

How Teenagers and Older Children Reach Out to Adults



Sometimes our children are very direct when they want our attention. "I need to talk with you." "Can we go to the park tomorrow?" "Watch this movie with me."

They don't always tell us in words that they need our attention.

Sometimes they show us indirectly through their behaviours. We just have to know what to look for.



Examples

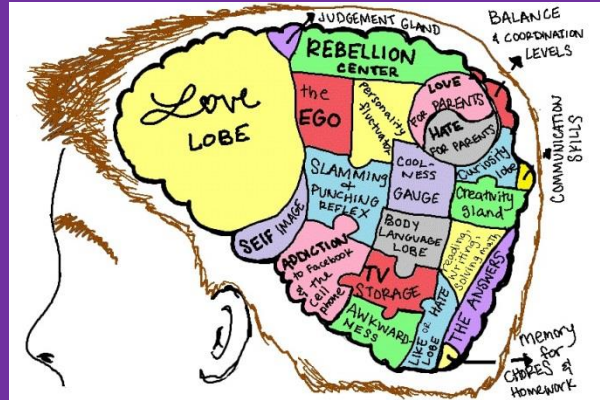
- Steve sits next to his dad in the room when he needs to talk, but he does not say anything until his father says "What's on your mind?"
- Janet cooks breakfast on the weekend for her parents when she wants to spend time with them.
- Dave goes to his uncle's workplace after school when he wants to spend time with uncle Mike.



Teenagers differ in how they reach out to their parents and other adults. How does your teenager do it?

- When are the times that your teenager reaches out to you?
- Is there a difference in how your teenager reaches out when he or she just wants to connect with you compared to when they're having a problem?

By spending a little time each day with your teenager, even if it is just tidying up a room together or having a meal, you have an invaluable window into your teenager's life.



Sometimes their life might become stressful and your teenager may need help to deal with a problem.



Reasons Teens Need Help

Stress, anger and/or depression resulting from difficulties in their life, such as:

- Academic problems.
- Problems with family members, peers, close friends or boyfriend/girlfriend.
- Problems with teachers or supervisors.
- Worries about their future.

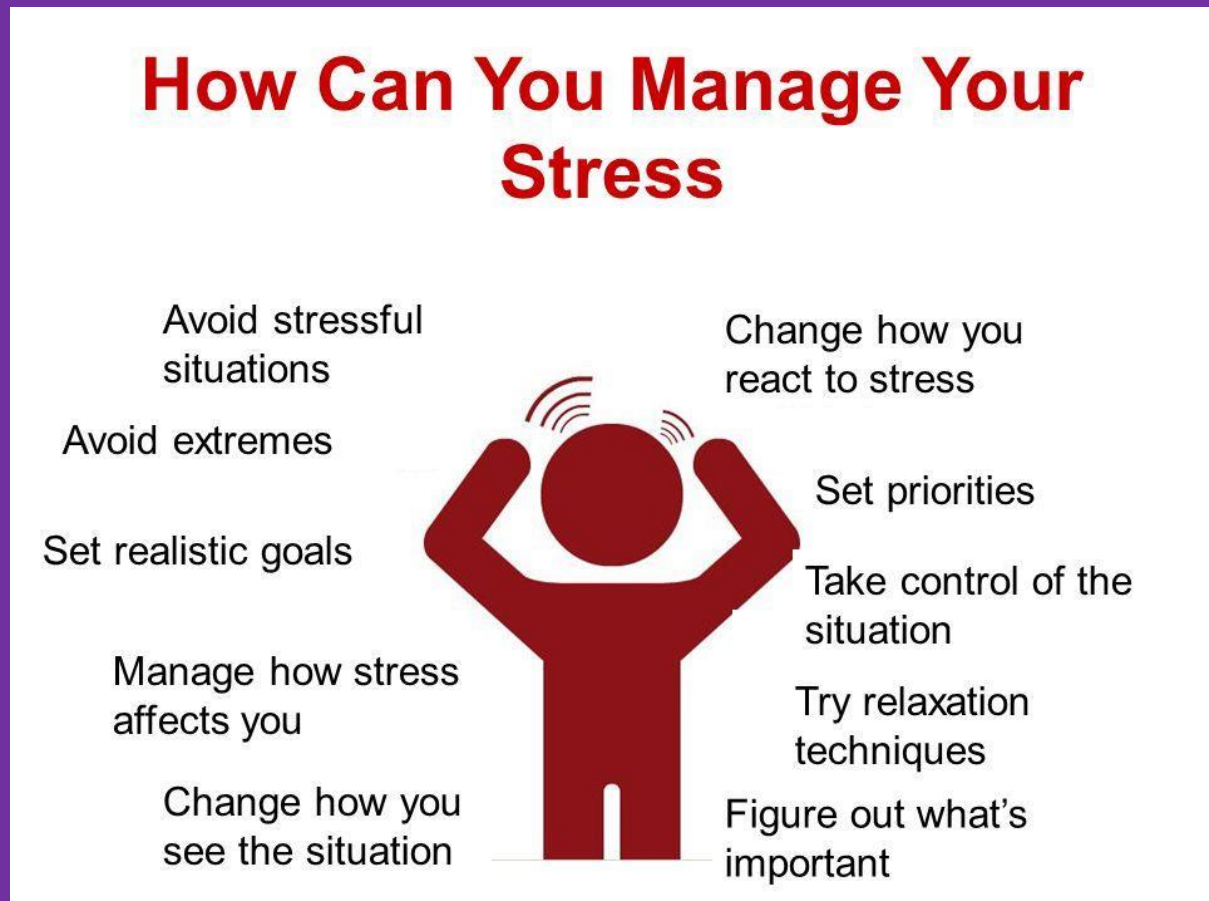
Teens and Depression

Why teens may be depressed: Stress

- Teenagers, like adults, experience stress in their lives.
- Teenagers often feel most stressed by situations they see as outside of their control.
- These situations can be anything from frustrations and demands at school, to moving house, to problems with friends or even the death of somebody close to them.
- Teenagers can sometimes feel overwhelmed by the stressors in their lives as they haven't yet developed the resilience to deal them.
- Unlike adults however, teenagers may not yet have a means of coping with this stress.

How Parents Can Help Their Children

- Realise that teenage stress is something to be taken seriously.
- Watch to see if stress is affecting your child's health, behaviour, thoughts or feelings.
- Listen carefully to your child and watch for signs of overload.
- Learn and Model stress management skills. (our PSA can help you with these)
- Support your teenagers involvement in extra-curricular, pro-social activities.



How teenagers can manage their stress

- Exercise and eat regularly.
- Watch out for excess caffeine intake which can lead to anxiety and agitation.
- Learn relaxation exercises.
- Learn to be assertive rather than aggressive or passive.
- Learn coping skills such as breaking large problems into smaller parts.
- Decrease negative talk and thoughts into more positive ways of thinking.
- Learn to feel good about doing a good job.
- Take breaks from stressful situations.
- Build a supportive network of friends.



When stress becomes too much these are signs that your teenager may be depressed.

- If these symptoms last 2 or more weeks your teen may be depressed:
 - Consistently sleeping more or less than usual.
 - Frequent and lengthy bouts of anger.
 - Chronic boredom.
 - Inability to focus or think clearly.
 - Loss of interest in things formerly enjoyed.
 - Withdrawing from friends and Family.
 - Sexual Promiscuity.

Depression can lead to thoughts of suicide. If you think your teen is having thoughts of hurting themselves encourage them to seek help from your General Practitioner or your local GP's surgery nursing team – they will know how to quickly access support for your child and YOU!

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.

Parents can access help and advice they may need by using the hyperlink below. You can either type the "URL" into your internet browser engine, or simply Google "young minds charity"

http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents

If you feel you need a chat (or emotional support) in contacting any professionals or agencies, our PSA can help you. Call the PRS main number and leave your details with the office staff – the PSA will then get back to you as soon as they can.

Main Telephone Contact Number - 01609 710 443