

## When Kids Have Both Ends Burning

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You notice that your child has come home from school for the past few weeks in a very different mode than usual. As she comes in the door, you ask her to clean the dishes in the sink and start homework. She snaps back at you in a strong voice, and then proceeds to throw her books on the floor.

You, surprised at this outburst, perceive it as a challenge to your authority; raise your tone of voice, and demand that she complete her chores and homework. At this point your child “loses it,” begins to cry and runs to her room. You think to yourself that she must be pre-hormonal, ignore the display, and remind her that she must practice her piano after homework, and then be ready to leave the house by 6 pm for her softball game. The crying does not stop, and you start to wonder what else you can do.

What is described above can be a fairly common occurrence in families in which children and teenagers can become burned out. Today’s youth are blessed to be able to be exposed to a wide variety of activities; however this exposure can come at a price if taken to the extreme.



**Just like adults, youth can also experience stress and burnout symptoms including:**

- Moodiness
- Lethargy
- Excessive whining
- Loss of the fun of an activity, and a feeling as if you have to “drag” their feet to do things
- Depressive and anxiety symptoms can even become present if the issue is not attended to.

These problems can begin to impact other areas of life including school grades, performance in sports and recreational activities, and more subtly, family relationships. Parents can also experience the same burnout symptoms as they run from activity to activity.

Wellness professionals have become more concerned in recent decades about this phenomena, as college admissions criteria become more stringent, competition with peers increases, as well as a push by parents for their kids to be the “best.” It is not uncommon for youth nowadays to be lost in a schedule rather than be enjoying their youth in play or engaging in time with others that fosters growth of relationships.

Parents can relieve this cycle by becoming familiar with the symptoms of burnout described above. They can also plan specific times for family interaction and activities. Scheduling downtime for youth is also important. This could also entail cutting back on activities that the youth may even want to do.

This would be a good opportunity to teach youth about the importance of stress management and working with them to develop techniques to relieve stress such as deep breathing, meditation, and visualization. Helping youth to learn that “we are not what we do” can assist them in developing a healthy perspective on their view of themselves and enhance their self-esteem.



For more information, call  
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