



## MENTAL HEALTH

# “Auntie” Stress

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## Stress – Not Just For Adults

Imagine your child or teen doing well at school, easily remaining focused on assignments, secure in their relationships with peers, adults and family members, and able to deal effectively with disappointments and set-backs. This is not always the case and when you see them struggling, whether at school, in their hobbies or their personal life, you are willing to do anything to help them.

Poor results on tests and exams, inability to focus, low self-esteem, making unwise life choices - these are just some of the signs that your child may be suffering from stress or anxiety. Think about how we feel when we have deadlines, pressures, disagreements and other demands on our life. As an adult, we are expected to have the skills to handle all these pressures and yet we continue to struggle. Children and teens who have not yet had life experiences can and do feel overwhelmed and exhibit this in a variety of ways, including acting out, withdrawal, depression, feelings of inadequacy and disinterest in life. Their self-esteem, motivation and care to learn becomes stifled.

In school, it is important to have test smarts, stress smarts and facts smarts. By becoming balanced emotionally, test and stress smarts improve which then impacts facts smarts. Have you ever struggled to remember something when you were under stress? Or, do you wonder why you forget the simplest things? That's stress at work. Our attention is not on what needs to be done, but rather on the thing that is distracting us – whether it be the argument

with a friend or family member or our frustration with trying to master a new skill.

Unfortunately, unless steps are taken to introduce techniques to deal with this, the effects are cumulative, resulting in more of what you don't want for your child. So what can be done?

It is important to learn to control our reactions to the upheavals in life. Although, it may not seem apparent, we do have a choice in how we react to the stressors in our lives. By developing skills we can learn to act in a way that leaves us emotionally, mentally and physically healthy.

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“Auntie-Stress”  
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