DE-STRESS

Everyone experiences stress. Stress is a part of life. Our students' lives can become overwhelming as they manage schedules filled with high academic performance expectations, sports, clubs, community service, work, planning for the future, peer pressure, and home responsibilities. Stress is a normal physical response to things that are happening in life. Sometimes stress can gradually build up before students recognize that their bodies and minds are overly stressed. When that happens, our students truly suffer. Focus and concentration is hindered, anxiety can increase and academic performance may decline.

Here are some simple ways that parents can help their teens take better care of themselves and manage daily stress:

- Provide Teens with Lots of Water
- Offer Teens 3 Meals a Day & Healthy Snacks (Nourish Mind and Body)
- Promote Both Exercise and Plenty of Rest (Recommend 9.5 Hours of Sleep Daily)
- Teach Teens to Practice Breathing Deeply and Slowly when Stressed
- Remind Teens to Slow Down, Plan Ahead, and to Take One Thing at a Time
- Help Teens to Focus on the Positive as Often as Possible
- Notice the Funny Side of Life… Teach Your Teen to Laugh Often!
- Encourage Teens to Say "No" to Extra Activities/Projects that Require More Time/Energy
- Make Time to Chill and Relax… Breathe Slowly, Stretch, Take a Warm Bath, Read for Fun
- Every Day Have Your Teen Do Something Enjoyable and Do Something for Somebody Else
- Share Your Problems with Trusted Friends, Family, Teachers and Counselors

It can be challenging to tell the difference between normal teenage stress and potentially concerning behaviors. **Concerning behaviors may include:** *persistent sadness or anxiousness, significant change in eating or sleeping habits, increase in irritability, restlessness, "not caring", loss of concentration, loss of interest in once pleasurable activities, hopelessness or thoughts of suicide.*

For additional support, consult with your doctor, mental health professional, community agency or your school's support staff (social worker, psychologist, nurse, guidance counselors). Simply call 2-1-1 (1-866-211-3380) to access information about area resources that can help resolve a variety of basic life needs and personal issues. For additional information, feel free to call 414-344-0447 (National Alliance on Mental Illness "NAMI" Greater Milwaukee). Please know that help is out there. You are not alone.