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BeWell
Health & Wellness

BeWell BridgeUP Health and Wellness Parent Newsletter

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PARENT STRESS

Stress Basics for Parents



While being a parent is joyful, it is also one of the most stressful life experiences. All parents experience stress. While some stress may help you deal with challenges, too much stress can be bad for your health and relationships. It may leave you without energy, enthusiasm, and joy. Stress may also cause problems in your relationship with your teenager.

Common Sources of Stress for Parents:

- Health problems
- Financial concerns
- Relationship troubles
- Work demands
- Worry about children
- Dealing with elderly parents
- Problems with the neighborhood

Impacts of Stress

STRESS AND YOUR BODY

Too much stress may cause physical harm to your body, including your mental and emotional health. Stress may also increase your risk of accidents, decrease your overall life satisfaction, and increase your risk of alcohol and drug abuse. Some of the most common symptoms of stress are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Changes in sleeping patterns ▫ Changes in eating patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Weight loss ▫ Diarrhea ▫ Nausea | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Body aches/headaches ▫ High blood pressure ▫ High cholesterol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fatigue ▫ Poor concentration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Difficulties relaxing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Restlessness ▫ Frustration ▫ Anxiety ▫ Depression |
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STRESS AND YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Stress can also cause troubles in relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. Even when parents try to hide their stress, teenagers still can feel when their parents feel stressed. Teenagers with stressed parents take on the stress of their parents and often have negative coping behaviors.

Steps and Resources to Reduce Stress

In order to be the best parent possible and have the energy to care for you family, you first have to give yourself permission to take care of yourself. Reducing stress can seem difficult, but there are simple things you can do to identify your stress and work to reduce your stress.

RECHARGE

Make sure you are recharging everyday. Try to **eat healthier** foods to make your body feel energized. Get enough **sleep** each night and exercise regularly. You can also recharge by spending **quiet time alone** or taking up a **hobby**.

CHOOSE YOUR PARENTING BATTLES

Remember, **not everything is worth the stress** of a fight. Being **consistent with discipline** and, if necessary, talking to your child's other parent about **co-parenting** techniques may help.

Parenttoolkit.com has many tips and resources in English and Spanish to help you recharge and learn parenting techniques. Search for their articles "Eight Ways to Bring **Mindfulness** into Your Family" to learn about mindfulness exercises or "This is the Most Effective Way to **Discipline** Kids, According to Science" to learn about parenting techniques.

FIND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Do not be afraid to **ask for help**. Community organizations, and support groups are just a few services that are available to help you.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Your doctor can help to identify any physical or mental illness that may be contributing to your stress.

DEVELOP A BUDGET

Planning how you spend your money and how much you spend can help to reduce stress caused by financial concerns.



Single Stops are community based organizations where families can get assistance with services including: applying for public assistance, legal services, referrals to childcare services, immigration services, referrals to medical and health services, and referrals to support groups or stress management services. Visit singlestopusa.org/locations/ to find a Single Stop in your neighborhood.

If you need to talk to someone immediately, you can contact the **Parent Helpline** (NY Foundling) for crisis counseling and parent support at **1(888) 435-7553** or **LIFENET** for mental health and crisis support at **1(800) 543-3638** for English and **1(877) 298-3373** for Spanish.

If you need specific assistance for yourself, your teen, or a member of your family, contact Renee Cohall, LCSW, Co-Director of the BeWell BridgeUP Health and Wellness Initiative at **(646)-245-4000** or rmc49@cumc.columbia.edu. For more information about general resources to reduce stress or assist with parenting contact Jenn Meyer and Annie Walden-Newman at bewellbu@gmail.com

