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Rural Teens and Stress

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NEWBURY HEALTH CLINIC
DR. MELANIE LAWRENCE
FAMILY MEDICINE; MARCH 27TH – APRIL 26TH 2017
Stress leads to risk taking behavior

Stress is highly associated with:

- Alcohol misuse
- Risky sexual practices
- Tobacco use
- Violence
- Mental health disturbances
- Poor academic outcomes
- Diminished physical well-being (1)

What needs to be done?

- To identify the stressors experienced by adolescents, especially those that are unique to teens in rural communities
- To empower this population and provide them tools to seek help and coping mechanisms to intercept the cycle of risk taking behaviors.
Public Health Repercussions

**Teens Nationwide**

- 4,300 alcohol related deaths/year which cost $24 Billion dollars in 2010. (5)
- 189,000 alcohol ED visits/ yearly for underage teens. (5)
- 15.5% of females & 11.1% male has Social Anxiety disorder. (6)
- 12 month prevalence of anxiety is approximately 25% (6)
- 4-8% experience depression, with a reported 20% cumulative incidence by age 18. (10)
- $24 Billion dollars spent in 2010 on excess drinking cost and outcomes. (10)

**Teens in Vermont**

- 24.4% report feeling sad or hopeless everyday for 2 or more weeks
- 12.1% have made plans to commit suicide
- 18.1% were offered, sold or given illegal drugs at school (9)
Community Perspective:

Danielle, 17 yo Newbury, VT

“I think some of the biggest factors stressing out my friends and I is school work. Personally I tend to get stressed when I read the news. Negative outcomes from stress might be snappiness, or tiredness. Other times I might eat.”

Melissa (mother of local teen) Newbury, VT

“I think in general being a teenager is a stressful time in life. You are trying to figure out where you fit in the worlds and sometimes that’s easy and sometimes it isn’t. I know for myself that I have had to change some of the ways I parents because I realized that I was the cause of a lot of stress In my teenagers life by pressing expectations on her and almost trying to force her compliance…we found that this created tons of stress on our daughter and it didn’t produce the outcome we thought it would. We saw this wasn’t helpful so we stopped. With all the outside influences and stressors in the world I want to be a resource for her not an added stressor.”

Dr. Lawrence, MD Newbury, VT

“In the United States, stress begins increasing at age 14. As stress increases the rate of drug and alcohol abuse, depression, school issues and poor-decision making increases dramatically. As a rural family physician, I see the harm of unresolved stress daily in my patients. This results in significant social and healthcare costs to individuals as well as the community as a whole.”

DartScreen risk behavior screened 5,768 adolescents aged 14-18. They found:

- 18% of females and 8% of males screened positive for anxiety disorder. (1)

- 1 in 5 teens reported being stressed, which was associated with greater likelihood of alcohol and marijuana use. (1)
To create a pamphlet that can be a tool to empower teens to better manage their stress.

It will contain apps for healthy lifestyle, stress, mood, mindfulness, as well as Help line numbers for teens in crisis, and signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression.

These will be available for teens at a variety of spaces including teen meet ups organized by Drs. Lord and Lawrence as part of their TEEN SPEAK-OUT project and in local physician's offices.
Who to call when you need help:

1. 911 (criminal or medical emergency)
2. 211 (can connect you with local resources for crisis/emergencies, health and more)
3. Member service line: 1-866-449-4444
    (NH): 1-800-848-3333
5. Hampshire Rape Crisis Line: 1-800-663-1226
6. Drug and Alcohol Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
7. Domestic Violence: 1-800-228-7385

Results

The Pamphlet: Front and Back

How to deal with your STRESS

Things that cause stress

- School pressures: exams, grades, think about graduation
- Family
- Dating: Relationships; Paranoia
- Course schedule
- After school jobs
- Sports
- Physical and emotional changes
- Bullying
- Thinking about/prescience to try drugs, sex, tobacco

How our bodies & minds react to these stressors

- Headaches, stomach aches, tiredness and muscle pain
- Loss of pleasure in the things
- hostel not being seen or understood
- Crying (crying) butting noses often
- Sudden anxiety or depression
- Changes in sleep and eating habits
- Difficulty concentrating

What can you do?

3 ways to deal with stress:

1. Talk to friends/family: Connecting to other is a good way to talk through the triggers to our daily lives and sometimes we are not alone.
2. Mindfulness practices: Start a routine of yoga, meditation, tea sipping or breathing exercises to help you stay in your body on the negative side effects of stress or find an app on your phone
3. Take care of your body: Making sure you talk get enough sleep, eat well and getting regular exercise. These are simple ways to manage your stress.
4. Persevering: What a good can help keep our minds off of the worries of daily life. Remember to appreciate the small, everyday joys.
5. Connect to nature: Going for a walk or hike can help anyone feel grounded and peaceful.

Helpful phone Apps

- Help
- Healthy Minds & Games for kids & adults
- Mindful Tomato: App to help you focus on your breathing and meditation
- Deep Breath - Meditation
- Mindful
- Pawsitive
day

Mind Full, or Mindful?
The pamphlet was created and vetted by Dr. Lawrence as well as parents of teens in the office, it will be passed along to be used as part of the Teen SPEAK-OUT project that will hold its first meeting in June 2017.

The pamphlet was well received by Dr. Lawrence who was the point of contact for this project.
Future Steps....

- To involve adolescents in the area in the creation of stress management resources.
- With the beginning of the Teen Speak-out meet-ups in June 2017, this pamphlet will be updated and added to as seen fit by the participating teens under the guidance of Drs Lord and Lawrence.
- Future projects could follow up on the effectiveness of the pamphlet as a tool/resource for teens in the area in taking charge of their own mental health.
References


