All people experience stress differently. Children respond to stressful situations in similar ways to how parents respond. If you can be calm during times of increased stress it will help your child remain calm too! It is common to have physical, emotional, and behavioral responses to stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• nausea or stomach upset</td>
<td>• excessive worry</td>
<td>• social isolation or withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• headache</td>
<td>• helplessness</td>
<td>• excessive cleaning or sanitizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fatigue</td>
<td>• difficulty concentrating or focusing</td>
<td>• over or under eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• muscle tension</td>
<td>• anger</td>
<td>• sleep disturbances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• joint pain</td>
<td>• frustration</td>
<td>• avoiding public places</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The emotional or physical response may not be within your control. So, let’s focus on what you can control – your actions and behaviors.

- First, identify the emotions that you have during times of increased stress
- Second, label the emotions (this can be a mental task, or you can write it down)
- Third, identify the actions and behaviors that occur with the emotion
- Last, replace unhealthy actions/behaviors with healthier alternatives

It may be helpful to keep a written log that includes dates, times, and events that are related to an increase in stress. This can help to identify patterns that occur over time.

For example, if you regularly experience increased stress on Sunday evenings you can make a plan for what to do on Sunday evenings to help keep your stress levels down.
DAILY CHANGES TO HELP MANAGE STRESS

- Limit the amount of COVID news and information that you consume to the most credible sources and reduce your time on social media/websites that are not fact-based. Good places to find factual information:
  - local or state health department
  - CDC website
- Explore new activities or hobbies or increase the amount of time spent engaging in hobbies or activities that you already enjoy.
- Set up a daily routine or schedule. Be sure to include designated time for self-care, fun, family, friends, meals, exercise, work and sleep. Hang it on the fridge for a daily reminder.
- Make time for yourself. Go for a short walk, phone a friend, or take time alone in a separate room without disruptions.
- Maintain your own health. Your body and mind work best when they are well maintained. Do your best to eat a proper diet, exercise, and get sufficient amounts of sleep.

BUILD A COPING SKILLS TOOLBOX

Coping skills are sensory appealing tools that help the mind and body to keep calm or de-stress.

- Hearing/Sound – music, audio books, white noise, nature sounds
- Sight/Vision – pictures of your beach vacation, family photos, watch calming TV show
- Feeling/Touch/Tactile – a fuzzy blanket, a warm mug of hot cocoa, fidgets
- Smell/Scents – essential oils, reed diffuser, lotion, baking
- Taste – favorite foods or drinks
- Movement – go for a walk, yoga, stretching, exercise
- Others – deep breathing, meditation

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