



Helping Your Child Manage Stress and Anxiety

When it comes to wellbeing, managing stress, worry, and anxiety is essential. While school plays an important role in supporting your child's wellbeing, as parents, you shoulder a considerable amount of this task. The Senior School has been working with Wellio to help build strong mental health habits with your child early to prevent potential problems, rather than deal with issues when it's too late. Below are some tips from Wellio on how to help tackle stress and anxiety at home. The key is to teach these strategies to your child and to promote them constantly.

Stress Management

Adolescents will often interchange words such as stress and anxiety without considering that the two emotions carry very different weights and require very different actions. The Black Dog Institute defines stress as our body's response to a demand placed on it. Stress is often confused with anxiety, but stress is not a diagnosable mental illness. Stress is a normal condition; everyone experiences it. It involves an emotional, physical, or mental response to events that cause bodily or mental tension, ready to nudge us when risks or challenges arise. Anxiety is defined as ongoing feelings of tension or dread.

Dealing with Stress Effectively

When we don't have strategies and ways to deal with stress effectively, it leads to a range of negative consequences such as lack of sleep, shutting down communicating with people, emotional outbursts and can lead to anxiety. That's why handling and managing stress in the early stages is important.

Supporting children if they become stressed

- Identify what stresses your child
- Learn your child's signals when they're stressed - e.g. withdrawing, mood changes
- Normalise "light touch" conversations about stress, stressors, and ways to destress, for example
 - Getting better/enough sleep (8 hours is recommended for Secondary School)
 - Know how to reduce social media
 - Exercising
 - Meditation
 - Breathing exercises
 - Spending time with friends
 - Journaling
 - Reducing junk food

Avoid Thinking Traps

- Common Thinking Traps ([article here](#))
 - Conclusions, catastrophising, black and white thinking, and minimisation and magnification.

Addressing Thinking Traps

- Catch it: Identify the thinking trap.
- Check it: Is this realistic? Is there evidence to support this thought?
- Change it: Is there another explanation? What would I tell a friend?

"The Stress Bucket" ([article here](#))

- Everyone's stress bucket gets filled by stressors - e.g. exams, friendship issues.
- We all need "taps" to help reduce stress - e.g. exercise, talking to someone, sleeping well.
- Avoid using "false taps" to try and reduce stress - e.g. scrolling social media, gaming, eating junk food.

Anxiety Management

- Breathing exercises
- Identify their best support person
- Contact PCG Tutor, Year Coordinator or Director of Pastoral Care
- Seek professional and/or free help, such as your GP or Kid's Helpline 1800 55 1800

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