

The
Exchange

Supporting psychological
wellbeing and emotional
resilience in children, young
people and families.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH STRESS



For Parents & Carers



 THEEXCHANGEWELLBEING

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exchange-counselling.com



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH STRESS



WHAT IS STRESS?

STRESS can be defined as the degree to which you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope as a result of pressures that are unmanageable.

Stress releases adrenaline and cortisol which gives us a surge of energy. Too much adrenaline and cortisol can have a damaging effect on:

- **Our immune system**
- **Our sleep pattern**
- **Our short and long-term memory**
- **Our capacity to learn, concentrate and focus**
- **Our relationships**
- **Our mental and physical health**

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- Lack of motivation
- Absence from work/avoiding school
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling bad tempered
- Having overwhelming emotions
- Constantly feeling tired
- Headaches
- Prolonged increased breathing/heart rate
- Disengaged from family

These will be different for everyone – it's important to notice changes in our children.



BALANCE OUT THE STRESS

SEROTONIN
Mood Stabiliser



Diet,
Purposeful
Activity

DOPAMINE
Reward
Chemical



Achievement

OXYTOCIN
Love Hormone



Connection &
Relationships

ENDORPHIN
Pain-killer



Exercise

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH STRESS

WAYS TO COPE

Helpful Coping Strategies:

- Exercise
- Being outdoors
- Time with friends
- Listening to music
- Relaxation
- Doing something fun

Unhelpful Coping Strategies:

- Misuse of alcohol/drugs
- Isolating from friends and family
- Not enough sleep
- Not taking breaks

Young people might experience anxiety provoking thoughts like:

“I’m never going to pass- it’s too hard”

“What’s the point even trying?”

“What if I fail?”

“Then I won’t get in to Uni”

“Then I won’t get a job”

“I’ll never do as well as them”

UNDERSTAND THE WHY

Adult

- Don't get so worried about it
- Why are you so stressed?
- I'm sure you'll do fine
- Exams aren't the end of the world
- You can still get a job without them
- It's no big deal if you fail

Young Person

- What if I fail?
- I don't think I can do this
- I don't have enough time to study
- My work isn't good enough
- I need to pass or what's the point?
- Why can't I remember all this?

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Be available without judging

Empathise

Notice effort rather than achievement

Avoid shoulds and musts

The power of listening

Don't compare to your experience

Ask- What do they need?



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH STRESS

Ask your young person to "audit" their stress busters.

What areas do they think they need more time invested in or supported with?

STRESS BUSTERS

Consider what you put in your body. Certain foods have properties that can help us feel better overall.

Stress-lowering foods; Sweet potatoes, eggs, garlic



Take time to check in with yourself. How are you feeling? What could help? Be realistic in planning and setting goals.

Praise your achievements, no matter how small.



Look at who you have in your support network: family, friends. Who can you trust to share your feelings?

Remember everyone experiences stress- you are not alone.



Take time to give yourself proper rest. Turn off your phone early and try to wind down before bedtime.

Take a bath or listen to music to wind down.



Listen to your body. Take regular breaks and don't overdo it. You'll be much more productive that way.

Try setting a timer and studying for 25 minutes then a 5 minute break then repeat.



Exercise can have a massive impact on stress levels, even in small amounts. Even walking for 10 minutes can help.

Plug into a podcast and walk around the block.



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