



## **Coping with School Stress**

It is the month of October which means we are well into the school year and the novelty of school has likely started to wear off. School work is picking up, extracurricular activities have started, and friends are forming their social groups. This can be a time of stress not only for students, but for parents of students as well. Below are some tips and techniques for decreasing stress and making the school year one that is both manageable and enjoyable!

### **#1: Identify the Main Source of Stress**

-What is the cause of your child's stress? Is it the amount of school work they are assigned to complete each night? Is it their understanding of the material they are learning? Are they struggling with extracurricular activities and finding a balance between school, sports, friends, and family? Or is the stress related to their interactions with peers? Whatever your child may be feeling stressed about, there are resources out there to offer them support. I encourage parents to research the types of services offered at their child's school, such as after school homework help/and or tutoring that may aid with academics. Maybe your child would benefit from a social skills group to aid with their socialization with peers. Some schools offer opportunities for students to practice their social skills and meet with other students who may be struggling to make connections. Whatever your child's needs may be, get to know their school staff! There may be resources out there you didn't know existed : ).

### **#2: Rest and Relaxation**

This goes for you parents out there as well! The school year is a busy and stressful time for all. We often forget to set aside time for self-care and relaxation, which only contributes to

our feelings of stress. It is important to set aside time for yourself and your child to engage in fun activities and down time in the home setting. Children and teens may need support with this! It is especially easy for teenagers to get caught up in extracurricular activities and outings with friends, however it is important you talk to them about balancing these activities with time for self-care. Make time for family, schedule a movie night, play games, do something unrelated to school, extracurricular activities, and friends. If possible, encourage your child and/or teen to disconnect from their phones and social media. The struggle is real, but it makes a difference!

### **#3 Teach Positive Self Talk**

Negative self-talk is a major contributor to stress. The messages we send ourselves impacts our ability to handle daily stressors that may come with school, relationships, and extracurricular activities (all of which are especially important during middle and high school years). Try replacing self-defeating talk with positive affirmations and messages of encouragement! With positive self-talk comes confidence, hope, and optimism. That project that may have seemed impossible to complete suddenly becomes more manageable. You may find yourself being able to problem solve difficult situations more easily and have a more optimistic outlook on achieving goals. Young kids may need your help with this mom and dad! You can model positive self-talk for your children and have discussions about what self-encouragement looks like : ).

While the school year is in full swing by the month of October, there is plenty of learning left to be had. These tips and tricks aim to improve you and your child's ability to handle stress. Don't be afraid to ask for help and seek additional support based on you and your child's needs.

We're all in this together!

**Sincerely,**

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