



The Truth about... Stress

What is stress?

Stress is a feeling, but usually we don't really sit back and realise that stress doesn't have a pinned down definition. When we feel stress, we may be talking about situations or events that put pressure on us; or stress is the reaction to us being placed under the pressure and we find it difficult to cope with the situation.

What are the signs of stress?

Stress is a normal part of life. Stress causes our body to go into "fight", "flight" or "freeze" mode, but there are physical, emotional, and behavioural signs of stress:

Physical

- Shallow breathing or hyperventilating.
- Panic attack.
- Muscle tension.
- Blurred eyesight
- Sore eyes
- Problems going to sleep
- Staying asleep or having nightmares.
- Being tired all the time.
- Grinding your teeth
- Clenching jaw
- Headaches
- Chest pains
- High blood pressure
- Indigestion
- Heartburn
- Constipation
- Diarrhoea
- Sick, dizzy, fainting.

Emotional

- Irritability, aggression, impatient, wound up.
- Over-burdened.
- Anxious, nervous, afraid.
- Racing thoughts.
- Unable to enjoy yourself
- Depressed
- Uninterested in life
- Sense of dread
- Worried about your health
- Neglected
- Lonely.

Behavioural

- Indecisive
- Worrying
- Avoiding troubling situations.
- Snapping at people
- Biting your nails
- Picking your skin
- Unable to concentrate
- Eating too much or too little.
- Smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual.
- Restless
- Tearful or crying.

Developing Resilience

Resilience is our ability to bounce back from a situation that has brought us trouble. It is also about adapting to a situation and making productive **changes** to improve our lives. This includes:

Make some lifestyle changes

Developing assertiveness.
Use relaxation techniques.
Make time for friends.

Looking after your physical health

Get enough sleep.
Eat healthily
Stay active

Give yourself a break

Reward yourself for achievements.
Resolve conflicts.
Forgive yourself.

Build a support network.

Friends and family.
Teachers
GP
Counsellor.

Dealing with Pressure (Self Help Tips)

Here are some tips with dealing with pressure:

Identify your triggers

- Reflect on what is triggering the stress; **is it an issue that comes up regularly, like homework?; is it an ongoing issue, like bullying; is it a one off cause, such as an exam you are nervous about?**

Organise your time

- Making some adjustments to your schedule may help you to deal with the situation. **Identify the best time of day to and prioritise your time effectively; make a list of what you need to do; set small and achievable targets; vary your tasks and take breaks; try not to do too much at once; ASK FOR HELP!**

Address some of the causes

- Is it a housing or financial problem? Is it something in school or home? Is it something to do with your family? Address the situation and talk to someone about what can be done.

Accept the things you cannot change

- Accepting something that you cannot change will bulk up your energy into something that can be changed.

Treatments

Most treatments can be accessed through your GP, so you should always consult a medical professional before making any decisions. Here are some treatment options that are available:

Talking Therapies

- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** understanding your thought patterns, recognising trigger points and identify positive actions.
- **Mindfulness, meditation, yoga.**

Ecotherapy

- Improving your wellbeing and self esteem by spending time in nature.
- Physical exercise in green spaces or gardening or conservation projects.

Complementary Therapies

- Yoga and meditation
- Acupuncture
- Aromatherapy
- Massage

Remember...

It is ok to feel stressed...
...**but do not suffer alone**

We have a whole host of people around in and out of school to talk to:

- Your parents.
- Your friends.
- Your teachers.
- Your GP.
- Your school nurse.
- Your mental health leads.
- Your school counsellor.

LET'S

TALK