

SPECIAL ISSUE FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS

BRAIN, CHILD

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Teens and
Character

Ann Hood

EXCLUSIVE ESSAY

PLUS:

My Teenage Daughter
Hates Me

Mamas on the
Sidelines

Doing the Math

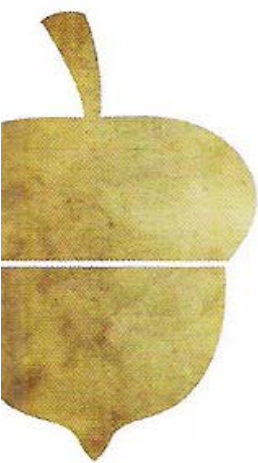
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News & Other Gleanings From the World at Large



Dressed for Stress?

Teens are stressed, and during the school year, even more stressed than adults. That's the finding of a new American Psychological Association survey of nearly 2,000 adults and more than 1,000 teens. Teens reported that their stress level during the school year—which they ranked as 5.8, on average, with 10 being the worst—was beyond what they perceived to be a healthy range. (Adults ranked their stress level at 5.1.) The biggest problems teens reported were feeling overwhelmed (31%) and depressed or sad (30%). Girls were more likely to feel down from stress than boys.

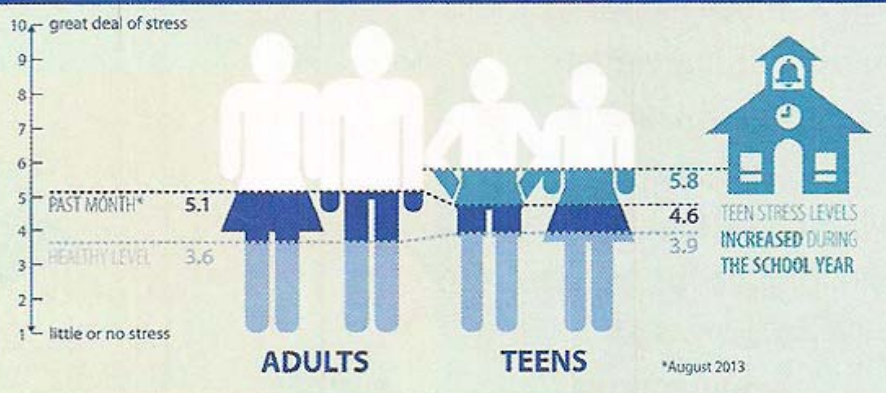
Benevolence for the Bully

"We need to teach kindness," says Scott Fried, an award-winning international public speaker, health educator and author who has spent much of his life talking to teens in schools, synagogues and summer camps around the world.

Stress in America™

Teens are under pressure. They face a troubling outlook, reporting comparable stress levels and symptoms of stress as adults.

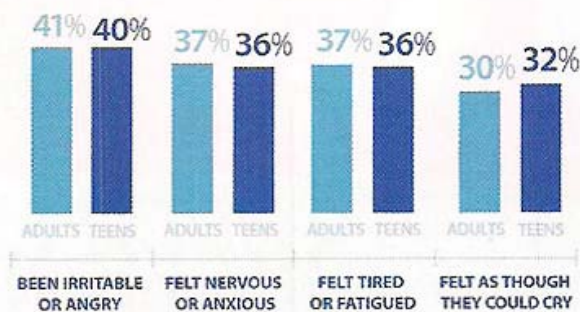
TEENS REPORT STRESS SIMILAR TO ADULTS, EXCEEDING LEVELS SEEN AS HEALTHY



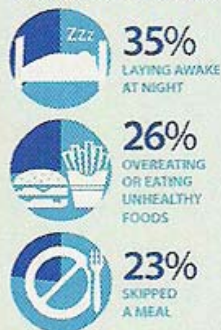
34% OF TEENS PREDICT THEIR STRESS TO INCREASE IN NEXT YEAR

TEENS REPORT EXPERIENCES OF STRESS MUCH LIKE ADULTS

Symptoms of Stress Reported in the Past Month:



Stress-Induced Behavior Over the Past Month in Teens



For more information: www.stressinamerica.org



While much emphasis has been placed on helping the one bullied, as it should be, says Fried, less has been done to educate people on how to help the perpetrator of the act (a term Fried and others in the field prefer to call bullies, to avoid the risk of kids being labeled).

“Happy people don’t hurt people,” says Fried. “Hurt people hurt people. The emptiness and pain in the perpetrator of the act requires attention as well.”

Fried raises the point that most people “have been bullied if not by others then by themselves.” He adds that in higher-income areas, the hurting behavior turns inward—self abuse, anorexia, alcohol. In less affluent areas the bullying tends to play itself out externally. While he admits these are generalizations, the fact remains that the numbers when including self-harm are much larger than we think.

Summer Ethics for Teens

Last summer my daughter, a high school sophomore, attended Lyceum, a new philosophy camp at the University of Illinois.

In addition to lectures on such topics as ethics, time travel, informal flaws, and metaphysics, my daughter was expected to read large sections on “The Problem of Free Will” and “Philosophy of Technology.” Not exactly light reading.

The philosophy camp, which teaches critical thinking and logical reasoning, is based on the belief that an early introduction to philosophy might help high school students in other subject areas or in test-taking and written argument. Alexis Dyschkant, Director of Lyceum, and Andrew Higgins, Research Director, believe that is the case.

Anecdotal evidence supports the concept. Angela Li, a recent student in the Lyceum camp, says, “the class about arguments and fallacies really stuck, and sometimes when I’m having a debate at school, I come back to what I remember from class.” Natalie Hummel and Iluianna Tarista, also camp graduates, said that the quantum physics knowledge proved useful in their chemistry class. “We talked about the camp and the ideas it espoused for a long time after,” said Hummel.

Enrollment in Lyceum is free (the program is funded by a University of Illinois engagement grant) and is limited to 26 high school students who are accepted based on enthusiasm, rather than grades or test scores. No grades or credit are given. The instructors are philosophy graduate students or recent graduates with a belief in the project.

Another Lyceum camp has since begun at the University of Iowa, and this year University of Minnesota will host one. —Gale Walden

An SAT Makeover

More than 1.7 million students took the SAT in 2013. But starting in the spring of 2016, students will be taking a new version of the test, according to the nonprofit College Board, which runs the SAT.

Some of the changes include the omission of obscure vocabulary words, mandatory essays, a deduction for incorrect answers, and a move back to the 1,600-point grading scale instead of the 2,400-point grading scale that was introduced in 2005. In addition, there will likely be more questions that require

analysis and an understanding of a narrower range of subjects.

Even the good old written essays may change, adding a requirement for students to offer an explanation of how they built an argument. This is in reaction to the fact that the current SAT essays aren’t graded on factual accuracy.

But perhaps the most interesting plans underway include a project to provide free online SAT tutorials to all students. The free online tutorials, through a partnership with nonprofit education website Khan Academy, are designed to flatten the advantage of wealthier students, who are more likely to have access to private test tutors and expensive prep programs.

Also in the pipeline—arranging for free college applications for economically challenged students. ■

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By Carrie Jasper

Once doubled sweetness
Now synchronized eye-rolling
My twins at fifteen