

Some Simple Facts and Tips about School Related Stress

Keeping It Real

When it comes to dealing with school stress, the most important thing to remember is to keep it real! Learn what stress is, what it isn't, and what it can do if you choose to let it rule your life. Here are some facts to help you keep it real!

What Stress Is

Stress is can be combination of both your schedule and schoolwork. Notice whether your schedule allows you enough time to get all your schoolwork done or whether you need to budget your time better to accomplish all your assignments. If finding time to get your schoolwork done seems almost impossible, plan to find a quiet place (like a library or study hall) to spend the first hour or two after school to do your homework.

If scheduling is not the problem and the schoolwork is too difficult for you, plan to spend the first few hours after school in your teacher's classroom or a study hall to get the tutoring you need! Avoiding budgeting your time or asking for help may be unnecessarily increasing your stress level at school.

What Stress Isn't

The schedule and the schoolwork that may be causing you stress is not something to lose sleep over or get so upset over that you can't eat. If you're disturbing your sleeping patterns or your eating patterns, or if you're impairing your ability to concentrate at home, a change is in order. Talk with your parents, counselors, and teachers to come up with a schedule that you can actually follow and homework assignments that you can realistically accomplish. You may need some help with budgeting your time better, or you might need to take a class that is less demanding.

What Stress Can Do

If you are not in control of your stress, your stress will be in control of you. If you do not learn to budget your schedule and your assignments, your stress level will continue to rise with the increased number of homework assignments and hectic pace of your life. High levels of stress can reduce your ability to concentrate, cause drowsiness or fatigue, and make it very difficult for you to function throughout the day. You can prevent these things from happening by maintaining an organized schedule that includes time for homework and by choosing to take courses that are not too demanding.

Dealing with It!

Now that you're keeping it real, you need to know how to deal with the stress that school can have on you. Check out these easy ways to deal with the pressures of school.

Maintain Perspective

Remember, the world will not end if you do not finish all your homework assignments perfectly or if you are a little late with handing in an assignment on a rare occasion. No homework assignment is so important that you should lose sleep or make yourself sick over it. If you find yourself overly stressed about simple assignments, repeat: "It is only a homework assignment." Focus on doing your homework to the best of your ability instead of doing it perfectly.

Get Organized!

You can reduce your school stress by becoming more organized. Make sure that all your books are labeled and that you have plenty of supplies such as paper, pens, notebooks, and calculators. Also organize your coursework so that you have a different folder for each class; this will help to keep your assignments clear and help you to find your information more quickly when you are doing your homework. A lack of organization can cause you needless stress and can make you take you longer to complete your assignments.

Betcha Didn't Know

A lack of organization is what stresses out many students and prevents them from beginning and accomplishing schoolwork.

Prioritize

Prioritize your schoolwork. Notice what date each of your assignments are due, and estimate how much time each assignment will take you to complete. Then prioritize your work. Make sure that the assignments that are due immediately and the larger assignments that require more work (like a term paper) are at the top of your list. Be sure to work on the assignments in the order that you have them written down. When you prioritize your work, you will be less likely to fall behind in your school work and will be more likely to hand in your assignments on time. You'll also feel much more relaxed!

Maintain Your Focus

Stay focused on your assignments, and do not allow yourself to get distracted by the radio, TV, the Internet, or friends. Be sure that the place you have chosen to do your homework has very few, if any, distractions so that you will not be interrupted and can devote your time and attention to your work. Maintain your focus so that you can complete your assignments and avoid feeling stressed about not finishing your work later.

Learn to Say "No"

Learn to say "no" when you already have a very full academic schedule. If your friends or family ask you to do something that will conflict with getting your assignments finished, explain to them that you unfortunately have to say "no" even though you would like to say "yes" because it would interfere with completing your school work. You might be surprised at how understanding and sympathetic your friends and family will be.

Get Extensions

If at all possible, ask your teacher for an extension. Ask if you can have a little extra time to complete your homework. Your teacher may allow you to turn in your homework late for either a grade lower than you would have received on your assignment or without lowering your grade at all if you do not make it a habit of turning in late work.

Betcha Didn't Know

Asking for an occasional extension is permissible to some teachers as long as it does not become a habit and the reason for an extension is not due to poor planning or laziness. If you absolutely need an extension because of an emergency situation, speak up! Ask for help and get an extension.

Remember, even if your teacher insists on lowering your grade on your assignment for turning in late work, any credit is better than no credit at all!

Stress-Busters

Sometimes, dealing with the stress of school just isn't enough. Sometimes you need some slammin' ways to wrap up your school work so you can get your groove on and start kickin' it with your friends. Here's how to bust your stress so you can get out the door and bust a move with your homies. Check out the 411 ...

Take Breaks

Take breaks! You'll find that you will be able to think more clearly and have more energy if you take breaks every 45 minutes to an hour when you are doing your homework. Get up and stretch, take a short walk, or get a drink of water. A 5- to 10-minute break will help you feel refreshed and ready to complete your assignments.

Use Teamwork

Put together a study group of your classmates so that you do not have to study alone. You will find that when you work together as a team, everyone will accomplish more in a shorter amount of time. Ask your teacher if it would be okay for you and your classmates to work together on some of your homework assignments.

Delegate, If You Can

If you have your teacher's permission to work together as a group, choose one particular part of the assignment to focus on and then delegate the rest. For instance, if you are giving an oral presentation about the most interesting people in the last century, choose one person to learn about and then delegate the rest of the assignment to those in your group. This way you will learn about something you are interested in, complete your assignment, and have time left over for your other assignments and social activities.