

**END THE RACE:
REDUCING ANXIETY &
STRESS FOR YOUR CHILD
AND FAMILY**

**Deerfield Parent Network
Race to Nowhere Discussion
Facilitator: Debbie Gross, LCSW
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How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **Family**
 - **Don't over-schedule**
 - **Make time for family dinners**
 - **Set time aside for family fun**
 - **“Tuck” your child in**



How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **Extracurricular Activities**
 - Help your child find something he or she is interested in, finds valuable, or enjoys
 - Emphasize value in leadership or community service



How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **Sports**
 - Support all levels of ability
 - Listen to your child when it comes to his or her 'drive'
 - Balance competitiveness and criticism with encouragement and support



How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **Friends**

- If friend group changes, open up discussion
- If friends drop off, talk about it, but don't necessarily assume your child should pursue that friendship
- Supervise activities
- Talk about peer pressure, alcohol, tobacco use, and drugs
- Talk about sex, responsibility, and self-esteem



How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **Plugging In**

- **Set up graduated technology privileges based on maturity, understanding of risks, and supervision of use**
- **Teach the value of shutting down (meals, at night, during homework, during face-time with others)**
- **Use of surveillance technology when needed**
- **Open up discussions when children and teens are NOT getting texts or messages**



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How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **School**

- **Respect your school's authority – “United Front”**
- **Don't do your child's work!**
- **Get involved on committees that address change, stress, or children's needs**
- **Monitor your child's time spent doing schoolwork and communicate this to teachers**
 - **Separate out screen time from actual work time!**
- **Help your child find balance**
 - **How many honors or AP classes are appropriate?**
 - **How long should homework really take?**
 - **What 'track' should my child really be on?**



How can parents help reduce stress and anxiety in their children?

- **Unique Learners**

- Find success in small increments
- Look for strengths and find activities that celebrate them
- Work with teachers to manage schoolwork load
 - Some children take longer to do similar work than peers
- Focus on self-esteem
- There IS a college for every learner who wants to continue in higher education



Additional strategies¹

- **Find out what's on their minds**
 - **Ask your child's opinions, and be open to the answer**
- **Listen: show you care and understand**
 - **Notice the successes, achievements, and positive experiences**
 - **Empathize with the challenges, failures, or problems**

Additional strategies¹

- **Guide kids to solutions**
 - **What happened?**
 - **What could you do differently to have a different outcome?**
 - **What's your plan?**

Additional strategies¹

- **Keep things in perspective**
 - **6-6-6-6 Rule (how important will the problem be after 6 hours, 6 days, 6 months, 6 years...)**
 - **Without minimizing feelings, help your child focus on next opportunities and how to set new goals when old ones don't get met**
 - **Be proud of effort (process) rather than focusing solely on outcome (product)**

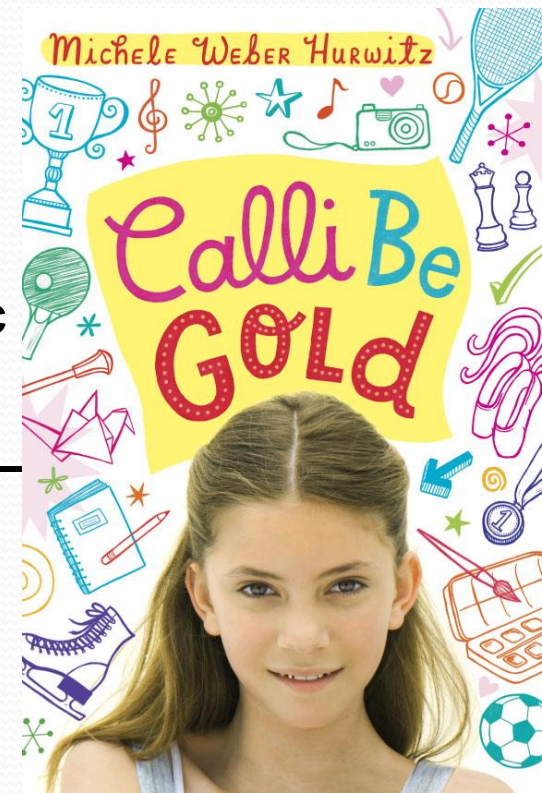
Additional Strategies¹

- **Be a good role model**
 - **Live a life of hopefulness**
 - **Learn calming strategies for yourself**
 - **Make time for relaxation and fun**
 - **Help demonstrate optimism and confidence in the face of adversity, problems, or setbacks**

One Book's Great Message

- **“Calli Be Gold” by Michele Weber Hurwitz**

- A middle school family “Must Read”
- Buffalo Grove mom and author Michele Weber Hurwitz writes about one girl’s ability to get her family to “see an alternative to the rush-rush lifestyle they lead”
- Calli, an 11-year-old girl, narrates this story as she tries “to live up to her parents’ unrealistic expectations”
- Parents and children can relate to her struggles – “Isn’t it okay to just be a good person and be who you are and not have to be great at something?”



References

- ¹<http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/worrying.html#cat145>, ©The Nemours Foundation 1995-2009.
- Nolan, Abby, Reviewer of “Calli Be Gold”

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