious within a family. As a parent, you can sense when your child is overwhelmed or stressed out, and your child can sense when you are finding it difficult to relax.

Here are EIGHT inexpensive and simple ways to help your family cope with the stress of everyday life:

1. Create a family relaxation kit together.
 - a. Take a basket, storage bin, or cardboard box and instruct your family members to put in items that can help them relax and feel better after a long day. You can include books, DVDs, arts and crafts supplies, stress balls, etc. Encourage everyone to be creative!
2. Ask your family members to fantasize about the next vacation they would like to take or a fun activity they would like to engage in during the upcoming weekend. This will give everyone something to look forward to.
3. Take a break from technology. Ask everyone to turn off their cell phones, tablets, iPods, etc. for at least 15-30 minutes each day.
4. Encourage your family members to talk about the things that they are grateful for or things that they appreciate about your family. Every family argues and experiences conflict, but every family also has its strengths and positive qualities.
5. Do a "feelings check" with your children. Ask them to list all of the feelings that they felt that day and what triggered those feelings. You can share your feelings with them as well. The goal shouldn't be to "fix" those feelings but to validate them. Let your children know that you understand why they might have felt that way.
6. If your loved ones are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, ask them what you can do to help them or to show support. Don't expect yourself to be a mind reader. Let them tell you what they need to help them feel better.
7. Play a board game or card game together or play some music. An activity like this can distract everyone from the tough parts of their day and can give you the opportunity to connect with your children and spouse in a relaxed and positive way.
8. Take a walk together. Physical activity (even just 10-15 minutes of it) can help you relieve stress and will release mood-boosting endorphins.

If you feel that stress is impacting your family in negative ways or you would like to learn more about stress management, please contact:

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