

Tips on Teaching Your Teen How to Deal with Stress

By Denise Witmer

Learning how to deal with stress is a part of growing up, but your teen will need your help. Here are seven tips that will help you, help him:

- Be available to talk. If you're never there for your teen, you won't be able to help him. Take some time out of your week for some one-on-one time with him. Make this part of your routine so that your teenager will know that he can count on you being there.
- Encourage healthy escapes from the daily grind of school. Show your teenager the benefits of taking the dog out for a jog, hiking a trail, or just going out for a walk. Physical activity is known to relieve stress. Creativity will also help to relieve stress. Buy your teenager a journal or diary or encourage another creative hobby.
- Laughter can get rid of stress just as much as exercise and is another healthy escape. Make comic or humorous books available in your home. Allow get-togethers with friends. Rent movies with a comedy theme. You can also teach your teen how to laugh at himself, using humor to take the stress away from normal human mistakes that can happen.
- Build your teenager's confidence and self-esteem by remembering to praise him when he does something good. Make this a habit by finding something your teenager did right ~ everyday. It's not that they aren't doing good things all the time; it's just that we, as parents, sometimes need to take the time to notice that they are doing good things. With the basic foundation of confidence and self-esteem that you provide, your teenager will be better able to handle changes and stress.
- Teach your teenager how to keep things in perspective. This is an important part of relieving stress. Taking a situation and looking at it from different points of view and seeing how it relates in the whole scheme of life is a skill your teenager will need to learn. He will be able to reduce his stress load if he is able to 'let go' of the little stress triggers we encounter in our lives.
- Show your teenager how to focus on the positive aspects of a situation. Have him try and list the benefits and opportunities created, rather than the problems. Even the most unpleasant experiences can lead to positive growth and outcomes
- Be wary of negative roadblocks. Often teenagers who do not learn how to deal with stress appropriately turn to drugs and alcohol. Talk to your teen often about these roadblocks and remember the warning signs.