

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Healthy Relationships:

Healthy Relationships: A Guide for Teens
10 Tips for Building Healthy Relationships

Workshops # 1

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

MINORITY CHRISTIAN COACHES ASSOCIATION

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Healthy Relationships

Healthy Relationships: A Guide for Teens

Healthy relationships are fun and make you feel good about yourself. You can have a healthy relationship with anyone in your life, including your family, friends and dating partners. Relationships take time, energy, and care to make them healthy. The relationships that you make in your teen years will be a special part of your life and will teach you some of the most important lessons about who you are. This guide was written to help you understand different kinds of relationships, what makes each relationship special, and how to communicate in a positive way. We have included common stories and fun ways to work on many kinds of relationships.

What makes a relationship *healthy*?

Communication & Sharing: The most important part of any healthy relationship between two people is being able to talk and listen to one another. You and the other person can figure out what your common interests are. You can share your feelings with the other person and trust that they will be there to listen and support you. In healthy relationships, people don't lie. Communication is based on honesty and trust. By listening carefully and sharing your thoughts and feelings with another person, you show them that they are an important part of your life.

Respect and Trust: In healthy relationships, you learn to respect and trust important people in your life. Disagreements may still happen, but you learn to stay calm and talk about how you feel. Talking calmly helps you to understand the real reason for not getting along, and it's much easier to figure out how to fix it. In healthy relationships, working through disagreements often makes the relationship stronger. In healthy relationships, people respect each other for who they are. This includes respecting and listening to yourself and your feelings so you can set boundaries and feel comfortable. You will find that you learn to understand experiences and feelings of others as well as having them understand your experiences and feelings.

How do I know that I have a healthy relationship with someone?

You know that you are in a healthy relationship with someone because you feel good about yourself when you are around that person. Unhealthy relationships can make you feel sad, angry, scared, or worried.

Healthy peer relationships involve an equal amount of give and take in the relationship. In unhealthy relationships, there is an unfair balance. You may feel that most of the time you are giving the other person more attention than they give to you.

Healthy Relationships Continued

You should feel safe around the other person and feel that you can trust him/her with your secrets. In a healthy relationship, you *like* to spend time with the other person, instead of feeling like you're pressured into spending time with them. Unhealthy relationships do not include trust and respect, which are very important parts of a family relationship, good friendship, or dating relationship. No one deserves to be in an unhealthy relationship.

When you argue with your friends, you can go home and get away from them. But, when you argue with a brother or sister, they are in your house and you may feel like you can't get away from them. **Talking things out and coming up with rules that you and your brothers and sisters agree on will make living together a lot easier.**

Here are some ways to handle an argument and help you to avoid fighting with your brother(s) or sister(s):

Go for a walk or go to separate rooms in the house, before you lose your temper in an argument.

Talk to your parents about what is bothering you. Most likely they will be able to give you advice.

Set up your own personal space. Even if you share a bedroom, make a little space (even in a corner of your bedroom) that is all yours. Tell your brother or sister that they need to knock before coming into your bedroom or your special area of a shared bedroom.

Respect your brother or sister's personal space too - whether it is their room or a part of your shared bedroom. They will be more likely to show you the same respect in return.

Decide ahead of time how you are going to share the phone. For example, you can figure out separate times when each of you can talk to your friends.

Take turns with the television. Talk ahead of time about what shows you want to watch, then take turns watching your favorite shows if they are on at the same time.

Healthy Relationships Continued

Pick your battles. Try to figure out what is really bothering you. This will help you to know if the problem is worth arguing about. Some issues may be more important than others.

Now that you have some ideas on how to avoid fighting, you may want to think about how to work on building a healthy relationship with your brother or sister. Talking about the things that are bothering you in a calm way really helps. Doing things together, like going on a bike-ride or watching a movie will give you a chance to talk to each other and enjoy the time that you spend together too.

Friendships can be complicated at this time in your life. You may be making new friends while you are trying to keep old friends. One thing that can make any relationship complicated is peer pressure. Peer pressure is when you chose to do something you usually *wouldn't* do, or you stop doing something that you normally *would* do because you are worried about what your friends will think. Some friends may pressure you to do something because "everyone else does it," such as making fun of someone. One of the biggest challenges that you may have to face is standing up to a friend.

Here are tips to help you handle a disagreement with a friend:

You always have the right to say "no" to your friend whenever you want to. In a healthy friendship, you should not be afraid of losing a friend because you say "no." Good friends should respect your right to say no about anything and not give you a hard time. It is important that you show your friend the same respect when they say no to you.

If you and your friend disagree about something or have an argument, it does not mean that you have an unhealthy relationship. You will not always agree with what your friend has to say. As long as you and your friend can talk to one another and listen to what each person has to say, you should be able to work through a disagreement. Healthy friendships involve trust and being able to respect each other's differences.

The friends that you make and the relationships you develop will help you learn a lot about yourself. Your friendships may be the most important thing to you right now. You will find out what things you like to do together but more importantly, you will learn about the kind of friends you want to have and the kind of friend you want to be to others.

Healthy Relationships Continued

There is no best age for teens to begin dating. Every person will be ready for a dating relationship at a different time. Different families may have certain rules about dating too. When you decide to start a new dating relationship, it should be because you care about someone and not because you feel like you have to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. A dating relationship is a special chance to get to know someone, share your thoughts and feelings with each other, and do activities together.

Healthy dating relationships should start with the same ingredients that healthy friendships have, such as good communication, honesty, and respect. Dating relationships are a little different because they may include physical affection, like hugging, kissing, or holding hands. As with all relationships, it may be tempting at first for you to spend all of your time with your new partner. But, making special time to spend together and apart means that you will be able to work on having a healthy relationship with the person you are dating and with other people in your life, like your friends and family.

You should NEVER feel pressured to do something that you don't want to do. He/She should always respect your right to say no to anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. It is important that you are both clear with each other about your values and your limits. By talking about how each of you feel about a lot of things, you may avoid getting into situations where you are pressured into making a decision on the spot about something very important.

Here are some tips for starting a healthy dating relationship and ways to stay safe:

Get to know a person by talking on the phone or at school before you go out with them for the first time.

Go out with a group of friends to a public place the first few times you are spending time together.

Plan fun activities like going to the movies, a picnic, the mall, a walk, etc.

Be clear with the other person about what you feel comfortable doing and what time your parent(s) or guardian(s) expect you to be home.

Tell at least one friend and especially your parent(s) where you are going, who you will be with, and how to reach you.

Healthy Relationships Continued

Dating relationships can be a fun and exciting part of your life now. They may be a little confusing, especially if dating is new to you. Once you know that the person that you like, likes you too, you may be unsure of what to do next. You can start by learning about what makes a dating relationship healthy. The most important thing to remember is staying safe, especially when you begin to date.

Your relationship with your parents may be confusing right now. As you are growing and changing, you have more responsibilities and also more freedom to spend time with other people like friends or dating partners. While you may feel ready to make your own decisions about where and when you go places, your parents will put limits on you. The reason that your parents do this is because they care about you and want to protect you from danger. You may find that you are fighting with your parents more than you used to.

Here are some tips for how to avoid and handle arguments with your parents:

Discuss the rules ahead of time and not at the last minute. This way you will be able to tell what they will say yes or no to before you make plans. Your parents can also explain to you why each rule is in place. Ask them to give you the chance to explain how the rules make you feel and suggest what you think are appropriate rules. Your parents may be willing to listen to your ideas and use them when making rules that you both agree on.

Try to remain calm and do not lose your temper when your parents say no to something. You will show your parents that you are responsible and mature by talking instead of yelling and listening to what they have to say.

Follow each rule that they set. If your parents tell you to be home at a certain time, stick to it. They may begin to worry about your safety if you are late. By being responsible and by following rules, your parents may be willing to negotiate a later time in the future, especially if they know that you will follow their rules.

Pick your battles. Try to figure out what is really bothering you. This will help you to know if it is worth arguing about. Some issues may be more important than others.

Spend time with your family. Some teens argue with their parents over the amount of time they spend with their friends. Communicate with each other and make some special family time so that you can all enjoy the time you spend at home. Suggest activities that your whole family will enjoy together such as going for a hike, a bike ride, or going to the beach

Healthy Relationships Continued

10 Tips for Building Healthy Relationships

September 10th, 2007 by Tejvan Pettinger

1. Speak a little less, listen a little more

Most people get tremendous pleasure from speaking about themselves. But, here we have to be careful; if we always speak about our achievements or tribulations, people will get fed up with our egoism.

If we are willing and able to listen to others, we will find it much appreciated by our friends. Some people are not aware of how much they dominate the conversation. If you find you are always talking about yourself, consider the advice of the Greek philosopher, Epictetus:

"Nature gave us one tongue and two ears so we could hear twice as much as we speak."

2. Which is more important being right or maintaining harmony?

A lot of problems in relationships occur because we want to maintain our personal pride. Don't insist on always having the last word. Healthy relationships are not built through winning meaningless arguments. Be willing to back down; most arguments are not of critical importance anyway.

3. Avoid Gossip

If we value someone's friendship we will not take pleasure in commenting on their frequent failings. They will eventually hear about it. But, whether we get found out or not, we weaken our relationships when we dwell on negative qualities. Avoid gossiping about anybody; subconsciously we don't trust people who have a reputation for gossip. We instinctively trust and value people who don't feel the need to criticise others.

4. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not just a cliché, it's a powerful and important factor in maintaining healthy relationships. However, real forgiveness also means that we are willing to forget the experience. If we forgive one day, but then a few weeks later bring up the old misdeed, this is not real forgiveness. When we make mistakes, just consider how much we would appreciate others forgiving and forgetting.

5. Know When to Keep Silent

If you think a friend has a bad or unworkable idea, don't always argue against it; just keep silent and let them work things out for themselves. It's a mistake to always feel responsible for their actions. You can offer support to friends, but you can't live their life for them.

Healthy Relationships Continued

6. Right Motive

If you view friendship from the perspective of “what can I get from this?” you are making a big mistake. This kind of relationship proves very tentative. If you make friendships with the hope of some benefit, you will find that people will have a similar attitude to you. This kind of friendship leads to insecurity and jealousy. Furthermore, these fair weather friends will most likely disappear just when you need them most. Don’t look upon friends with the perspective “what can I get out of this?”. True friendship should be based on mutual support and good will, irrespective of any personal gain.

7. Oneness.

The real secret of healthy relationships is developing a feeling of oneness. This means that you will consider the impact on others of your words and actions. If you have a true feeling of oneness, you will find it difficult to do anything that causes suffering to your friends. When there is a feeling of oneness, your relationships will be free of jealousy and insecurity.

For example, it is a feeling of oneness which enables you to share in the success of your friends. This is much better than harbouring feelings of jealousy. To develop oneness we have to let go of feelings of superiority and inferiority; good relationships should not be based on a judgemental approach. In essence, successful friendship depends on the golden rule: “do unto others as you would have done to yourself.” This is the basis of healthy relationships.

8. Humour

Don’t take yourself too seriously. Be willing to laugh at yourself and be self-deprecating. This does not mean we have to humiliate ourselves, far from it — it just means we let go of our ego. Humour is often the best antidote for relieving tense situations.

9. Work at Relationships but don’t over analyze

Maintaining healthy relationships doesn’t mean we have to spend several hours in the psychiatrist’s chair. It means we take a little time to consider others, remembering birthdays and anniversaries etc. But, it is a mistake to spend several hours ruminating and dissecting relationships. This makes the whole thing very mental; it’s better to forget any negative experiences. Good friendships should be built on spontaneity and newness, sharing a moment of humour can often do more benefit than several hours of discussion.

Healthy Relationships Continued

10. Concern and Detachment

Healthy relationships should be built on a degree of detachment. Here, people often make a mistake; they think that being detached means, “not caring”. However, this is not the case. Often when we develop a very strong attachment we expect the person to behave in a certain way. When they don't we feel miserable and try to change them. A good friendship based on detachment means we will always offer good will, but we will not be upset if they wish to go a different way.

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Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Good Hygiene Habits:

Defining Hygiene
Personal Hygiene
Tips for Good Hygiene

Workshops # 2

Wellness is Fun Conference



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Good Hygiene Habits

What is Hygiene?

Hygiene is a fancy term that really only refers to the steps you take to keep clean and healthy. You are a very important person and you are responsible for keeping yourself special and healthy. Hygiene is what keeps and promotes the health of people and the community. There are clean living habits everyone should try to follow. Let's learn the importance of cleanliness.

Hygiene is commonly understood as preventing infection through cleanliness. In broader call, scientific terms hygiene is the maintenance of health and healthy living. Hygiene ranges from personal hygiene, through domestic up to occupational hygiene and public health; and involves healthy diet, cleanliness, and mental health.

The term hygiene originates as a reference to Hygieia, who was a daughter of Asclepius and the goddess of health, cleanliness and sanitation.

Outward signs of good hygiene include the absence of visible dirt (including dust and stains on clothing) or of bad odor/smells. Since the development of the germ theory of disease, hygiene has come to mean any practice leading to the absence of harmful levels of bacteria.

Good hygiene is an aid to health, beauty, comfort, and social interactions. It directly aids in disease prevention and/or disease isolation. (That is, good hygiene will help keep one healthy and thus avoid illness. If one is ill, good hygiene can reduce one's contagiousness to others.)

Washing (with water) is the most common example of hygienic behavior. Washing is often done with soap or detergent which helps to remove oils and to break up dirt particles so they may be washed away. Frequent hand washing is among the most common hygienic advice.

Hygienic practices—such as frequent hand washing or the use of autoclaved (and thus sterilized) water in surgery/medical operations—have a profound impact on reducing the spread of disease. This is because they kill or remove disease-causing microbes (germs) in the immediate surroundings. For instance, washing one's hands after using the toilet and before handling food reduces the chance of spreading E. coli bacteria and Hepatitis A, both of which are spread from fecal contamination of food. Adequate hygiene requires an adequate and convenient supply of clean water.

Personal hygiene

Daily washing of the body and hair.

More frequent washing of hands and/or face.

Oral hygiene—Daily brushing and flossing teeth.

Cleaning of the clothes and living area.

General avoidance of bodily fluids such as feces, urine, vomit, saliva and other bodily fluids.

Not touching animals before eating.

Avoidance of direct or indirect contact with unhygienic people.

Holding a tissue over the mouth or using the upper arm/elbow region when coughing or sneezing, not a bare hand. Alternatively, washing hands afterwards.

Suppression of habits such as nose-picking, touching the face etc.

Washing hands before eating.

Not licking fingers before picking up sheets of paper.

Food preparation and consumption

Maintain good food and cooking hygiene to prevent food poisoning

Cleaning of food preparation areas and equipment for example using designated cutting boards for preparing raw meats and vegetables.

Institutional dish sanitizing.

Washing of hands after touching uncooked food when preparing meals.

Not using the same utensils to prepare different foods.

Non-sharing of cutlery when eating.

Not licking fingers or hands while or after eating.

Proper storage of food so as to prevent contamination by vermin.

Refrigeration of foods (and avoidance of certain foods in environments where refrigeration is or was not feasible).

Labeling food to indicate when it was produced (or, as food manufacturers prefer, to indicate its best before date).

Disposal of uneaten food and packaging.

Medicine

Use of bandaging and dressing of wounds.

Use of protective clothing such as masks, gowns, caps, eyewear and gloves.

Sterilization of instruments used in surgical procedures.

Safe disposal of medical waste.

Personal services

Sterilization of instruments used by hairdressers.

Sterilization by autoclave of instruments used in body piercing and tattoo marking.

Personal Reasons

Many people, women in particular, are very conscious of their hygiene needs and practices. This can be a result of being taught of the importance from an early age, from being picked-on at school for head lice or similar, or as a way of making themselves more attractive to the opposite sex.

Self-esteem, confidence and motivation can all be altered by our body image, often reflected on our ability to care for ourselves and keep good hygiene practices.

A bright white smile with clean and healthy teeth can endear people to us, whereas brown, unhealthy teeth can cause embarrassment and can alter our sense of well-being.

Healthy hair, skin and nails are signs of a good well-balanced diet and can give us confidence in everyday life.

Social Reasons

Most people hate to be talked about, especially in a negative manner. By ensuring that our body is clean and well presented, we are more assured of projecting a positive body image that reflects our personalities.

Children should be taught the importance of hygiene and how to achieve good hygiene very early to keep themselves and others healthy and to reduce the risk of being bullied at school.

Health Reasons

If a person is due to go into hospital, sometimes that person becomes very aware of their hygiene. The thought of being vulnerable and exposed to strangers can cause the person to become very strict on their hygiene needs.

Good Hygiene Habits Continued

If you have cut yourself, the wound should be cleaned and dressed suitably, this can help reduced the risk of infection and pain.

Conditions such as head lice, athlete's foot etc. should be treated immediately to prevent further infections and spread to others.

Hand washing cannot be emphasised enough as this simple action can prevent a plethora of illnesses and disorders developing. Many people 'forget' to wash their hands after using the toilet or before handling foods; this deed can cause a great deal of illness and even death.

Psychological Issues

By being well presented, clean and tidy, people can feel more confident, especially in social situations. Many job interviews and such like are highly dependent of hygiene as many decisions are made by first impressions within the first few minutes of meeting; these decisions are often made in the sub-conscious. Our chances of succeeding either in work or social settings, or even with the opposite sex can be altered by our maintenance of hygiene.

Maintaining hygiene practices helps to reduce the risks of ill health, but equally important affects how we and others perceive ourselves and can influence our levels of confidence and self-esteem which can affect many aspects of our lives. During puberty the body goes through some very important changes increasing the need for a regular regime for maintaining personal hygiene. Many teenagers and indeed parents find these changes embarrassing to discuss and many teenagers can be left in the dark about what they need to do and the products available to them.

Body Odour

Puberty causes the body to produce greater quantities of oils and sweat that can clog up the pores leading to spots acne or sores. This coupled with increased activity can lead to foul smelling and offensive body odour. This subject should be discussed in an informal and gentle manner so as not to make a big issue of it. Teenagers should be able to have free and private access to the bath or shower and by allowing them to choose their own cleansing products, and be encouraged to bathe regularly.

Boys should be told about the occurrence of nocturnal ejaculation and the need for a morning shower, whilst girls should be educated on their menstrual cycle and how this can add to odours.

Parents should discuss the variety of anti-perspirant deodorants available and explain why they are needed; many teenagers believe they can simply spray deodorant as an alternative to washing. Parents or carers must explain that temporarily masking odours does not stop the problem.

Good Hygiene Habits Continued

Hair Removal

Many teenagers class hair removal as becoming an adult. Again they should be educated on why it is done and the products available. They should be taught the correct technique as many of the goods can cause very serious injuries if they are not used correctly.

Oral Hygiene

Being busy with school, establishing a social life and a general increase in the consumption of junk food can all have a detrimental effect on the teeth. Good oral hygiene practices should be part of every life from the moment the child grows their first tooth. It should be a twice daily activity that should become second nature. If you feel your teenager is neglecting their teeth, bring the subject up for discussion. Be sure to mention the consequences of bad breath and how rotten teeth can jeopardise their career options not forgetting how painful dental problems can be. Continue to make their dental appointments for them and encourage attendance.

Menstrual Cycles

Many girls rely on the advice given by their friends, but the mother is the best person for giving accurate information. Always pick a time that ensures privacy and dignity for your daughter and allow plenty of opportunity for questions. Reassure her that there is nothing to be embarrassed about and that it is a fact of life that affects 50% of the world's population. Provide information of the various products available and explain the advantages and disadvantages of each one clearly. She must be educated on the correct usage and disposal of the items and be permitted to select her own method of protection. Always be sure to include the importance of hand-washing with this subject.

Every family has their own way of approaching this subject and there is no right or wrong way of doing it as long as both the parent and child are comfortable enough to ask each other questions.

If open discussion is not a comfortable option, there are many leaflets and books that specialise in this field. By leaving one or two next to your child's bed, they can learn in privacy, and the parent can offer a point for questions at an appropriate time.

Many modern teenagers are leaps and bounds ahead of their parents and maybe practising some of these tasks already. They are usually very aware of the necessity for extra care with hygiene needs as they find their sexuality and attractiveness to the opposite sex.

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Living With Asthma:

Overcoming The Challenges Of Asthma

Coping With Asthma

Tips For Managing Asthma

Workshops # 3

Wellness is Fun Conference



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Living With Asthma

Overcome the Challenges

by Kathleen MacNaughton, R.N.

Living with asthma can be challenging, but if you pay attention to the details of successful asthma management, you or your child can lead an active, healthy life.

A positive approach to living with asthma will start with a solid asthma management plan focused on controlling your asthma and preventing it from interfering with your lifestyle. Work with your doctor to devise a plan that works for you. Such plans will include:

- Lifestyle and environmental changes that will help you avoid your asthma triggers
- Asthma medication(s) to help prevent and control asthma symptoms
- Plans for dealing with the occasional asthma emergencies, i.e., asthma attacks

Be sure to take the time to talk with your doctor about your asthma management plan, which should also include regular medical followups. When things aren't working for you, take a proactive role in your health care.

Living With Asthma is Easier With Knowledge

There is an old truth, "Knowledge is power," that should guide your day-to-day efforts of living with asthma. The more you know about asthma, what causes your symptoms, and how to prevent them, the better you'll be able to take care of yourself. And the healthier you will be overall.

Here are some things you need to know:

- **How to use your medicine correctly.** First, find out all you can about your asthma medicine, including how and when to take it, potential side effects, and how it controls your asthma. If you use a metered dose inhaler, learn how to use it correctly.
- **What your triggers are and how to avoid them.** It's essential to know what brings on—or triggers—your asthma symptoms. Triggers differ for each person, so it might take a while to figure out what all of yours are. Keeping an asthma diary can help. Once you know your triggers are, you can strive to avoid or at least limit your contact with them.

Don't Let Asthma Get in the Way of Everyday Life

Remember, it is still possible to be active and stay healthy, even when you're living with asthma. Asthma treatment has come so far in the last couple of decades that people who have asthma today can do just about anything that people without asthma can do, including competitive sports. In fact, many medal-winning Olympic athletes have asthma.

The key to living with asthma successfully is to keep it under control. Limit contact with asthma triggers by controlling your environment, monitoring your condition with a peak flow meter, and following your treatment plan strictly.

Changing in your environment to eliminate your asthma triggers can be hard, but your efforts will be worth it. You should start to feel much better when you can keep your home as trigger-free as possible. In some cases, you might even want to think about changing where you live, as certain areas of the country are worse than others for people with asthma.

Dealing With Emergencies

It is important to realize that even people who take their asthma medicine exactly as prescribed and who work to avoid triggers can have the occasional asthma attack. So, it's essential to have what is called an **"Asthma Action Plan"** in place for those times.

An Asthma Action Plan is a written guideline that can help you:

- Identify the signs that your asthma is starting to slip out of control. These signs include both symptoms and your peak flow meter readings.
- Know exactly what action to take, based on how you are feeling, your peak flow rate and what stage you are in.
- Act quickly on danger signs to prevent or stop an asthma attack.

When your asthma is not under control, some of the signs that you should not ignore that mean your asthma is getting worse are:

- More frequent asthma symptoms
- More intense asthma symptoms
- Symptoms waking you up at night
- Missing school or work because of asthma
- Peak flow rate is low or changes a lot from day to day
- Symptoms do not respond as well to your asthma medicines

Need to use your quick-relief inhaler more often than usual

The important thing to realize is that you can still have a healthy, active life when living with asthma, although you may have to pace yourself at times or make some adjustments here or there, such as avoiding outdoor sports in the early morning, when pollen counts are at their highest (assuming pollen is one of your triggers).

Tips for Coping and Living With Asthma

Dealing with any health issue, including asthma, may be stressful at times. And, unfortunately, stress can be a trigger for asthma attacks. So, it's important to learn how to cope with the challenges and frustrations of living with asthma in as positive a way as possible.

You might also draw inspiration from knowing that many famous people have learned how to live with asthma and still thrive in their lives. There is no reason why you cannot live just as successfully with asthma.

Talking with other people who are also living with asthma can be helpful too. You can probably find a local asthma support group if you live in a populated area, but thanks to the Internet, many online options available today as well.

How Can Anxiety Affect People With Asthma?

People living with a chronic illness often experience some anxiety. But it's important to distinguish whether the anxiety is beneficial or interferes with your full participation in life. Beneficial anxiety motivates necessary action, such as taking the proper steps to control a chronic condition, whereas excessive anxiety can complicate the medical condition.

Ongoing stress or difficulty in managing everyday stress can result in a variety of problems for people with asthma, including:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Poor physical fitness due to a lack of exercise
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Changes in appetite

Depression

When stress levels increase, so do asthma symptoms, such as [wheezing](#) and [coughing](#). As asthma symptoms increase, so can anxiety, creating a downward spiral in health.

If stress is severe, anxiety can escalate into panic attacks, which are characterized by: symptoms such as:

- shortness of breath
- feelings of smothering or choking
- heart palpitations
- shaking and trembling
- dizziness
- sweating
- hot flashes or cold chills
- chest pains
- a feeling of unreality (such as being in a fog, in a cloud, or detached from one's surroundings)

fear of dying, going crazy, or losing control

What Are Some Ways to Better Manage Stress and Anxiety?

Here are some tips to help you manage your stress and keep asthma symptoms under control:

- **Eat healthy foods.** Sugar, caffeine and alcohol can all raise stress levels. Avoid foods containing these ingredients as much as you can.
- **Breathe deeply.** Try to breathe from the diaphragm as often as possible and pay steady attention to the breath. In a panic or anxiety attack, breathe slowly and deeply through the nose.

- **Exercise.** Daily physical activity is a good way to work off anxiety.
- **Sleep.** Most people do not sleep enough. Poor sleep, or lack of sleep, leaves less energy and fewer emotional and physical resources to cope with stress. For a better night of sleep:
 - Don't go to bed until tired
 - Follow a sleep routine
 - Use your bedroom only for sleeping (and for sex)
 - Don't exercise just before bed
 - Avoid caffeine
 - Don't nap during the day
 - Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- **Reduce the amount of stress.** Identify what is causing the stress and then try to resolve the stressors. While stress is part of everyday life, there are ways to avoid it by becoming more time-efficient by delegating and setting priorities. Coping with the challenges of asthma can also be stressful. Successfully getting it under control may also lead to a reduction in your stress levels.
- **Change negative thoughts.** Set a time limit for worrying -- for example, you might say: "After 15 minutes, I will stop thinking about this." There are CDs, DVDs and books that can help in learning to change thought processes. A mental health professional who specializes in behavioral therapy can also help.
- **Relax.** Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, and yoga, can also help lower stress levels. Classes, CDs, books and DVDs are all available to help learn different techniques. Use a relaxation technique two to three times a day for 15 to 20 minutes each time.
- **Use positive affirmations.** Think reassuring and calming thoughts, such as, "I am becoming calm. I can handle this."
- **Ask for help.** Family and friends want to help. Remaining connected to those who are most important who can help reduce stress and anxiety. Consider joining a support group to meet other people in the same situation and learn from their experiences.
- **Seek professional help.** If self-help techniques do not reduce stress and anxiety, consider seeking the help of a qualified mental health professional who can provide a combination of both cognitive (talk) therapy and behavior modification, and possibly also prescribe anti-anxiety medications.

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Stress Management:

Defining What Stress Is
Dealing With Different Types of Stress
Tips For Managing Stress

Workshops # 4

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

MINORITY CHRISTIAN COACHES ASSOCIATION

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Stress Management

What Stress Is... Definitions

This is a dangerous topic!

There have been many different definitions of what stress is, whether used by psychologists, medics, management consultants or others. There seems to have been something approaching open warfare between competing definitions: Views have been passionately held and aggressively defended.

What complicates this is that intuitively we all feel that we know what stress is, as it is something we have all experienced. A definition should therefore be obvious... except that it is not.

Problems of Definition

One problem with a single definition is that stress is made up of many things: It is a family of related experiences, pathways, responses and outcomes caused by a range of different events or circumstances. Different people experience different aspects and identify with different definitions.

Hans Selye (one of the founding fathers of stress research) identified another part of this problem when he saw that different types of definition operate in different areas of knowledge. To a lawyer or a linguist, words have very precise, definite and fixed meanings. In other fields, ideas and definitions continue evolving as research and knowledge expands.

Selye's view in 1956 was that "stress is not necessarily something bad – it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental." Selye believed that the biochemical effects of stress would be experienced irrespective of whether the situation was positive or negative.

Since then, ideas have moved on. In particular, the harmful biochemical and long-term effects of stress have rarely been observed in positive situations.

The Current Consensus

Now, the most commonly accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S Lazarus) is that stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.

People feel little stress when they have the time, experience and resources to manage a situation. They feel great stress when they think they can't handle the demands put upon them. Stress is therefore a negative experience. And it is not an inevitable consequence of an event: It depends a lot on people's perceptions of a situation and their real ability to cope with it.

This is the main definition used by this site, although we also recognize that there is an intertwined instinctive stress response to unexpected events. The stress response inside us is therefore part instinct and part to do with the way we think.

What Stress Is - The Underlying Mechanisms...

There are two types of instinctive stress response that are important to how we understand stress and stress management: the short-term "[Fight-or-Flight](#)" response and the long-term "[General Adaptation Syndrome](#)". The first is a basic survival instinct, while the second is a long-term effect of exposure to stress.

A third mechanism comes from [the way that we think](#) and interpret the situations in which we find ourselves.

Actually, these three mechanisms can be part of the same stress response – we will initially look at them separately, and then show how they can fit together.

"Fight-or-Flight"

Some of the early work on stress (conducted by Walter Cannon in 1932) established the existence of the well-known fight-or-flight response. His work showed that when an animal experiences a shock or perceives a threat, it quickly releases hormones that help it to survive.

These hormones help us to run faster and fight harder. They increase heart rate and blood pressure, delivering more oxygen and blood sugar to power important muscles. They increase sweating in an effort to cool these muscles, and help them stay efficient. They divert blood away from the skin to the core of our bodies, reducing blood loss if we are damaged. And as well as this, these hormones focus our attention on the threat, to the exclusion of everything else. All of this significantly improves our ability to survive life-threatening events.

Power, but little control...

Unfortunately, this mobilization of the body for survival also has negative consequences. In this state, we are excitable, anxious, jumpy and irritable. This reduces our ability to work effectively with other people.

With trembling and a pounding heart, we can find it difficult to execute precise, controlled skills. And the intensity of our focus on survival interferes with our ability to make fine judgments based on drawing information from many sources. We find ourselves more accident-prone and less able to make good decisions.

It is easy to think that this fight-or-flight, or adrenaline, response is only triggered by obviously life-threatening danger. On the contrary, recent research shows that we experience the fight-or-flight response when simply encountering something unexpected.

The situation does not have to be dramatic: People experience this response when frustrated or interrupted, or when they experience a situation that is new or in some way challenging. This hormonal, fight-or-flight response is a normal part of everyday life and a part of everyday stress, although often with an intensity that is so low that we do not notice it.

There are very few situations in modern working life where this response is useful. Most situations benefit from a calm, rational, controlled and socially sensitive approach. Our [Relaxation Techniques](#) section explains a range of good techniques for keeping this fight-or-flight response under control.

The General Adaptation Syndrome and Burnout

Hans Selye took a different approach from [Cannon](#). Starting with the observation that different diseases and injuries to the body seemed to cause the same symptoms in patients, he identified a general response (the "General Adaptation Syndrome") with which the body reacts to a major stimulus. While the Fight-or-Flight response works in the very short term, the General Adaptation Syndrome operates in response to longer-term exposure to causes of stress.

Selye identified that when pushed to extremes, animals reacted in three stages: First, in the Alarm Phase, they reacted to the stressor.

Next, in the Resistance Phase, the resistance to the stressor increased as the animal adapted to, and coped with, it. This phase lasted for as long as the animal could support this heightened resistance.

Finally, once resistance was exhausted, the animal entered the Exhaustion Phase, and resistance declined substantially.

Selye established this with many hundreds of experiments performed on laboratory rats. However, he also quoted research during World War II with bomber pilots. Once they had completed a few missions over enemy territory, these pilots usually settled down and performed well. After many missions, however, pilot fatigue would set in as they began to show “neurotic manifestations”.

In the business environment, this exhaustion is seen in “[burnout](#)”. The classic example comes from the Wall Street trading floor: by most people’s standards, life on a trading floor is stressful. Traders learn to adapt to the daily stressors of making big financial decisions, and of winning and losing large sums of money. In many cases, however, these stresses increase and fatigue starts to set in.

At the same time, as traders become successful and earn more and more money, their financial motivation to succeed can diminish. Ultimately, many traders experience burnout. We look at this in more detail in our section on burnout.

Stress and the way we think

Particularly in normal working life, much of our stress is subtle and occurs without obvious threat to survival. Most comes from things like work overload, conflicting priorities, inconsistent values, over-challenging deadlines, conflict with co-workers, unpleasant environments and so on. Not only do these reduce our performance as we divert mental effort into handling them, they can also cause a great deal of unhappiness.

We have [already mentioned](#) that the most common currently accepted definition of stress is something that is experienced when a person perceives that “demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.”

Stress, a matter of judgment

In becoming stressed, people must therefore make two main judgments: firstly they must feel threatened by the situation, and secondly they must doubt that their capabilities and resources are sufficient to meet the threat.

How stressed someone feels depends on how much damage they think the situation can do them, and how closely their resources meet the demands of the situation. This sense of threat is rarely physical. It may, for example, involve perceived threats to our social standing, to other people’s opinions of us, to our career prospects or to our own deeply held values.

Just as with real threats to our survival, these perceived threats trigger the hormonal fight-or-flight response, with all of its negative consequences.

Building on this, this site offers a variety of approaches to managing stress. The navigation bar in the left hand column offers a range of practical methods for managing these stresses by tackling them at source. It also offers some powerful tools for [changing your interpretation](#) of stressful situations, thereby reducing the perception of threat.

Pulling these mechanisms together – the integrated stress response... So far, we have presented the [Fight-or-Flight response](#), the [General Adaptation Syndrome](#), and our [mental responses](#) to stress as separate mechanisms. In fact, they can fit together into one response.

The key to this is that Hans Selye's 'Alarm Phase' is the same thing as Walter Cannon's Fight-or-Flight response.

We can therefore see that mental stress triggers the fight-or-flight response, and that if this stress is sustained for a long time, the end result might be exhaustion and burnout.

Stress and Your Health

[We've already looked](#) at the survival benefits of the fight-or-flight response, as well as the problems this caused for our performance in work-related situations. We've also seen the negative "[burnout](#)" effect of exposure to long-term stress. These effects can also affect your health – either with direct physiological damage to your body, or with harmful behavioral effects.

The behavioral effects of stress

The behavioral effects of an over-stressed lifestyle are easy to explain. When under pressure, some people are more likely to drink heavily or smoke, as a way of getting immediate chemical relief from stress.

Others may have so much work to do that they do not exercise or eat properly. They may cut down on sleep, or may worry so much that they sleep badly. They may get so carried away with work and meeting daily pressures that they do not take time to see the doctor or dentist when they need to. All of these are likely to harm health.

The direct physiological effects of excessive stress are more complex. In some areas they are well understood, while in other areas, they are still subject to debate and further research.

Stress and heart disease

The link between stress and heart disease is well-established. If stress is intense, and stress hormones are not 'used up' by physical activity, our raised heart rate and high blood pressure put tension on arteries and cause damage to them. As the body heals this damage, artery walls scar and thicken, which can reduce the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart.

This is where a fight-or-flight response can become lethal: Stress hormones accelerate the heart to increase the blood supply to muscles; however, blood vessels in the heart may have become so narrow that not enough blood reaches the heart to meet these demands. This can cause a heart attack.

Other effects of stress

Stress has been also been found to damage the immune system, which explains why we catch more colds when we are stressed. It may intensify symptoms in diseases that have an autoimmune component, such as rheumatoid arthritis. It also seems to affect headaches and irritable bowel syndrome, and there are now suggestions of links between stress and cancer.

Stress is also associated with mental health problems and, in particular, anxiety and depression. Here the relationship is fairly clear: the negative thinking that is associated with stress also contributes to these.

The direct effects of stress in other areas of health are still under debate. In some areas (for example in the formation of stomach ulcers) diseases traditionally associated with stress are now attributed to other causes.

Regular exercise can reduce your physiological reaction to stress. It also strengthens your heart and increases the blood supply to it, directly affecting your vulnerability to heart disease.

Although this site focuses mainly on stress and work performance, many of the tools and techniques within it will help you manage stresses that would otherwise adversely affect your health. *However, if you suspect that you are prone to stress-related illness, or if you are in any doubt about the state of your health, you should consult appropriate medical advice immediately.* Keep in mind that stress management is only part of any solution to stress-related illness.

Take stress seriously!

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Choosing What Sport To Play:

Getting Started
Getting Approvals
Tips For Choosing A Sport

Workshops # 5

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

MINORITY CHRISTIAN COACHES ASSOCIATION

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Choosing What Sport To Play

Reviewed by: [Amy Stanford, MSN, CNP](#)

Date reviewed: June 2007

No matter what a child's interests are-baseball, tae kwon do, swimming or running-your child is likely to find a sport that he or she enjoys. The health and fitness benefits of physical activity will be experienced whether an individual or team sport is chosen. By practicing good fitness and eating habits early in life, a child can increase the chances of growing into a healthy adult. Sports participation can motivate the couch potato, occupy the child who has idle time, minimize the habits of the fast-food junkie and relieve stress. The emotional rewards of self-esteem, social skills and dedication learned from sports participation can last a lifetime.

Getting Started

The best sport for a child is one that the child finds fun and interesting. To encourage a healthy and active lifestyle, you might casually expose your child to a variety of physical activities and let the child's desires and abilities act as a guide to further commitment. Spend some one-on-one time with your child practicing and learning different sports and recreational activities.

Allow your child the freedom to try different sports. If your child is interested in a particular sport, check out the programs available at school, through your city's parks and recreation association, religious organizations or civic clubs. Make sure the child has the proper sports equipment, that it fits properly and that it has all the appropriate safety features.

Spend some one-on-one time with your child practicing and learning different sports and recreational activities. A child is likely to enjoy a sport more if allowed to learn in a relaxed atmosphere while having fun and receiving support and encouragement from adults.

Athletics for children should be thought of as a means of entertainment and recreation. Adults should not pressure a young child to focus only on winning even if exceptional athletic promise is shown. A young athlete who might show natural talent in a particular sport must work hard and show dedication in order to succeed. Almost any child even if less skilled than his or her peers can improve with positive support and coaching. Keep in mind, however, that enrolling your child in an organized sport, involves a commitment on your part. Your child will need appropriate equipment, transportation and, your support.

Choosing What Sport To Play Continued

The Doctor's OK

To help your child enjoy the activity to the fullest, you may want to consult with your doctor about participation in organized sports. A pre-sports checkup should include a complete physical exam. If your child has experienced chronic health conditions in the past, do not rule out sports participation. Ask your doctor whether a specific activity might be appropriate for your child.

Parental Guidance

Your child will need you more than ever for support and advice during sports participation. To help your child build confidence and have fun, try to be actively involved in your child's endeavor and keep a good attitude. If your child becomes involved in an organized or team sport, make every effort to attend the practices and games.

In organized sports, teach your child that involvement means certain responsibilities are required-for one's self and towards other participants. Encourage your child to give activities the best effort possible, to be responsible and to respect team mates, coaches and opponents-valuable lessons in sports as well as in life.

When learning a sport, mistakes are inevitable. Parents and coaches can lower the stress level by calmly pointing out that mistakes are opportunities for valuable feedback on areas for improvement. Adults involved in children's sports should avoid pushing too hard, overprotecting or academically delaying a child for competitive reasons.

Fair Play

A child learns by example. How the child is treated-on the field and off the field can have lasting effects. An atmosphere that is fun and educational is likely to promote healthy self esteem in children. An atmosphere that is negative and critical can hurt the child's self esteem. To promote an enjoyable environment, help your child follow a philosophy of "fair play." Respect teammates, as well as opponents, whether they are winning or losing. Fair play applies to children, parents and coaches.

Player Pointers

Here are some fair-play points for players, parents and coaches:

Some things for players to keep in mind:

Enjoy the game!

Respect teammates, as well as opponents, whether they are winning or losing.

Remember that the outcome is never as important as the lasting impression of warmth, understanding and pure enjoyment of playing.

Remember that scoring is most thrilling when it rewards a true achievement.

Choosing What Sport To Play Continued

Recognize that playing to win is an essential component of competition, but seeking victory at any cost defeats the true meaning of competition.

Show respect for the referees, umpires and judges at all times, and accept their decisions in a dignified manner.

Lose gracefully, as well as win gracefully.

Try your best.

Tips On Choosing A Sport For Your Child (cont.)

Parent Pointers some things for parents to keep in mind:

Attend practices and games or meets if your schedule allows. Lend the players your support in a positive manner. Emphasize their accomplishments and efforts.

Make sure your child never talks with, or leaves with, strangers.

Have your child bring the required equipment to and from all games and practices.

Practice with your child.

Avoid material rewards. Stress the joy of the sport.

Listen. Make your child feel important and encourage contribution to a team effort.

Understand that your child will make mistakes.

Be positive and do not criticize. If your child is not performing correctly or improving, suggest an alternate technique with the coach's guidance, such as, "That's pretty good, now how about trying it this way?"

Be positive and provide encouragement when your child's team loses or your child fails to place.

Make fun and technique-development top priorities when practicing.

Support your child's coach and, before being asked, offer to help in any way possible.

Do not disagree with the coach or referees on the field or in front of your child. Questions, input and positive suggestions should be discussed privately and calmly.

Enjoy the excitement of the sport and the opportunity to be with your child.

Choosing What Sport To Play Continued

For some people, choosing which sports to pursue throughout high school is hard because they have never really played an organized sport before and aren't sure what they'll most enjoy. For others it's a tough decision because their friends don't like to play the same sports. No matter what your sports dilemma is, you have to make the decision that is best for you. If you're great at soccer but would rather play football because you think it's more fun, then give the pigskin a go (just make sure it's cool with mom and dad)!

Sports are meant to be fun. If there is a sport you really enjoy but you aren't sure if you can make the team, try out anyway. What's the worst that can happen? If you get cut you can always try another sport. And sports like cross-country and track don't typically cut participants from the team. You can still participate even if you're not on the meet squad.

Every Now and Then There's an "I" in Team

Some sports, like lacrosse or field hockey, require every person on the field to be on the same page. Sure, certain people stand out more than others but superstars don't necessarily make a good team!

Sports like tennis, track and field, cross-country, swimming, gymnastics, and wrestling are all sports where individual performances are tallied into team scores. Of course there are exceptions, like relays in track and swimming, but for the most part it's possible to win a solo event in these sports and still have your team lose or vice-versa.

No one knows you better than you do. Maybe you enjoy the spotlight. Maybe you get annoyed by the way teammates act when they are über-competitive. Or maybe you just don't like competing with friends for a spot in the starting lineup. For whatever reason, team sports might not be your thing — and that's fine. Luckily, there are many individualized sports to choose from.

If Your School Doesn't Have Your Sport

Some schools are limited in resources — a city school may not have a lot of fields, for example, while a rural school may not have enough students to make up a team for every sport.

A school's geographic region can also play a role. If you live in a climate where it snows from the fall to the spring, your school may not be able to participate in a lot of outdoor sports.

Choosing What Sport To Play Continued

If your school doesn't have your sport, don't let it get you down. You can always try out for a different sport during the same season or look into whether your local town has a recreational league that you can join.

If Organized Sports Aren't Your Thing

Many people are attracted to the competition and popularity that can come with team sports. Others love the camaraderie and unity that are present in a team atmosphere. But for some people, teams are just frustrating and another form of cliques. If you're not the biggest fan of organized sports, where you have to follow someone else's schedule and rules, many other fun and exciting options are out there for you.

You might already have an exercise routine or activity you like to do in your free time, but if you're looking for something that will both keep you busy and allow you to blow off steam, try some of these activities:

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Getting & Staying Healthy/Fit :

Five Rules To Live By
What Is Overweight
Preventing Obesity
Tips For Staying Healthy

Workshops # 6

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

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Getting & Staying Healthy/Fit

Five Rules To Live By

There's a lot of discussion these days about fit kids. People who care (parents, doctors, teachers, and others) want to know how to help kids be more fit. Being fit is a way of saying a person [eats well](#), gets a lot of physical activity ([exercise](#)), and has a healthy [weight](#). If you're fit, your body works well, feels good, and can do all the things you want to do, like run around with your friends.

Some steps only parents can take — such as serving healthy meals or deciding to take the family on a nature hike. But kids can take charge, too, when it comes to health. Here are five rules to live by, if you're a kid who wants to be fit. The trick is to follow these rules most of the time, knowing that some days (like your birthday) might call for cake and ice cream.

1. Eat a variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables. You may have a favorite food, but the best choice is to eat a variety. If you eat different foods, you're more likely to get the nutrients your body needs. Taste new foods and old ones you haven't tried for a while. Some foods, such as green veggies, are more pleasing the older you get. Shoot for at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day — two fruits and three vegetables. Here's one combination that might work for you:

- at breakfast: ½ cup (about 4 large) strawberries on your cereal
- with lunch: 6 baby carrots
- for a snack: an apple
- with dinner: ½ cup broccoli (about 2 big spears) and 1 cup of salad

2. Drink water and milk most often. When you're really thirsty, cold [water](#) is the No. 1 thirst-quencher. And there's a reason your school cafeteria offers cartons of milk. Kids need calcium to grow strong bones, and milk is a great source of this mineral. How much do kids need? Aim for 3 cups of milk per day, or its equivalent. You can mix it up by having milk and some other calcium-rich dairy foods. Here's one combination:

- 2 cups (about half a liter) of low-fat or nonfat milk
- 1 slice cheddar cheese
- ½ cup (small container) of yogurt

Getting & Staying Healthy/Fit Continued

You probably will want something other than milk or water once in a while, so it's OK to have 100% juice, too. But try to limit sugary drinks, like sodas, juice cocktails, and fruit punches. They contain a lot of added sugar. Sugar just adds calories, not important nutrients.

3. Listen to your body. What does it feel like to be full? When you're eating, notice how your body feels and when your stomach feels comfortably full. Sometimes, people eat too much because they don't notice when they need to stop eating. Eating too much can make you feel uncomfortable and, over a period of time, can lead to unhealthy weight gain.

4. Limit screen time. Limit screen time. What's screen time? It's the amount of time you spend watching TV or DVDs, playing video games (console systems or handheld games), and using the computer. The more time you spend on these sitting-down activities, the less time available for active stuff, like basketball, bike riding, and swimming. Try to spend no more than 2 hours a day on screen time, not counting computer use related to school.

5. Be active. One job you have as a kid — and it's a fun one — is that you get to figure out which activities you like best. Not everyone loves baseball or soccer. Maybe your passion is karate, or kickball, or dancing. Ask your parents to help you do your favorite activities regularly. Find ways to [be active](#) every day. You might even write down a list of fun stuff to do, so you can refer to it when your mom or dad says it's time to stop watching TV or playing computer games!

Speaking of parents, they can be a big help if you want to be a fit kid. For instance, they can stock the house with healthy foods and plan physical activities for the family. Tell your parents about these five steps you want to take and maybe you can teach them a thing or two. If you're a fit kid, why shouldn't you have a fit mom and a fit dad?

Reviewed by: [Mary L. Gavin, MD](#)

Date reviewed: May 2007

Why Do People Become Overweight or Obese?

Most of the time, people have too much body fat because the body gets more calories (from foods and drinks) than it burns through physical activity, such as playing soccer or walking to school. Extra calories are stored as fat. The more extra calories a person consumes, the more fat is stored.

This happens very easily in modern life. People spend more time in front of TVs or computers and less time exercising. We drive everywhere instead of walking or riding bikes. Fewer schools offer gym classes; more kids play video games than active ones like dodgeball. Even grown-ups spend more time sitting at desks and in cars than they once did. People also lead busier lives so they have less time to cook healthy meals. We eat more restaurant meals and ready-made food from a box.

Weight problems also can run in families, but don't let that discourage you from making changes that could help you reach a healthy weight. Your habits — what kind of food you eat and how much you exercise — can make a big difference. The biggest problem for most people is not getting enough activity and exercise.

How Can Excess Weight Hurt Your Health?

It's hard to feel good when your [body](#) has too much weight to carry. Being overweight or obese can make it harder to breathe and sleep. It can make a person feel tired and cause aches or pains. A weight problem also can make you embarrassed, [sad](#), or even angry. And when people feel bad, they may eat more because food can be comforting. This isn't a good idea, especially if the person is already overweight.

Getting help is important because weighing too much can make you sick. Overweight or obese kids have a greater chance of getting [type 2 diabetes](#). And later in life, they have a higher risk of getting heart disease.

How Can You Keep From Becoming Overweight?

The best way to stay at a healthy weight is to be active. You can join a sports team. Or, if you don't like team sports, try swimming, tennis, martial arts, or just being active in your own backyard. Jumping rope, dancing, and walking will get your heart pumping. Getting some extra [exercise](#) can be as easy as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or walking instead of having your parents drive you. Being active also means watching less TV and playing fewer video games.

Eating healthy is another part of staying fit. Aim to eat a variety of foods and get five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Choose water and low-fat milk over soda and other sugary drinks. When it comes to high-calorie and high-fat foods, eat them only once in a while and, when you do, have smaller portions.

Getting & Staying Healthy/Fit Continued

What Should You Do?

Talking to a parent is the best first step if you are concerned about your weight. Your mom or dad can make a doctor's appointment for you. The doctor may suggest ways of changing your eating and exercise habits. In general, kids don't need to diet. But a kid who is very overweight may need some expert help from a dietitian or a doctor who specializes in weight management. Together, you'll be able to come up with a safe and healthy plan that should include eating nutritious foods and exercising regularly.

Helping Others

If you have a friend or relative who is overweight, remember to be kind. He or she is probably well aware of the problem. Jokes or teasing will make the person feel worse. Try to be encouraging instead by exercising together and sharing what you know about eating healthy foods. Do that and you will both like what you see when you look into the mirror!

Reviewed by: [Mary L. Gavin, MD](#)

Date reviewed: June 2008

Tips for Staying Healthy

- Don't go to bed until tired
- Follow a sleep routine
- Use your bedroom only for sleeping (and for sex)
- Don't exercise just before bed
- Avoid caffeine
- Don't nap during the day
- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Get enough sleep (at least 8-9 hours a night)
- Eat a healthy diet that includes at least 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- Take a multivitamin with folic acid and get at least 1300 mg of calcium daily
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes most days of the week
- Avoid smoking
- Learn to manage stress
- Take time every day to do something you enjoy! (Read, paint/draw, dance, cook, talk to a friend, etc.)

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Learning How To Eat Healthy :

Changing Your Eating Habits
12 Tips To Eating Healthier
Smart Snacks

Workshops # 7

Wellness is Fun Conference



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Learning How To Eat Healthy

Changing Your Eating Habits

Many people are used to eating a certain way and never think about what they are actually putting into their bodies. For example, some people regularly drink six cans or more of regular soda every day, but when they find out there are about nine teaspoons of sugar in one can, it puts things more in perspective. Start by slowly changing your habits. Try cutting back to three cans a day, then to two and so on, and then start replacing some of the soda with healthier options.

Other people are eating a lot of food between mid-day and bedtime because they skip breakfast. Another common scenario is when someone has grown up thinking that meat should be the focus of every meal. Change your habits slowly by trying to eat two-thirds of the meat you would normally eat, and then decrease the portion little by little. Cutting portion size limits calories. So does eating lean cuts of meat and using lower-fat methods of preparation such as broiling.

Look For Balance

When people strive for more balance in their diets, they tend to enjoy mixing up their food choices. A lot of times, people eat the same things over and over. When they start trying new foods, they find out what they've been missing.

Make Better Choices

The Nutrition Facts label is an important tool that gives people guidance for making smarter food choices from every food group. The label shows how high or low a food is in various nutrients. Dietary experts suggest, that once you start using the label to compare products, you'll find there is flexibility in creating a balanced diet and enjoying a variety of foods in moderation. For example, you could eat a favorite food that's higher in fat for breakfast and have lower-fat foods for lunch and dinner. You could have a full-fat dip on a low-fat cracker. What matters is how all the food works together.

Motivations For Change

Older people are most likely to improve their eating habits, but nutrition is important for people of all ages. Dietary experts recognize, when people have health problems or their friends become ill, these are often strong motivators of change. The more serious the health condition, the more serious the change, but it would be better if people made changes early and prevented health problems in the first place. So what if you're feeling trapped by a diet full of fast-food burgers and cookies? You can work your way out slowly but surely.

12 Tips To Eating Healthier

Tip #1) Look at What You Eat Now

Write down what you eat for a few days to get a good picture of what you're taking in daily. By looking at what you eat and how much you're eating, you can figure out what adjustments you need to make. It is suggested that people write down what they are feeling. Were you nervous, happy, or sad when you ate five slices of pizza in one sitting? The very nature of writing things down in a food diary can help people make healthy changes. A food diary can keep your goals on track. Be honest. If you have to write down that you actually ate nine cookies, you may only eat two instead.

Tip #2) Start With Small Changes

You don't have to go cold turkey. In the end, you want to achieve a long-term healthy lifestyle. Small changes over time are the most likely to stick. For example:

- If you want to eat more vegetables, try to add one more serving by sneaking it in. Add bits of broccoli to something you already eat like pizza or soup.
- If you need more whole grains, add barley, whole wheat pasta, or brown rice to your soup.

When you think about what you need to get more of, the other things tend to fall into place. For example, if you have some baby carrots with lunch or add a banana to your cereal in the morning, you're going to feel full longer. You won't need a food that's high in sugar or fat an hour later.

Also, look for healthier versions of what you like to eat.

- If you like luncheon meat sandwiches, try a reduced-fat version.
- If you like the convenience of frozen dinners, look for ones with lower sodium.
- If you love fast-food meals, try a salad as your side dish instead of french fries.

Pick one or two changes to start with. Once the changes have become habits, which usually happens in about two to four weeks, then try adding one or two more. In six to 12 months, you'll find that you've made substantial changes.

Tip #3) Use the Nutrition Facts Label

To make smart food choices quickly and easily, compare the Nutrition Facts labels on products. Look at the percent Daily Value (%DV) column. The general rule of thumb is that 5 percent or less of the Daily Value is considered low and 20 percent or more is high. Keep saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium low, while keeping fiber, potassium, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C high. Be sure to look at the serving size and the number of servings per package. The serving size affects calories, amounts of each nutrient, and the percentage of Daily Value. The %DV is based on a 2,000-calorie diet, but recommended calorie intake differs for individuals based on age, gender, and activity level. Some people need less than 2,000 calories a day. You can use the %DV as a frame of reference whether or not you consume more or less than 2,000 calories. The %DV makes it easy to compare the nutrients in each food product to see which ones are higher or lower. When comparing products, just make sure the serving sizes are similar, especially the weight (grams, milligrams, or ounces) of each product.

Common Nutrient Content Claims, from USDA

- **fat-free** less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving
- **low-fat** 3 grams or less per serving
- **light** one-third fewer calories or half the fat of the "regular" version
- **reduced** when describing fat, sodium, or calorie content, the food must have at least 25 percent less of these nutrients than the "regular" version

Tip #4) Control Portion Sizes

Understanding the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label is important for controlling portions. Someone may have a large bottled drink, assuming it's one serving, but if you look at the label, it's actually two servings. And if you consume two servings of a product, you have to multiply all the numbers by two. When the servings go up, so do the calories, fat, sugar, and salt.

Other suggestions include, dishing out a smaller amount on your plate or using smaller plates. If you put more food in front of you, you'll eat it because it's there. According to the ADA, an average serving size of meat looks like a deck of cards. An average serving size of pasta or rice is about the size of a tennis ball. Here are some other ways to limit portions:

- Split a meal or dessert with a friend at a restaurant
- Get a doggie bag for half of your meal
- Get in the habit of having one helping
- Ask for salad dressing, butter, and sauces on the side so you can control how much you use

Tip #5) Control Calories and Get the Most Nutrients

You want to stay within your daily calorie needs, especially if you're trying to lose weight. You also want to get the most nutrients out of the calories, which means picking nutritionally rich foods. Children and adults should pay particular attention to getting adequate calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, and E.

According to the Dietary Guidelines, there is room for what's known as a discretionary calorie allowance. This is for when people meet their recommended nutrient intake without using all their calories. Some dietary experts compare the "discretionary calorie allowance" idea to a household budget. You know you have to pay all the bills and then you can use the leftover money for other things. The discretionary calorie allowance gives you some flexibility to have foods and beverages with added fats and sugars, but you still want to make sure you're getting the nutrients you need.

For example, a 2,000-calorie diet has about 250 discretionary calories, according to the Dietary Guidelines.

Tip #6) Know Your Fats

Fat provides flavor and makes you feel full. It also provides energy, and essential fatty acids for healthy skin, and helps the body absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. But fat also has nine calories per gram, compared to four calories per gram in carbohydrates and protein. If you eat too much fat every day, you may get more calories than your body needs, and too many calories can contribute to weight gain. Too much saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol in the diet increases the risk of unhealthy blood cholesterol levels, which may increase the risk of heart disease. People should lower all three, not just one or the other.

Learning How To Eat Healthy Continued

Saturated fat is found mainly in foods from animals. Major sources of saturated fats are:

- cheese
- Beef
- milk

Trans fat results when manufacturers add hydrogen to vegetable oil to increase the food's shelf life and flavor. Trans fat can be found in:

- vegetable shortenings
- some margarines
- crackers
- Cookies
- other snack foods

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance in foods from animal sources such as:

- meat
- poultry
- egg yolks
- milk and milk products

Most of your fats should come from polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as those that occur in:

- fish
- nuts
- soybeans
- corn oil
- canola oil
- olive oil
- other vegetable oils

This type of fat does **not** raise the risk of heart disease and may be beneficial when consumed in moderation.

Learning How To Eat Healthy Continued

Tip #7) Make Choices That Are Lean, Low-fat, or Fat-free

When buying meat, poultry, milk, or milk products, choose versions that are lean, low-fat, or fat-free. Choose lean meats like chicken without the skin and lean beef or pork with the fat trimmed off. If you frequently drink whole milk, switch to 1 percent milk or skim milk. Many people don't taste a difference. Some mix whole milk with lower-fat milk for a while so the taste buds can adjust. This doesn't mean you can never eat or drink the full-fat versions. Remember, that's where the discretionary calories come in.

Other tips to reduce saturated fat include:

- Cooking with non-stick sprays and using olive, safflower, or canola oils instead of lard or butter.
- Eating more fish, which is usually lower in saturated fat than meat.
- Bake, grill, and broil food instead of frying it because more fat is absorbed into the food when frying.
- You could also try more meatless entrees like veggie burgers and add flavor to food with low-fat beans instead of butter.

Look at these differences in calorie content of commonly consumed foods from, ARS Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17

- 1 oz. Regular Cheddar Cheese = 114 Calories vs. 1 oz. Low-fat Cheddar Cheese = 49 Calories
- 3 oz. (cooked) Ground Beef (25% fat) = 236 Calories vs. 3 oz. (cooked) Ground Beef (5% fat) = 148 Calories
- 1 cup Whole Milk (3.24%) = 146 Calories vs. 1 cup Low-fat Milk (1%) = 102 Calories
- 3 oz. (cooked) Fried Chicken leg with skin = 212 Calories vs. 3 oz. (cooked) Roasted Chicken breast with no skin = 140 Calories
- 3 oz. Fried Fish = 195 Calories vs. 3 oz. Baked Fish = 129 Calories

Tip #8) Focus on Fruit

- The Dietary Guidelines recommend two cups of fruit per day at the 2,000-calorie reference diet. Fruit intake and recommended amounts of other food groups vary at different calorie levels. An example of two cups of fruit includes:

Learning How To Eat Healthy Continued

- one small banana
- one large orange
- one-fourth cup of dried apricots or peaches

Eat a variety of fruits--whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried--rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices. The whole fruit has more fiber, it's more filling, and it's naturally sweet. Some juices, such as orange and prune, are a good source of potassium.

Ways to incorporate fruit in your diet include:

- adding it to your cereal
- eating it as a snack with low-fat yogurt or a low-fat dip
- making a fruit smoothie for dessert by mixing low-fat milk with fresh or frozen fruit such as strawberries or peaches.
- Also, your family is more likely to eat fruit if you put it out on the kitchen table.

Tip #9) Make Half Your Grains Whole

Like fruits and vegetables, whole grains are a good source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

In general, at least half the grains you consume should come from whole grains. For many, but not all, whole grain products, the words "whole" or "whole grain" will appear before the grain ingredient's name. The whole grain **must** be the first ingredient listed in the ingredients list on the food package. The following are some whole grains:

- whole wheat
- whole oats
- oatmeal
- whole-grain corn
- popcorn
- wild rice
- brown rice
- buckwheat
- whole rye
- bulgur
- cracked wheat
- whole-grain barley
- millet

Learning How To Eat Healthy Continued

Whole-grain foods **cannot** necessarily be identified by their color or by names such as brown bread, nine-grain bread, hearty grains bread, or mixed grain bread.

Tip #10) Eat Your Veggies

The Dietary Guidelines recommend two and one-half cups of vegetables per day if you eat 2,000 calories each day.

Try adding vegetables to foods such as:

- meatloaf
- lasagna
- omelettes
- stir-fry dishes
- casseroles

Frozen chopped greens such as spinach, and peas, carrots, and corn are easy to add. Also, add dark leafy green lettuce to sandwiches. You can involve children by letting them help pick vegetables in different colors when you're shopping.

Eat a variety of dark green vegetables such as:

- broccoli
- Spinach
- greens

Eat a variety of orange and deep yellow vegetables such as:

- carrots
- winter squash
- sweet potatoes

Eat a variety of starchy vegetables and legumes such as:

- corn
- dry beans
- peas
- chickpeas
- pinto beans
- kidney beans

- tofu

Eat a variety of other vegetables, such as tomatoes and onions.

Look for ways to make it convenient. You can buy salad in a bag. Or buy a vegetable tray from the grocery store and put it in the refrigerator. Everything's already cut up and you can just reach in and eat it throughout the week.

Tip #11) Lower Sodium and Increase Potassium

Higher salt intake is linked to higher blood pressure, which can raise the risk of stroke, heart disease, and kidney disease. The Dietary Guidelines recommend that people consume less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day (approximately one teaspoon of salt). There are other recommendations for certain populations that tend to be more sensitive to salt. For example, people with high blood pressure, blacks, and middle-aged and older adults should consume no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day.

Most of the sodium people eat comes from processed foods. Use the Nutrition Facts label on food products: 5%DV or less for sodium means the food is low in sodium and 20%DV or more means it's high. Compare similar products and choose the option with a lower amount of sodium. Most people won't notice a taste difference. Consistently consuming lower-salt products will help taste buds adapt, and you will enjoy these foods as much or more than higher-salt options.

Prepare foods with little salt. The [DASH \(Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension\)](#) eating plan from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends giving flavor to food with:

- herbs
- spices
- lemon
- lime
- Vinegar
- salt-free seasoning blends

Consult with your physician **before** using salt substitutes because their main ingredient, potassium chloride, can be harmful to some people with certain medical conditions.

Learning How To Eat Healthy Continued

Potassium counteracts some of sodium's effect on blood pressure. Increase potassium-rich foods such as:

- sweet potatoes
- orange juice
- bananas
- spinach
- winter squash
- Cantaloupe
- tomato puree

Tip #12) Limit Added Sugars

The Dietary Guidelines recommend choosing and preparing food and beverages with little added sugars. Added sugars are sugars and syrups added to foods and beverages in processing or preparation, not the naturally occurring sugars in fruits or milk. Major sources of added sugars in the American diet include regular soft drinks, candy, cake, cookies, pies, and fruit drinks. In the ingredients list on food products, sugar may be listed as:

- brown sugar
- corn syrup
- glucose
- sucrose
- Honey
- molasses

Be sure to check the sugar in low-fat and fat-free products, which sometimes contain a lot of sugar. Instead of drinking regular soda and sugary fruit drinks, try dinking:

- diet soda
- low-fat or fat-free milk
- water
- flavored water
- 100 percent fruit juice

For snacks and desserts, try fruit. People are often pleasantly surprised that fruit is great for satisfying a sweet tooth. If ice cream is calling your name, don't have it in the freezer. Make it harder to get by having to go out for it. Then it can be an occasional treat.

Smart Snacks

- unsalted pretzels
- applesauce
- low-fat yogurt with fruit
- unbuttered and unsalted popcorn
- broccoli, carrots, or cherry tomatoes with dip/low-fat yogurt
- grapes
- apple slices with peanut butter
- raisins
- nuts
- graham crackers
- gingersnap cookies
- low or reduced-fat string cheese
- baked whole-grain tortilla chips with salsa
- whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Anger Management :

4 Myths About Anger
Managing Anger
Anger Management Counseling

Workshops # 8

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

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Sports
Ministry

Anger Management

4 Myths About Anger

Myth 1: *Aggression is the instinctive way of expressing anger.*

REALITY: Aggression is a learned behavior, acted out by individuals who have poor impulse control and have gotten away with it in the past.

Myth 2: *Expressing anger releases and gets rid of it.*

REALITY: This is not necessarily so. Studies indicate that habitual focus on and expression of anger can actually increase hostility.

Myth 3: *Tantrums in childhood are healthy expressions of anger.*

REALITY: Tantrums become a way of controlling parents, and: they reinforce the habit of demanding immediate gratification.

Myth 4: *You should always express what you feel, including rage and hostility.*

REALITY: It is often beneficial to say what you feel, but not always. It is important to express your feelings in a considerate and respectful manner, **not in thoughtless or destructive ways.**

Why learn to manage your anger?

1. Chronic anger is a strain on your cardiovascular system.
2. Considering response options other than rage will reduce the number of occasions on which you antagonize others, and may increase the likelihood of you getting what you really want.
3. Being more positive and less angry about life and other people will make you a happier person.

MANAGING ANGER

1. Keep a "rage log"

How often during the day you engage in aggressive actions, such as slamming doors, honking your horn, yelling at other motorists, or barking at retail clerks? How often do you provoke people to yell, scream, or honk their horns at you?

How often do you have negative thoughts about other people? "What a jerk she is!" "I'd like to punch him!" "Why don't these morons move faster!"

Anger Management Continued

How often do you blow your cool? Do you shout angrily, fantasize about physically assaulting someone, or even explicitly threaten violence? How often do you find yourself frowning, impatient, irritable, in a hurry, gritting your teeth?

Take a honest look at your hostility level. Even if you think it is everybody else's fault, make note of the frequency and intensity of your rage.

2. Talk to yourself.

Make an agreement with yourself to try to delay getting angry. Don't you have better ways to spend your time than flying into a rage? Many situations are too unimportant for you to explode about. Your time and your health are much too valuable.

Don't jump to conclusions about the motives of the person who is annoying you. The person who is not moving through the traffic light on schedule is not deliberately trying to keep you from getting to work on time and is probably not a stupid idiot either. He or she is probably just tired and momentarily distracted. Besides, you are probably not going to be late anyway.

3. Cool It!

When you become aware of hostile thoughts or attitudes, yell at yourself "Stop!" or "Cool it!" It sounds silly, but yelling "Stop!" at yourself interrupts your anger program, decreasing the likelihood of you steaming yourself up by thinking of past injustices.

4. Distract yourself.

When your assessment of the situation leads you to the conclusion that your irritation is unmerited or not worth the trouble, simply getting your mind off the anger can be effective.

For example, suppose you are waiting in line at the bank. You can become increasingly irritated, or you could read a magazine, book, or newspaper while you wait. You could also simply watching and observing other people.

5. Decide what you can do about the situation; then do it and let the anger go.

Let's go back to the bank. You have a right to be irritated if you are waiting in line. You have several choices. You can complain to the manager. You can also use the ATM, use the bank when it is uncrowded, or change banks. You don't have to stand in line and stream.

6. If you are chronically angry, take a look at yourself.

What belief are you trying to justify? Do you keep finding examples of situations where life is unfair? It isn't fair. Life's unfairness is not a new discovery. What's the point of continually getting mad about it? It's also true that some people are jerks. Why bother getting mad about that?

Anger Management Continued

7. Avoid overstimulation. Get plenty of rest and exercise.

When your body is in an agitated state, you are more likely to feel and express hostility. Too little sleep, operating under time pressures, and too many competing tasks all contribute to a state of agitation.

Give up or sharply cut back on sweets, caffeine, cigarettes, and/or alcohol. All these contribute to intense reactions and overreactions to people, situations, and stimuli. Steaming yourself up by thinking of past injustices.

8. Learn to listen.

When people talk, do you find yourself impatient, judging, or thinking about what you'll say next? Preoccupation with yourself and your judgments and lack of true attention to what someone else is saying are principal ingredients for angry exchange.

Start listening. Don't jump to conclusions. Fight the urge to break in with your own comments. Try to learn something new by listening. Don't turn conversations into cross examinations.

9. Assume other people have good intentions.

If you get angry a lot you probably don't trust other people. You assume the worst of them. Many times your evaluation of their motives may not be correct.

Other people may be behaving more reasonably than you credit them for. Try to accept other people as they are, not as you wish they were. When you see a situation from another person's perspective, you will feel less threatened and judgmental.

10. Learn to laugh at yourself.

If you develop a sense of humor about yourself, you can laugh at some of the things that are truly too unimportant to work yourself up about. Getting yourself into and out of a trivial and petty state of anger can be quite amusing. Of course, don't judge yourself **either**.

Anger Management Continued

Anger Management Counseling

Anger management counseling can take many different forms and take an individual in a number of different directions.

An anger management counselor might begin with basic educational information, for example, about the purpose of the feeling of anger.

Anger does serve a purpose. It is the energy we use to solve problems. Unfortunately, if we let it go too far, become too intense, then we are dealing with the feeling of rage, and we have moved our bodies into the flight or fight physiology. By the way, this physiology is useful if I am actually threatened, (and can pick the most appropriate of the three choices).

However, fight or flight chemistry in response to the gas bill is inappropriate. Skewering the gas bill will only tear the paper, not kill the dragon.

In fight or flight, I have three behavioral options, run for my life, fight for my life, or freeze.

In order to create some other options, I need to calm down.

There are several ways to do that.

I can take my pulse, and if it is over 100 beats per minute, I need to take a time out, do my HeartMath, go for a walk, change my thinking to change my thought, listen to a relaxation tape, or practice my deep breathing.

HeartMath

HeartMath or heart rate variability biofeedback is an excellent tool to use, not just for anger management, but as a lifestyle tool.

HeartMath is a program for use on your PC which is very simple to use and allows you to train the time between your heart beats. If the time between heart beats, which probably already feels very coherent to you, is actually coherent to the 100th second or 1000th of a second, the hormonal bath inside your body changes from stress hormones to DHEA, the anti-aging hormone.

What is so excellent about HeartMath as an anger management tool is that it takes so few practices to learn, and once I have learned it, I can *cue the response anytime I want, just to feel good.*

Anger Management Continued

How is it that I can learn how to manage the time between my heartbeats?

Well, the heart actually has a very sophisticated nervous system of its own, a brain if you will, and it can and does sense information, and the heart sends much more information to the brain in your cranium than that brain sends to the heart.

It turns out that when we manage the heart rate variability effectively, we open the higher perceptual centers in the brain, and are free to brain storm solutions.

Those higher perceptual systems are not available when my heart rate variability is incoherent, when I am stressed.

How to use the HeartMath tool when away from the computer?

1. If you are recognizing that you are stressed, switch the focus away from the external to the internal, the area around your heart.
2. Breathe deeply ten times, breathing the cool, soothing breathe through your heart. (Of course, you are pretending)
3. Remember a positive fun time and try to re-experience it. Remember it with some detail.
4. Now ask your heart, "What would be a less stressful way to handle this situation in the future?"
5. Listen for your heart's answer. Your heart's intelligence is cooperative and affiliative, and it will offer you a solution which is cooperative and affiliative for that external situation, which is a win-win situation.
6. Once you have mastered HeartMath for anger management, or stress management, then you can use it for Peak Performance. What is it that the best golfers in the world know about the importance of heart rate variability coherence?

Cognitive-Behavioral Anger Management Counseling

If you are an individual who manages his emotions through cognitions or thinking, then this particular style of of anger management counseling will work very well for you.

Just remember that my perceptions happen very rapidly, and my physiology can change in 1/18th second, which is twice as fast as I can blink my eyes.

Simply by changing the thought, we can change how we feel.

Identifying automatic thoughts and disputing them allow us to reduce or change our internal experience or emotion.

Automatic thoughts are simple little rules that I have learned to cue up in my head to help me explain certain circumstances or situations, and they often cast me in the role of victim, as if you are acting against me.

If I remember an automatic thought, and do not examine it, I get some payoffs; I get to take revenge and I am not responsible.

So, the Cognitive/Behavioral model of anger management counseling will involve teaching me to examine my automatic thoughts, and dispute them. Perhaps I will even learn to create a balancing thought.

Breathing

Breathing is the cheapest and quickest way to manage physiology and anger and even create contentment.

I love to ask my anger management clients how much it costs them to breathe deeply. They are chagrined to answer that breathing is free so far.

Attention to breath is the key to managing emotions. I switch my focus to the breath, breathing in to a count of three and out to a count of three, and keep going until my physiology changes.

It is actually inspiring isn't it?

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Video Games & Me :

What Do Teens See In Video Games
Negative Effects Of Gaming
7 Ways To Make The Most Of Electric Games

Workshops # 9

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

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Video Games & Me

What Do Teens See in Video Games?

Sex and drugs and violence. How does participating in these games affect kids? It has been estimated that 82% of children aged 8 to 18 live in households that have video games and that the average playing session exceeds an hour. Given this large amount of viewing time, these researchers aimed to learn more about the content of video games that were rated as appropriate for teens by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB).

Researchers randomly selected 81 of the 396 teen-rated games on the market in April 2001, and an experienced video-gamer learned the games and played each for an hour. Researchers observed videotapes of play and provided content descriptors for each game (e.g., violence, profanity). The content descriptors assigned by the examiners and the ESRB were then compared.

The percentages of games given specific descriptors by the ESRB versus the researchers were: violence, 95% vs. 98%; blood, 27% vs. 42%; sexual themes, 20% vs. 27%; profanity, 17% vs. 27%; and substance use, 1% vs. 15%. Investigators assigned more content descriptors to 39 games (48%) than had the ESRB. Investigators found that 90% of games overall rewarded or required injuring characters and that 69% rewarded or required killing a character to win; violence averaged 36% of game time in violent games.

Comment: Recently, attention has focused on whether television and movie depictions of violence, smoking, and alcohol use affect teen behavior (*Journal Watch Psychiatry* [Sep 3 2003](#) and [Jul 24 2003](#)). Unlike passive viewing of maiming or homicidal acts in movies or on TV, video games require active participation by child players. A natural next step would be research into the behavioral consequences of interactions involving violence and sex in video games.

— **Barbara Geller, MD**

Published in Journal Watch Psychiatry March 25, 2004

Violent Video Games and Teens

Negative Effects on the Brain, Development, and Behavior © [Susan Carney](#)

Video games are a multi-billion dollar industry. New titles are marketed to teens each year, with increasingly realistic graphics and sound effects. Many teens, especially boys, spend hours a day playing these games, and parents are often unaware of exactly what their kids are viewing.

Parents are often concerned about the violent content of these games, but unaware just how dangerous they can be. But the risks for increasing aggressive behavior are real. "The latest brain research shows that violent games activate the anger center of the teenage brain while dampening the brain's conscience." [Ninth Annual MediaWise Video Game Report Card, David Walsh, Ph.D. et. al., 2004].

Video Game Research

Other studies have found similar results, including increased aggressive thoughts and behaviors, and a decrease in helping behaviors after playing violent games. One study looked at two groups of kids between to ages of 13 and 17: one group played a T-rated game involving military combat while other group played a nonviolent game.

After, functional magnetic resonance imaging was used to scan the kids' brains while they performed certain tasks. The results? The first group showed more activity in the amygdala, a part of the brain which plays a part in emotional arousal, and less activation in the parts of the brain connected to focus, concentration, and control. [Study: Violent Video Game Effects Linger in Brain, Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, 2006].

Desensitization to Violence

The initial surprise, or disgust felt when viewing violent images is gradually reduced over repeated viewings. This means that the images make less and less of an impact over time. Instead of finding them shocking and disturbing, kids soon experience these realistic scenes as amusing and entertaining. In addition, the offenders in video games rarely receive negative consequences for their actions, nor do they show [empathy](#) or remorse for pain inflicted on their victims. One of the problems with this is that kids may find themselves less compassion towards real incidents and victims of [violence](#), as well.

Perception of Hostile Intent

Constant exposure to these types of images can also cause viewers to perceive the world as more violent than it is, and also normalizes using violence as the best way to solve conflicts. This in turn can lead to misperceptions about threat: kids can start to view other's intentions as more hostile or threatening than they are intended, because they have been conditioned to expect certain things. As a result, their responses to this perceived threat may be more likely to escalate situations towards violence, rather than using more constructive, peaceful ways of resolving problems.

Using Violence to Establish Control

The themes in video games also normalize unhealthy social relationships and interactions. Male on male violence is presented as the way to determine pecking order: gang violence is glorified, and men solve conflicts through fighting to establish their place on the social chain. Since teens are very concerned about their social status, they are especially vulnerable to this type of modeling.

Violence is also used to establish control over women, and [sexual violence](#) is common in some of the most popular games. Repeated exposure to and participation in these storylines for kids just learning how to navigate relationships can normalize this behavior for both boys and girls, and can impact their expectations of each other.

There is cause to be concerned about the impact of violent video games. Parents need to be aware of the content of the games their kids are playing, and use the video game rating system wisely. Parents should also talk to their kids about the themes and storylines of these games, and stay on the alert for any behavioral red flags that may indicate a problem.

As children get older, the time they spend playing video games often increases, taking the place of other activities, such as watching TV. It's easy to see why preteens find video games so appealing: Skill is required to use the controls; elaborate rules must be understood and mastered; and children this age have a growing interest in exploring the world and their place in it.

Many popular video games are rife with violence, unrealistic images of men's and women's bodies, and a lack of racial diversity among characters. Still, you can take steps to make your preteen's experience a positive one.

Talk to him about the games he plays, helping him interpret what he sees and experiences and challenging ideas he may be adopting. Taking an interest in the games and Web sites that captivate your child will give you invaluable insight into his interests.

7 Ways to Make the Most of Electronic Games

Talk to your child about the games she likes to play.

See what connections your preteen is making between herself and video game characters. Make sure she is aware of the real-life consequences of what she sees on screen. Ask why games are appealing: Is it the competitive aspect? Getting lost in a fantasy world? The ability to solve problems? Having a sense of power and performing superhuman feats? Or is it the popularity that a game has among friends?

Get to know the video games your child plays at home and with friends.

Use guides, editorial and consumer reviews, parent recommendations and other resources to make informed choices about which games your child plays. After you and your child have read and talked about some reviews, such as those from the [Entertainment Software Rating Board](#), rent or borrow a game to give it a trial run before you buy.

Watch out for negative images of women and other cultures.

In addition to unrealistic and exposed female bodies, many video games direct violence toward female (as well as male) characters. Talk to your preteen about what he or she thinks of the game's female characters. Try to find out what your child is learning about other people and cultures from the characters. Speak out against any images or ideas you find objectionable.

Help your child set limits on his playing time.

Researchers believe that young people become overweight when screen time takes the place of physical and social activities. Help your child learn to value physical activity, homework and time spent with friends and family above game playing.

Emphasize the social aspects of game play.

Look for video games that allow multiple players to play as a team. Encourage your preteen to see the communal side of games by swapping playing tips with other players online or with friends. These steps can keep electronic games from becoming your child's solo retreat.

Teach your child how to detect product placement and other advertising.

Marketers use video games to build brand exposure and to associate their products with what is cool. When you see a video character using or wearing name-brand merchandise, point it out. When a product appears in the background, explain to your child that it's there because a company paid the video-game maker to put it there.

Avoid games that show characters solving conflict by violent means.

Steer clear of "first-person shooter" games—those in which your preteen takes on the identity of a violent character. When your child sees a character hitting, kicking or biting to solve a problem, point it out. Then ask your child to suggest another way the problem might have been resolved.

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Time Management :

Time Management Principles
Step By Step Approach To Time Management

Workshops # 10

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

MINORITY CHRISTIAN COACHES ASSOCIATION

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

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Time Management

TIME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

As a student, there are some basic Principles of Time Management that you **can apply**.

Identify "Best Time" for Studying: Everyone has high and low periods of attention and concentration. Are you a "morning person" or a "night person". Use your power times to study; use the down times for routines such as laundry and errands.

Study Difficult Subjects First: When you are fresh, you can process information more quickly and save time as a result.

Use Distributed Learning and Practice: Study in shorter time blocks with short breaks between. This keeps you from getting fatigued and "wasting time." This type of studying is efficient because while you are taking a break, the brain is still processing the information.

Make Sure the Surroundings are Conducive to Studying: This will allow you to reduce distractions which can "waste time." If there are times in the residence halls or your apartment when you know there will be noise and commotion, use that time for mindless tasks

Make Room for Entertainment and Relaxation: College is more than studying. You need to have a social life, yet, you need to have a balance in your life.

Make Sure you Have Time to Sleep and Eat Properly: Sleep is often an activity (or lack of activity) that students use as their time management "bank." When they need a few extra hours for studying or socializing, they withdraw a few hours of sleep. Doing this makes the time they spend studying less effective because they will need a couple hours of clock time to get an hour of productive time. This is not a good way to manage yourself in relation to time.

Try to Combine Activities: Use the "Twofer" concept. If you are spending time at the laundromat, bring your psychology notes to study. If you are waiting in line for tickets to the REM concert, bring your biology flashcards to memorize.

These are some ideas to get you started. You can read more about time management in one of the books in the [bibliography](#). You can also learn more at time management workshops. In addition, you should know that college students aren't the only ones who have become more efficient workers. Get a headstart and learn how to

THE HEART OF TIME MANAGEMENT IS MANAGEMENT OF YOURSELF.

Time Management is more than just managing our time; it is managing ourselves in relation to time. It is setting priorities and taking charge of your situation and time utilization. It means changing those habits or activities that cause us to waste time. It is being willing to experiment with different methods and ideas to enable you to find the best way to make maximum use of time.

- **ESSENTIALLY EVERYTHING WE DO REQUIRES TIME.**
- **SOME EVENTS/ACTIVITIES ARE EXTERNALLY CONTROLLED:** meetings family obligations work duties

OTHER ACTIVITIES ARE INTERNALLY CONTROLLED: chatting on the phone, commitment to a club or project, or just "messing around."

A Step By Step Approach to Time Management

Stephen Covey is the current organization guru that commands \$45,000 per speaking engagement. He also earned \$90 million last year on books, supplies, and materials. One of Covey's most basic rules is to begin with the end in mind.

This focus on one's GOALS provides the vision and motivation to see the task through. That is probably the best place to start in our discussion of Time Management. We will first try to understand the crucial importance of goal-setting. Then we'll look at developing a personal calendar, schedule, and to-do list. Finally, we'll discuss how to overcome scheduling barriers.

1. Goals

As Covey explains, goals give a framework for motivation. The more important goals one needs to make are those that cover the broad areas of our personal lives. Too often we start with specific goals and hope they will fit into the big picture (i.e., goals for dieting or balancing the budget), when we really need to identify a few broad categories (i.e., career, family, health, finances, intellectual, hobbies, etc.). It might be helpful to write four or five such categories along the top of a piece of paper and make columns for each.

This sort of forethought is actually a great time saver in that it gives a framework to decide what is a primary value and what is not. And yet this sort of planning time is usually neglected. Most executives, for example, feel that the number one problem they face is a lack of planning and think time.

Next, identify three to five goals per category. For example, in the category of "family," one goal might be to make my relationship with my spouse my highest priority, or to find personal balance, or to impart values to our kids, etc.

Then, using another sheet of paper for the first category, enumerate the goals along the side of the page and make a statement for each goal in that category. These goals should be specific enough to address the real-life issues you are facing. Regarding my goal to make my relationship with my wife my top priority, I've written the statement, "If Mom ain't happy, nobody's happy! Check with her on this once a week." Regarding your career planning, you might make the statement, "Get a teaching position by next January." In other words, these statements make your goals measurable. They should also include a date (deadline), and should be achievable. You should be able to reflect your goals through scheduled activities.

2. Activities

Your next objective is to identify the activities that will help you get to your goal. For imparting values to your kids, you might decide to read a good book with them at dinner or bedtime (i.e., *The Book of Virtues* by Win. Bennett). How best does one best turn goals into reality? Try these three steps for starters.

First, brainstorm. Create a list of all possible activities that might help you to reach your goal. Second, prioritize your activities. Here it might be helpful to employ the feedback of your spouse or a good friend. If this person both cares about you and yet can remain objective, they might help you to be realistic about which activities will actually work toward desired results and which are simply more enjoyable.

Third, attempt to accomplish the activities of higher priority that day. Remember the 80-20 rule -- you need to focus 80% of your time on those activities of highest priority. In section 4 are suggestions on how to prepare a schedule that reflects one's highest values.

3. Using a Calendar

A calendar can stimulate your vision, aid long-term planning, and help measure your personal planning success. One graduate student has created a master calendar for his entire graduate experience, with critical dates factored in. Included in his calendar is a dissertation checklist. We have included that list at the end of these notes.

Also, many students have found a monthly calendar to be quite helpful. It proves to be more portable than a large calendar, and will help you avoid schedule conflicts.

4. Scheduling Your Daily Values

According to Peter Drucker, "time is the scarcest resource available." And yet, as we saw in our opening illustration, many times our highest priorities are not reflected in our actual daily activities.

The Barna Research Group, in their 1990 study on graduate students, found that most students considered close personal friendships to be their top personal priority -- and yet little time was consistently given to relationship-building activities. Matching one's activities with one's values is truly no simple task!

And yet, to be effective in developing a balanced life, this connection is crucial. Here are some suggestions for making that connection:

- a. Place in your schedule only the events that actually match the goals on your goal sheets.
- b. Plan to plan! In other words, set in your schedule each week a small amount of time to plan for the following week. That fifteen to thirty minutes could be the most valuable activity of your week! (It has been said that every hour in effective planning saves three to four hours in execution and results.)
- c. Review your schedule daily. You may want to place your daily goals at the top of your schedule for quick review.
- d. Schedule time for flexibility, correspondence, and crisis management. If you can learn- to have "scheduled crises" you will be able to keep them from taking over your personal and family time. Then you should be able to keep an "ideal" work week to about 50 hours per week or less. (A study was done of those who worked 50 or more hours per week, and found that their productivity declined proportionately as their number of work hours increased past 50.)
- e. Evaluate your schedule weekly. As I suggested earlier, begin keeping a journal of how time is actually spent. Drucker points out that astute managers constantly assess where their time is going for increased productivity.
- f. Manage a to do list. It has been said that the palest ink is better than the best memory. Therefore, I have always recommended writing down EVERYTHING! Once your list is developed, prioritize your activities by placing an H, M, or L (for High, Medium, or Low) in front of each item. This system is so simple and yet can be the key factor in doubling or tripling your output. The idea is to use one's most productive hours for H items, and other hours for the M and L items. These M and L items will become higher priorities as time goes on.

5. Tips for Effectiveness

Goals, schedules, and to-do lists are incredibly helpful items -- but only if we continue to actually USE them. Here are some ideas for staying effective in your time management efforts. First, discover relationships that refresh you (as opposed to always spending time with those who drain you). I highly recommend a support group for every graduate student. Second, when possible, use your time twice. Carry stationary with you to write notes to friends if you ride a bus or are caught waiting outside your advisor's office. Third, set study times and locations free from interruptions. Fourth, delegate work whenever possible. Fifth, finish a project before picking up the next -- even skipping lunch if you have to. This cuts down on the reorienting required to start again. Sixth, keep phone numbers on the "to-do list" of those you'll need to contact (saves you from repeatedly looking them up). Finally, handle things only once if possible. For example, if you receive an email message, decide NOW if you want to respond or delete it. "Do-it-now workers" always rank highest in efficiency.

6. Barriers to Scheduling

There are several barriers to scheduling you may need to overcome. These barriers are the time wasters. The biggest, or course, is procrastination. The best way to attack procrastination is the "Swiss Cheese Method" I mentioned earlier. Divide your projects into smaller (perhaps 15 minute) chunks or tasks. You may want to set up some rewards for yourself for the completion of each task. The Swiss Cheese Method is designed to help you focus on ONE issue at a time.

The second barrier is interruptions. If you find yourself getting interrupted frequently (phone calls, drops ins, etc.), you may need to simply leave the premises. Instead of allowing your best work hours to be wasted by incoming calls, set certain phone hours in your schedule.

The third barrier is stress. It's been shown that 75% of all worries never actually happen. But the stress over these fictitious events can waste many hours. Stress can be managed, though. One way is simply to allow flex time in your schedule to deal with demanding issues. Also, you may want to read the article entitled *Emotional Fatigue: Coping with Academic Stress*.

We'd be happy to send that to you.

Perhaps the best way to overcome these barriers and others is simply to create habits of good time management, because this will naturally begin to remove internally generated time wasters. When you find yourself in a habit pattern that is continually wasting your time, try these steps:

Start strong. Set a workable resolution plan that will attempt to tackle the time-waster. Then begin your plan boldly.

No exceptions until habit is firmly rooted. This is the key to beating the habit. You may even need the encouragement and accountability of a friend for your "weak moments."

Act quickly on new resolutions. The idea here is to not procrastinate once you've realized what the time waster is otherwise, it will only get more and more deeply entrenched into your daily routine.

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Staying Drug & Alcohol Free :

Staying Free Of Alcohol and Drugs
Tips For Stay Drug Free
Different Drugs And There Affects
Talking With Kids About Alcohol and Drugs

Workshops # 11

Wellness is Fun Conference



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Staying Drug & Alcohol Free

Staying Free of Alcohol & Drugs

by Kali Munro, M.Ed., Psychotherapist

For many people, getting off alcohol and other drugs is not the hardest part of overcoming an addiction. Staying off, living alcohol and drug free is. There are many reasons for this, one of which is now you face the pain that you've been fleeing. This pain may have been caused by child abuse, abandonment, the loss of a loved one, or being lesbian or gay in a homophobic society. These aren't easy issues to face at the best of times, but they can be that much harder when combined with the additional problem of recovering from alcohol and drugs.

Regardless of the reasons why you originally started to use alcohol or drugs, once a pattern of using has been established, you may not know any other way to deal with life, never mind how to deal with traumatic experiences. You may not feel you have any other coping strategies, such as problem-solving skills, self-care techniques, or other ways of dealing with issues that are buried underneath the drinking and drug haze.

When you stop using alcohol or drugs, particularly after a long history of substance abuse, you may be swamped with an avalanche of painful emotions. This can feel incredibly overwhelming for you, (and your loved ones) especially if you weren't prepared for it, don't know what is happening or what to do, or you assume that sobriety is always like this. No wonder so many people run back to the bottle or drugs, despite the best of intentions. If these things sound familiar to you, it's a good idea to find support. Try to find ways to slow down the release of pent up emotions so that the pace feels more manageable, or not as overwhelming. For help with this, see the section on taking a break from your feelings in my article on [Feelings](#).

Others slump into a deep depression after withdrawal. If the alcohol and drugs were propping you up, you may "crash" coming off. This can feel not only overwhelming, but discouraging, since you probably hoped that life would get better. Well, don't give up. It will.

This is a time when you need information about the process, and to find and hold on to hope. It can help to hear about others whose lives have turned around and how they managed to do it. You'll want to know what you can expect, and what you can look forward to, even if not right in the moment at least in the near future. Know that only a few of the possible benefits are increased self-respect, self-confidence and self-love, and that those things can open other doors for you.

Staying off Alcohol and Drugs

While people recovering from alcohol or drugs don't all respond to the same therapeutic approach, people are different after all, there are some approaches that often help. In the beginning, most people need a very practical and realistic approach to coping. This means finding practical ways to:

- Identify and express your feelings.
- Slow down and contain overwhelming emotions.
- Plan how to set boundaries with people or situations that sabotage or undermine your recovery.
- Draw on the positive support of others.
- Ask for help when you most need it, that's why friends are there.
- Learn problem solving skills
- Learn how to take care of yourself by developing positive coping strategies.
- Create a plan of action for crises.

Honesty is an essential element of recovery, and you can encourage this by taking a realistic approach. Being realistic means looking at what you can do, not what sounds like a good idea. You can push yourself to do a little more, but don't set yourself up to fail. The last thing you need is to create a plan or contract that is unrealistic, and leaves you telling lies or feeling ashamed that you couldn't do it. Being realistic may mean that you begin by gradually reducing your alcohol or drug use, while working on some of your issues before quitting. Or, that you simply quit. Whatever works best for you is the route to go.

To stay alcohol or drug-free you might need to do longer term or deeper therapeutic work. This might mean dealing with emotional, physical, sexual or ritual abuse; being abandoned as a child; experiencing a significant loss, chronic illness or death; growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family; feeling confused or ashamed about your sexual identity, etc. For some people, this may also include facing their present living situation, such as an abusive or absent partner.

Facing these issues is not easy, and may require the professional help of a psychotherapist (individually or in a group). While some people remain alcohol and drug-free without doing this deeper work, others can't. Many people find that deeper issues are intimately connected to why they abused alcohol or drugs in the first place. Looking at these issues can help relieve the need to depend on alcohol or drugs.

Just as with quitting alcohol and drugs, dealing with painful issues usually hurts before it gets better. At first, you may feel as though you're getting worse, but the long term gains, such as feeling good about yourself, enjoying life more fully, and feeling more alive, free and happy are worth the hard work.

It's tempting to say that there is only one way to get off alcohol and drugs. Some people want to believe that there is a definitive answer or solution that works for everyone. But life and people are rarely that simple. I've seen many people become alcohol and drug-free (and others who massively reduced their consumption) by a variety of ways. Ultimately, you should trust your intuition, deep inside of you. If it feels right, try it out. It could be the first step to a life free of addictions.

Tips for Staying Drug Free

Healthy and helpful ways for you to stay drug and alcohol free:

- Make friends with kids who don't smoke, drink or use drugs...Your friends have a lot of influence over you, both good and bad, so pick them carefully.
- Make your own decisions. That's an important part of becoming an adult. It's hard enough to make choices when you're straight – why make it harder by drinking or using drugs?
- It's important not to care what others think about you: what's important is what you think of yourself.
- Don't try to please everyone...you can never do it, so make taking care of yourself your No. 1 priority, rather than pleasing everybody else.

Talk to your parents about things that bother you. Surveys show that kids who spend time with their families, keep communications open, eat dinner and attend religious services together are less likely to smoke, drink or use drugs.

Get involved in after-school activities such as sports, clubs or community service. Just hanging out with friends after school or being bored can lead to doing things that will hurt you, like smoking, drinking or using drugs.

Different Drugs and Their Effects

What is Alcohol?

Alcohol is the most widely tried drug among youth and is the most commonly used and widely abused drug in the country. It is found in beers, wines and hard liquors.

How is it used?

Alcohol is swallowed. It is absorbed by the stomach, enters the bloodstream, going to all tissues.

How does it affect you?

Alcohol's effects vary depending on the user's size, weight, age and sex, as well as the amount of food and alcohol consumed. Alcohol can act as a disinhibitor and also produce dizziness, slurred speech, nausea and vomiting. Even at low to moderate doses, alcohol can significantly impair judgment and coordination. Alcohol can also increase aggressiveness, leading to domestic violence or child abuse. Excessive amounts of alcohol can produce hangovers, with effects such as headache, nausea, thirst, dizziness and fatigue. Long-term effects of large quantities of alcohol can lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and liver.

What are Steroids?

Steroids are synthetic compounds related to the male sex hormone testosterone. They come in tablet or liquid forms.

How is it used?

Steroids are swallowed or often injected directly into muscles. They are often used illegally by body-builders, long-distance runners and other athletes who claim the steroids give them a competitive advantage or improve their physical appearance.

How does it affect you?

When used in combination with a program of muscle-building exercise and diet, steroids may contribute to increases in body weight and muscular strength. Steroid users can be affected by more than 70 side effects, including psychological as well as physical reactions, most seriously affecting the liver, cardiovascular and reproductive systems. Steroids can also produce aggressive behavior and interfere with bone growth in young adults.

What are inhalants?

Both parents and their children may not be aware of how dangerous inhalants can be. Inhalants are readily available and accessible to children in your own home, in school and on grocery shelves. Some substances are already known such as paint and glue, but there are more than 1,000 products that are very dangerous when inhaled such as typewriter correction fluid, felt tip markers, spray paint, air freshener, butane and even cooking spray.

How is it used?

Inhalants are sniffed or "huffed" to give the user an immediate high. Using inhalants even one time can be deadly.

How does it affect you?

Sniffing inhalants can cause sudden death, suffocation, hallucinations.

What is ecstasy?

Ecstasy, which is derived from speed and methamphetamine, can be found in capsule, tablet, powder or liquid forms.

How is it used?

Ecstasy can be swallowed, snorted, injected or smoked.

How does it affect you?

Ecstasy, is a synthetic or "designer" drug that acts simultaneously as a stimulant and a hallucinogen. Ecstasy produces hallucinogenic effects and can affect mood, sleeping and eating habits, thinking processes, aggressive behavior, sexual function, and sensitivity to pain. The drug can also increase your blood pressure and heart rate. Users who take Ecstasy at raves risk exhaustion and dehydration from a combination of the drug and non-stop dancing, and users have died from heat stroke.

What is LSD?

LSD, also called acid," is a hallucinogen - a potent mood-changing drug, which is found in tablets, capsules or liquid form.

How is it used?

LSD can be swallowed or licked off paper.

How does it affect you?

Experiences may include panic, confusion, suspicion, anxiety and more. Users can also experience flashbacks after they have stopped using the drug.

What is meth?

Methamphetamine, also known as "meth," "speed" or "crank" is a stimulant drug that affects the central nervous system.

How is it used?

Meth can be found in pill form or a powdered form and can be swallowed, snorted, injected or smoked.

How does it affect you?

Methamphetamine can affect heart rate and blood pressure. It can also cause insomnia, increased physical activity or produce symptoms of paranoia. Meth is addictive enabling users to develop a tolerance quickly, needing increasing amounts to get high, and going on longer binges, forcing users to avoid sleep.

What is Heroin?

Heroin, a white-to-brownish tar-like substance or powder, is a highly addictive drug derived from morphine. Today, heroin is purer than ever with a lower price.

How is it used?

Heroin can be injected, smoked or inhaled. Heroin users quickly adopt a tolerance for the drug and must use increasing amounts to get the same effects.

How does it affect you?

Heroin can cause slowed and slurred speech, respiratory depression, an impaired immune system, HIV infection from injection, decreased sexual pleasure, sedation proceeding to coma, reduced appetite, irregular heart rate or blood pressure, or death.

What is Cocaine?

Cocaine is a white powder that is derived from the South American coca plant. Crack is a chemically altered smokeable form of cocaine in the form of pellets or crystalline rocks. Both are highly addictive.

How is it used?

Cocaine can either be snorted or injected and produces a high lasting about 20 minutes. Crack cocaine is smoked with effects lasting about 12 minutes.

How does it affect you?

Cocaine can increase blood pressure, heart and breathing rates and body temperature and lead to heart attacks, strokes or respiratory failure. Cocaine also lowers the body's resistance and ability to fight infection. Cocaine can also cause violent or paranoid behavior, hallucinations, confusion, anxiety or depression. Once the drug leaves the brain, the user experiences depression, irritability, and fatigue.

What is Marijuana?

Marijuana is the most frequently used illegal drug. Marijuana is a green, brown or greyish mixture of dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds and flowers of the hemp plant. Marijuana and other drugs made from the same plant are also known as cannabis. All forms of cannabis are mind-altering and all contain THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the main active ingredient in marijuana.

How is it used?

Most marijuana users roll loose marijuana into a "joint" - a cigarette, or smoke it in a pipe. Others mix marijuana into foods.

How does it affect you?

Marijuana's effect on the user depends on the potency of THC it contains. There are stronger forms of marijuana available today than in the 1960s which means stronger effects. There are serious consequences to marijuana use, especially by children, which include impairment of short-term memory, concentration and motor skills critical for a child's intellectual and social development; greater likelihood of use of another illegal drug such as cocaine or heroin; increased likelihood of having unprotected sex or sex with multiple partners, leaving them at greater risk of pregnancy, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; possible long-term physical and psychological dependence and/or slowed reaction time, impaired coordination and decrease attention span, leading to increased highway accidents and fatalities.

Talking With Kids About Alcohol and Drugs

The issue of drugs can be very confusing to young children. If drugs are so dangerous, then why is the family medicine cabinet full of them? And why do TV, movies, music and advertising often make drug and alcohol use look so cool? We need to help our kids to distinguish fact from fiction. And it's not too soon to begin. National studies show that the average age when a child first tries alcohol is 11; for marijuana, it's 12. And many kids start becoming curious about these substances even sooner. So let's get started!

Listen carefully

Student surveys reveal that when parents listen to their children's feelings and concerns, their kids feel comfortable talking with them and are more likely to stay drug-free.

Role play how to say "no"

Role play ways in which your child can refuse to go along with his friends without becoming a social outcast. Try something like this, "Let's play a game. Suppose you and your friends are at Andy's house after school and they find some beer in the refrigerator and ask you to join them in drinking it. The rule in our family is that children are not allowed to drink alcohol. So what could you say?"

If your child comes up with a good response, praise him. If he doesn't, offer a few suggestions like, "No, thanks. Let's play with Sony PlayStation instead," or "No thanks. I don't drink beer. I need to keep in shape for basketball."

Encourage choice

Allow your child plenty of opportunity to become a confident decision-maker. An 8-year-old is capable of deciding if she wants to invite lots of friends to her birthday party or just a close pal or two. A 12-year-old can choose whether she wants to go out for chorus or join the school band. As your child becomes more skilled at making all kinds of good choices, both you and she will feel more secure in her ability to make the right decision concerning alcohol and drugs if and when the time arrives.

Provide age-appropriate information

Make sure the information that you offer fits the child's age and stage. When your 6 or 7-year-old is brushing his teeth, you can say, "There are lots of things we do to keep our bodies healthy, like brushing our teeth. But there are also things we shouldn't do because they hurt our bodies, like smoking or taking medicines when we are not sick."

If you are watching TV with your 8 year-old and marijuana is mentioned on a program, you can say, "Do you know what marijuana is? It's a bad drug that can hurt your body." If your child has more questions, answer them. If not, let it go. Short, simple comments said and repeated often enough will get the message across.

You can offer your older child the same message, but add more drug-specific information. For example, you might explain to your 12-year-old what marijuana and crack look like, their street names and how they can affect his body.

Establish a clear family position on drugs

It's okay to say, "We don't allow any drug use and children in this family are not allowed to drink alcohol. The only time that you can take any drugs is when the doctor or Mom or Dad gives you medicine when you're sick. We made this rule because we love you very much and we know that drugs can hurt your body and make you very sick; some may even kill you. Do you have any questions?"

Be a good example

Children will do what you do much more readily than what you say. So try not to reach for a beer the minute you come home after a tough day; it sends the message that drinking is the best way to unwind. Offer dinner guests non-alcoholic drinks in addition to wine and spirits. And take care not to pop pills, even over-the-counter remedies, indiscriminately. Your behavior needs to reflect your beliefs.

Discuss what makes a good friend

Since peer pressure is so important when it comes to kids' involvement with drugs and alcohol, it makes good sense to talk with your children about what makes a good friend. To an 8-year-old you might say, "A good friend is someone who enjoys the same games and activities that you do and who is fun to be around." 11 to 12-year-olds can understand that a friend is someone who shares their values and experiences, respects their decisions and listens to their feelings. Once you've gotten these concepts across, your children will understand that "friends" who pressure them to drink or smoke pot aren't friends at all. Additionally, encouraging skills like sharing and cooperation -- and strong involvement in fun, healthful activities (such as team sports or scouting) -- will help your children make and maintain good friendships as they mature and increase the chance that they'll remain drug-free.

Build self-esteem

Kids who feel good about themselves are much less likely than other kids to turn to illegal substances to get high.

As parents, we can do many things to enhance our children's self-image. Here are some pointers:

- *Offer lots of praise for any job well done.*
- *If you need to criticize your child, talk about the action, not the person.* If your son gets a math problem wrong, it's better to say, "I think you added wrong. Let's try again."
- *Assign do-able chores.* A 6-year-old can bring her plate over to the sink after dinner; a 12-year-old can feed and walk the dog after school. Performing such duties and being praised for them helps your child feel good about himself.
- *Spend one-on-one time with your youngster.* Setting aside at least 15 uninterrupted minutes per child per day to talk, play a game, or take a walk together, lets her know you care.

Say, "I love you." Nothing will make your child feel better.

Repeat the message

Information and lessons about drugs are important enough to repeat frequently. So be sure to answer your children's questions as often as they ask them to initiate conversation whenever the opportunity arises.

If you suspect a problem, seek help

While kids under age 12 rarely develop a substance problem, it can -- and does -- happen. If your child becomes withdrawn, loses weight, starts doing poorly in school, turns extremely moody, has glassy eyes -- or if the drugs in your medicine cabinet seem to be disappearing too quickly -- talk with your child and reach out to any one of the organizations listed here. You'll be helping your youngster to a healthier, happier future.

Questions & Answers

Why do people take bad or illegal drugs?

There are lots of reasons. Maybe they don't know how dangerous they are. Or maybe they feel bad about themselves or don't know how to handle their problems. Or maybe they don't have parents they can talk to. Why do you think they do it?

Why are some drugs good and some drugs bad for you?

When you get sick, the drugs the doctor gives you will help you get better. But if you take these drugs when you're healthy, they can make you sick. Also, there are some drugs, like marijuana or crack, that are never good for you. To be safe, never ever take any drugs unless Mom, Dad or the doctor says it's okay.

Teen Education and Enrichment Programs

Learning How To Be Accountable :

Becoming An Accountable Teen
Critical Thinking
Assumptions, Inferences and Evaluations

Workshops # 12

Wellness is Fun Conference



“BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS”

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Learning How To Be Accountable

Becoming an Accountable Teen

The teen years are a time when independence looms large, but the battle to achieve much-wanted freedom rages on. This is also around the time that parents are striving to teach teens responsibility so they can grow into mature, trustworthy adults who are accountable for their actions. To get the ball rolling, parents should prepare a set of rules or guidelines, tasks and commitments, and they should be age-appropriate with [clear](#) expectations. Regardless of the family dynamics and home structure, parents desire to help teens become mature adults, but expect resistance and be prepared to explain your case. Allow your teen to voice his or her opinion whenever possible, which will encourage open communication. It is the reaction of parents that helps teens learn from their mistakes and gain a fair amount of teen responsibility, so get ready to set the right example.

Critical Thinking

Teens are not the best decision-makers, which may be in part to their brains not being fully grown. An interesting study on teen brain growth by Dr. Jay Giedd at the National Institute of Mental [Health](#) finds that teens lack brain connectivity to make decisions on the same organizational and critical thinking levels that mature adults do. The teenage brain is still growing and learning, based on the environment it lives within, and - because it is not completely grown - it still needs to be taught responsibility. Since lecturing is not always the best way to talk to your teen, it may be wise to act as a role model for your teen to the best of your ability, every day

To teach teens responsibility, parents must focus on two dimensions of being responsible, which are thinking critically about a situation and making decisions about a situation. Both are skill sets that can greatly enhance teen self-responsibility and also responsibility to the family and to society.

So how does a parent teach teens responsibility through critical thinking? It is not as hard as you might think. First, clarify the teen's responsibility, and ask questions on his point of view toward the responsibility.

For example, one responsibility would be to help out with the household chores. Most teens do not enjoy washing the dishes, but the fact is that it has to be done. Clarify what chores need to be done, why they need to be done, and who needs to do them. The teen may ignore or refuse the chore and responsibility. This is normal, and it offers opportunity to communicate with the teen about the responsibility. Here is an example of a discussion regarding responsibility:

Parent: The dishes were not done last night. (Note: There is no "You"—there is no blame here—only mention of the situation.)

Learning How To Be Accountable Continued

Teen son: It's not fair that I have to wash the dishes. You didn't wash them either.

Parent: We all agreed that we share the responsibility for washing dishes on separate nights.

Teen son: You never do anything around here!

Parent: I washed the dishes on Monday. It is your responsibility to do them on Tuesday. Now that it is Wednesday, there are two days of dishes that need to be washed by your sister. Is it fair for one person to do her dishes and your dishes? In all fairness, should we keep this a family responsibility?

Teen son: Fine. I'll do the dishes.

This conversation is an important step in fostering teen responsibility. First, the parent clarified what the responsibility was. Second, the parent affirmed her thoughts on the situation and asked her son to clarify his line of reasoning. Third, the parent refuted her son's line of reasoning with logic. This way he knows what is fair and that his lack of responsibility was simply not fair to the entire family (not just unfair to the parent, but to everyone in the household).

Constantly ask the teen how he came to a conclusion about a situation so you can understand his line of reasoning and give him a sense of logic about teen responsibility. It is also important that the parent does not blame him or demean him. Keep communication open by asking questions and affirming that he has family obligations.

Assumptions, Inferences and Evaluating

Another part of teaching teen responsibility is removing assumptions, inferences and openly evaluating situations together. This is becoming harder for parents because they compete with peers, society and the media to be an influencing voice. Teens are also great at making assumptions. They assume their friends have better lives, more things, and more freedom.

They make wide inferences about style, [music](#), relationships and socializing, which leads to assumptions about what is cool, acceptable, and mature. Teaching teenagers responsibility is really evaluating information and situations, and understanding the implications of their decisions. Ask your teen where she came by a certain thought or decision and what she thinks the consequences of that decision will be.

Learning How To Be Accountable Continued

Discuss the situation of teen responsibility. What is the problem? Are grades slacking because there is too much time spent on the telephone or Internet? If that is the problem, then what are the decisions that can be made to overcome the problem? Teens need to socialize. It is self-affirming and self-enhancing to have friends, but when the relationships with friends override the teen's self-responsibility and the household, it becomes necessary to have an open discussion and get to the root problem.

Now that the problem has been framed through a discussion with the teen, identify the possible solutions. Most teens do not really want responsibility, so it is important that they understand why they have responsibility in the first place. This will also help the parent and [child](#) identify solutions together and grow stronger.

If grades are slacking because of a lack of teen responsibility toward [education](#), discuss the choices and different solutions. This must be a discussion without blame or accusation. Perhaps the teen responsibility has slowed because she is taking on too much work or she lacks self-esteem to complete her work. What are the choices that the parent and teen can develop together to overcome the problem? What are the consequences of these choices? Ask your teen for input and you will foster the thought process that develops responsible teens.

Part of learning to become a mature adult is understanding responsibility towards family, education, the community, and oneself. Help your teenager understand the damages that can occur because of negative self-talk: "I'm stupid, [fat](#), ugly." This kind of thought process breaks down a teen's self-responsibility. Help your teens by valuing them as people with opinions and giving them clear, positive self-views and positive views of others.

Accountability is about learning how to build a self-value system and affirm individual value as part of the community. This includes being responsible for the world and being part of the global citizenship by becoming involved and responsible. Teen responsibility requires using words and communication based on reasoning, love, and affirmation. The [goal](#) of parents teaching teens responsibility is to understand the point of view of the young person and at the same time, help the teen to understand why the responsibility is important.

Are you a Pushover?

Would Nancy Reagan be proud of your ability to "just say no" or would you actually follow your friends if they jumped off a bridge? Being a pushover may make you more likeable, but it doesn't make you more respectable.