

## Managing Stress

Stress is a common response to tough events or situations. Whilst a certain level of stress is normal and can even enhance motivation and productivity, excessive and prolonged stress is unhealthy and can impact your psychological and emotional wellbeing.

### What are some psychological and emotional signs of stress?

- Depression or anxiety.
- Anger, irritability or restlessness.
- Feeling overwhelmed, unmotivated or unfocused.
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Racing thoughts or constant worry.
- Problems with your memory or concentration.
- Making bad decisions.

### Stress Management Tips for Students:

Students are susceptible to experiencing stress. Concerns such as financial expenses, work/study balance, family expectations, deadlines and study load are all likely to induce stress in students. Managing stress in its early stages can help maximise the study experience and enhance opportunities for students.

You can reduce your study-related stress by remaining on top of your study load. This can be achieved by using your time wisely each day, during the week, and across the semester. Remember, what you don't do today will need to be done tomorrow so try your best not to leave assignments until the last minute.

Many assignments + limited time left = stress overload! You can prevent this by utilising a daily diary and having a wall chart for the semester to help you manage your time and stay on top and up to date with your assessments.

### Some common stress triggers and strategies:

#### ▪ Social

Social stress puts serious peer pressure on students. Dealing with new relationships, balancing academic life with social life, living with or without family members and/or adjusting to the new environment can all trigger and exacerbate stress.

#### ▪ Academic

Adhering to timetables, meeting deadlines, achieving good grades, understanding

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class content, anxiety about assessments/exams, responsibilities, and poor time management all lead to a build-up of academic stress.

- **Daily life**

This stress is associated with issues that are not related to academic or social life. These can include daily commute, part-time job, financial burdens, health-related concerns and so on.

Practical stress management can help students deal with their worries and become more productive, competent and efficient.

**Some additional tips for managing stress are:**

- **Manage time**

Proper time management is one of the most effective stress-relieving techniques. Whether it's relaxation, work or study, time must be spent wisely. Students should ideally be able to formulate and adhere to a timetable/study schedule. Choose a relaxing break between work and study, even if it's just taking time out to breathe.

- **Exercise and get some air**

A healthy lifestyle is essential for not only students, but for everyone. It is important to maintain a health study/life balance so if you are busy studying throughout the day, take some time out to get some fresh air and exercise. Maintaining a healthy routine helps to reduce stress.

- **Stay positive**

If you keep focusing on the negative aspects of a situation, you will increase your mental stress levels. Instead, try to look at the glass half full, and try to remain optimistic through tough times. For example, instead of feeling upset over a bad grade, try to maintain a positive attitude and look at ways to improve next time.

- **Organise your academic life**

Organisation is one of the key factors when studying in helping to reduce and manage stress. By keeping your notes organised, submitting assignments on time, and keeping track of all deadlines, stress can be greatly reduced.

- **Stop procrastinating**

The best way to stop procrastinating is to get started on the easiest or least daunting task first. Or, at least get started on one of your tasks, perhaps the one that is due first. Many students procrastinate because they dread the task they're putting off. Once you get started, however, it is a lot easier to keep the momentum going which

will keep you feeling more focused, positive and capable.

- **Take one step at a time**

Don't put too many eggs in one basket. Instead of feeling overwhelmed about all the deadlines, it's best to make a list and sort them out one by one. This helps you to be more efficient and productive with your time.

- **Spend time talking with friends/family**

A friendly and comforting voice helps to reduce stress levels and reduce loneliness. Confiding in someone you trust can help you feel emotionally connected which enhances your psychological wellbeing.

- **Water therapy**

Water therapies are effective for reducing stress and relaxing the body. It is important to remain hydrated so remember to drink 1-2 litres of water each day. Also, enjoying a hot bath can help to enhance relaxation and hence improve your academic performance.

- **Do something you love**

If you feel extremely stressed out, take a break and do something you love. Whether it is painting or listening to music, doing something you enjoy can cheer up your mood and distract you from a stressor.

A general rule of thumb is to moderate your workload and avoid taking on too much. Following the tips above can help you find and maintain a good study/life balance. If you feel you would benefit from additional help or support please contact Student Life or your own professional services, such as your GP or psychologist.

We are all here to help.