

How Teens Cope With Stress

(NAPSA)—Being a teenager can involve a lot of juggling. Trying to manage demands at school, home and from friends can seem stressful—even overwhelming at times.

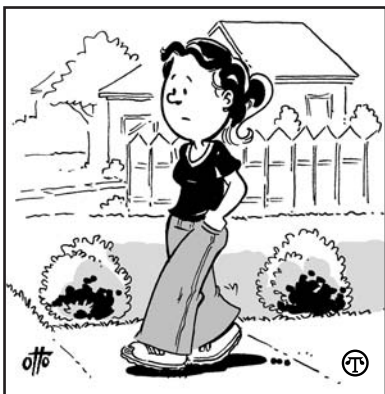
To help teens handle stress and stay focused, parents should encourage their teens to budget their time, eat and sleep well, exercise, and ask for help when they need it.

The recent winners of the Young Epidemiology Scholars (YES) Competition, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the College Board, explored both positive and negative ways of responding to stress. Natalia Nazarewicz of Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Aman Prasad of Pocatello, Idaho, conducted the two studies.

Nazarewicz surveyed more than 1,000 high school students in the Oak Ridge area on the practice of deliberate self-harm, such as cutting or burning their skin. She found that 26 percent of the students reported they had deliberately hurt themselves at least once. The survey showed the self-harm was often a response to stress and that twice as many girls as boys had resorted to such actions.

“I talked with some high-school guidance counselors and student advisors after completing my study and they were shocked by the scope of the problem,” said Nazarewicz.

For his project, Prasad conducted a survey that he said sug-



Stress can lead to some self-destructive behaviors and exercise—even taking a simple walk—can do a lot to alleviate stress.

gests that physical activity may help teens mitigate the negative effects of minor mood disorders. He surveyed 800 ninth and tenth-grade students from three schools about how much physical activity they engaged in each week and measured the students' mood by asking each person to assess how optimistic and how aggressive he or she felt.

On average, he found that students who exercised at a rate of three or more days a week reported being in a better mood than students who did not exercise.

Nazarewicz and Prasad both won \$50,000 college scholarships in the annual YES Competition, besting 700 students who entered nationwide. For more information, visit www.collegeboard.com/yes.