



STRESS AWARENESS

RESOURCE TOOLKIT



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STRESS AWARENESS

INTRO



April is Stress Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of managing stress for a healthier lifestyle. Understanding the distinction between positive and negative stress, as well as learning effective stress management techniques, can significantly enhance our overall well-being—both mentally and physically!

This month's Free Your Feels mental health toolkit is designed to support both youth and the adults in their lives by providing comprehensive resources and practical strategies for managing stress. You'll find information on recognizing the signs of stress and anxiety, as well as tips for creating a supportive environment to help manage and/or cope with stress, all to help you navigate the challenges of stress in a healthy and constructive way. By equipping yourself with these tools, you can build positive mental well-being for yourself and those around you!



FOR EVERYONE



Did you know there's good stress and bad stress? It's important to recognize the differences **between the two** so that you can better manage stressful situations. Good stress is short-term and can motivate you to achieve goals, feel energized, and overcome challenges. It often occurs in exciting situations, like: Going on a first date; Riding a rollercoaster; Anticipating an upcoming exam; Preparing for an important presentation or speech. Bad stress, on the other hand, is typically not short-term, and can be overwhelming and anxiety-inducing, making it difficult to focus or complete tasks. It can have negative effects on both physical and mental health. Examples of bad stress include: Ending a relationship (platonic or **romantic**) **Death** of someone you love; Abuse or neglect; Financial challenges. Chronic, bad stress can lead to serious issues. Managing stress involves identifying stressors and adopting healthy coping strategies.

ACTION:

Self-care techniques can help you handle stress more effectively. Explore the "Managing Stress With Self-Care" handout from Mental Health Center Kids [here!](#)



Managing Stress With Self-Care

Research Behind Self-Care And Stress

- Studies show that regular self-care helps in the prevention and management of stress.
- People who practice self-care experience better mental health, more resilience through difficulties, and a higher quality of life.
- Overall, self-care helps people live longer and healthier lives.

Ways To Embrace Self-Care For Stress Relief

- Marvelous Moments**
Carve out special moments each day for yourself. It could be as simple as reading a book, drawing, or taking a walk in nature. Take a moment to practice gratitude and cherish each "ME TIME" moment.
- Energetic Escape**
Release stress through physical activity. Go for a bike ride, dance to your favorite tunes, or practice yoga.
- Positive Enjoyable Activities**
Seek out hobbies and activities that bring joy to your heart. It could be playing with a pet, baking cookies, or stargazing.
- Inspiring Affirmations**
Empower yourself with positive affirmations each day. Repeat positive phrases such as "I am strong," "I am capable," and "I am worthy."
- Mindful Moments**
Practice mindfulness by paying attention to the present moment. Breathe deeply and focus on the here and now.
- Mood Music**
Create a playlist of your favorite feel-good songs. Whenever you need a dose of happiness, hit play and move to the beat.
- Nature Time**
Choose a special spot in nature as your "ME TIME" sanctuary. Whenever you need peace, visit this calming space to recharge.

"ME TIME" Pledge
Make a commitment to prioritize self-care, make time for yourself, and nurture your well-being.

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FOR YOUTH



Teens juggle various commitments, including academics, social interactions, and physical changes, which can often result in stress and burnout. While effective stress management requires patience and practice, it offers long-term benefits by regulating emotions, fostering personal growth, and strengthening relationships. Sometimes, the number of commitments on your plate can make it difficult to manage them all realistically. Organizing your commitments for the school year can help prevent burnout and unnecessary mental fatigue.

ACTIONS:

The Commitment Planner template from NAMI is a tool designed to help students manage their school, work, and personal time, promoting mental well-being. Everyone's commitments are unique, so feel free to customize it to fit your specific needs.

Change to Chill offers free teen-specific online mental health resources designed to help you learn how to relax and integrate healthy habits into your lifestyle. Explore mindfulness guides and stress relief activities for teens to help yourself and others soothe their minds and "Change to Chill".



Change To Chill
Feeling overwhelmed, anxious or stressed? Change to Chill offers free online mental health resources for teens designed to help them learn how to relax an...

[changetochill.org](https://www.changetochill.org)



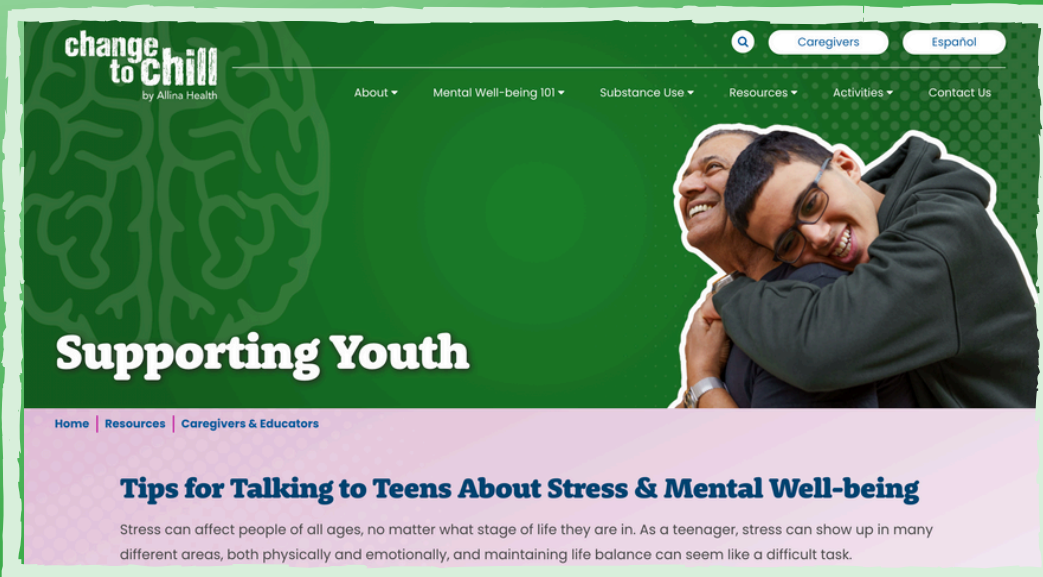
FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



Are you concerned that your teen is struggling but unsure how to support them or where to start with helping? Change to Chill offers free online mental health resources and valuable tips on effectively communicating with your teen about the importance of prioritizing their mental health. You'll also find **practical** strategies to help them manage stress and anxiety.

ACTION:

Visit Change to Chill's "Supporting Youth" webpage for caregivers and educators. This page provides helpful tips for talking to teens about stress and mental well-being.



FOR EDUCATORS & PROFESSIONALS



The pressures of academic performance, social relationships, and extracurricular activities can create a high-stress environment for teens. This stress can manifest as anxiety, causing symptoms like irritability and difficulty concentrating. Educators play a crucial role in supporting teens by creating a supportive and understanding classroom environment. They can implement stress-reducing activities, such as mindfulness exercises, and provide resources for mental health support. Additionally, fostering open communication and encouraging students to express their feelings can help alleviate anxiety and promote a healthier school experience.

ACTION:

Character Strong regularly hosts webinars for educators, covering a range of topics related to student mental health. Related to stress and anxiety is their webinar titled "How to Support Students with Anxious Feelings". You can explore all of their webinars [here!](#)





QUESTIONS? CONTACT

Porshia Hartel
Digital Media Specialist
Voices for Georgia's Children
freeyourfeels@gmail.com