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High Stress and Sleep Schedules for Teens

The average high school teen juggles school work, activities, stress, and more while also attempting to maintain a decent sleep schedule over the span of at least four years. Studies have proven that individuals exceed more when on a regular sleep schedule.

I asked two individuals, Danni Baker and Ty Young, about their sleep habits/daytime activities. The first question being, “On average, what time do you go to bed?” Danni said “usually 9:00 pm ,” and Ty responded with “12:00 pm.” To follow up, I asked them what the average time they usually woke up for school. Danni gets about 9 ½ hours of sleep every night, and Ty gets about 8 hours of sleep. A study done by Nationwide Children’s Hospital stated that an adolescent teen gets about seven hours of sleep, although the recommended amount is still nine hours of sleep. The causes of this are thought to be because of the time school begins, and other school obligations that go on after hours. This loss of sleep results in moodiness, behavioural issues, decrease in academic abilities, and reckless driving. The four years of high school keep teenagers busy, but that is not always such a good thing.

Teens have expectations that are typically set pretty high. These would be easier to meet and achieve if the teens were not in high stress situations most of the day. Danni has One Act Play rehearsal from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, and on Saturdays she is at competitions all day. After this and eating dinner, she still has geometry homework and studying to do most nights. Finals season is coming up, so the stress and studying levels are higher than normal. Danni is typically a 3.8 GPA student, which can be easy some days, but other days students end up taking up to five tests or quizzes. Ty, on the other hand, can be found at Community Players rehearsals working as a stage manager, or sometimes even performing. On Wednesdays, he is at the theatre from 2:30 pm to 10:00 pm. During tech week, Ty has to be there every single day for about four hours and then even longer on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. After all of this, he still has biology and geometry homework, typically, on top of studying. Danni rated her average stress level a six on a scale from one to ten, ten being the highest. Ty said his stress level would have to be about a six after theatre and a four during the day. According to American Psychological Association, “Teens report that their stress level during the school year far exceeds what they believe to be

healthy (5.8 versus 3.9 on a 10-point scale) and tops adults' average reported stress levels..."

The stress levels grow throughout the years due to the high expectations to succeed in more ways than one. Teens no longer just worry about being number one in sports, but also number one in extracurricular activities, school work, and just overall in life.

We need to work towards lowering the daily expectations and focusing more on the effort than the end result. This would lower the amount of time a teen spends working on other projects instead of sleeping, which overall, would increase teens' health and performance in life.