November 2022 School Newsletter

## International Stress Week & Building Resilience

International Stress Week is November 7th-11th. It was created in 2018 to raise awareness of the stigma associated with stress-related mental health conditions and how to prevent stress.

Some stress can be good for you. Being nervous before a football game can help you do your best. But chronic stress—when stress is ongoing—can be damaging. Chronic stress can suppress the immune system and even put us at risk for mental health disorders.

Signs of stress becoming unhealthy is when it negatively impacts day-to-day life. Not being able to relax is an early sign of unhealthy stress levels. With short-term stress, you’re able to relax and regroup afterward. Other signs of unhealthy stress are substance use, inability to fall asleep or stay asleep, an affected appetite, or withdrawal from friends & family.

74% of people report being unable to cope with the levels of stress in their lives. Within this group, 32% had thoughts of suicide. Young adults experience the most common causes of stress: the pressure to succeed and self-image. Both of these affect youth much more than established adults.

There are ways to help destress if you can’t calm down naturally. Try meditation, exercise like yoga or walking, breathing exercises, eating well, and sleeping recommended amounts.

This year’s theme is *Working Together to Build Resilience and Reduce Stress*. Resilience—the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or stress—can be learned. Building resilience in your children can help them thrive even when experiencing high-stress levels or other life challenges like bullying.

Tips for Building Resilience in Youth:

1. **Make connections.** Teach your children to engage and connect with their peers. Help build a strong family network to support your kids.
2. **Help your child by having them help others.** Youth can feel empowered by helping others. Do volunteer work or help them find ways to support their classmates.
3. **Maintain a daily routine.** Routines provide structure and comfort to children, especially during distress or transition.
4. **Take a break.** Validate your child’s feelings but teach them how to focus on something they can control. Challenge unrealistic thinking. “What would you tell a friend with these worries?”
5. **Teach your child self-care.** Basic self-care—such as eating well, exercising, and sleeping well—is important. Help them make time for this as well as their favorite activities.

Find more tips on building resilience at [apa.org/topics/resilience/guide-parents-teachers](http://apa.org/topics/resilience/guide-parents-teachers).

If your child shows signs of unhealthy chronic stress, get them professional help. Find local mental health resources at [wecarepeople.org](http://wecarepeople.org) or by calling 211.

If you or your child are in crisis, call the local 24/7 Hopeline at 1-800-567-HOPE (4673).