

# How to Manage Stress Effectively

Whether it's the daily grind at work or school, challenges in friendships, upcoming examinations or unexpected situations that leave you anxious, stress can be a heavy burden.

But remember, God invites us to cast all our worries on Him because He cares for us.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” ([1 Peter 5:7, NIV](#))

This week PSHE gives us the opportunity to explore the impact of stress in our lives and discover ways to manage stress.

Starting Point:

Discuss all of the words and ideas that come to mind that are associated with stress.



# TRIGGERS

- A social event e.g. a party, peers
- An upcoming performance e.g. exams, school play, sports days
- Specific phobia, e.g. spiders, dogs
- Social media, the news
- Going away, separation from parent/carer
- New situations
- Sensory overload
- Worries about everything and anything: 'what if...?'



Discuss 4 emotions you experience when you feel under stress and then share with the group.

- ❑ What types of emotions have we shared?
- ❑ Have we talked about some of the more difficult emotions such as tearful, scared, panicked or frightened?

It is very difficult to find a precise description of stress. The best (easiest to understand) is probably that 'stress is an imbalance between the demands made on a person and the person's ability to cope or adapt to the demands'.

People need a certain level of stress to perform; the problems only arise when people feel unable to cope. The body responds to stress when preparing for action.

Thousands of years ago, if a person were being attacked by a wild animal, his/her stress reaction would help him/her to either run away or defend him/herself by fighting.

This is known as the 'fight or flight' response.

Many modern day situations may cause a fight or flight response, where the body is ready for action, but the action is not needed.

This can cause us long-term and short-term problems.





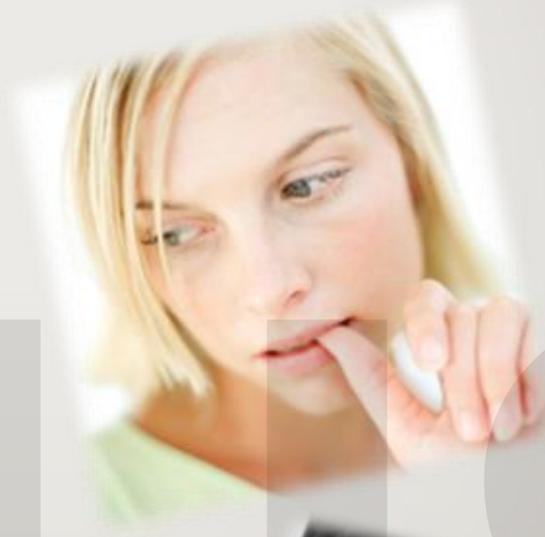
# What do you think are 'short-term' and 'long-term' problems?

## Short-Term Problems or The Immediate Effects of Stress.

- Muscles tense
- Breathing becomes faster and shallower
- Adrenaline flows
- Feelings of anger or anxiety
- Sweating increases
- Digestion slows down
- Immune responses decrease
- Blood pressure rises
- The liver release sugar, cholesterol and fatty acids into the body

## Long Term Effects of Stress

- Poor sleep
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Feeling helpless
- Exhaustion
- Inappropriate aggression
- Irritability
- Over or under eating
- Loss of self-esteem
- Lack of concentration
- Depression





1. What do you do to cope with stress?
2. What actions do you take and what attitude do you adopt to reduce your stress or worry?
3. What have you seen others do to cope with stress or react to stress?

## The A B C of Stress Management

<b>A</b>	Awareness	Being aware of how you experience stress and what causes your stress.
<b>B</b>	Balance	Discover how much stress you need to perform effectively without feeling overloaded.
<b>C</b>	Control	Increase your awareness and identify your level of balance to help you feel more in control.

# ACTIONS TO TAKE & ATTITUDES TO ADOPT

## Actions:

---

- Talk about it with someone you trust
- Write about it, it often helps to put things in perspective e.g. keep a diary
- Do something physical like exercise or dancing
- Make time to do something you enjoy such as a hobby, listening to music or doing something creative
- Set priorities through time planning, goal setting or making 'to do' lists
- Learn to relax

## Attitudes:

---

- Laugh
- Distance it – imagine a few weeks from now how unimportant it will be
- Think positively, negative thoughts can pull you down
- Imagine yourself being successful – it can help you to develop a positive way of thinking
- Focus on something you enjoy, to help you think about the present rather than feeling worried about the future

## What are unhelpful ways to manage stress?

Some unhelpful ways are:

- Using drugs
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Being aggressive
- Being angry

## Reflection

Identify one action you will take and one attitude you will adopt to help you manage stress.

Share this with the group.



SMILE



# What can you do to support someone with anxiety?

- Encouragement and praise for managing difficult situations.
- Use rewards for achievement
- Provide reflections to develop insight e.g. I wonder if you are feeling worried about the party next week?
- Model facing fears or that a situation can be mastered- we know children learn from how others around them respond to situations
- Be on the lookout for 'have a go' behaviour
- Normalise anxiety for them
- Allow independence and encourage problem solving