

STRESS

HELP FOR STRESSED OUT PARENTS



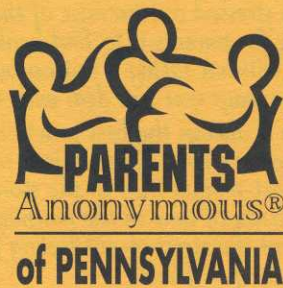
STRESS is the body's reaction to the demands we place on it. Everyone faces stressful situations every day, but the effects of stress vary based on:

- The length of time the stressful situation lasts
- The severity of the stressful situation
- The way you choose to react to the stressful situation

For parents, stress can be overwhelming. The demands of jobs, school, home or relationships add to the stress we naturally feel at times in our parenting role. We sometimes react to stress by yelling, screaming or hitting our children – even when we are not really stressed out because of their behavior. The challenge for parents is to find healthy ways to handle stress without taking it out on our children. Here are some ways you can deal with stress:

- Prevention is always the best practice. Think ahead, organize your life and your schedule – avoiding last-minute trips to the store and giving yourself plenty of time in the morning can really help prevent the stressed-out feeling from happening in the first place.
- Take care of yourself. You spend lots of time taking care of your children, but who takes care of you? Make sure you eat a healthy diet, sleep regularly, and pay attention to your own health needs.
- Make time for fun. Plan activities with your children that you also enjoy, and allow some time for yourself each day – even ten minutes of quiet time for yourself can help you focus and calm down.

- Keep a journal. Writing down your thoughts and feelings in a private journal gives you a safe place to “vent” and keeps stress from building up.
- Make friends with other parents. Support groups like Parents Anonymous® provide a chance to talk to other parents who are feeling stressed out, just like you. You can give and receive support and encouragement and realize that you are not alone in these feelings.
- Practice stress reduction when you are feeling overwhelmed. Take a warm shower, go for a walk, let the housework go while you have a cup of tea or talk to a friend – you will feel better after you take care of yourself.
- Give yourself a time out when you feel as if you might harm your children. Remember that you will only add to the stress – yours and your children's – by lashing out at them.



For more information call
Parents Anonymous® of Pennsylvania

1-800-448-4906

www.parentsanonymousoffpa.org



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