

# CERTIFIED CHILDREN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE

## SESSION 9:

### Stress: Tools to Help Children Deal with Daily Stress

To adults, childhood can seem like a carefree time. But kids still experience stress. Things like school and their social life can sometimes create pressures that can feel overwhelming for kids. As a parent, you can't protect your kids from stress — but you can help them develop healthy ways to cope with stress and solve everyday problems.



Kids deal with stress in both healthy and unhealthy ways. And while they may not initiate a conversation about what's bothering them, they do want their parents to reach out and help them cope with their troubles.

But it's not always easy for parents to know what to do for a child who's feeling stressed.

Here are a few ideas:

**Notice out loud.** Tell your child when you notice that something's bothering him or her. If you can, name the feeling you think your child is experiencing. ("It seems like you're still mad about what happened at the playground.") This shouldn't sound like an accusation (as in, "OK, what happened now? Are you still mad about that?") or put a child on the spot. It's just a casual observation that you're interested in hearing more about your child's concern. Be sympathetic and show you care and want to understand.

**Listen to your child.** Ask your child to tell you what's wrong. Listen attentively and calmly — with interest, patience, openness, and caring. Avoid any urge to judge, blame, lecture, or say what you think your child should have done instead. The idea is to let your child's concerns (and feelings) be heard. Try to get the whole story by asking questions like "And then what happened?" Take your time. And let your child take his or her time, too.

**Comment briefly on the feelings you think your child was experiencing.** For example, you might say "That must have been upsetting," "No wonder you felt mad when they wouldn't let you in the game," or "That must have seemed unfair to you." Doing this shows that you understand what your child felt, why, and that you care. Feeling understood and listened to helps your child feel supported by you, and that is especially important in times of stress.

**Put a label on it.** Many younger kids do not yet have words for their feelings. If your child seems angry or frustrated, use those words to help him or her learn to identify the emotions by name. Putting feelings into words helps kids communicate and develop emotional awareness — the ability to recognize their own emotional states. Kids who can do so are less likely to reach the behavioral boiling point where strong emotions come out through behaviors rather than communicated with words.

**Help your child think of things to do.** If there's a specific problem that's causing stress, talk together about what to do. Encourage your child to think of a couple of ideas. You can start the brainstorming if necessary, but don't do all the work. Your child's active participation will build confidence. Support the good ideas and add to them as needed. Ask, "How do you think this will work?"

**Listen and move on.** Sometimes talking and listening and feeling understood is all that's needed to help a child's frustrations begin to melt away. Afterward, try changing the subject and moving on to something more positive and relaxing. Help your child think of something to do to feel better. Don't give the problem more attention than it deserves.

**Limit stress where possible.** If certain situations are causing stress, see if there are ways to change things. For instance, if too many after-school activities consistently cause homework stress, it might be necessary to limit activities to leave time and energy for homework.

**Just be there.** Kids don't always feel like talking about what's bothering them. Sometimes that's OK. Let your kids know you'll be there when they do feel like talking. Even when kids don't want to talk, they usually don't want parents to leave them alone. You can help your child feel better just by being there — keeping him or her company, spending time together. So if you notice that your child seems to be down in the dumps, stressed, or having a bad day — but doesn't feel like talking — initiate something you can do together. Take a walk, watch a movie, shoot some hoops, or bake some cookies. Isn't it nice to know that your presence really counts?

**Be patient.** As a parent, it hurts to see your child unhappy or stressed. But try to resist the urge to fix every problem. Instead, focus on helping your child, slowly but surely, grow into a good problem-solver — a kid who knows how to roll with life's ups and downs, put feelings into words, calm down when needed, and bounce back to try again.

Parents can't solve every problem as kids go through life. But by teaching healthy coping strategies, you'll prepare your kids to manage the stresses that come in the future.

## **Is Your Toddler Stressed?**

If your toddler seems more anxious or nervous than usual, learn the reasons behind the stress and the solutions for soothing it away.

Toddlerhood is a special and exciting time when a vast amount of physical, emotional, and cognitive growth occurs. With all the changes happening in their little bodies and minds, toddlers are often sensitive to the world around them and are prone to feeling stress. Stressors can be as universal as the normal developmental stage of separation anxiety, or as unintentional as exposure to the evening news. Here are some of the reasons your toddler may be feeling stressed, some common signs to look out for, and the ways to lessen or alleviate her anxiety.

## **Signs Your Toddler Is Stressed**

Signs of toddler stress vary with each individual. "Every child is unique and will display her own personal signs of stress," says Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution*, "so parents need to be on the lookout for unusual or suspect behaviors and actions." Rene Hackney, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist and founder of Parenting Playgroups and Parenting by Dr. Rene, agrees. The toddler years span varying levels of language development, she explains, so a meaningful Q&A about her stress may be unrealistic, but simply listening to comments and words or watching behaviors can offer significant clues about the presence of stress. "Changes in normal behavior are significant indicators," Pantley advises. The following signs may suggest that your toddler is feeling stressed:

- Change in regular sleep and eating habits
- Change in emotions (showing signs of being sad, clingy, withdrawn, or angry)
- Increase in crying or tantrums
- Nightmares and fears at bedtime
- Physical ailments, such as headaches or stomachaches
- Anxious tics, coughs, or body movements
- Frequent reliance on habits such as hair chewing or thumb-sucking
- Change in bowel movements

Although "these symptoms don't always indicate stress, they could be related to misbehavior, habits or growth. If a child's behavior worsens, it could be a sign of something more," Pantley says. If there's any concern that a child's behavior is becoming more extreme, seek advice from a professional.

## **Reasons for Toddler Stress**

### **Separation Anxiety**

For young toddlers, the growing awareness that their primary caregivers are their main protection against threat creates an instinct to keep them close by, Pantley says. Whether they are learning how to walk or are starting preschool with longer periods of separation, toddlers may feel anxious. "Though separation anxiety is often a healthy response to being separated, it can also be a reaction to an unrelated stressor, such as a new day care," Dr. Hackney explains. "When there's a life stressor, kids' tolerance for other frustrations tends to go down." This can lead to increased clinginess, difficulties with goodbyes, or nervousness about being away from primary caregivers.

## **New Family Dynamic or Big Family Changes**

Major family changes such as death, divorce, a parent's job loss, or a new home can stress toddlers. "The combination of heightened emotions, disrupted schedules, and unfamiliar routines can make even the most relaxed child feel some tension," Pantley says. Even positive changes, like the birth of a sibling, can be stressful simply because the toddler must adjust to a different way of life in the household. "Change equals stress," Dr. Hackney explains. If there is a significant impact on the way life has normally been, stress can result.

## **Potty Training**

"When potty training goes well, it tends to just be a transition, a milestone," Dr. Hackney says. But "it becomes a stressor when parents push it on a child before he's ready, when a child is screaming that he don't want to go, and when parents are upset with him over it." If learning to use the potty is beginning to feel like a discipline issue, reevaluate your toddler's readiness. He may be trying to tell you that now is not the most effective time to learn this new skill, even if you are hoping it is. The longer the struggle, the bigger the stress becomes. Instead of worrying, consult your pediatrician, find expert info online, or read books on the subject.

## **Overwhelming Schedules**

Children live in the present and enjoy taking the time to experience the world around them, so overscheduling them for different activities or rushing from place to place can create stress. If a parent's agenda or busy to-do list disregards a child's rhythm, stress will occur.

## **Unexpected World Events**

Big scary events (natural disasters, school shootings, and terrorist attacks) or exposure to violence on the evening news can affect toddlers. Even accidental exposure to a scary movie or commercials on television can influence your child. "It's common for children to pick up on the stress around them," Pantley explains. Pay attention to any frightening or violent images surrounding a child's environment on a daily basis.

## **Solutions to Toddler Stress**

### **Keep Calm and Carry On**

"It's important to stay calm and acknowledge your child's feelings," Pantley says. "But don't go overboard. You want to convey that you understand your child's feelings, but that nothing bad will happen when you are apart. Your child can learn that he doesn't have to be immobilized by stress or fear." Dr. Hackney suggests a tactic she describes as "matter-of-fact empathy," where the message is conveyed through words, body language, and tone of voice that you understand how your child feels but you're not changing course. If a child doesn't want to go to day care, say, 'I know, this is really hard. I know you really don't want to go, you're having fun at home,' but continue your usual routine and then head out the door as planned. This way, "all of your language is basically saying 'I completely understand, but we're still going,'" Dr. Hackney says.

### **Stick to the Schedule**

Maintain daily routines such as going to day care or preschool, feeding, and preparing for bedtime. Routines allow toddlers to feel in control over what to expect, and "go a long way in creating a sense of calm," Dr. Hackney says. Keeping a consistent bedtime is particularly important because children can become stressed more easily if they are overtired. "To help your child cope with the stressors of life, make certain that she is getting a good night's sleep, adequate naptime, healthy meals, and plenty of daily activity,". It's best to postpone other changes -- such as potty training or transitioning to a big-kid bed -- that can disrupt the normal schedule. Wait until life has settled into a comfortable pattern.

### **Allot Time for Breaks**

Build in adequate time for rest breaks, naps, and preparation for activities. "Children live according to a much slower clock than adults do," Pantley explains. "They don't give a thought to what they might be doing next. They pause as they watch the cat sleep, examine the color patterns in the carpet, and ponder the reasons for having toes. So examine your schedule to make sure you're focusing on priorities and taking time to enjoy your child's company. Make sure that you're not taking away any special moments by rushing to the next item on the schedule.

### **Plan Ahead and Allow for Processing**

"How parents present a stressor, how they frame and discuss it, and how they answer questions gives children boundaries on how to perceive it," Dr. Hackney explains. "The idea is to start honest and small. If you need to tell your child about someone passing away, try saying, 'We wanted to let you know that Grandma was very sick and she died.'" If he has questions, you can then decide how to describe it (giving a toned-down version or rephrasing it based on your beliefs and comfort level.) If you're trying to explain a new sibling, read storybooks about the new baby's arrival a few weeks in advance. Make the initial introduction very focused on the toddler as a new big brother or sister, and keep his normal routine to make the transition smoother, Dr. Hackney says. Convey the message that his thoughts and feelings matter, but don't give too much information that can't be processed.

### **Monitor TV Exposure**

Be mindful about what programs your child is absorbing. "When a parent is watching the news and a child is in the room, there's exposure to all kinds of violence," Hackney says. Reserve certain TV shows for after the kids are in bed or limit how long you watch the evening news. Exposure can often be unintentional, so try scheduling different TV times for different-aged kids or make sure all the programming is geared toward a younger child if she's in a room with others. Visit websites like [kids-in-mind.com](http://kids-in-mind.com) or [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org) to see the reviews and ratings of various programs so you can make informed decisions about TV viewing.

### **Give Extra Hugs and Kisses**

When adjusting to change, some extra one-on-one attention and a few more daily cuddles and kisses can provide just what a toddler needs to feel comfortable and to get settled into new patterns, Pantley says. Whether the stressor is a negative or positive one, the added affection can help boost the child's confidence and self-regulation skills, enabling her to be more flexible and resilient to change.

## **How does Stress Affect a Child's Development?**

Prolonged **stress** in young **children** can slow — or even stop — both brain **development** and physical growth. Prolonged exposure to cortisol released during the **stress** response can cause long-term damage to the **developing** brain, and can negatively **affect** the immune system.

### **Physical symptoms can include:**

- Decreased appetite, other changes in eating habits.
- Headache.
- New or recurrent bedwetting.
- Nightmares, Sleep disturbances.
- Upset stomach or vague stomach pain.
- Other physical symptoms with no physical illness.

## **What is Toxic Stress?**

Toxic stress response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as **physical** or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support.

## **Is Bedwetting a Sign of Stress?**

And that **stress** or anxiety will **cause** a child who has never wet the bed to start. Like a lot of myths, none of these is true. Wetting the bed -- also called nocturnal **enuresis**-- isn't a behavioral issue kids can control.

## **Warning Signs of Emotional Stress: When to See Your Doctor**

When symptoms of stress start to feel overwhelming, it may be time to see your physician. Here are some guidelines to help you decide.

Signs of stress include:

- Apathy, lack of energy
- Difficulty making decisions
- Difficulty "keeping track" of things
- Feeling on edge
- A change in eating habits
- Sleeping more than usual or difficulty getting to sleep
- Being more emotional
- Using alcohol or drugs to relieve or forget stress

Symptoms of stress include:

- Chronic back pain
- Tension headaches
- Neck pain
- Gastrointestinal problems (pain, diarrhea)
- Palpitations

## **How can we Help our Children Handle the Stresses of Everyday Life?**

In middle childhood, pressures may come from a number of sources—from within the child herself, as well as from parents, teachers, peers and the larger society in which the child lives. Pressure can take many forms that challenge children and to which they must respond and, often, adapt. Whether these are events of lasting consequence like the divorce of their parents, or merely a minor hassle like losing their homework, these demands or stresses are a part of children's daily existence.



Children welcome some events and are able to adapt to them with relative ease. They perceive other events as threats to their own or the family's daily routines or general sense of well-being, and these stresses are more troublesome. Most stress faced by children is in the middle, neither welcomed nor seriously harmful, but rather a part of accomplishing the tasks of childhood and learning about themselves.

Youngsters may also worry about making friends, succeeding in school, combating peer pressure or overcoming a physical impairment. Whatever its form, if stress is too intense or long-lasting, it can sometimes take a toll on children. Clusters of stressful events seem to predispose children to illness. Major events, especially those that forever change a child's family, like the death of a parent, can have lasting effects on children's psychological health and well-being. Minor daily stresses can also have consequences. They can contribute to loss of sleep or appetite. Children may become angry or irritable or their school grades may suffer. Their behavior and their willingness to cooperate may change.

## **How Different Children Cope with Stress**

Children's temperaments vary and thus they are quite different in their ability to cope with stress and daily hassles. Some are easygoing by nature and adjust easily to events and new situations. Others are thrown off balance by changes in their lives. All children improve in their ability to handle stress if they previously have succeeded in managing challenges and if they feel they have the ability and the emotional support of family and friends. Children who have a clear sense of personal competence, and who feel loved and supported, generally do well.

Certainly, a child's age and development will help determine how stressful a given situation may be. Changing teachers at midyear may be a major event for a child in the first grade and merely an annoyance for a sixth-grader. Being short may be a minor issue for a 5- or 6-year-old boy but a source of daily embarrassment for an adolescent. How a child perceives and responds to stress depends in part on development, in part on experience, and in part on a child's individual temperament.

Ironically, many parents believe that their school-age children are unaware of the stresses around them and are somehow immune to them. After all, their children not only have all their basic needs met, but perhaps they also have a roomful of toys, friends to share them with, plenty of playtime, and a full schedule of extracurricular activities.

Yet children are very sensitive to the changes around them, especially to the feelings and reactions of their parents, even if those feelings are not communicated directly in words. If a parent loses a job, children will have to adjust to their family's financial crisis; they must deal not only with the obvious family budgetary changes but also with the changes in their parents' emotional states. Children may have to cope with a bully on the playground, a move to a new neighborhood, a parent's serious illness or the disappointment of a poor sports performance. They might feel a constant, nagging pressure to dress the "right" way, or to achieve the high grades that can put them on the fast track toward the "right" college.

## **Stress and Today's Middle-Years Child**

Some psychologists believe that today's middle-years youngsters actually are faced with more stress than the children of previous generations were and have fewer social supports available. The change in family structure from the large, supportive, extended families (including both parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents) of previous generations, to the present high incidence of divorced families, single-parent families and stepfamilies has drastically altered the experience of childhood. Millions of youngsters must adjust to such changes.

Even in intact and stable families, the growing number of households with two working parents often forces children to spend more time in after-school programs or at home alone. For some children this loss of time with their parents is quite stressful. So, too, is the responsibility for caring for themselves and the family home and sometimes for overseeing a younger sibling after school.

Many children and their families are stressed by the multiple activities that fill children's "free time." Overscheduled children with inadequate "down time" can become exhausted.

Today's children are also being raised in an era in which they are exposed to violence and peer pressure about sexual activity and drug use and are warned to be cautious about kidnapping, sexual abuse and other crimes. This sense that they are living in an unsafe world is a constant source of stress for some children. In short, today's youngsters are regularly confronted with challenges to their coping skills and often are expected to grow up too fast.

## **Good and Bad Stress**

Not all stress is bad. Moderate amounts of pressure imposed by a teacher or a coach, for example, can motivate a child to keep her grades up in school or to participate more fully in athletic activities. Successfully managing stressful situations or events enhances a child's ability to cope in the future.

When the stress is continuous or particularly intense, it takes a toll on both the psyche and the body. Sudden stressful events will accelerate your child's breathing and heartbeat, constrict her blood vessels, increase her blood pressure and muscle tension and perhaps cause stomach upset and headaches. As stress persists, she might be more susceptible to illness and experience fatigue, nightmares, teeth-grinding, insomnia, tantrums, depression and school failure.

## **12 Tips to Reduce Your Child's Stress and Anxiety**

Anxiety symptoms are common in children and adolescents, with 10-20% of school-aged children experiencing anxiety symptoms. An even larger number of children experience stress that does not qualify as an anxiety disorder. So how can you help to reduce your child's anxiety and stress?

1) **Encourage your child to face his/her fears, not run away from them.** When we are afraid of situations we avoid them. However, avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations maintains the anxiety. Instead, if a child faces his or her fears, the child will learn that the anxiety reduces naturally on its own over time. The body cannot remain anxious for a very long period of time so there is a system in the body that calms the body down. Usually your anxiety will reduce within 20-45 minutes if you stay in the anxiety-provoking situation.





2) **Tell your child that it is okay to be imperfect.** Often we feel that it is necessary for our children to succeed in sports, school, and performance situations. But sometimes we forget that kids need to be kids. School becomes driven by grades, not by enjoyment of learning if an 85 is good, but not good enough. This is not to say that striving is not important. It is important to encourage your child to work hard but equally important to accept and embrace your child's mistakes and imperfections.

3) **Focus on the positives.** Many times anxious and stressed children can get lost in negative thoughts and self-criticism. They may focus on how the glass is half empty instead of half-full and worry about future events. The more that you are able to focus on your child's positive attributes and the good aspects of a situation, the more that it will remind your child to focus on the positives.

4) **Schedule relaxing activities.** Children need time to relax and be kids. Unfortunately, sometimes even fun activities, like sports, can become more about success than they are about fun. Instead, it is important to ensure that your child engages in play purely for the sake of fun. This may include scheduling time each day for your child to play with toys, play a game, play a sport (without it being competitive), doing yoga, paint, have a tea party, put on a play, or just be silly.



5) **Model approach behavior, self-care, and positive thinking.** Your child will do what you do. So if you avoid anxiety-provoking situations, so will your child. If you face your fears, so will your child. If you take care of yourself and schedule time for your own needs, your child will learn that self-care is an important part of life. If you look for the positive in situations, so will your child. Children learn behaviors from watching their parents. So when you think about your child's psychological well-being, think about your own as well.

6) **Reward your child's brave behaviors.** If your child faces his or her fears, reward this with praise, a hug, or even something tangible like a sticker or a small treat. This is not bribery if you establish this as a motivator prior to your child being in the situation. If you reward behaviors your child will engage in them more often.

7) **Encourage good sleep hygiene.** Set a bed time for your child and stick to that bed time even on weekends. Also have a 30-45 minute bed time routine that is done every night. This helps your child to transition from the activities of the day to the relaxed state necessary to fall asleep.



8) **Encourage your child to express his/her anxiety.** If your child says that he or she is worried or scared, don't say "No you're not!" or "You're fine." That doesn't help your child. Instead, it is likely to make your child believe that you do not listen or do not understand him/her. Instead, validate your child's experience by saying things like "Yes, you seem scared. What are you worried about?" Then have a discussion about your child's emotions and fears.

9) **Help your child to problem solve.** Once you have validated your child's emotions and demonstrated that you understand your child's experience and are listening to what your child has to say, help your child to problem solve. This does not mean solving the problem for your child. It means helping your child to identify possible solutions. If your child can generate solutions, that is great. If not, generate some potential solutions for your child and ask your child to pick the solution that he or she thinks would work best.

10) **Stay calm.** Children look to their parents to determine how to react in situations. We've all seen a young child trip and fall and then look to their parent to see how to react. If the parent seems concerned, the child cries. This is because the child is looking to their parent for a signal of how to react to the situation. Children of all ages pick up on their parent's emotions and resonate with them. If you are anxious, your child will pick up on that anxiety and experience an increase in his/her own anxiety. So when you want to reduce your child's anxiety, you must manage your own anxiety. This may mean deliberately slowing down your own speech, taking a few deep breaths to relax, and working to ensure that your facial expression conveys that you are calm.

11) **Practice relaxation exercises with your child.** Sometimes really basic relaxation exercises are necessary to help your child to reduce their stress and anxiety. This might mean telling your child to take a few slow, deep breaths (and you taking a few slow breaths with your child so your child can match your pace). Or it might mean asking your child to image him or herself somewhere relaxing, like the beach or relaxing in a backyard hammock. Ask your child to close his/her eyes and imagine the sounds, smells, and sensations associated with the image. For example, close your eyes and picture yourself on a beach. Listen to the sound of the surf as the waves come in and go out, In and out. Listen to the sound of the seagulls flying off in the distance. Now focus on the feel of the warm sand beneath your fingers and the sun warming your skin. Your child can do these techniques on his or her own during anxiety-provoking times.

12) **Never give up!** Anxiety and stress can be a chronic struggle and often the source of a child's anxiety changes over time so it can feel as though you are always putting out fires. With repetition of the anxiety and stress management techniques, your child will learn how to lower his/her anxiety level and how to cope with anxiety-provoking situations. The key is repetition so keep it up!



**Resources:** If you think that your child is suffering from an anxiety disorder or experiencing a high level of stress or you need the help of a therapist please see the following resources:

- Anxiety Disorders Association of America: [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)
- OCD Foundation: [www.ocfdoundation.org](http://www.ocfdoundation.org)
- Child Anxiety Network: <http://www.childanxiety.net/>
- Anxiety Social Net: <http://www.anxietysocialnet.com/>

## The Nervous System

The nervous system is an internal communication system, relaying signals with short electrical impulses. The central nervous system is composed of the brain and spinal cord. The peripheral nervous system extends to all other parts of the body.

Health problems related to the nervous system include stress, insomnia, depression, nervous disorders, headaches and multiple sclerosis.

## Examining the Nervous System

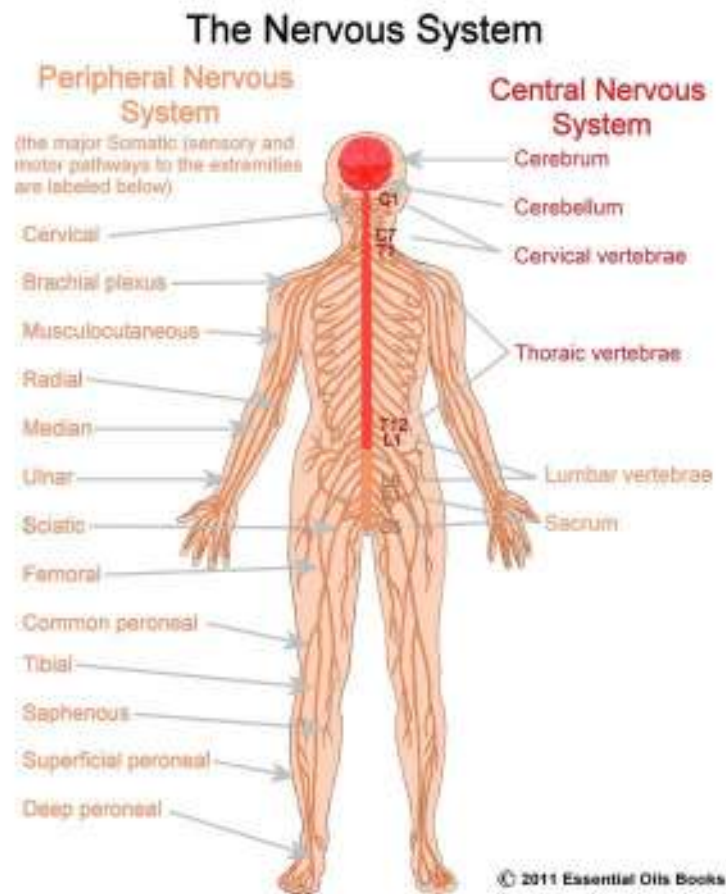
The nervous system is made up of groups of cells called neurons. A neuron is a cell body with a nucleus, a dendrite (which receives input) and an axon (which relays signals to other cells).

Neurons transmit information through the body in a manner similar to the way electricity flows through a wire. A nervous impulse begins with the reversal of the concentrations of sodium and potassium both inside and outside the neuron. Sodium rushes into the cell and potassium rushes out, generating momentum that conducts an impulse down the axon and toward the dendrite of the next neuron. This transmission continues from cell to cell until the message is delivered. All this takes place at incredible speed.

Some of the spaces between nerve cells, called junctions, are so small that the impulse can travel from one nerve to the next very quickly. These are called gap junctions. However, most neurons relay signals across larger spaces called synaptic junctions. These require chemical messengers called neurotransmitters.

Neurotransmitters are released into a synaptic junction by one cell and bond with receptors on the membrane of the neighboring cell. After the electronic signal has been relayed, the neurotransmitters are deactivated and recycled. Some neurotransmitters include serotonin, acetylcholine, dopamine, GABA (gamma amino butyric acid) and norepinephrine (noradrenaline). Abnormal levels of neurotransmitters can cause an assortment of complications. For instance, abnormally low levels of serotonin are associated with obesity, depression. Sleep disorders anxiety and migraine headaches.

Many neurons are surrounded by special cells that form an outer layer called the myelin sheath. The myelin is composed mostly of lipids. It insulates the neurons to speed up the conduction of impulses, as it prevents "short circuits" between adjacent neurons. Deterioration of the myelin sheath is associated with many degenerative disorders of the nervous system.



The nervous system has two major divisions – the central nervous system (CNS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS). The CNS is composed of the brain and spinal cord and is the body's main signal-processing unit. The nerves of the PNS extend to other parts of the body, including internal organs, skeletal muscles and glands.

The PNS subdivides into the somatic and autonomic pathways. Somatic-pathway responses are voluntary or conscious. For example, use of arm or leg muscles and sensory perceptions are controlled by somatic nerves. Autonomic pathways deal with involuntary actions like digestion, excretion, heartbeat and the contraction of the smooth muscles. These are all things we can't control.

Autonomic pathways divide again into the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the nervous system. These branches work independently and opposite of one another. The sympathetic nervous system, which secretes the neurotransmitter noradrenaline, initiates "fight or flight" responses when stimulated by physical, emotional or environmental stress. This is a primitive, instinct-like ability that allows a person to maximize energy in order to most effectively react to stress. It raises blood sugar, heart rate, blood pressure and metabolism, constricts blood vessels and stops less vital functions like digestion. The parasympathetic nervous system normalizes the body by balancing it to the state it was in before the stimulus occurred. The neurotransmitter acetylcholine restores non-vital functions. The reciprocating actions of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems allow the body to cope with stress without being overwhelmed by its physiological effects.

Stress can have many negative effects on the body. In addition to the uncontrollable, physical reactions described above, stress can also deplete levels of water-soluble vitamins (C and B complex) and vitamins A and E. These vitamins are essential to the proper development and function of nervous-system tissue because they act as co-enzymes in chemical reactions and raw materials for nerve cells. Adequate vitamin and mineral intake can help provide the body with the nutrients it needs to function properly, even under stress.

### Did You Know?

- The average adult brain weighs about three pounds.
- Some nerve fibers with myelin sheaths conduct impulses as fast as 600 feet per second.
- An estimated 10,000 neurons die each day from aging, disease, injury or poisons.

### Nervous System Analysis

If you have four or more of the following indications, you may consider nutritional aid to the nervous system.

- Lack of energy
- Regular consumption of alcohol
- Frequent mood swings
- Poor concentration or memory
- Stressful lifestyle
- Feeling low, uninterested or depressed
- Too little sleep or restless sleep
- Unsettled, apprehensive, pressured
- More than 2 cups of caffeinated beverages/day
- Feeling out of control
- Suffer from anxiety or worry
- Easily irritated or angered

### Nervous System Suggestions

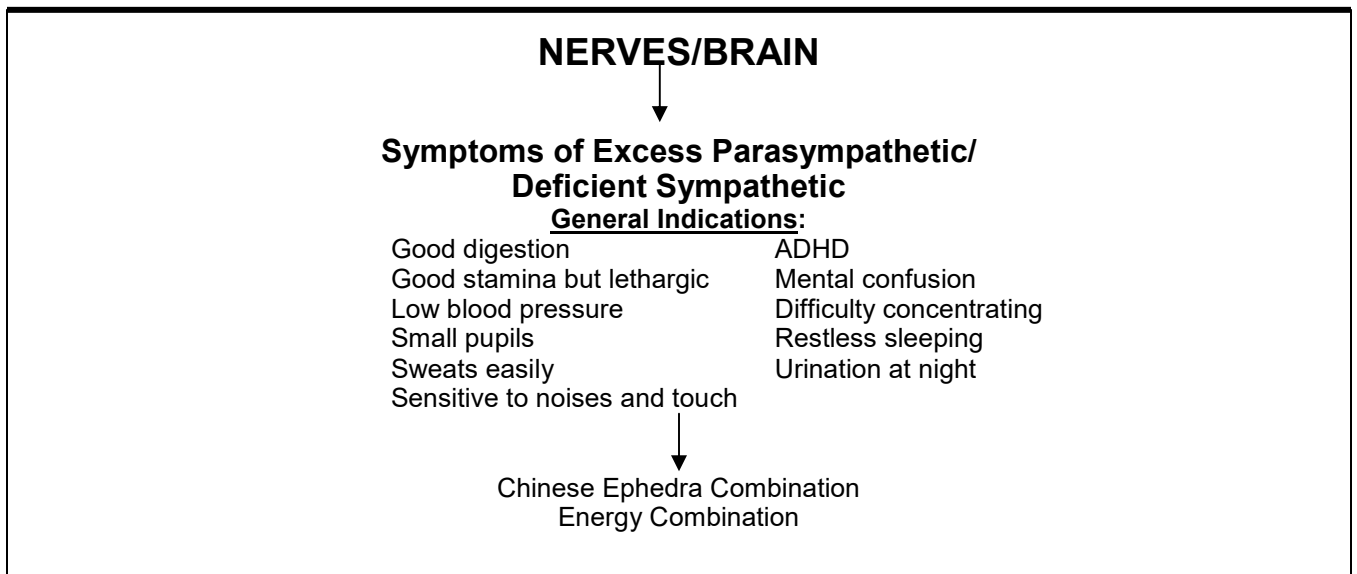
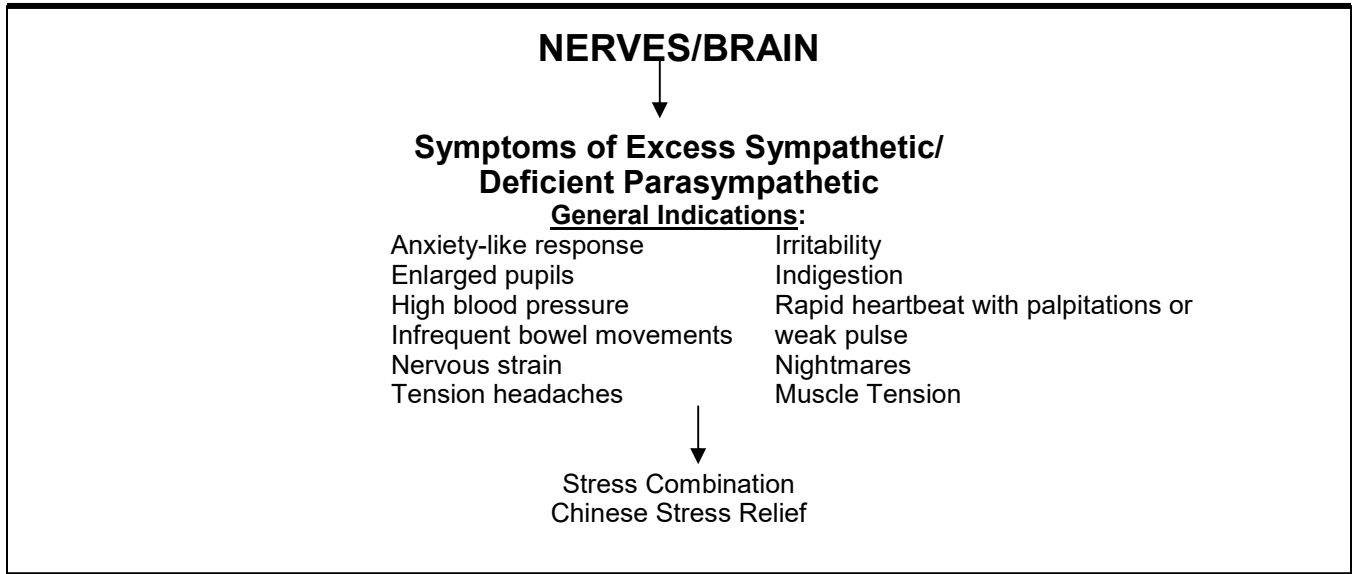
- Eat regular, wholesome meals.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol and stimulants.
- Exercise regularly.
- Manage your stress.
- Eat a lot of green, leafy vegetables, fruits, whole grains and nuts.

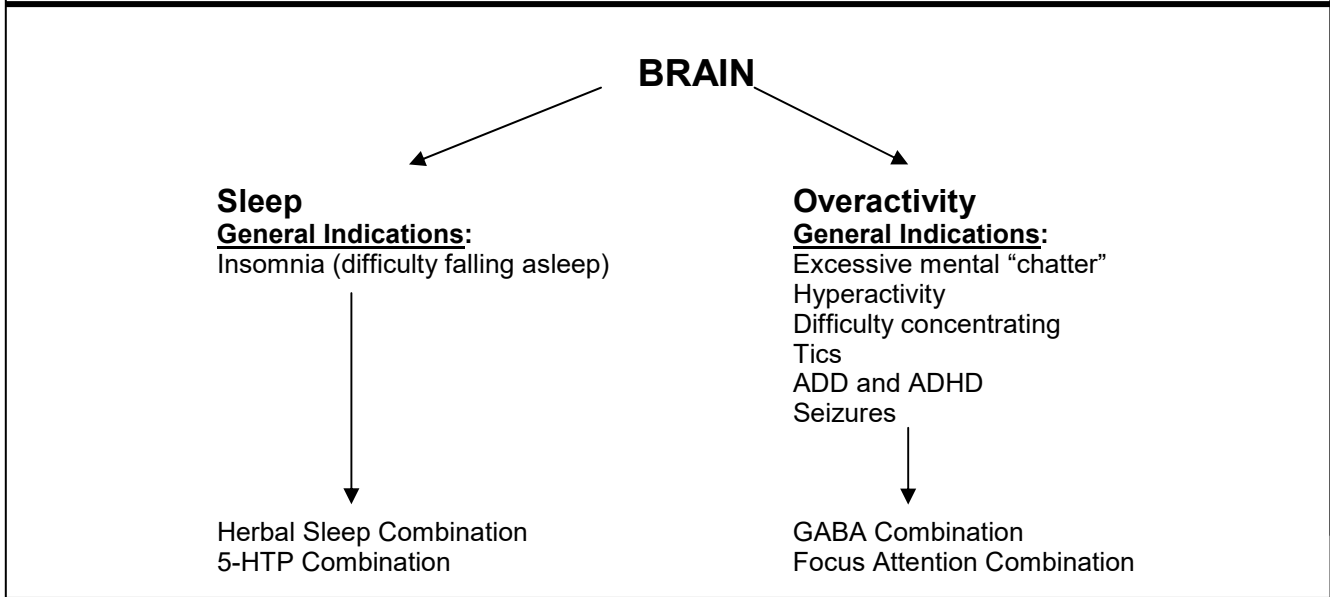
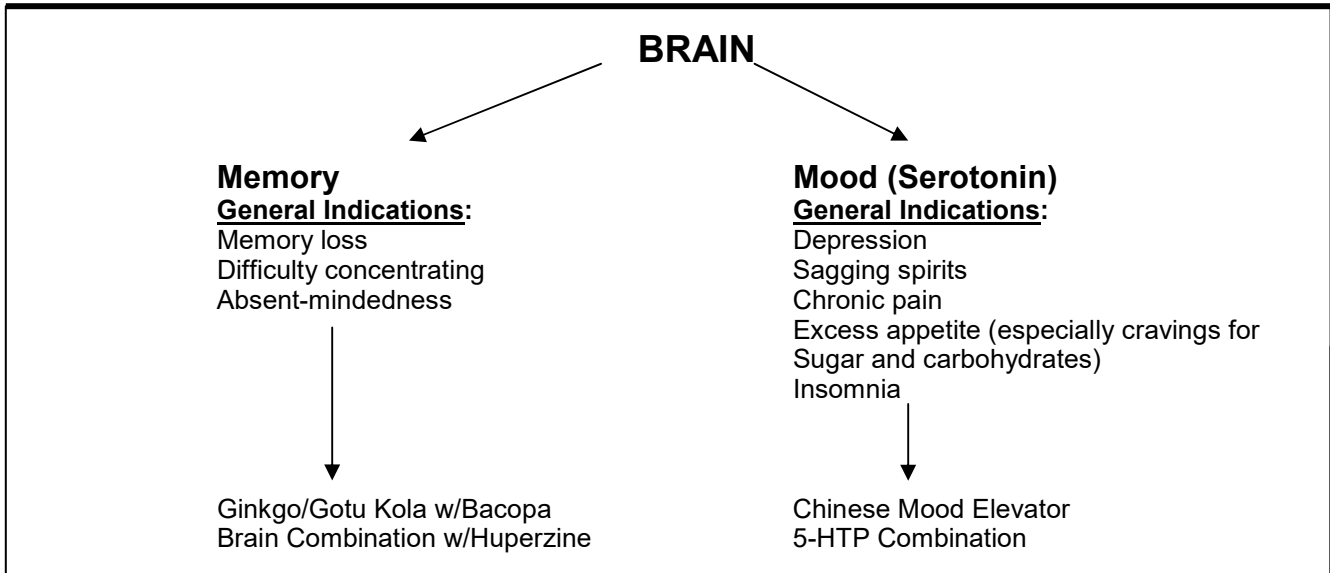
## Nervous System Products

The following products are listed with ingredients only as not to sell any particular product line. These ingredients can be purchased at any store you wish. If you are interested in the actual combinations listed below, please contact JLS directly.

- **Nerve Calming** – A combination of herbs and essential B-complex vitamins, which nourishes the nerves to help the body cope with stress. Contains generous amounts of vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, plus schizandra fruit, choline bitartrate, wheat germ, inositol, PABA, bee pollen, citrus bioflavonoids, hops flowers, passion flower and valerian root to help reduce tension, stress and insomnia.
- **Stress Combination** – This combination contains one of the most favored herbs of Europe for relaxation – chamomile. High in chromium, magnesium and vitamins A and C, the stress combination works well with other supplements like B-complex vitamins, bee pollen and vitamin C.
- **Chinese Stress Relief Combination** – This Chinese stress relief combination combines 16 herbs and natural substances to support emotional balance. Its primary nutrients – polygonum, dragon bone, oyster shell, haliotis shell and fushen – help normalize mental function and strengthen the cardiovascular system. This formula helps nourish the nervous system and improve gastric function, in addition to strengthening the urinary system.
- **Chinese Ephedra Combination** – This powerful weight-loss aid contains Chinese ephedra (ma huang), which possesses constituents that stimulate the central nervous system. It activates the heart, increases blood pressure and speeds up metabolism.
- **Energy Combination** – This energy combination supports the body's own energy-building system. It works with the glandular, nervous and circulatory systems to help relieve stress and promote energy metabolism and glucose utilization. The combination provides a variety of nutrients needed for optimal vitality – some that nourish the glands (kelp and licorice) and some that nourish the brain and nervous system (gotu kola).
- **Ginkgo/Gotu Kola w/Bacopa** – Ginkgo contains flavonoid glycosides like quercetin and other key compounds similar to gotu kola. It boosts circulation to the brain. Gotu kola herb has been called “brain food” by many herbalists. Bacopa is from bacopin, an Ayurvedic compound that stimulates memory. Studies show that people who took bacopin supplements had reduced memorization time, increased memory time and decreased retrieval time. Bacopa may also help boost concentration.
- **Brain Combination w/Huperzine** – This combination aids the brain in two ways. First, it utilizes three powerful antioxidants that cross the blood-brain barrier to protect cells from free radical damage. Second, it feeds this vital organ with the specialized “brain food” nutrients of Ginkgo biloba, phosphatidyl serine and huperzine.
- **Chinese Mood Elevator** – This combination of 18 Chinese herbs has nervine, sedative and stimulant properties. These herbs help build and strengthen the liver, stimulate circulation and improve “sagging” feelings. Chinese Mood Elevator helps with tension, depression and other nervous disorders.
- **5-HTP Combination** – This combination contains hydroxytryptophan, a precursor to serotonin, an important neurotransmitter that helps regulate appetite, mood and sleep. 5-HTP combination is blended with three adaptogenic herbs – Siberian ginseng, ashwaganda and suma – that work synergistically with 5-HTP to help the body adjust to changes, control hunger and achieve restful sleep.
- **St. John's Wort** – This popular herb has gained national attention for its ability to alleviate mild to moderate depression. It contains an active constituent, hypericin, which appears to prolong the activity of serotonin (a neurotransmitter) in the brain. St. John's Wort may also lengthen the performance of dopamine and norepinephrine, two brain chemicals that are linked to depression. In Europe, many doctors prescribe this herb instead of prescription antidepressant drugs.
- **Herbal Sleep Combination** – This combination of valerian root, passion flower and hops flowers supports restful sleep and provides soothing and calming properties.
- **GABA Combination** – GABA combination helps “tone down” excessive brain activity and promotes a state of relaxation and peace. This unique formula also contains glutamine for mental energy, taurine to stabilize and protect brain tissue, spirulina for its abundance of brain nutrients, and passion flower, an herb long used to relieve stress.

- **Focus Attention Combination** – This combination provides nutrients essential for normal brain-stimulation levels while supporting blood circulation and neurotransmitters in the brain. This special formulation helps protect the body from undesirable side effects caused by drugs or exposure to toxic chemicals, food additives, pesticides and other harmful influences.





**CERTIFIED CHILDREN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 9  
QUESTION & ANSWERS**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at [iridology@netzero.net](mailto:iridology@netzero.net) or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

**All information will be kept private. If you would like comments and suggestions let us know and we will respond to you.**

1. What are 4 signs of stress or distress in toddlers?
2. How does stress affect a child's development?
3. What are the signs of stress in a child?
4. How do you calm down an angry child?
5. How do I get my child to stop worrying?
6. How can I help my toddler with anxiety?
7. How can I help my toddler with separation anxiety?
8. Can toddlers be stressed?
9. What is toxic stress?
10. How can I help my child with anxiety?
11. Is bedwetting a sign of stress?