

Transcript Season 2 Episode 9 : Managing High School Graduation Stress

Podcast Opener:

Everyone needs some advice now and then. If you are getting ready to leave home or have been on your own for a while, Grown Up U: Facts for Success can give you trusted advice that can take the stress out of adulthood. Listen and find some answers to the questions being constantly bombarded at you.

Podcast Script:

Pamela Luker: I am Pamela Luker. I am the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for Pope County and with me today I have Dardanelle High School senior, Destini Nguyen. And today's topic is about managing high school graduation stress.

So, it's no surprise that high school seniors experience stress. The senior year in high school ending in graduation is one of the major transition phases in a person's life. So, what are some of the reasons you feel high school seniors get stress, Destini?

Destini Nguyen: Well, there's a lot of pressure with all the work that we're having to do, since this is our final year so things like SATS, ACTs, scholarship applications, and just senioritis in general. So, I got that very, very badly so most of the work as with what my friends have done.

We have just laid back to all our work, including the scholarships, so we got stressed out thinking that all the due dates coming up, we got to do this, but we ended up pushing off till last minute.

Same thing with ACTs and SATs and more tests we get laid back and we're like, "Oh, we can do this later." but then the time has come, we are needing to get all these test scores in. And we get stressed, because this is our final moment to where we're getting to where we want to be, and things outside of school get us more stress too, because we have to worry about so much of that outside of our schoolwork.

Pamela Luker: Right, right, that's yeah that's good information I remember my senior year, especially towards the end it was really a struggle that sometimes, just to stay motivated. Then you start thinking about all the things you have coming up those tests you're talking about, and you know it just the list seems endless. It does so. Yes, so that's a lot to keep up with, and to think about.

You know just to kind of define stress. Stress is defined as something that causes strong feelings of worry and anxiety. And that period of time definitely causes those things.

So, change causes stress, which you know it could be good or bad. I know seniors are usually pretty excited and happy that they've reached the end of the high school and they're ready to graduate because you know you've worked what 13 years of your life to get there. But, as you mentioned, you know all of that includes some stressors that go right along with it.

Are there any additional factors contributing to stress for high school students who are graduating?

Destini Nguyen: Well, for most students they're going to most likely be joining clubs and do extracurricular activities. So along with senior year, even though we're worried about all of our schoolwork, we're also worried about doing good in sports, doing good in our activities, getting those credits and hours in, and just to get ready for the end of senior year because there's a possible chance those credits will go into our college transcripts and be seen by college professors.

So, either those credits and those activities that we're doing it's just the work in general that may stress out most of the time because we're trying to get everything done and since it's our last stretch it's just all crammed into one year, even though we're all tired of everything.

Pamela Luker: Right, right, you're ready for it end and you're excited so I get it. One thing that you know you and I talked about previously was it's not just the regular ACT and all of the normal stress, you also I heard you say previously you have AP (Advanced Placement) test coming up so out those are classes, that you could get college credit for too. So, I know that has to be stressful for you right now.

Destini Nguyen: Yes, it really is because all that work like I said, with the extracurricular activities those AP classes get in a lot of our time because there's so much studying there's so much work or so much homework and there are some problems that some high school seniors don't understand that.

Sometimes they can balance out those so easily so there's one time, where you have a game one night but then you also have a test the next day, sometimes you may not have time to do all that homework and studying and you're cramming it all into one night.

Pamela Luker: Right, right, yeah you know that's why it's important to even if you don't have homework or anything that you're studying well in advance, because you know it's something you have coming up so it's definitely overwhelming.

So, we've discussed the stressors now let's talk about some ways to manage high school graduation stress, so some suggestions are practicing mindful mindfulness and focusing on the present. So, there's a lot if we start thinking about the future here. And yes, you do want to think about the future, because what you do now does have an impact on it, but let's focus on what we need to get through right now.

Change your perspective so realize that no single action you take now as likely to result in any drastic consequences. Now I will also say to kind of go along with that, try to give yourself a little grace.

I know, whenever I was that I was in school or even college, you know, towards the end I was really hard on myself, because I set high standards for myself, but sometimes you just have to give yourself some grace.

Adopt healthier habits since poor health habits make stress worse. So, some positive health habits that can reduce stress and help you cope include getting adequate sleep. So, as you're trying to you know participate in those extracurricular activities and still have to go home and study it's important that you're also getting adequate sleep, because it can add to the stress.

Eating healthy foods. So, I know it's hard when you're studying just to grab those like junk food items but try to stick with healthy foods and some brain foods.

Drinking more water and exercising regularly. Remember exercise can help reduce stress. Take time for self-care so senior year in high schools very busy but remember to give yourself breaks occasionally and use your support system.

So, your high school teachers and school counselors, they're all there to help you as well as your friends and family. And you know I heard Destini say that you know she does rely on her friends. You guys kind of bounce your stresses off of each other and sometimes just have an open conversation, even though it doesn't change your situation, it can help relieve some of those burdens that you're carrying around with you daily this knowing that you're not the only one going through that.

So that's my last thing is, you are not alone, it is normal to experience stress. At this stage of your life, and if it gets overwhelming you know talk to your parents, I mean if it gets to the point where you need to. I mean talk to your parents about getting professional counseling.

Don't be scared to say hey this is way too much for me, I think it would help with me talking to someone.

Destini Nguyen: Because like what I said earlier, with all the stress and all the work and AP tests and all the sports, I was not alone through everything because I've always had friends help. I had my amazing counselors Ms. Hudgeons and Mr. Hetting at Dardanelle High.

They were always there to help us with stress and help us with work. They email this constantly telling us, "Hey do this, make sure this is turned in on time." And most of my teachers were there to help me and my parents were also there. So, everything that I did I always had help by my side no matter what ever happened.

So, even though I was very stressed throughout this entire year I was getting down to the point where I felt okay, because I had people around me to be there and be my support system for whatever I did. So especially since graduation, for me, is next week it's getting to the point where I'm so thankful for the people around me to help me to where I am now.

Pamela Luker: That's amazing!

Thank you so much, Destini, for joining me today and discussing managing high school graduation stress.

I appreciate it. Thanks for sharing your experience, and I hope you know there's someone out here that can learn from it and know they're not alone and that this is common. So, we wish all the graduates this year success and happiness in their future endeavors.

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