

# Stress Management

## Are you feeling stressed out?

### What is stress?

Stress is a very natural response to challenges, changes and the pressures of life. When not handled properly stress can seriously affect your concentration, energy levels, physical health, mood and ability to study effectively.

### Types of stress

There are two kinds of stress. **Positive stress** (yes, there is such a thing!) makes life interesting. It gives us that push to get things done and take on challenges. **Negative stress** on the other hand leads to frustration and exhaustion. It tips the scales so that everything starts to seem overwhelming and hopeless.

### Causes of stress

The first step to dealing with stress is identifying what exactly is causing the worry and frustration. An easy way to do this is to start a stress diary. Keeping a daily log will help you to pick up on common themes and patterns. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What caused the stress?
- How did you feel physically & emotionally?
- How did you act in response to the stress?
- What did you do to make yourself feel better?
- You might also consider these common causes of stress (tick those that apply to you):
  - Relationship problems
  - Not coping with studies
  - Leaving home to come to university
  - Having too many responsibilities at the same time (e.g. part-time work, academic demands & being a leader in a society all at the same time)
  - Financial problems

### Symptoms of stress

There are times when we are so focused on our day-to-day demands that we don't realize that we are stressed. A very important part of dealing with stress is to know it is happening and deal with it before things become so overwhelming that you can't cope with life.

Stress can express itself, cognitively, emotionally, physically & behaviorally.

The following are symptoms of stress (Tick those that apply to you):

Cognitive symptoms:

- Poor concentration
- Worrying excessively
- Negative thinking
- Feeling overwhelmed

Emotional symptoms:

- Moodiness e.g. irritability or depression/unhappiness
- Inability to relax/feeling tense
- Feeling lonely or isolated

Physical symptoms:

- Getting sick all the time
- Aches and pains

Behavioral symptoms:

- Eating too much or too little
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Isolating yourself from others

## What to do?

One of the most important things to remember when dealing with stress is that a little count for a lot. By making small changes to your lifestyle you can manage stress so that positive stress does not become negative stress.

The good news is that these changes are often simple and easy—they do however take a commitment on your part to look after yourself!

## Tips for dealing with stress?

### 1. Avoid unnecessary stress

- learn to say no
- avoid people who stress you out
- remember, you'll always have a to do list. Don't try to finish everything all at once

### 2. Alter the situation

- express your feelings instead of bottling them up
- be willing to compromise—if you are asking someone to change their behaviour be willing to change yours as well
- plan ahead & don't overextend yourself

### 3. Adapt to the stressor

- look at the big picture—will this matter a year from now?
- drop the perfectionism—learn to be 'good enough' - no one is perfect!
- focus on the positive—remind yourself of the good in your life

### 4. Accept the things you can't change

- don't try to control the uncontrollable—focus on the things you can control such as how you react to problems

### 5. Make time for fun and relaxation

- do something you enjoy everyday e.g. go for a walk, meet up with friends etc
- connect with others—spend time with people who are positive and make you feel good about yourself
- keep your sense of humour

### 6. Adopt a healthy lifestyle

- exercise regularly
- eat a healthy diet
- reduce caffeine and sugar—they affect your energy levels
- get enough sleep
- avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs—they only provide a temporary escape from your problems.

7. **If you feel like you are not coping, talk to someone you trust or see a psychologist who can help you.** Remember—problems don't go away and dealing with them immediately can prevent more serious consequences (e.g. failing exams, getting excluded)

**Find us @:**

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**Mowbray**

#### Telephone Numbers:

- **021 650 1017**
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#### Hours:

**Mon – Fri 08H30 – 16H30**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>be informed</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>know the dangers</b></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>make an informed choice!!</b></li></ul> |
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