



Parents Make A Difference!

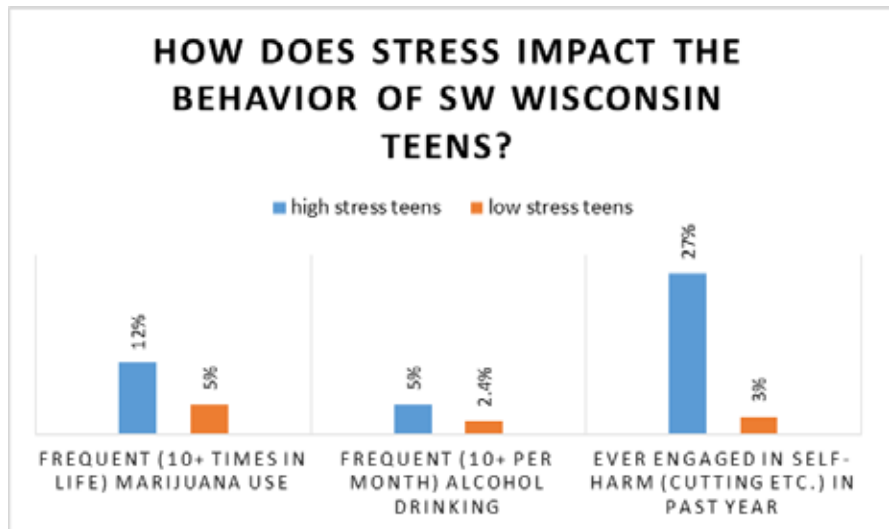
Managing Stress



The changes of adolescence, including social, academic, and other demands, can make the teenage years a stressful time. As a parent, you can help your teen recognize and manage stress in a healthy way. Adults and teens who are overwhelmed by stress may be more likely to engage in destructive behaviors such as drinking alcohol, using drugs, or harming themselves (Labouvie, 1986). Parents may not be able to *remove* the stress from the teen years but they can help kids understand how stress can be beneficial in some circumstances and help them find better ways to cope.

Teens and stress

The 2015 Department of Public Instruction Youth Risk Behavior Survey asked 5,309 youth in grades 7 through 12 in Southwest Wisconsin about a variety of topics. **42%** of 9th-12th graders reported they “always” or “most of the time” **feel stress** in their lives. Of those students who feel constant stress, there is more frequent marijuana use, alcohol drinking, and self-harm compared to students who report lower levels of stress.

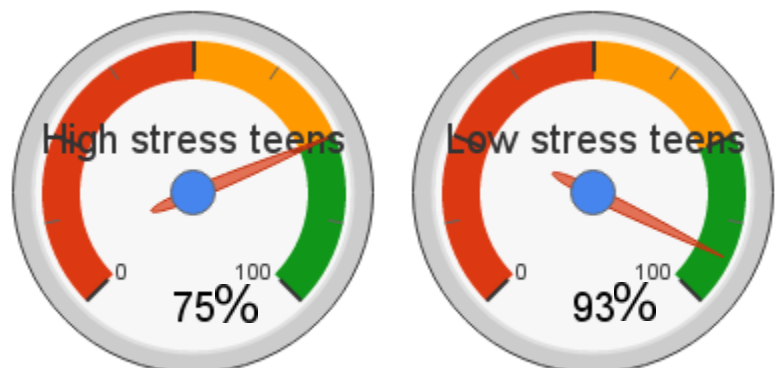


Supporting our teens

Stress is not always a bad thing. Situational stress can motivate students to achieve goals in academics, sports, or performance arts. However, when stress feels negative, there are ways to lessen its impact. One factor that can help relieve stress is feeling a part of a community. Of the students surveyed, **54%** agree that in their community, they **feel like they matter** to people. How do you connect your teen to the world around them? Only **21%** feel that they **get the help they need** when they feel sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious. This trend is relatively consistent across the 4 high school grade levels. Teens need help from their families in managing complex emotions and learning coping mechanisms.

93% OF LOW-STRESS TEENS

AGREE THAT “MY FAMILY LOVES ME AND GIVES ME HELP & SUPPORT WHEN I NEED IT” COMPARED TO 75% OF HIGH-STRESS TEENS.



You don't need to do it alone

If stress, anger, or sadness is overwhelming, reach out to a professional help. When negative feelings are more than your family can handle, contact a doctor or school counselor. Professionals are there to help and can point you in the right direction.

Care for yourself

"Kids don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are." -- Jim Henson

The teenage years can be stressful for parents, too! Be an example for your child by taking time to care for your own body, mind, and emotions/relationships.

REMEMBER – PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

You can assist your teen to manage stress by teaching and modeling positive ways to deal with negative emotions and difficult life events.

Healthy ways to manage stress

Information by Dr. Larissa Duncan, UW-Madison School of Human Ecology

1. Schedule "*Pleasant Events*" with your teen and "capitalize" on these by savoring/amplifying them. Examples of capitalizing include taking note of the positive event, thinking about the event again after it has occurred, and telling others about the event, such as posting it on social media (Langston, 1994).
2. Teach *Mindfulness* to your teen. Mindfulness involves deliberately paying attention to one's present-moment experience, nonjudgmentally (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 2003). Mindfulness is associated with lower anxiety and depression. (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Mindfulness also is thought to allow people to tolerate and reflect on strong emotions rather than responding impulsively (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Check out the stop.breath.think app with your teen for a guided meditation to relax after a hectic day.
3. Make *Gratitude* a family affair. Try keeping a gratitude journal & have your teen do the same. This is associated with less negative attitude, fewer physical symptoms, better sleep quality, and greater satisfaction with life (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).
4. Find *Opportunities for Acts of Kindness*: Volunteer as a family or find simple ways to help others. Engaging in five acts of kindness every week for 6 weeks increased positive attitude in students. (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005)

Teens, Stress, and Parenting Resources:

<http://myparenthetical.com/what-does-parental-self-care-look-like-50-ideas-for-caring-for-yourself-as-a-parent/>
<http://centerhealthyminds.org/join-the-movement/well-being-tips-for-children-and-their-families>
<http://myparenthetical.com/mindful-parenting/>

Getting to Calm: Cool-Headed Strategies for Parenting Tweens + Teens, by Laura S. Kastner

"Parents Make a Difference" is a product of the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a program of the Department of Public Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Extension and local school districts. This newsletter is adapted from the UW-Extension newsletters "Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" This issue of "Parents Make a Difference" was written by Chelsea Wunnicke, UW-Extension Richland County. This issue was reviewed by Bev Doll, UW-Extension Grant County; Amy Mitchell, UW-Extension Crawford County; Lori Berget, UW-Extension Lafayette County; Deb Ivey, UW-Extension Iowa County; and Ruth Schriefer, UW-Extension Iowa County. Thanks are extended to the 5,309 7th to 12th graders from Southwest Wisconsin who participated in the 2015 YRBS survey. Contact UW-Extension for further information: Grant County (608) 723-2125; Lafayette County (608) 776-4820; Crawford County (608) 326-0223; Iowa County (608) 930-9850; or Richland County (608) 647-6148. Or visit our website at: <http://www.cesa3.org/yrebs.html>

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