

# You CAN handle stress.

Life can be stressful! As families, we often feel overworked and overscheduled. Children AND adults feel the effects of our busy lives, so it's important as parents that we're aware of stress and how to help our children handle it in healthy ways.

## STRESS FOR ADULTS vs. STRESS FOR CHILDREN

### 10 SIMPLE STRESS-BUSTING SKILLS YOU (and your kids) CAN DO TODAY:

1. Learn to say "no."
2. Take 10 deep breaths.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Find a parent support group.
5. Eliminate stimulants (like caffeine).
6. Go outside for fresh air.
7. Spend quality time with family.
8. Find an activity you love.
9. Keep the lines of family communication open.
10. Set "family priorities."

#### What are the common causes of stress?

(Note differences and similarities.)

- jobs/employment
- finances
- family/relationships
- personal health & safety
- death of a loved one
- obligations/responsibilities

- over-packed schedules
- peer pressure
- bullying/harassment
- self-imposed pressure in school, activities
- any major life changes

#### What are the signs of stress in me? In my children?

(Again, notice similarities!)

- anxiety/depression
- insomnia or over-sleeping
- headaches, muscle pain, other physical ailments
- anger, lashing out
- lack of focus
- changes in eating habits (over-eating or no eating)
- reliance on alcohol, drugs

- emotional changes (sad, irritable, fearful, angry)
- behavior changes (losing temper, crying)
- physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)
- changes in interactions with others (withdrawal from friends and social situations)

#### How can I manage my own stress?

#### How can I help my child?

(It's important to be a role model.)

- identify sources of stress and make changes when possible
- recognize how you react to stress, be aware of triggers
- develop a variety of stress management skills (see tips at left)

- help your child understand what stress is, give examples
- support them in making life changes to avoid unnecessary stress (i.e. too many activities)
- teach coping skills that will empower them to handle stress on their own

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