

The Power of Parents

“A child who gets through age 21 without smoking, using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so.”

Source: (CASA) <http://www.casacolumbia.org/>

Coping

What is Coping?

Coping refers to the thoughts and actions we use to deal with a stressful situation.¹

Why is it important to teach your children healthy coping skills?

- Parents perceive children as having lower levels of stress than children perceive themselves as having.²
- Stress, if not properly handled, has many negative health affects including:³
 - Painful muscle tension
 - Long-term heart problems
 - Heart attack
 - Ulcers
 - Exhaustion
 - Coping mechanisms are valuable skills that your children can use throughout their lives

Possible Stressors in Your Child's Life

- School
- Negative thoughts about oneself
- Problems with friends and peers at school
- Death of a loved one
- Changing home environment or financial status
- Taking on too many activities
- Expectations they don't feel they can live up to

Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

1. Centre for Studies on Human Stress. 2. Humphrey, *Helping Children Manage Stress*, 1998, p.8. 3. American Psychology Association.

What Can You Do As a Parent?

- Encourage your children to talk to you and to be open about their emotions.
- Be a role model for healthy behavior.
- Support involvement in sports and other pro-social activities.
- Reassure your children that they are in a safe and loving environment.
- Communicate with the other adults in your child's life (ie. Teachers, coaches, etc.).
- Teach your children the healthy coping skills below.
- Monitor for the unhealthy coping strategies listed below.
- Join your local coalition.

(Please visit www.communities4action.org for a full listing)

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Healthy Coping Skills

- Exercise and eat regularly
- Relaxation techniques like mindfulness meditation or yoga
- Avoid negative self talk and learn how to speak kindly of yourself
- Find an activity you love and dedicate a certain amount of time to it each week
- Create a stable and encouraging network of friends

Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Unhealthy Coping Strategies

- Use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- Excessive intake of caffeine
- Avoidance of responsibilities and activities
- Stress eating
- Oversleeping

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Parent Education Websites

www.nimh.nih.gov

www.bolstercollaborative.com

www.drugfree.org

**If you suspect your child is in distress,
HELP is available**

- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990
- Youth Mental Health Line: 1-888-568-1112
- Child-Help USA: 1-800-422-4453 (24 hour toll free) Coping With Stress

Compliments of Prevention Partnership Committee of

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www.communities4action.org

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