

DEALING WITH STRESS



When we talk about being stressed, it usually means we're tense about something that's happening in our lives. Some stress can be a good thing. It can help us get motivated to get things done. For some people, too much stress can lead to other problems, including depression.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a normal part of daily life. It's a natural physical and mental response that is designed to help you cope effectively with emergencies. Among other things, stress makes your body produce chemicals that raise your heart rate and blood pressure and increase mental focus. This helps you to perform well in a challenging situation over a short period of time.

The problems from stress happen when stress is regular and doesn't let up. The chemicals the body releases can build up and cause changes that damage your physical and mental health.

WHAT CAUSES A PERSON TO FEEL STRESSED?

There are lots of different causes for stress. Things that affect one person may not be a problem for someone else. The important thing is to work out what's troubling you.

Stress can come from different areas of your life.

There may be problems at home with your family, such as your parents splitting up or one of your parents having a new baby. Some people may have trouble with violence at home, or with physical or sexual abuse.

School can also be a cause of stress. Many young people worry about schoolwork and exams or about how they get on with other students. As well as wanting to do well for themselves, they may feel that they have to meet family expectations, and that they're expected to do as well as friends or siblings. They may be keen to do well in their schoolwork, but have other problems like being bullied or falling out with friends. Or they may have other responsibilities that take their time, such as caring for a sick sibling or parent, or needing to work as well as going to school.

Drinking alcohol and taking drugs can also cause stress.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE STRESSED?

Most people, whether they are young or old, get stressed sometimes. Stress can be caused by a lot of different things, but common causes in young people are to do with school, work, family or relationships. Whatever the cause, the results are usually the same.

Common mental health symptoms include:

- feeling angry or irritable
- feeling anxious
- being moody and easily frustrated
- feeling like crying regularly
- having low self esteem or lacking confidence
- feeling restless all the time
- having trouble concentrating.

Common physical symptoms include:

- feeling sick in the stomach
- having constipation or diarrhoea
- having stomach aches and/or headaches
- having problems sleeping
- feeling constantly tired
- sweating a lot
- having cramps or twitches
- feeling dizzy or fainting
- eating too much or too little
- using drugs or smoking.

Visit: www.youthbeyondblue.com

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beyondblue: the national depression initiative

