Managing Stress in the Family: Coping Strategies for Parents

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Center for Youth Development and Intervention

The CYDI's Mission is to improve prevention and treatment of youth mental health and behavioral problems and strengthen communities.

www.cydi.ua.edu

EASE: Managing Emotions for Teens and Young Adults with Autism
Intervention for 12-21 year olds with autism who struggle with managing their emotions
npowell@ua.edu
205-348-6551

The FEELING Study
Online surveys for teens in high school and their caregivers
Email mxia3@ua.edu or visit our website at: https://mxia.people.ua.edu/feeling.html

FAST: Facial Affect Sensitivity Training Study
Intervention for 6-11 year olds who struggle with empathy and concern for consequences
fastclinicaltrial@ua.edu
205-348-2472

R15: Social Attention Study
Research study for 11-13 year olds
b.rad.laboratory@gmail.com
205-348-4201

ORED: Brain Research Study
Research study for 10-17 year olds who are neurotypical or who have been diagnosed with autism or social anxiety
b.rad.laboratory@gmail.com
205-348-4201

Parents: Do you or your child want to participate in research/interventions? Do you want to be informed of events?
Join our CYDI registry to give us permission to contact you with applicable information!

Are you an educator, clinician, organization, or professional and want to be a CYDI partner?
Complete our CYDI partnership survey to let us know you may be interested in partnering with us on future work and would like more info on workshops, events, and research.
Anyone feeling stressed these days?
Stress
So what is stress?
Not all stress is bad
Stress & the sympathetic nervous system

Human reaction to real or imagined danger or threat of danger: Fight or flight response

How do you know when you are stressed?
Physical
Cognitive
Emotions
Behaviors
Executive function areas disengage [PFC]
- problem-solving, moral reasoning
- expression: impulsive behavior, substance use, anxiety, anger

Fight or flight areas engage [subcortical areas]
- increased heart rate, readiness to act
Family

Intimacy/marriage

Health

Family

Intimacy/marriage

Health
What do you do to relieve stress?

- Exercise
- Connect with friends
- Walk the dog
- Watch tv
- Read
- Yoga
- Make time to unwind
- Rely on faith
What is mindfulness?

“Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, without judgment or reaction to whatever appears in the field of your experience”

-Jon Kabat-Zinn
Mindfulness in Everyday Life

- **STOP**
  - **S** top, pause – come to stillness
  - **T** ake a breath
  - **O** bserve, open to present experience: *sensation, emotion, thought, situation*
  - **P** roceed: how can I best take care of myself, this moment?

- **W.I.N.**
  - **W** hat’s
  - **I** mportant
  - **N** ow
Specific strategies

- Brief moments of quality time
- Physical activity
- If a consequence is issued, it cannot be retracted
- Take temperature at the door
Meltdowns (response to stress) in kids

### Prevention
- A meltdown is a reaction, not an attempt to get (not misbehavior)
- Identify primary triggers, minimize them
- Prep child in advance (remind of strategies)

### How to respond
- Reduce stimulation
- Acknowledge the feeling, show respect
- Simple statements, use their name (grounding)
- Maintain warmth and acceptance

### How not to respond
- Ask questions
- Why / how…
- Tell child he needs to stop (instead “I see you are upset”)
- Say “calm down” (instead – “let’s breathe together”)
Where to get more help

- CYDI: www.cydi.ua.edu
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4AChild
Resources

**Mindfulness resources:**
http://www.mindful.org/
http://www.mindfulnet.org/page2.htm
http://www.mindfulnessforteens.com
Resources

- **Breathe Like a Bear** by Kira Wiley
- **Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids** (and Their Parents) by Eline Snel
- **What Does it Mean to be Present?** by Rana DiOrio
- **Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress** by Laurie Grossman, Angelina Alvarez, [Mr. Musumeci’s 5th Grade Class](#), & Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD
- **The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook for Kids: Help for Children to Cope with Stress, Anxiety, and Transitions** by Lawrence E. Shapiro, Robin K. Sprague, & Matthew McKay
- **The Gift of Nothing** by Patrick McDonnell
thank you!

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