

How to Reduce Stress

Helpful tips from the School Counselor - April 2020

Chronic Stress Leads to:

- Lowered Immune System: Which can affect the immune system's ability to fight off illnesses, viruses, infections, etc.
- Sleep Disturbances: Either the inability to get enough sleep or sleeping too much.
- Appetite Disturbances
- Releases Negative Neural Hormones which negatively affect body and brain functioning.
- Stress affects us physiologically in a variety of additional ways.

Understanding the Brain's Reaction to Stress/Fear:

The **Amygdala** is the part of our brain that handles our fear/stress response or our fight, flight or freeze response. When this part of the brain is activated by a real or perceived threat, we will then see everything as a threat. Even the smallest challenge or stressor can feel like a catastrophe while in the fear/stress response. The **Prefrontal Cortex** is the part of the brain that regulates our emotion, how respond to, impulse control, and how we make good or bad decisions. When we are in the **Amygdala**, our fear response takes over and shuts down our **Prefrontal Cortex**, then we cannot make rational and smart decisions. This releases stress hormones that affect our bodies and minds.

*This is why it is critical that we de-stress daily during stressful times. De-stressing helps us to regulate our brain and get back to our "thinking brain" also known as our **Prefrontal Cortex**.*

Research shows that by learning about our fear/stress response within our brain we can better control our own fear/stress response.

HOW TO "DE-STRESS" AND REDUCE ANXIETY

Everybody faces stress in their lives and can utilize coping skills to reduce their stress, fear, or anxiety.

Everyone is different and will need to develop their own unique coping skills to help them de-stress.

During stressful times we must make time to do daily activities that bring us enjoyment, peace, and contentment.



Glenns Ferry School District

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Examples of Coping Skills/Healthy Activities

- Limit the amount of news and negative reports about the world and local struggles
- Get enough sleep/rest
- Keep a healthy routine
- Stay in contact with your support network
- Do some arts and crafts
- Gardening/Yard work
- Projects around the house or chores
- Humor – See the light in every situation!
- Get outside (maintain the recommended state and national guidelines about social distancing) – there are benefits to sun exposure
- Baking/Cooking
- Move your body: walking, running, hiking, yoga, lifting weights, stretching, etc.
- Focus on the things that you can control
- Practice self-compassion during this time.
- Find activities that motivate and uplift you to engage in
- Hang out with and cuddle your pets
- Write in a journal
- Write down the things you are grateful for
- Write down positive “I am” statements or positive affirmations
- Watch motivational speakers online
- Download the “Good News Network”
- Walk in Nature
- Do something nice for yourself or someone else
- Spend time with your family
- Declutter spaces that are overwhelming
- Dance like nobody is watching
- Write Poetry
- Practice your photography skills
- Practice some deep breathing exercises.

“INNER PEACE BEGINS THE MOMENT YOU CHOOSE NOT TO ALLOW ANOTHER PERSON OR EVENT TO CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS.”

- PEMA CHODRON

ADDITIONAL INFO

Don't forget to reach out to teachers for assistance on school work. They are here to help and want to see you be successful during this time.

Reach out to the school counselor to set up a time for a Zoom Meeting or a phone call if you need to talk about things that you are struggling with. I am here for you and want to help and support you through this unexpected and stressful time.



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