

# Hot Topics

# LEADER handling stress

**Note to Leaders:** *Girls live in a very stressful, high-pressure world. Stress comes in a variety of forms. For some girls, it means that from an early age, they were expected to excel in school while being involved in sports, arts, and other activities. For other girls, stress is more emotional. They deal with family struggles, abuse, and relationship pressures. Listen to what causes stress for your girls and be prepared to respond.*

No matter how great your life is, everyone eventually goes through stressful seasons. Sometimes it's due to procrastination or poor choices. Other times, stress is caused by things out of our control like an accident or choices made by others. Either way, stress management skills are great skills to have. Use the following verses in your discussion.

## Read Psalm 46:10

How can being still and thinking about God's greatness help relieve stress?

When you're stressed out, it can be really hard to sit still and think. What are some practical ways to slow down when you're stressed out?

## Read Philippians 4:6

Is it possible not to be anxious?  
Do you think it's a sin to worry? Why or why not?  
What should you do if you feel anxious or stressed out?  
Why is prayer so important?  
How do you feel after you pray?

## Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12

What do you think these verses have to teach us about handling stress?  
If you're feeling stressed, what do you think is causing it?  
Are there things that you could cut out of your life to help relieve stress?  
Does being busy make you feel important? Why or why not?  
Are there things you could not do or be less involved in that would allow you to be more effective in the things God has called you to do?

## Guidelines for Handling Stress

Handling stress is always going to be a balancing act. When you're in the middle of a stressful situation, here are a few ways to help you reduce and manage stress:


- Set small, measureable goals. If you find you've bitten off a bit more than you can chew, it can help to break your big job down into smaller, more manageable tasks. Make sure your goals can be measured and reward yourself for reaching your goals.
- Get to work. When you're feeling stressed, sometimes it can feel really good to procrastinate and forget all about your stress. However, this will lead to more stress down the road. Instead, get to work now and take time to reward yourself later.
- Give yourself a break. Do your best, but don't beat yourself up if you don't accomplish everything you set out to do. You're not superwoman, and sometimes you're going to let things fall through the cracks. Put your best effort into everything you do, but if it doesn't turn out exactly like you'd hoped, give yourself a break.

### Additional Resources:

*Fighting Invisible Tigers: A Stress Management Guide* by Earl Hipp, Michael Fleishman, and Pamela Espeland, Free Spirit Publishing, 1995.

*Inside a Cutter's Mind: Understanding and Helping Those Who Self-Injure* by Jerusha Clark and Dr. Earl Henslin, NAV Press, 2007.

*Stressed or Depressed: A Practical and Inspirational Guide for Parents of Hurting Teens* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart and Dr. Catherine Hart Weber, Thomas Nelson, 2005.



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