***Managing Stress & Anxiety***

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Would it even be the teen years if you didn't experience some form of stress? No way! As a teen you have HUGE to-do lists. You're navigating a social life, athletics, academics, all while thinking about getting into college. Learn how to manage the stress and mindfully navigate your teen years.

**Recognize the signs of anxiety:** Underline the ones you experience

Racing thoughts, Easily distracted, Tightness in your shoulders, Headaches, Short breathing, Rapid heart rate, Feeling restless, Sleep problems, OCD behaviors.

**Activities to Reduce Stress & Anxiety**

1. *Figure 8 drawing with positive phrase*

Grab a blank sheet of paper, a marker/colored pencil/pen, and decide what word or phrase will be your focal point. It’s a word or phrase that you need more of in your life right now. It might be something like “peace,” “I’m ok,” “Slow down.” Turn your paper laterally and put that word or phrase at the top. Now, focusing on the word or phrase, slowly draw a big figure 8. Use the entire page. By doing this activity, you are creating an internal shift with the bilateral stimulation. Do the activity for 2 minutes.

1. *Box breathing*

Use a separate piece of paper. Starting at the bottom left hand corner, label your box from 1 to 4 going from bottom to top. That line is your inhale line. The top lateral line label from 1-4 from left to right and title that “hold.” The right-hand line, from top to bottom, add a 1-4 along the side. That is your exhale side of the box. Now from the bottom right corner label from right to left 1 through 4. That is your second “hold” line. Set a timer for 2 minutes and journey around the circle, breathing, holding, exhaling, and holding at a nice relaxed pace.

1. *Time management Activity*

-Use the space below to write down your priorities in order from most important to least important. Areas you can include, but not limited to, are: School, Volleyball, Friends, Family, Faith/Spirituality, Relaxation/Leisure, Job. After you put them in order of importance, make a mental note to see if the way you’re spending your time is in line with your priorities.

 -Either here or in a planner, make a to-do list

 -On your to-do list, star the activity that is the hardest and then commit to doing that

 activity FIRST

 -One key when we tackle a to-do list is to avoid multi-tasking. Make a plan for how you

 will avoid distractions when you are trying to me productive. (Ex: when I get home

 from school I will turn off my phone to get an hour of homework in so I’m not

 distracted by texts or social media.)

1. *Ask yourself “Are these my goals or someone else’s?”*

In life, especially the teen years, anxiety comes up when we aren’t living in congruence with our own values and desires. Take a moment to ask yourself if you’re on a path to accomplish your own goals or if you’re set to accomplish the goals of someone else in your life (friends, parents, teacher, coach…). Journal about this question in the space below.

1. *Make a plan!*

Write down any other things you want to learn about or practice to help reduce stress in your life. Ideas are journaling, yoga, practicing mindfulness & gratitude, asking for help. Write out any other areas you want to try moving forward.