



Stress: Symptoms and Tips

Stress is a pressure that causes a change in behavior. When applied in moderation it can help to sustain life, to motivate, to cause us to make safety decisions. When stressors become out of balance and overbearing the effects can be harmful.

What are the symptoms of childhood and teen stress?

- Feeling upset; Irritable; Increased worry; increase in excuse making
- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty making decisions
- Absent-mindedness
- Deterioration in performance
- Accident prone
- Tension, nervous mannerisms (foot tapping, nail biting, hair twirling, paper shuffling, etc)
- Change in eating habits
- Change in sleeping habits, either decrease or drastic increase
- Substance use and abuse: smoking, alcohol, drugs
- Physical responses: rapid pulse, pounding heart, increased perspiration, shortness of breath, grinding teeth

Risk factors:

- Increasing fear which debilitates and limits life activities and involvement
- Health issues: stomach, digestion, irritable bowel, heart, obsessive-compulsive rituals
- Safety issues: depression, substance abuse and addictions, self-harm, suicide ideation

What to do:

- Provide reassurance that they are safe and respond with empathy
- Seek support and assistance (You're not alone)
- Inform your school counselor or nurse
- Utilize resource list in Parent Toolkit

