

Managing Stress

What is Stress?

Stress is wear and tear on the body and mind caused by life's many changes and demands. It is affected by both the environment and the make up of the individual in the environment. People react differently to stress - some adaptively others maladaptively. There are two levels of stressors:

- ▶ Macro, which are major happenings and
- ▶ Micro, which are the hassles of everyday living

We all have a breaking point - if we allow ourselves to reach it

Symptoms & Effects of Stress

- ▶ Individuals respond differently to stress
- ▶ Psychological stresses can trigger physical symptoms
- ▶ Major bodily systems such as the autonomic nervous system, endocrine and immune systems are involved in stress reactions
- ▶ It's important to recognise the effects stress can have on our:
 - Behaviour
 - Attitudes/thought processes
 - Emotions/feelings
 - Physical/psychological health

Can I Control Stress?

- ▶ Yes!
- ▶ Ownership or victim role
- ▶ Beware of negative or irrational thinking
- ▶ Learn awareness, acceptance, coping and action skills
- ▶ Consider the big picture: yourself, your interpersonal and interactive processes and your environment
- ▶ You can take responsibility and ownership for controlling potential stress in your life

Attitude

"Life is not about happenings but what we say to ourselves about those happenings." (Epithets, AD 50-138).
From our life experiences we develop beliefs, values and ways of judging and interpreting events in our lives.
Be:

- ▶ Flexible
- ▶ Adaptable
- ▶ Rational
- ▶ Positive
- ▶ Solution oriented with attitudes and beliefs
- ▶ Keep things in perspective - be careful of catastrophising
- ▶ Replace negative thoughts with positive ones

Stress Management Techniques

- ▶ Relaxation techniques to produce a quiet body and calm mind
- ▶ Take a deep breath and sigh the breath out
- ▶ Practice guided imagery or visualization
- ▶ Use circuit breakers such as:
 - Having a bath
 - Laugh regularly
 - Have a massage
 - Reading for pleasure
 - Do something you like doing
 - Exercise
 - Take regular breaks
 - Talk to someone



Stress Reduction & Maintenance

- ▶ Ensure a balanced lifestyle (work, relationships, social and leisure)
- ▶ Exercise three times a week for at least 30 minutes
- ▶ Use your communication skills (listening and talking effectively)
- ▶ Problem solving and decision making
- ▶ Effective time management
- ▶ Conflict resolution
- ▶ Set goals and manage time



Sources of assistance

- ▶ Your EAP
- ▶ Community health centres
- ▶ Courses and workshops
- ▶ Your General Practitioner
- ▶ Reading self help books



① Your EAP is there to help

Remember the EAP offers support through confidential face-to-face and telephone counselling and appointments can be made by phoning your EAP provider, Davidson Trahaire Corpsych (DTC), on **1300 360 364**.