



What is stress?

People feel stressed when they feel like the demands or pressures on them are more than what they can cope with. Everyone feels stressed at times.

In Short: Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world

What causes stress?

There are many reasons why you might feel stressed. Some examples:

- Health
- Relationships
- Work/School pressures
- Financial pressures

Stress can be even worse if your family is breaking up, someone close to you is ill or dies, or if you are being physically or sexually abused.

People vary in the amount that they get stressed by things - you may find that you get very stressed out by exams, but your friends don't seem bothered!

Positive events can also be stressful! For example starting a new job or going to university. Many people need a little bit of stress to give them the "get up and go" to do things that are important to them.

What are the effects of stress?

Stress can affect different people in different ways. Stress can affect your body and your feelings. Some of the effects are listed below:

Effects on your body:

- Tired - disturbed sleep
- Going off your food / eating too much
- Change in mood
- Headaches and tension
- Aches and pains in your neck and shoulders.

Effects on your feelings:

- Feeling sad easily upset
- Angry being irritable, losing your temper easily
- finding it hard to keep your mind focused poor concentration

How do I cope with stress?

There are several things that you can do to help yourself cope.

- Don't suffer in silence! Feeling alone makes stress harder to deal with.
- Talking to somebody you trust can really help you to deal with stress and to work out how to tackle the problems that are causing it.
- Make a list of all the things in your life that are making you feel stressed—write them down on a piece of paper. Then take each one in turn and list all the things you could do to tackle it. This can help you sort things out in your head. Problems look easier to deal with one at a time than in a big jumble in your head!
- Take a break - do something that you really enjoy.
- Do something relaxing, for example take a hot bath or watch a film.
- Do some exercise? This produces chemicals in your body called 'endorphins' which make you feel good!

When to get help?

Signs that stress is getting too much and that you should get help:

- You feel that stress is affecting your health.
- You feel so desperate that you think about stopping school, leaving work running away from situations or harming yourself.
- You may feel low, sad, tearful, or that life is not worth living.
- You lose your appetite or overeat
- You might find it difficult to sleep.
- You have worries, feelings and thoughts that are hard to talk about because you feel people won't understand you or will think you are 'weird'.
- You think negatively about yourself most of the time
- You are using drugs or alcohol help you cope and block out stress.

IF you can't change the source of your stress try to focus on changing your attitude towards it

H.O.W. T.O. B.E.A.T. S.T.R.E.S.S

Holiday
Open Up Talk
Work

Try to stay in the present

Own up - your feeling stressed – half the battle is admitting it

Be realistic about what you can do

Eat a balanced diet

Action plan

Time prioritise what you need to do

Set goals

Talk it helps

Relax

Exercise

Say no and don't feel guilty

Seek professional help if things don't change

