



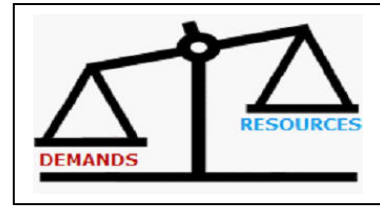
Understanding and Managing Stress

A Self Help Guide for
Students and Parents

STRESS

What is it?

Stress is our psychological, emotional and physical response to pressure. We feel there are too many demands, and too few resources to cope. That pressure can arise from external factors including life events, illness, home and family, study, or the demands we place on ourselves. Even those events which we see as enjoyable can be stressful, such as holidays, moving home, Christmas etc.



Thoughts which are common when stressed

- This is too much - I can't cope!
- It's not fair. Someone should be helping me.
- There is too much to do, and too little time
- I'll never finish

Emotions which are common when stressed

- Irritable, bad tempered
- Anxious
- Impatient
- Angry
- Hopeless

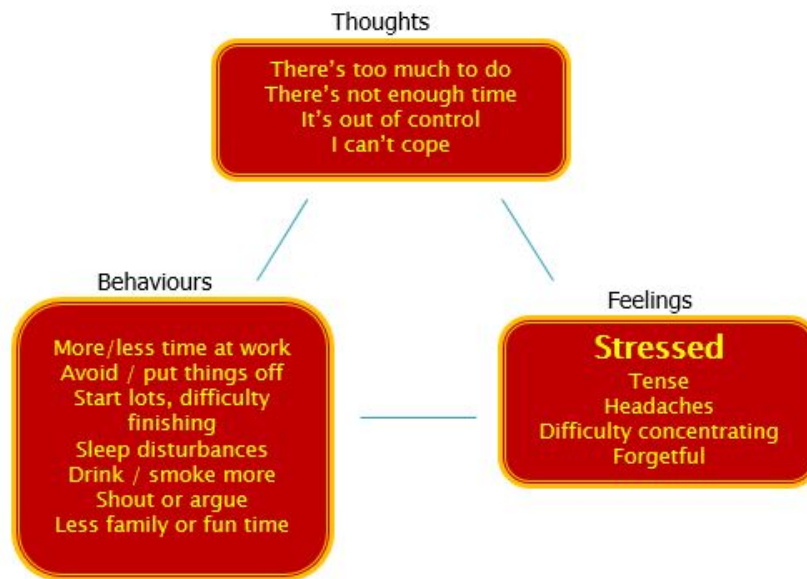
Physical sensations can include:

- Heart racing, pounding
- Breathing faster
- Tense muscles
- Hot, sweaty
- Headache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetful
- Agitated, restless
- Stomach churning

Behaviour can include

- Unable to settle, rushing about
- Unable to finish things
- **Sleep** disturbances
- **Shouting, arguing**
- Eating more (or less)
- Crying

Vicious Cycle of Stress



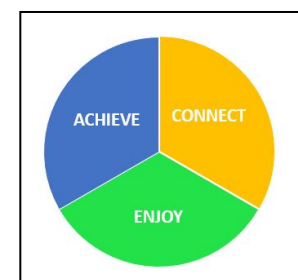
Identify Your Stressors

- What's making you stressed?
- Where am I when I'm feeling stressed? What am I doing? Who am I with?
- What are my thoughts when I am stressed?
- How will I behave when I'm stressed?

Even if there is little you can do about some situations, maybe making some small changes - in routine, in the way you handle things, doing things differently, taking time out, trying out different routines, thinking about it in a different way, getting help, seeking advice - could make all the difference.

Doing things differently – ACE IT!

Make time for yourself each day - relaxation, fun, enjoyment. Create a healthy balance - allow time for activities which give you a sense of achievement, those that help us connect to others, and of a sense of enjoyment.



When stressed, we often spend more time doing things that help us achieve, but less of enjoyment and closeness to others. Aim for a healthy balance as shown in the pie chart, between **ACE activities**: Achievement, Closeness or connecting to others, and Enjoyment (**ACE**)

What Can Help To Bring Stress Levels Down

- Try mindfulness for calm and relaxation
- Be with others - contact a friend, visit family
- Talk to someone
- Physical exercise - walk, swim, go to the gym, cycle
- Engage in a hobby or other interest
- Limit your responsibilities - it's okay to say no sometimes
- Write down everything you think you need to do – just get it out of your head
- Take one step at a time - don't plan too far ahead
- Positive self-talk - encourage yourself, tell yourself: I can do this, I am strong and capable (even if you don't believe it at first!).
- Eat a healthy balanced diet. Drink less caffeine and more water
- Stay organised

Thinking About Things Differently

- How helpful is it for me to think this way?
- Am I getting things out of proportion?
- Is it worth it?
- How important is this really? How important will it be in 6 months' time?
- Am I underestimating my ability to cope?
- What advice would I give someone else in this situation?
- Am I putting more pressure on myself?
- Can I do things any differently here?
- Is there another way of dealing with this?

In Library: **The Teenage Guide to Stress** by Nicola Morgan

Open-A Toolkit for How Magic and Messed Up Life Can Be by Gemma Cairney