

THE PARTNERSHIP *presents*
BREAKING POINTS
TOOLS TO TAKE ACTION



ACTION 3: TIPS FOR PROMOTING TEEN WELL-BEING & HEALTHY STRESS MANAGEMENT

Parents play a critical role in modeling and helping their teens develop healthy coping skills and a well-balanced life.

EMBRACE A BROADER DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

- As a family, discuss the characteristics of success that you value most (e.g., compassion, integrity, health). Remind your kids that success is measured over the course of a lifetime, not at the end of a semester.
- Explain that there are many different paths to success. Talk about your own path, including your struggles.
- Examine the subtle messages you send your kids. If your first question after school is, “How’d you do on the test?” you may be implying that grades matter more than anything else. Instead, ask, “How was your day? Learn anything interesting? Did you get to spend time with friends?”
- Help your teen find the right-fit college or post-secondary opportunity. Debunk the myth that only the most prestigious colleges will lead to success.

MODEL HEALTHY COPING SKILLS

- Show your kids how to learn from mistakes and disappointments.
- After a long day, instead of drinking a glass of wine or beer, try stretching or deep breathing.
- Promote healthy coping skills for managing stress: exercise, take a walk, practice yoga, meditation or mindfulness.

MAKE TIME FOR “PDF”

- [Research](#) shows that kids, regardless of age, need daily Playtime, Downtime and Family time (“PDF”).
- Allow for downtime and rejuvenation between activities. Encourage teens to unwind by listening to music, reading for pleasure and spending time with friends.
- Schedule high-quality family time multiple times a week to give kids the experience of unconditional love, acceptance and support. Eat meals together, take walks and practice family traditions.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Help your child manage time better – but don’t do it for him/her. Encourage your teen to:

- Set up routines.
- Write a daily to-do list and set priorities with realistic goals and timing.
- Use a planner or planning apps to track deadlines and set reminders.
- Prevent over-scheduling your teen with too many extra-curricular activities and AP or honors courses. Use the Challenge Success time management tool to help plan a healthy semester schedule. <http://www.challenge-success.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ChallengeSuccess-TimeManagementWorksheet.pdf>

PRIORITIZE SLEEP

- Teens need 8-10 hours of sleep every night for optimal health and learning. Sleep deprivation is associated with depression, anxiety and memory loss.
- Encourage teens to de-caffeinate 6-8 hours before bed.
- Remove all media devices from the bedroom during sleep hours. Receiving texts is the #1 reason why teens say they don’t sleep at night.
- Turn off all devices 30-60 minutes before bedtime. The blue light from the screens inhibits the production of melatonin, the biological trigger that tells kids it’s time to sleep.

Finally, explore stress management resources and programs at your child's school and in your community. If you have concerns about your teen's well-being, contact a health professional. For more tips, tools and research, visit challengesuccess.org.