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How to Have Your Family Thriving Guaranteed

7 Simple Yet Powerful Strategies
to Help Your Child's Behaviour
Without Medication



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Chapter Two: Childhood Stress

“The common signs of child stress, and how to help them cope in today’s ever changing environment”



Stress is one of those conditions that can, if left untreated, cause total havoc with your health, your mind and body. Unfortunately many people are not aware they are suffering from stress. Even when adults start taking a lot of sick days, many people actually use this time to do many things in the home, instead of relaxing to get better. Then they stress when they see others around them coping with work loads and not falling behind. Don't worry about other people: they are probably just as stressed but they haven't gotten around to showing it yet. The way to release stress is make time for slow steady exercise like a walk around the block to relax, gentle yoga and regular massage.

For children the problem is just as obvious. They often over-exercise and keep busy for too long when what they need to do is STOP. What all children MUST HAVE is:

1. A parent's ear to listen to them about everything - all the upsets, hurt and anger.
2. Don't leave your child in the middle of an upset time. If you have to, ask permission first.
3. There is nothing to fix for them: just LISTEN and be connected.
4. Later that day sit on their bed and do a foot massage. Always ask first if they would like with a nice moisture lotion then powder on

their feet with socks on after. See your videos.

5. Check how your child is feeling frequently.

One of the key ways to help reduce stress is to identify the symptoms, and then look at their own lifestyle and physical lives, so that they can correctly identify what is going on. Below I have listed some of the common symptoms of stress. By the way, many people who have visited me for a massage say they should have come in months ago – how long have you been experiencing symptoms like those below?

Signs to look for

- ☐ Tightness in or stiffness neck and shoulders
- ☐ Not able to sit in their chair at work without fidgeting
- ☐ Getting tired and fatigued
- ☐ Sit on the couch all night
- ☐ Find going to sleep difficult
- ☐ Headaches and blurry vision
- ☐ Stomach pain and cramps
- ☐ Pain and restless legs while sleeping
- ☐ Unable to sleep or excessive sleep
- ☐ Hold breath
- ☐ Decreased immunity – always getting sick
- ☐ High Blood pressure

Emotional Symptoms of Stress

- ☐ Feeling irritable
- ☐ Feeling frustrated or having no patience
- ☐ Feeling itchy and restless
- ☐ Unable to go to sleep deeply or throughout the night
- ☐ Becoming easily confused

- ☐ Having memory problems
- ☐ Negative self-talk or lack of confidence
- ☐ Having mood swings
- ☐ Over eating or eating when not hungry
- ☐ Unable to eat, or never feeling hungry
- ☐ Finding it difficult to concentrate
- ☐ Lack of energy
- ☐ Feeling you can't cope
- ☐ Finding it hard to make decisions
- ☐ Having emotional outbursts of crying and anger or both
- ☐ Lack of sense of humor
- ☐ Lack of libido
- ☐ Increased use of stimulants like drugs, alcohol or cigarettes
- ☐ Relationship problems

The thing to remember is that the symptoms listed above, can be reduced. If you answered "yes" to three or more symptoms on the lists then your body is suffering the effects of stress.

The health risks associated with on-going stress can vary. While stress has been linked directly to health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, obesity, some skin problems, digestive illnesses (such as ulcers) and recurrent illnesses there are also secondary problems associated with over or under eating, insomnia and a lowered immune system. As you can see stress can be a problem, but it is surprisingly easy to reduce and for you to return to feeling younger, happy, relaxed, energized and fulfilled in yourself.

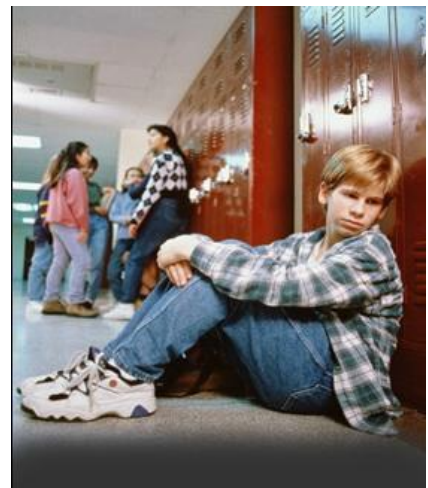
What you need to remember is that if you are not functioning at 100% then you are going to find the rigors of family life difficult to deal with.

One of the greatest gifts a parent can give his or her children is to look after themselves, and learn to take time out when it is needed. I know there are probably times when you feel you are “running on empty” and you need to stay alert for signs like that, or like those outlined above, because if you are not feeling 100% then your family life barometer won’t be reading that either. So take the time to deal with the sources of your stress, so that you can be the type of parent you dream of being.

Basically what stress symptoms indicate is that there is an imbalance either internally (within your mind-body-spirit system) or in your life. In both cases massage can be an amazing tool to help address that balance both for grandparents, parents and children. At this point you may not be aware that your child is suffering from symptoms of pain, stress or fatigue. Maybe your child has difficulty sleeping, or wants to eat all of the time (especially bad food), but you feel this is just a normal part of their growth process. Well don’t be so sure. Other clues indicating stress in children are their susceptibility to colds and flu’s for example.

Mum, did not know what else to do

I had one young client who was brought to see me as a massage therapist by his mother. He had many stress signals and Mum had run out of options. The young child was 12 years old. He had undergone a range of tests by his Doctor and nothing appeared to be wrong. The child had stomach aches and back pain and a sore neck. This is real pain brought on by stress.



An innocent question asked while giving a massage however, revealed that the child concerned was getting bullied at school. His parents were totally unaware this was happening and the child had been too scared to speak up.

Obviously once the problem was known, part of the concern had been lifted, and I finished the massage, Mum brought one of my DVD's so she could learn to massage her child herself. Mum was able to massage. Now Mum and Dad can take over and have far more confidence about dealing with issues within the family group.

Now your child might not be showing such clear indications of stress, but they will become obvious if you observe your child's behavior pattern for a few days. Ask yourself questions like

- ☐ "Does he seem happy, or is he withdrawn and reluctant to play with others?"
- ☐ "Does he eat his food with enthusiasm, or just play around with it?"
- ☐ "Is he happy to go to bed at night, or does he stay awake for long periods of time after going to bed?" (Longer than ten – fifteen minutes of awake time is often indicative of a problem here with sleeping)
- ☐ "Does he struggle to get up in the morning?"
- ☐ "Does he appear clingy, or complain more than normal?"
- ☐ "Does he constantly pick fights with his siblings, or with you?"

- “Has his performance in school work changed at all?”

These questions can only provide a short guideline for you to follow but the key things you are looking for is what indicators show your child is trying to cope with stress, like changes in behavior, eating and sleeping habits and their attitude during the day. What you also need to remember is that children can suffer stress from little changes in their lives – maybe a new child in their class at school; picking up problems between parents at home; Mum or Dad getting a new job; things like that.

Massage (whether from you or a professional Massage Therapist like me) can be extremely beneficial for children (and parents) who suffer from stress. Firstly and most importantly it helps provide a medium for releasing tension build-up – this can have an immediate and positive effect on children and adults alike as I found when I had my first massage. It can also help set the body up to heal itself. Now this takes a bit more time, and the results will not always be as evident immediately. After all it took a long time for your (or your child’s body) to get into a stressful state it is. But in children especially, receiving a massage will help them relax.

Points to note when massaging a child/adult with stress symptoms:

- Use longer slower strokes as you move your hands over the body
- Think and infuse calm and peace into your actions
- Go with the body’s natural energy rhythms, moving your hands outwards from the center to help release stress and tension
- Make sure the room you are massaging in is comfortable safe and relaxing

If you are able to understand that most of the stresses you suffer from

everyday can be controlled, managed and reduced, then you are well on your way to achieving the thriving family team you long for. Taking care of Self is often a difficult concept for parents (especially mothers) to understand – how many times have you used your spare time to clean up after your children; do some extra work for the office; or taken on extra duties for a community organization or church. We all do this type of thing because we have in us a type of “guilt” factor that seems to make us uncomfortable with actually taking time out for self or just plain doing nothing.

By changing your perspective so that you can see how important it is for you to be 100% healthy and happy so that you can have the thriving family life you have worked so hard for, you will feel a lot more empowered to have some “me time” and will be far more confident in handling any stressful situations created by other family members, as they occur.



The website www.HelenBrougham.com.au is here to support you and give you what you are looking for in different areas of your life. I'm so grateful to have you as one of our clients and one of our friends!

Enjoy!

Helen