



Frenchtown Community Coalition

Working to create a healthy, engaged, and unified community for the youth of Frenchtown

Tips for Helping Teens Manage Stress During the Holidays

In an increasingly fast-paced, technology-driven world, teen stress, depression and anxiety are on the rise. A survey by the American Psychological Association found that younger Americans report the highest level of stress among all age groups. In addition to peer, academic, social and family pressures, the holiday season can bring seasonal stressors.

Less daylight. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a common cause of the blues in the winter months due to a decrease in sunlight.

Changes in schedules and routines. Teens are already overscheduled these days. Holiday festivities and family get-togethers can make for an even tighter schedule.

Financial worries. Adults aren't the only ones stressing over finances. Not only do teens pick up on our worries and react to them, they often have the same worries, like how to pay for college or what to do after graduation. And during the holiday season, there is the added financial strain of gift giving.

Changes in diet and sleep routines. The holiday season comes with extra sweets and indulgences. In moderation that's not usually a problem. But too much sugar can have a negative impact on blood sugar and mood.

Increased grief about divorce, death, or other family changes. The holidays are often a reminder of loved ones that are no longer with us.

Some stress, sadness and anxiety are normal feelings around the holidays. But sometimes seasonal stress can be enough to cause clinical signs of depression and anxiety. It can be hard to distinguish normal teenage angst from signs of something more serious.

Here are some signs to look out for:

- General health complaints, especially frequent headaches and stomach aches.
- An increase in irritability or moodiness.
- Declining grades at school.
- Losing interest in things they used to enjoy.
- Changes in eating and hygiene habits.
- Behavioral changes such as acting out or isolating themselves.

Good self-care can help combat stress and prevent it from becoming a more serious problem. Here are some things you and your teen can do:

Get active. Exercise is a great way to reduce stress.

Rest. Teens need between eight to 10 hours of sleep a night but rarely get it. Creating a nightly routine is a good way to start better sleep habits.

Eat well. Remember to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean protein and drink lots of water. A healthy diet can help regulate your mood.

Meditation, breathing techniques and yoga are great stress relievers.

Giving back can foster gratitude and help your teen gain perspective.

Slow Down. Take time to slow down and enjoy the season. Stress isn't always a bad thing. In fact, it can motivate us to work harder and be more efficient. However, prolonged stress can have a negative impact on our physical and emotional wellbeing. If you notice yourself or your teen continuing to feel overwhelmed with stress, sadness or anxiety beyond the holiday season, it is important to see a mental health professional.



Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays from the Frenchtown Community Coalition!



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If you have questions or would like to join the Frenchtown Community Coalition Please contact FTCC@ftsd.org or call 626-2772

