

7 Ways Parents Can Help Teens Deal with Holiday Stress

November 24, 2014 by [Jan Hamilton](#)

Most parents know that the holiday season that begins at Halloween and stretches all the way into the New Year is stressful. What many of us don't realize is that as our stress level increases, so does the stress level of those around us, including our teenagers. Unfortunately, when we are stressed out we are also less likely to notice the signs of stress in ourselves and others. This can produce a double whammy for our teens that are experiencing more stress and getting less support for managing that stress than they might at other times of the year.

But there are things you can do to help keep the stress level of everyone in your family, especially your teens, from getting stressed out during the holiday season.



Follow these tips if you want to help your teen not feel stressed this holiday season. (photo credit: BigStockPhoto.com)

1. **Manage Your Stress**

The most important thing you can do to help your teens is to manage your own stress. Not only does this help lower the contact stress they get from you, it also helps ensure you will notice the signs of stress in those around you. Managing your own stress level also helps model healthy stress management techniques for your teens.

2. **Simplify Your Schedule**

One of the things that can create a lot of stress is over-scheduling. Between shopping and parties and decorating and family and travel... well, there is a lot going on. Limiting your commitments and simplifying your schedule will lower your stress and make it easier to enjoy those things you do choose to do.

3. Notice the Signs

Pay attention to how your teens are handling the holidays and look for the signs of stress like headaches, trouble sleeping, angry outbursts, or unusual moodiness. Spotting these signs is key to providing the support your teens need when their stress levels are high.

4. Understand the Impact of Big Changes

Major life events like a divorce or the loss of a loved one are difficult but they can become even more difficult during the holidays. If your teen has experienced this kind of life changing event, be aware that they may be more stressed or struggle with stress more this year.

5. Share, But Don't Overshare

If there are things going on in your lives that are making the holiday season more stressful than normal like financial difficulties or a separation, be honest with your teens but remember they aren't adults yet. Keep your sharing at the appropriate level and reassure them that while things are different or even difficult, you will get through it together. Don't burden them with your adult problems by oversharing or using them as a source of emotional support.

6. Make Moving a Priority

The days are shorter and it gets dark so early that it can be tempting to skip

active family time. However, this can actually exacerbate any issues you are having with stress because exercise helps alleviate stress. Make sure everyone keeps moving.

7. **Do Something for Someone Else**

The act of giving can do wonders for your stress level and helps keep the focus of the holiday season on giving, thankfulness, and blessings. Make it a point to volunteer, give back, and help others during the holidays and you will decrease your family's stress while helping many others.

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