

"I'm a good listener, so my friends tell me their problems. But then I get stressed because I worry about them," said Matt, a sophomore at Hilton High School.

Matt said that he reached his breaking point last year during a tough wrestling practice. He recalled lying on the mat, staring at the lights and saying, "Why am I doing this?" He then announced to his coach that he was thinking about quitting the team. A two-hour conversation ensued in which the coach suggested that Matt seek out a stress-management workshop.

Matt took his coach's advice, and said that he has made some important adjustments after attending workshops. The biggest change, he said, is that he now sticks to a daily schedule.

"I have everything planned from when I wake up to when I go to

sleep," he

noted.

Meanwhile, Katie said she has relieved the stress of living up to her sister's achievements by talking things out with her friends.

"It's gotten a lot better. A lot of people told me I'm my own person," she said.

Katie added that she gets through other stressful situations by being optimistic.

"I try to think of happy things — the weekends and the fun things I do when I get home," she said.

She views attendance at Mass as yet another stress reliever.

"It's my one hour a week I can get away from things," she said. "That's one hour I don't have homework, chores, doing this or doing that. I just sit and talk to God about whatever I want."

Matt said he incorporates one hour of free time into his daily schedule — "even if I just stare at a wall, if I just sit there and zone. I need that time, or I go absolutely nuts," he said.

"Set aside a little time each day to do nothing," Sarah agreed. "If you don't do that, you're going to run yourself ragged."

Matt noted that mental health is equally as important as physical health.

"There's only so much pressure and

abuse the body can take, and it's the same for your mind — there's only so much pressure and abuse that it can take," he said.

Erin pointed out that excessive stress can lead to physical problems.

Jill Emerson of Chill

For example, she said, "If you're not eating right, that would wear you down even more."

Despite these precautions, Jill and Matt acknowledged that stress is, to a certain point, unavoidable.

"I think some people hide it better than others, because everybody has stress," Jill said.

"If there's a person out there who's never had stress, I want to meet him," Matt remarked.

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