



DID YOU KNOW?

Building Connections and Positive Relationships Can Prevent and Manage Stress

We all have stress in our lives, but did you know that supportive relationships can lower our stress and help us live healthier lives?

These relationships can be with family, friends, teachers, coaches, mentors, or anyone who helps us feel better when we lean on them.

Being around people who support us can make us healthier by calming our brain and body when stressful things happen in our life. Research shows that having even one positive relationship can help.

It can be hard to find time in our busy lives to connect with others, but talking to a coworker or neighbor or calling a friend can help.

Being part of positive relationships and social activities are just as important to our health as quitting smoking and getting physical activity.

Everyday Practices

Here are some everyday ways to connect with others to help prevent and lower stress:

- Spend quality time with a friend, family member, or mentor
 - Eat meals together
 - Talk, read, or sing together
 - Establish “no screen time” hours to talk and/or play together
 - Take a walk with a friend outside or at a park
- Engage with your community
 - Join a faith-based or cultural organization
 - Go to events at your local library
 - Meet up with friends to play basketball or soccer, or join a sports team
 - Encourage your child(ren) to join a sports team, school activity, YMCA, or the local Boys & Girls Club





Sometimes We Need *a Little* Extra Support

When you are hitting a little bump in the road or are feeling a bit isolated and lonely, here are some things that can help:

Helping Yourself

- Join a peer support, therapy, or activity group (in person or online).
- Ask your health care provider or call 2-1-1 (or visit 211.org) for services, such as mental health support or parenting programs.
- Participate in community center or neighborhood family center activities.

Helping Others (it helps us too!)

- Take the time to support and calm yourself before you try to help others. Remember, taking care of yourself is not “selfish”.
- Check in to see how those you support are feeling, and ask them what they need to feel better. Just being there and listening can make a big difference.
- Support children or adults to help lower their stress.
Example: Encourage them to take a few deep breaths or consider a brief distraction with a healthy passion of theirs (for example, singing a song, dancing, drawing a picture, or exercising).
- Connect them with other supports, such as a mentorship program, (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters), a sports team, a faith-based organization, or a peer support group.

Sometimes We Need *a Lot* of Extra Support

Maybe you are going through an extra tough time and could use more people to support you. Here are some options:

- Contact your health care provider and/or your child’s provider. Ask for the nurse line and let the person know you or a member of your family are feeling overwhelmed.
- If you are in school or you have a child in school, talk to a school counselor or school wellness center.
- It can always be helpful to talk to an expert. Reaching out to a mental health provider for individual or family therapy can be helpful to get over even small bumps in the road.
- If you are a parent, ask your health care provider about support groups, home visiting programs, child-parent counseling, and child care support.
- If a relationship or environment feels physically or emotionally unsafe, talk to your health care provider or reach out to support lines:
California Parent & Youth Helpline: Call or text 855-427-2736; National Domestic Violence Hotline: Call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or text “START” to 88788



FOR MORE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS:

Visit ACEsAware.org/ManageStress or
Talk to your health care provider