

Characteristics of Families who Manage Stress

Research has shown that families who manage stress in healthy ways share the following characteristics:

1. They do things together as a family. When under stress, it is very easy for family members to withdraw from each other.
2. They build esteem by supporting each other. They show appreciation for each other and let other members know that they understand. They keep a positive, can-do attitude.
3. They develop social support within the community. Families are better able to endure hardships if they reach out to the community instead of becoming isolated. Meeting new friends, joining community activities and using community facilities are examples.
4. They enjoy the lifestyle they have chosen and can endure the hardship of that lifestyle better than those who are not satisfied with their current way of life.
5. They develop and use a range of stress reducing coping strategies such as exercise, keeping involved with activities, relaxation techniques, positive outlook, and a healthy diet.

Clemson Extension, From Family Stress to Family Strengths, February, 1997.