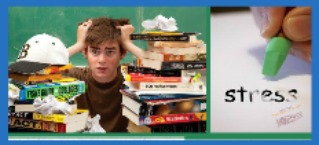
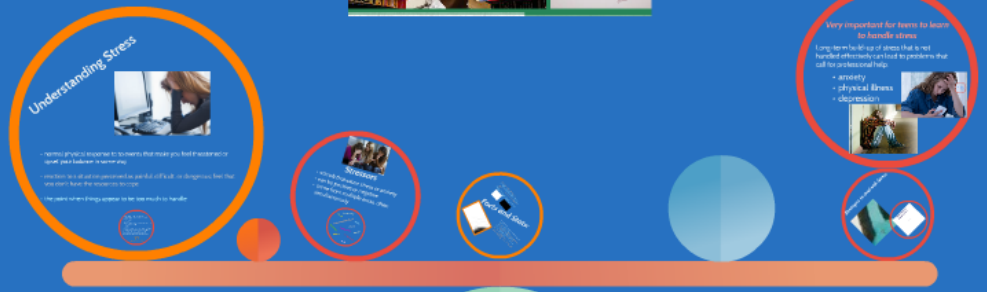
Finding a Balance

Teen Stress & Anxiety





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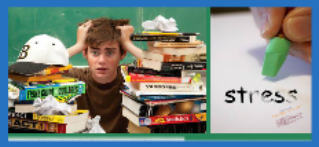

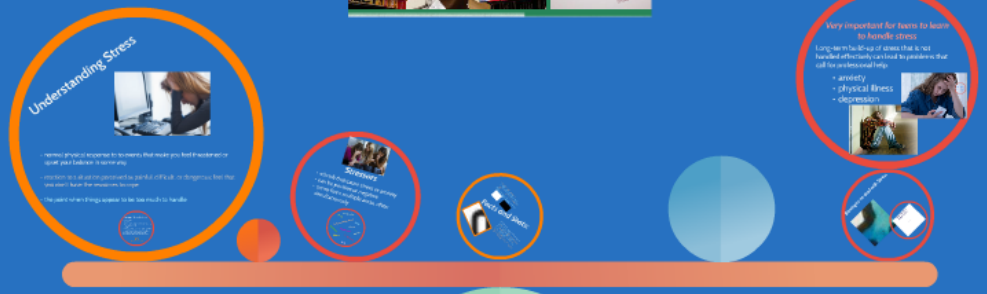

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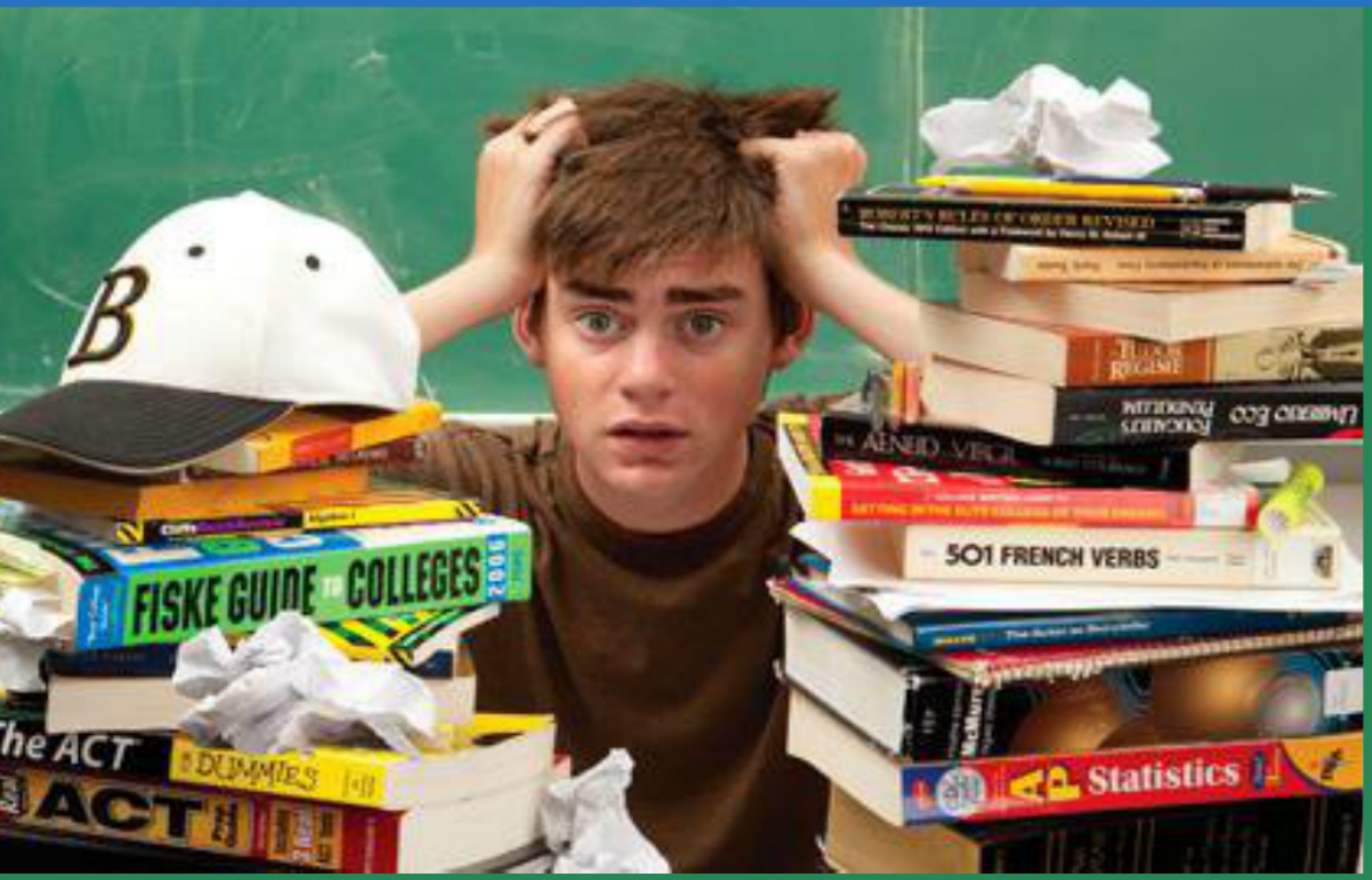

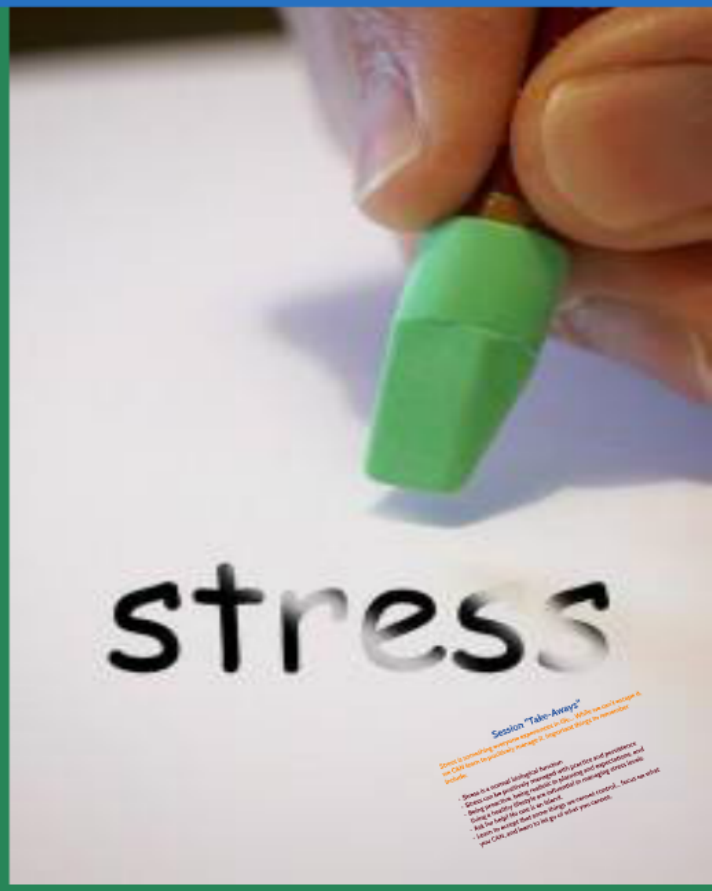

Understanding Stress

- normal physical response to to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way
- reaction to a situation perceived as painful, difficult, or dangerous; feel that you don't have the resources to cope
- the point when things appear to be too much to handle

Example: 16 yr. old Marissa

- part-time job
- two sports
- multiple AP/pre-AP classes; parents expect A's
- preparing for the SAT
- new driver
- has finals coming up, and a project due this week
- needs to find a date and dress for the dance
- worried that she has gained 5 pounds
- worried that her best friend is mad at her

Typical of DAILY pressures teens feel

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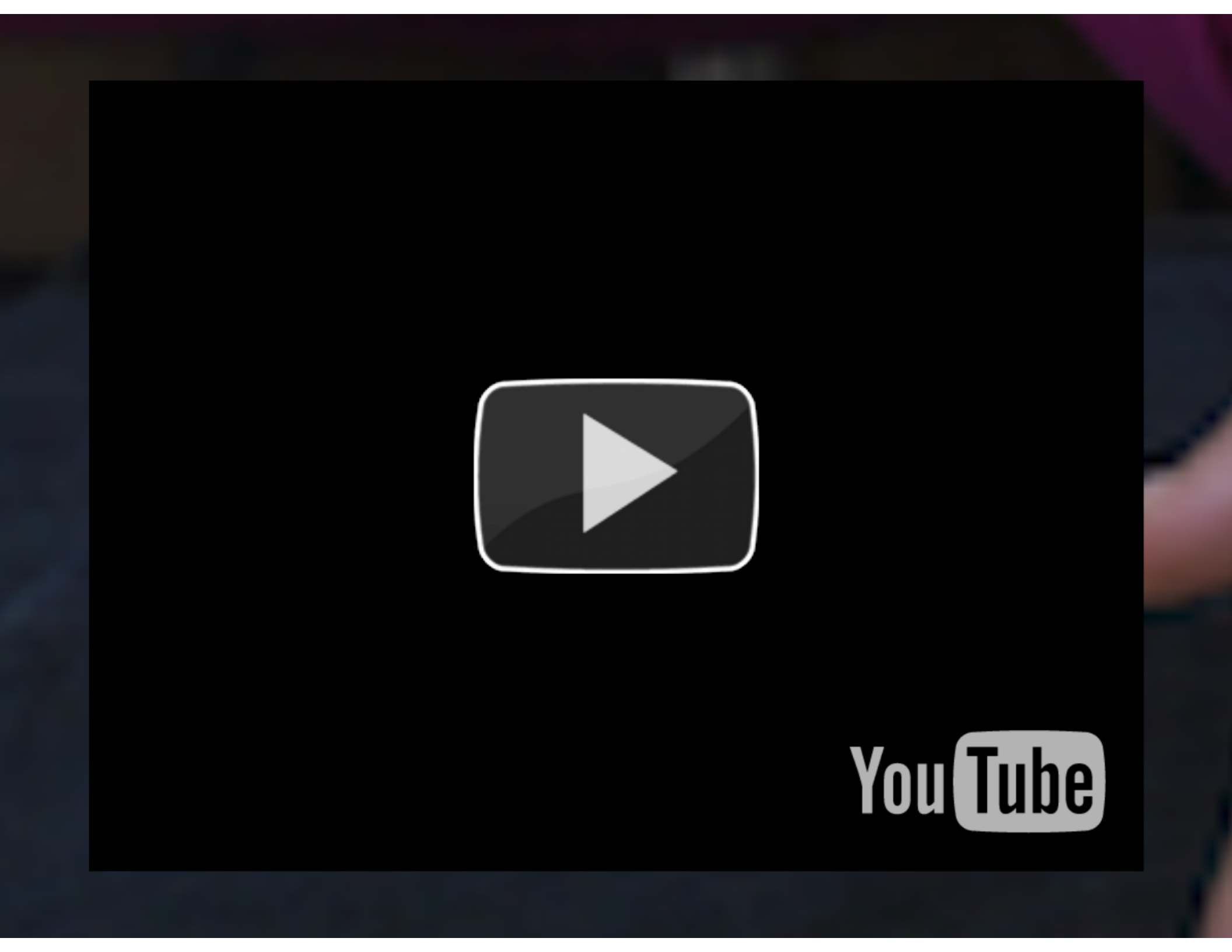
Stressors

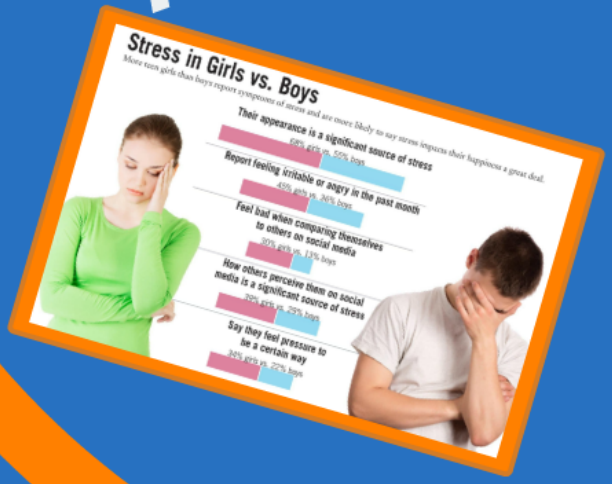
- stimuli that cause stress or anxiety
- can be positive or negative
- come from multiple areas, often simultaneously

Peer pressure
Sports
Assignments/workload
Grades
Change
Parents
Relationships
Appearance
Social Media
Siblings
Work


YouTube

Facts and Stats:

- Stress is as common for teens as adults
- Teenage brain - impulsive part highly developed; reasoning/logical part not developed until 23-25 years
- teenagers often not as skilled at coping with stress as adults
- Social media exacerbates stress and anxiety- Excessive screentime has significant negative effects



American Psychology Association found that:

- 49% experienced significant stress.
- 43% fatigue, headaches, and physical aliments related to stress.
- 39% stress negatively impacts their eating habits.
- 58% stress negatively affected their sleeping habits.
- 1 in 5 teens excercises less than once a week, or not at all... Excercise = major stress reducer.
- Teens who report high stress tend to spend 4.2 hours or more online, compared to teens who spend 2.5 hours or less online and report lower stress levels

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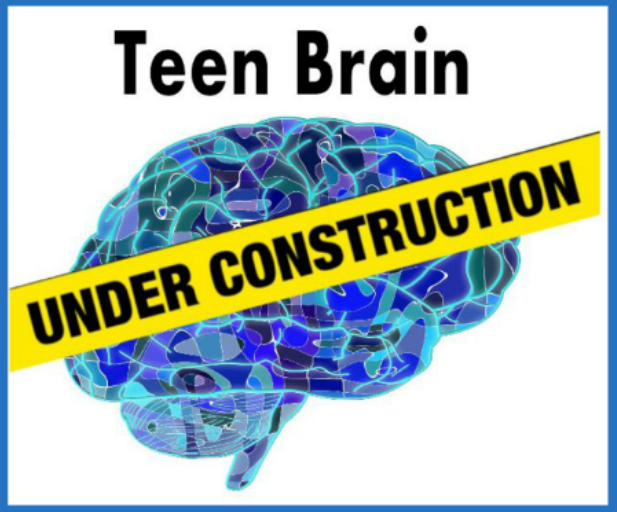

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Stress in Girls vs. Boys

More teen girls than boys report symptoms of stress and are more likely to say stress impacts their happiness a great deal.

Their appearance is a significant source of stress

68% girls vs. 55% boys

Report feeling irritable or angry in the past month

45% girls vs. 36% boys

Feel bad when comparing themselves to others on social media

30% girls vs. 13% boys

How others perceive them on social media is a significant source of stress

39% girls vs. 29% boys

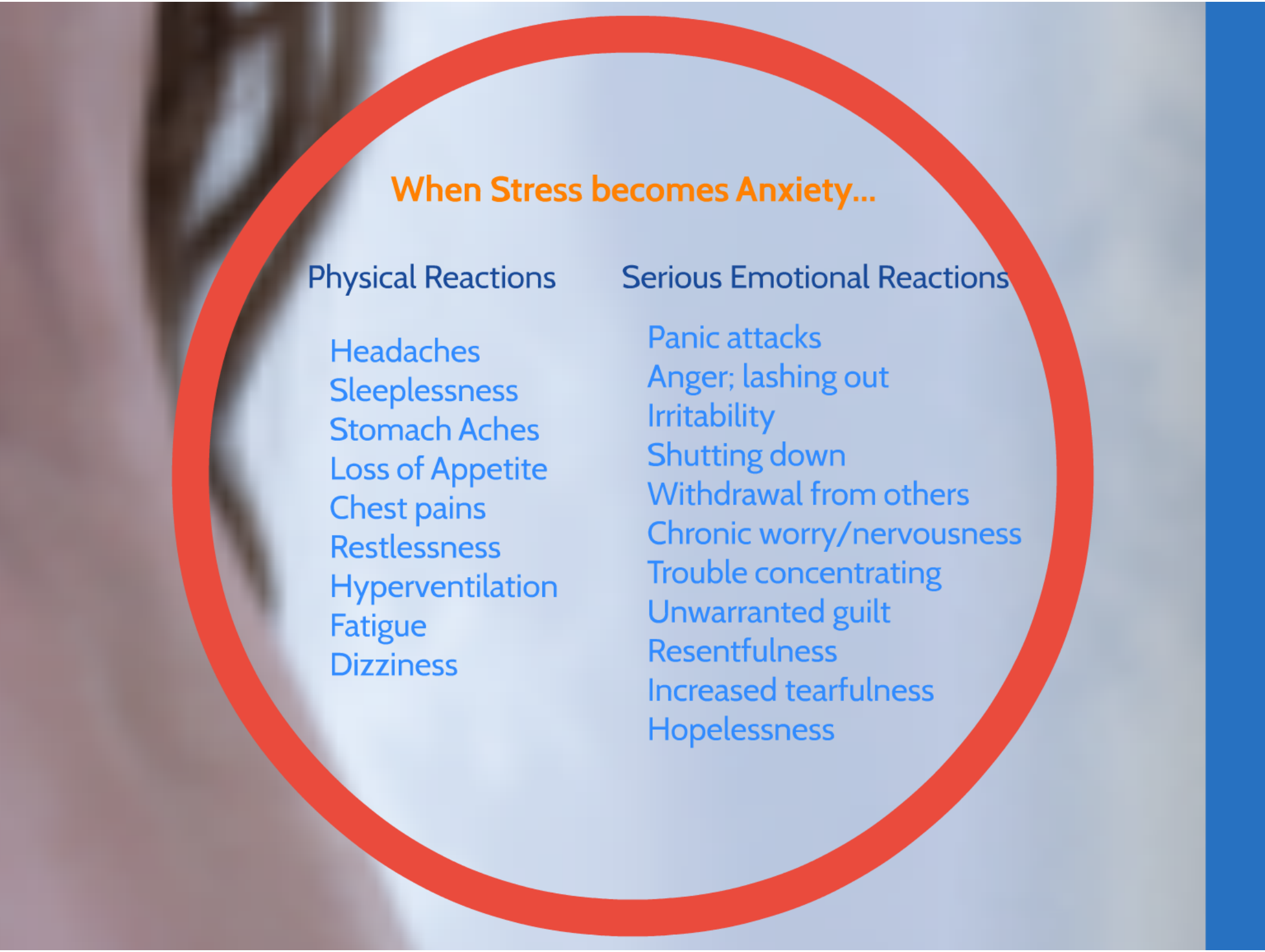
Say they feel pressure to be a certain way

34% girls vs. 22% boys

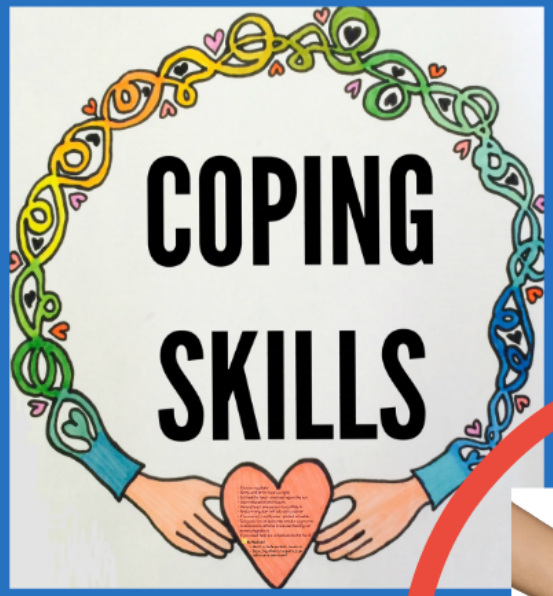
Very important for teens to learn to handle stress

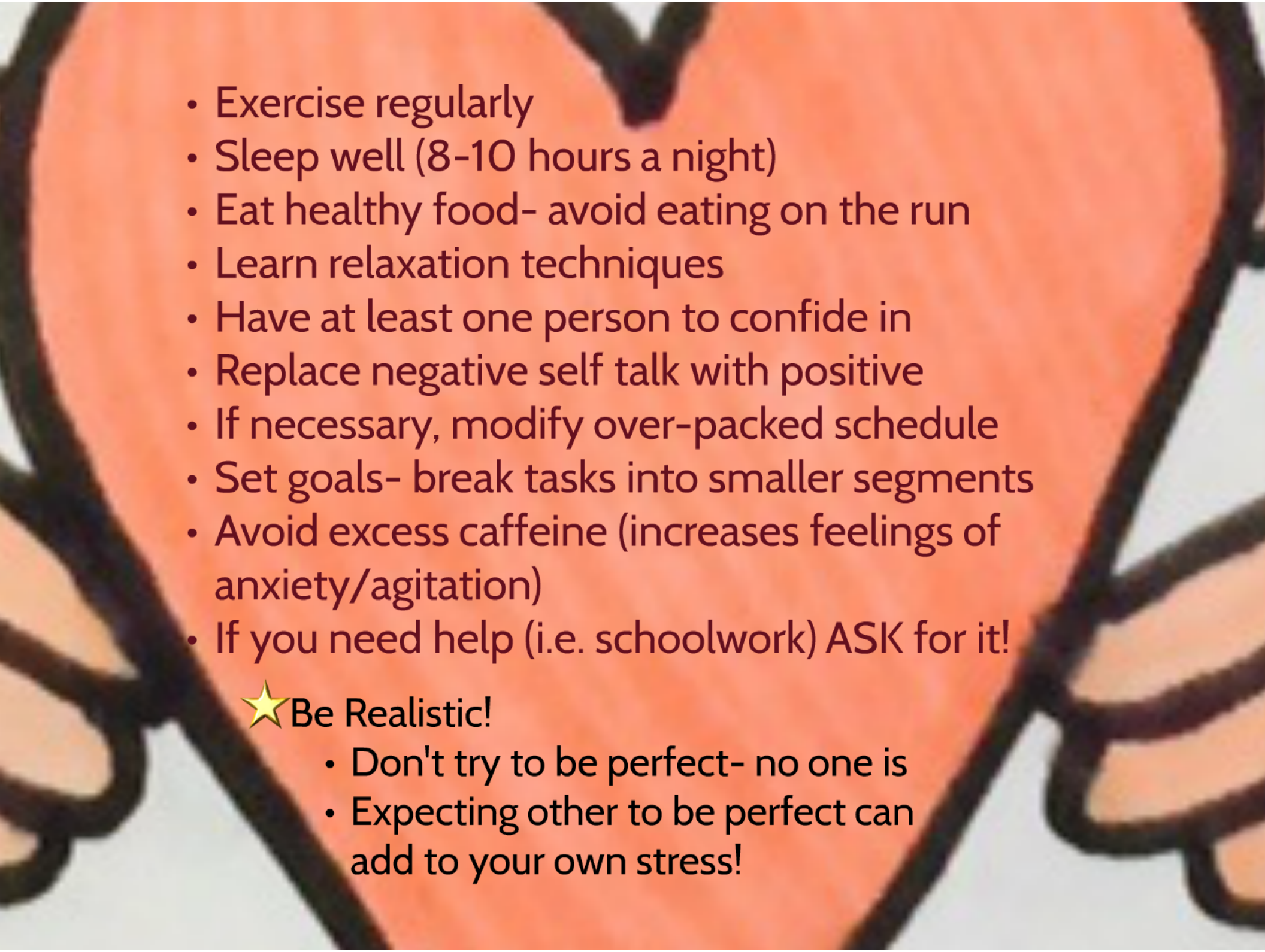
Long-term build-up of stress that is not handled effectively can lead to problems that call for professional help:

- anxiety
- physical illness
- depression


When Stress becomes Anxiety...
Physical Reactions
Headaches
Sleeplessness
Stomach Aches
Loss of Appetite
Chest pains
Restlessness
Hyperventilation
Fatigue
Dizziness
Serious Emotional Reactions
Panic attacks
Anger; lashing out
Irritability
Shutting down
Withdrawal from others
Chronic worry/nervousness
Trouble concentrating
Unwarranted guilt
Resentfulness
Increased tearfulness
Hopelessness

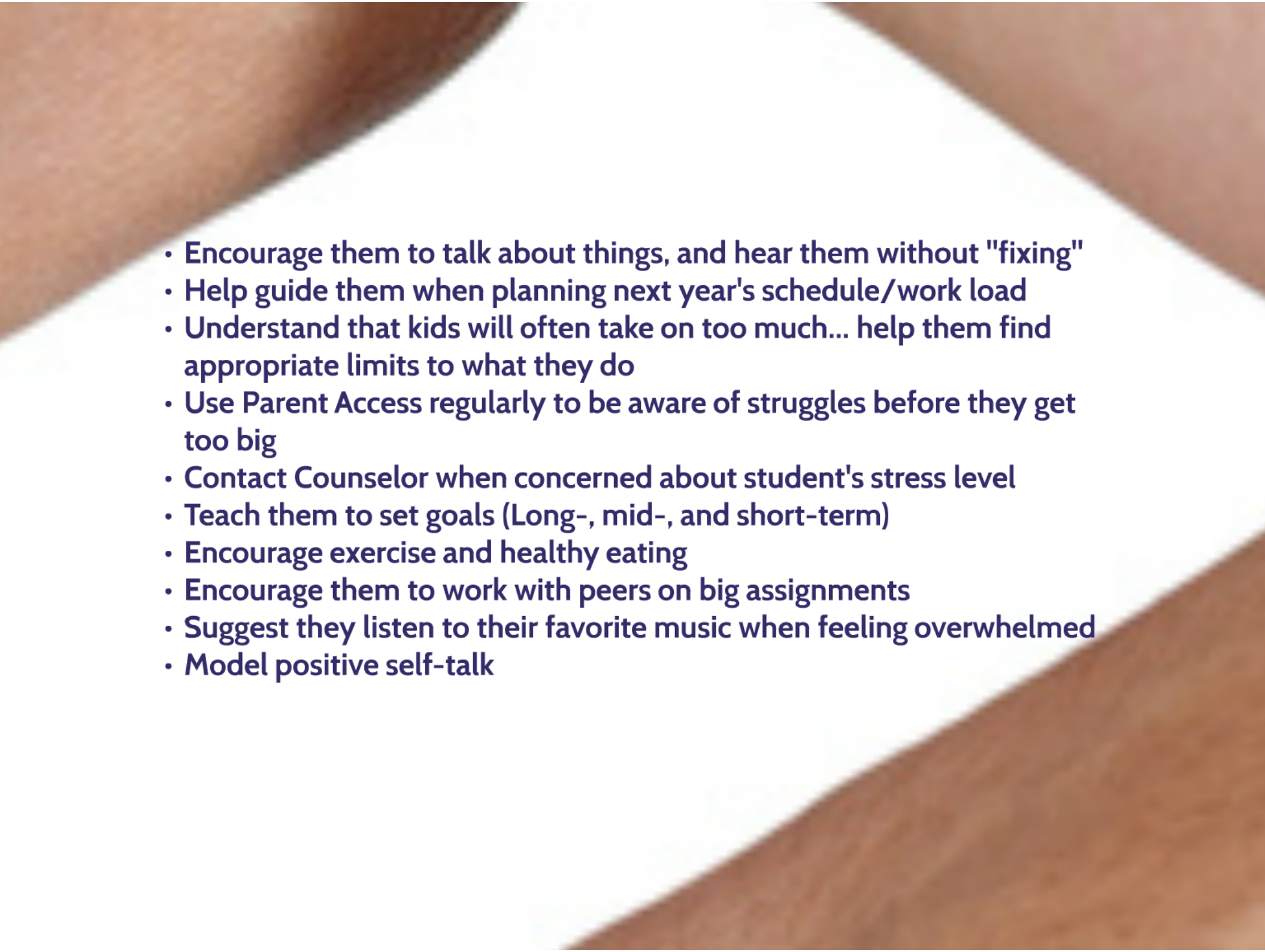
Strategies to deal with Stress




• Exercise regularly
• Sleep well (8-10 hours a night)
• Eat healthy food- avoid eating on the run
• Learn relaxation techniques
• Have at least one person to confide in
• Replace negative self talk with positive
• If necessary, modify over-packed schedule
• Set goals- break tasks into smaller segments
• Avoid excess caffeine (increases feelings of anxiety/agitation)
• If you need help (i.e. schoolwork) ASK for it!
Be Realistic!
• Don't try to be perfect- no one is
• Expecting other to be perfect can add to your own stress!

LLS

What can you
as parents do?



- Encourage them to talk about things, and hear them without "fixing"
- Help guide them when planning next year's schedule/work load
- Understand that kids will often take on too much... help them find appropriate limits to what they do
- Use Parent Access regularly to be aware of struggles before they get too big
- Contact Counselor when concerned about student's stress level
- Teach them to set goals (Long-, mid-, and short-term)
- Encourage exercise and healthy eating
- Encourage them to work with peers on big assignments
- Suggest they listen to their favorite music when feeling overwhelmed
- Model positive self-talk

Session "Take-Aways"

Stress is something everyone experiences in life... While we can't escape it, we CAN learn to positively manage it. Important things to remember include:

- Stress is a normal biological function
- Stress can be positively managed with practice and persistence
- Being proactive, being realistic in planning and expectations, and living a healthy lifestyle are influential in managing stress levels
- Ask for help! No one is an island.
- Learn to accept that some things we cannot control... focus on what you CAN, and learn to let go of what you cannot.

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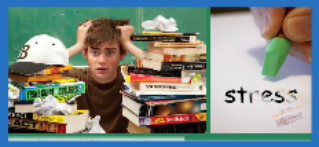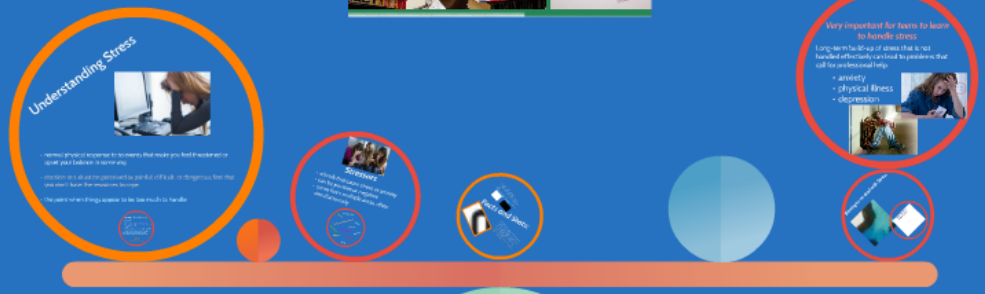
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