



Stress Management: Healthy Stress Management

Our responses to stress are more than just responses. They are coping mechanisms. Unfortunately, sometimes we choose unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Unhealthy Stress Management responses are attempts to cope, but they are ineffective in the long run, and they can even make us sick. Be aware: are you or your child using any of these techniques to cope?

1. Physical coping responses: headaches, stomachaches, sleep difficulties.
2. Behavioral coping responses: smoking, drinking, crying, bossy, overeating, refusal to go to school, sassy (back talk), isolation, lashing out, lack of patience, toilet accidents, biting nails, chewing hair, clinging.
3. Emotional coping responses: boredom, loneliness, depressed, easily upset/on edge, angry.
4. Cognitive coping responses: constant worry, trouble thinking clearly, forgetfulness, loss of sense of humor.

Good stress management involves:

1. Recognizing when we are using unhealthy stress management techniques
2. Being aware, taking control, and deciding to use healthy stress management techniques.

Here are some Healthy Stress Management Techniques:

1. Practice good nutrition
2. Get regular physical activity
3. Identify and remove a stressor
4. Talk about your stress with someone
5. Reframe the stressor from something bad that is happening to you to something challenging that you are confronting successfully.
6. Learn and practice relaxation techniques.

The first step to reducing stress is noticing that it's happening or about to happen. Be aware of your stress coping symptoms so you can choose to use healthy ones!

For more tips, or if you need more information or would like to talk to someone:

In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

Outside of Washington State: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at

www.circleofparents.org