

Managing Your Stress

STRESS MANAGEMENT

1. What is stress?
 2. What are your sources of stress?
 3. How can I manage stressful times in my life?
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1. WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is any change or stressor that you have to adjust to and your reaction to that change. External events happen and you react. It is important to learn healthy ways to react to external events. Your health depends on it! Stressful events can come from our environment, our thoughts or our feelings. Not all stressful situations are negative. Going on a holiday or attending a family reunion can be stressful, but fun, too.

When we are faced with a difficult situation, like writing an exam, our body reacts in order to protect us. This reaction is called "Fight or Flight". In other words we can attack the exam by preparing or avoid studying and run away from the stress. We decide on our response to the stress.

2. SOURCES OF MY STRESS:

Here are some questions to help you identify some sources of stress in different areas of your life:

Check off any which apply to you.

SCHOOL

1. I am unclear about my career goal _____
2. I can't concentrate in class _____
3. I study but have difficulty passing tests ___ assignments _____
4. I don't understand what my teacher teaches me _____
5. I may have a learning disability _____
6. I'm not sure if I am able to succeed in school _____
7. My attendance is poor _____
8. I'm often late for class _____

9. I have a low opinion of myself _____
10. I have too many assignments _____
11. I have to finish my program by a certain deadline _____
12. I feel harassed in school by someone _____
13. I am anxious because I have been out of school for a long time _____
14. I have never done very well in school _____

BODY

1. I don't exercise at least three times per week _____
2. I get sick a lot _____
3. I have many allergies _____
4. I often have physical ailments like headaches, stomachaches, backaches, and muscle tension _____
5. I have difficulty maintaining a normal weight _____
6. I smoke cigarettes _____
7. I drink alcohol to relieve my stress _____
8. I drink more than two cups of coffee or tea a day _____
9. I have no quiet time to walk, meditate, do yoga or relax _____
10. I eat lots of sugar _____ salt _____

MIND/FEELINGS

1. I am often worried about failing _____
2. I find it hard to say NO to others _____
3. I cry a lot _____
4. I find it difficult to sleep _____
5. I don't feel safe _____
6. I have trouble concentrating _____
7. I worry about many things _____
8. I am upset if people don't like me _____
9. I get angry, but I don't express my anger _____
10. Life doesn't have meaning to me _____
11. I often feel depressed _____
12. I don't think I will ever find a job that I enjoy _____
13. I feel discouraged about learning English _____

RELATIONSHIPS

1. My family is not supportive of me _____
2. I have difficulty getting along with others _____
3. A close family member or friend has recently been very sick or has died _____
4. I have to care for a family member(s) _____
5. I find it difficult to express my feelings _____

6. I am lonely _____
7. I don't have any close friends _____
8. I will be getting married soon _____
9. I miss my friends, pet, family at home _____

MONEY

1. I can't get the financial support that I need for my future courses _____
2. I don't have enough money for my basic expenses _____
3. I have difficulty managing my budget _____

CULTURAL

1. I don't understand the culture or systems in Canada _____
2. I feel nervous and overtired a lot of the time _____
3. I miss home very much _____
4. I feel angry at Canadians _____
5. I depend on my friends from my home country for friendship _____
6. I wonder why I came to Canada _____
7. I don't think anyone understands how I am feeling _____

Count up how many items you have checked and in what categories. If you have checked many items, you will most likely be experiencing a high degree of stress. You might want to meet with a counsellor to discuss more effective ways to cope with your stress.

3. HOW CAN I MANAGE THE STRESS IN MY LIFE?

- * Give yourself permission to take a break, now and then. Don't be too hard on yourself. Relax and slow down. Go for a walk or visit the ocean.
- * Practice relaxation techniques. Meditation, yoga, long quiet walks and deep breathing exercises all help to lower blood pressure, reduce muscle tension and promote sleep.
- * Exercise! Regular exercise gives your body a chance to use up any excess energy. Fifteen minutes, minimum, three times a week will help to reduce your stress level and improve your health, in general.
- * Seek help. Working with a counsellor can help teach you some relaxation techniques or find ways to cope with your life stressors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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