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Research paper on stress

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Stress; a Growing Problem

Stress is a growing problem directly affecting teenagers. One in ten teenagers admits to feeling like they do not have enough time in the day, six in ten admitted to cutting back on sleep to get school work done (Marshall, 2013). When people are stressed, the body responds by activating our nervous systems and specific hormones. This makes the hypothalamus release hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol get released into our system (Lyness, 2013.) This speeds up the heart rate, the breathing rate, metabolism, blood pressure rises, the liver releases glucose so that we can have more energy, the pupils dilate, and sweat is produced (Lyness, 2013). This happens so that the body will have an optimal reaction to stressful or dangerous situations (Lyness, 2013). However, during long term stressful situations, this symptoms still happen, not quite as severe, but they still happen (Lyness, 2013). This causes numerous problems in the body, since it is continually pumping out these hormones; it is depleting its reserves, which is how stress in teenagers is most commonly started.

Risk Factors:

Individual:

Stress in an adolescent is hard to avoid. With the system that is currently implemented in most high schools, the stress emanates from all the demands that come with the system (Lyness, 2013). To elaborate, the school demands, the negative thoughts and feelings about oneself, being bullied or being exposed to injury or violence, the stress that come along with being in a

relationship, the courses themselves mixed with the crammed schedules causes an enormous amount of stress on an individual (Lyness, 2013; “Helping Teenagers with Stress”, 2013). The majority of adolescents aged from fifteen to nineteen who live with their parents attend high school. On regular school days, these students do, on average, nine point two hours of school work, homework, and regular work (Marshall, 2013).

Environmental:

However, school isn't the only reason for stress. Unsafe living environments, separation or divorce of the parents, too many activities and expectations, also play a part (“Helping Teenagers with Stress”, 2013). If one does not have a safe and stress free environment at home, it makes coping with the stress presented at school even harder, especially if one has miscellaneous extracurricular activities (“Helping Teenagers with Stress”, 2013). The environment that the individual is in has a huge impact; it sets the tone for the rest of that person's day (“Helping Teenagers with Stress”, 2013).

Social:

The train of stress does not end there. In addition to all those factors, teenagers are not fully developed, and with that, they have not discovered the various coping mechanisms that can help people get through these situations (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013). In addition, the teenage brain is different than that of an adult. As teenagers are dealing with numerous changes such as physical, social, and emotional, they have to figure out a way to balance all these thoughts and feelings, and deal with school, jobs, etc. (Kendrick, 2005). While going through this, they are also trying to uncover their identity, and discover who they are (Kendrick, 2005).

Protective Factors:

Individual:

With all these factors putting people at risk, one would like to know how to prevent these. However, there is no one thing that can just get rid of stress. First off, one should start at the best place to start; the root of the problem. The stress starts with the individual, so one should start with stress management, and overall bodily health, exercising and eating regularly, avoid consuming caffeine, learning relaxation exercises, stop thinking negatively, feel good when accomplishing a task, taking a break from stressful situations, building a network of friends to help unwind, breaking things down (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013).

Social:

It is hard to get through stressful situations without a little help (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013). The parents and friends of people affected with stress also have a responsibility; they have a role to play as well. They can monitor the person affected, listen carefully to what they say, support them, encourage them, talk them down, don’t pressure them, and letting them relax peacefully (“Helping Teenagers with Stress”, 2013; Lyness, 2013).

Environment:

It is also crucial to be in a relaxing environment when one is under such pressures (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013). This helps the person unwind, and allows for the body to maintain its proper balance, helping the mind to go back to a safe mindset, and allowing this person to be able to see things with more clarity (Lyness, 2013).

Consequences:

Individual:

With all these stress factors shooting and bombarding teens, some cannot see the light. They do not know how to cope, and therefore must turn to something (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013). Teenagers with large amounts of stress are more likely to turn to drugs; this

reaction is also triggered by social isolation and pressure (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013). Now that drugs and alcohol have been added into the mix, various consequences that may arise. Consequences such as, repression, negative thoughts, insomnia, high blood pressure, ulcers, nausea, loss of appetite, muscle tension, severe headaches, migraines, weak immune system, feeling depleted and overwhelmed, anxiety, aggression, withdrawal, the list goes on (“How Stress Affects Teens”, 2013; “Helping Teenagers with Stress”, 2013; Lyness, 2013).

Society:

Each person feels the effects in their own way, but there is a bigger impact than just a couple kids being nervous (“Helping Teenagers With Stress”, 2013). Some stress is actually good for you; it keeps you on your toes and prepares you for what is going to happen (Lyness, 2013). Too much, can be catastrophic, it can lead to substance abuse and teenage dropouts, as well as many behavioral consequences (Tennant 2013). The level of aggression also rises, which is a danger, not only to the person experiencing it, but to the people around them (Tennant, 2013).

Programs in Place:

Prevention:

The elegant solution to this problem would be to stop it before it happens; to prevent it (Tennant, 2013). The way to prevent the stress from building up is to simply make sure that one is organized and calm (Tennant, 2013). These help to find a way to keep calm, and stay mentally in place that is not overwhelming. There are many things one can do to prevent the stress before it happens. For one, steer clear of these situations entirely, one can make time in one’s daily life to take a break and just relax (Tennant, 2013). Maintaining good health, as well as getting a sufficient amount of sleep, and being calm is also very important (Tennant, 2013; Lyness, 2013).

These are all small things that can be used to prevent stress; small things that can be implemented, and integrated into one's everyday lives that can save oneself from the heavy burden that stress brings.

Intervention:

Sometimes people are too late to stop things before they happen, so, one must deal with the fact that they have happened, and find a way to stop it, or at least cope with it. There are various methods to dealing with stress, methods such as not cramming one's schedule, accepting reality, learning to relax, watch what one is thinking, surrounding oneself with positive influences, less television and more exercise, deep breathing, relaxing activities such as yoga, talking it out with someone, taking some time for sheer relaxation (Lyness, 2013). There are also numerous programs in place to help people cope with stress, such as the Youth Stress and Mood Program at University of California Los Angeles (Asarnow, 2013). For something a little closer to the Quebec area, there is Station Seven in Chateauguay, both are places where youth can go and talk about what is going on in their life, and a place where they can find out how to manage their stress (Eastwood, 2013). There are numerous other ways to get help. For instance, instead of going out and seeking help face to face, one can go online to numerous sites that offer live chat services, sites like youthinbc.com (2013), or visit their help center at Simon Fraser's University Students Services. There are also many schools that offer a safe place to relax and learn different breathing techniques, and unwind so that we are able to continue with one's day. These programs all offer time to relax, a peaceful environment, and various techniques to keep one calm; a way to de-stress.

Stress is ever present in our society, there is no avoiding it for many teenagers; it is everywhere. Everyone is at risk. What one needs to learn to do is to help people, and oneself to

get through it. There are many resources at our fingertips, so many ways to deal with stress. All one must do, is reach out.

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