

CODE Community Support Group – Coping with Stress

“Give your stress wings, and let it fly away”

Let’s re-set and refresh ourselves, carry out this simple task when you need a break. It will help you to focus and will allow you to clear your brain.

- Sit down and close your eyes.
- Focus on something – your breath and image or a word.
 - o The word “one” is popular.
- Simply allow your mind to drift, returning your focus when you need to

Practicing this technique can help you to focus your mind and can be done at any time or any place.

Stress is extremely common and is even considered a natural part of life. You do need to have an element of stress in your life, but it shouldn’t control you or your actions. It’s all about balance and learning to cope and manage your stress, manipulating it to work for you.

Some find they actually work better under stress, whereas others struggle to cope at all. You have to find out what works for you and use it to help you in your everyday life.

The first thing to do to help is to identify the cause...

- What is causing you to be stressed?

The last thing you should do is turn to something unhealthy to help you cope (e.g. smoking or drinking).

So, what can you do to address stress?

- ❖ **Be active** – Whilst it won’t make it disappear, it will reduce the emotional intensity, clear your thoughts and let you deal with the problem more clearly.
- ❖ **Take Control** – If you think and remain passive “I can’t do anything about my problem” then your stress will only get worse. The feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress. The act of taking control is empowering, and it’s a crucial part of finding a solution that satisfies you. You need to focus on yourself, not others.
- ❖ **Connect with people** – create a good support network of friends and family that can help ease your work troubles and help you see things in a different way. Having a good laugh with friends and family can help you to relieve stress.
- ❖ **Have some me time** – we don’t spend enough time doing the things we really enjoy. Set aside a couple of nights a week for some quality “me time”, away from your uni work.

- ❖ **Challenge yourself** – Set yourself goals and challenges, be it with uni work or your personal life. Learn a new language, a new skill or even take up a new sport. This can help you to build confidence and, in turn, deal with stress.
- ❖ **Avoid unhealthy habits** – Don't rely on alcohol, smoking or caffeine as a way of coping. It's called avoidance behaviour and it is a way of burying the problems as opposed to facing them. This will only create new problems in the long run, and it won't fix your old ones.
- ❖ **Work smarter, not harder** – working smarter simply means prioritising your work, concentrating on the tasks that'll make a real difference.
- ❖ **Try to be positive** – look for the positives in your life and focus on the things for which you are grateful. Many people don't appreciate what they have in their life.

Write down three things that you are grateful for in your life

1.
.....
2.
.....
3.
.....

How to identify the stress in your life

Some stressors such as changing jobs, exam time, the pandemic, moving, or going through a break-up are easy to identify as the main cause. But we can't just brush over our own thoughts, feelings and behaviours as they majorly contribute to stress levels.

Are you stressed about an important deadline? Or is it you procrastinating that is actually causing the stress.

Identify your true source of stress

- * Look closely at your habits, attitudes and even excuses.
 - Do you explain away stress as temporary, even though you can't remember the last time you took a breath?
 - Do you define stress as an integral part of your work or home life, or even as part of your personality?
 - Do you blame your stress on other people or outside events, or view it as an entirely normal and unexceptional?

- * Accept responsibility for the role you play in creating or maintaining stress, if you don't then it will remain outside of your control.

Additional top tips to manage stress

- **Start a stress journal** – This can help you to identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed, keep track of it in your journal or use a stress tracker on your phone.
 - **What caused your stress?**
 - **How did you feel?**
 - **How did you act in response?**
 - **What did you do to make yourself feel better?**
- **Practice the 4 A's of stress management** – Some stressors arise at predictable times (Exam time, deadlines, moving etc). When handling predictable stressors, you can either change the situation or change your reaction. It's best to follow the 4 A's when reacting.
 - **Avoid unnecessary stress** – learn how to say no, avoid those who stress you out, take control of your environment and pare down your to do list.
 - **Alter the situation** – Express your feelings instead of bottling them up, be willing to compromise and create a balanced schedule.
 - **Adapt to the stressor** – Reframe problems, look at the bigger picture, adjust your standards and practice gratitude.
 - **Accept the things you can't change** – Don't try to control the uncontrollable, look for the upside, learn to forgive and share your feelings.
- **Manage your time better** – Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focussed (and you're more likely to procrastinate!). There are things you can do to achieve a better work-life balance.
 - **Don't over-commit yourself**
 - **Prioritise tasks**
 - **Break projects into small steps**
 - **Delegate (if possible)**
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle** – we touch on this each week. This is by far the most important part of a health mind!
 - **Eat a healthy diet**
 - **Reduce caffeine and sugar**
 - **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs**
 - **Get enough sleep**
 - **Exercise**
- **Relieve stress in the moment** – mastering this skill will help you tackle stress then and there, rather than focussing on it later. The fastest way to reduce stress in the moment is to:
 - **Take a deep breath**
 - **Focus on your senses... What can you see? Hear? Taste and touch?**
 - **This won't work for all, so focus on either breathing or your senses and look for what works for you**

The NHS website is a fantastic resource to use and they have a great selection of mental health apps to help you cope with stress. Some of these apps are as follows:

- Chill Panda

- Cove
- My Possible Self
- SilverCloud
- Stress & Anxiety Companion
- Student Health App
- Thrive

The full list can be found here - <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/>

Write down two stressors in your life, and then write down how you will tackle these using the information you have learnt today

Stressor 1 -

.....

Tackled by -

.....

.....

Stressor 2 -

.....

Tackled by -

.....

.....

CODE have plenty of ways to help you keep healthy each week...

HIIT – with Boxercise

Online

Every Monday at 6pm

<https://codestudents.co/Fitness>



Yoga

Online

Every Tuesday at 6pm

<https://codestudents.co/Fitness>



Core

Online

Every Thursday at 6pm

<https://codestudents.co/Fitness>



Meditation

Online

Every Saturday

<https://codestudents.co/meditate>



CODE Community Support Group

(limited to 15)

Every Thursday

2pm – 4pm in the Games room

<https://codestudents.co/Group>



Grab and Go table

Pick up snacks, food, drinks or a

book from our motivation library

Every Thursday – 2pm – 5pm

CODE Cafe

