

Hi JHCS Families,

We are off and running during this unrepresented school year. I hope you are all being kind to yourself as you adjust to the newness of this school year. I have enjoyed going into the classrooms and meeting with your students. During the month of September we are focusing on coping with stress. Some of the areas that we have focused on are:

1. What is stress?
2. What does it feel like?
3. What do I do with the feelings of stress?
4. Why it's important to use my voice
5. Be kind to yourself

There is not a handbook that tells you what you are supposed to do when extreme stress (outside the normal day to day stressors) affects your child. Below are some tips and resources that can help you as a parent navigate your way through helping your child through stressful transitions and events.

Often the symptoms of stress are seen in children by physical, emotional or behavioral manifestations.

1. Physical: decreased appetite, nightmares, headache/tummy ache
2. Emotional: worry, anger, crying, new fears, clingy
3. Behavioral: aggressive, stubborn, regressing to younger behaviors

What can you do to help your child:

1. Keep a routine. For each family that may look different. If you are not sure where to start, begin with family meals.
2. Children copycat just about everything we do so be their role model. Engage in positive talk and behavior.
3. There are a lot of worrisome events going on in our world so be cautious what you are watching, listening to and saying. They hear more than you think.
4. Keep your child in the loop. Prep them for changes that may be coming.
5. Spend time with your child when you disconnect and decompress from the world. Give them your full attention. The thing your children want the most is your time.
6. Listen to your child. As adults we want to solve our children's problems but by solving them they do not learn how to do this for themselves. When you listen to them work with them by using their language and asking questions that will prompt them to solve their own problem.
7. Teach your child through talking to them and by example to be compassionate to themselves. This will build their self-worth. Encourage, build and show affection instead of discouraging, tearing down and criticising.

8. Children have very few areas they can control in their lives so give them the opportunities to have more control in their life.
9. Get out and move! When the body engages in physical activities happy endorphins are released that burn off stress and anxiety.
10. If your child is becoming more withdrawn, depressed, unable to control their anger, struggling in school or interacting with family and this do not seem to decrease or disappear you may want to call your healthcare/mental healthcare provider.

Websites

Medline Plus: Stress in childhood

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002059.htm>

How to Manage and Reduce Stress

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-manage-and-reduce-stress>

American Red Cross: How to help kids cope with stress

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/a33446164/help-kids-cope-with-stress/>

Good House Keeping: 15 fun stress relieving activities

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/g32226840/stress-relief-activities/>

Helping kids cope with COVID-19 Tips to Reduce Stress and Anxiety

<https://www.gilletechildrens.org/khm/helping-kids-cope-with-covid-19-tips-to-reduce-stress-and-anxiety>

Kids Health: Childhood Stress

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/stress.html>

Disasters and scary events: helping kids cope

<https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/development/coping-with-trauma-disaster/>

Video: Talking to your kids about disasters, death and tragic news

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3v4ZyirhIs&t=27s>