

Stressed Out—and What to Do About It

Stress is our body's reaction to people and events and to our own thoughts. Teens face as much or more stress than any other age group. Some stress is normal, such as before a date, a big test, or an athletic event. But too much stress can have physical and psychological repercussions that interfere with health and well-being. Learning important self-management skills can help teens manage stress before it interferes with their health and well-being.



Following these steps makes stress more manageable for teens:

- **RECOGNIZE STRESS** Recognize that the symptoms you are experiencing are a result of stress.
- **IDENTIFY THE CAUSES** Identify the direct or indirect cause(s) of the stress.
- **REDUCE OR AVOID STRESS** If possible, reduce or avoid the causes you have identified.
- **MANAGE STRESS** If you cannot avoid the cause(s) of the stress, use a range of techniques to reduce it. Consider the following techniques:
 - Exercise, eat right, and get enough sleep to stay healthy.
 - Take time to relax with friends.
 - Participate in sports and hobbies.
 - Manage time better.
 - Set realistic goals.
 - Take a positive attitude toward problems.
 - Resolve festering conflicts.
 - Breathe deeply to the count of 10.
- **CHOOSE A TECHNIQUE** Choose the best technique and use it.

Building Your Teen's Social and Emotional Competence

Self-management is a social and emotional learning competency that helps teens effectively regulate their emotions, control impulses, manage stress, and set and achieve goals. These activities help teens build emotional awareness, reflection, and calming skills.

Acting It Out!

Have your teen practice using one or more strategies to reduce stress. Then ask him or her to discuss how it felt and if the level of stress seemed to be reduced.

Solve a Problem!

Have your teen imagine what it would be like if everyone used stress-management strategies regularly. Ask your teen to zero in on how strategy use would impact mood, performance, and relationships.

Many teens are experiencing feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear due to the onset of COVID-19. They need a chance to share their thoughts and feelings and ask questions. Make sure you are accurately informed and ready to educate your teen knowing the information is evolving all the time. Get information from: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.