

Stress Management

Stress is your body's way of preparing you to cope with challenges. Suitable levels of stress can help you perform at an optimal level when required, but too much stress can leave you feeling on edge and decrease your capacity to function at your best.

Common signs of excess stress include:

- Becoming very distressed or angry by small problems, challenges or disappointments
- Not being able to stop thinking about your worries
- Being tired all the time
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Eating too much or too little

If you are feeling too stressed it may be helpful to:

- Learn to say no. If your body is signaling to you that it is not coping with your current situation so it is important not to take on more responsibilities. You may even need to hand back some responsibilities that you have previously taken on.
- Review how you spend your days, weeks and years. Schedule in time for relaxation, nurturing good relationships, doing nothing, taking holidays, and dealing effectively with your stressors. This may mean taking a pay cut or passing up a promotion, but it may be worth it.
- List all your stressors on a piece of paper. Divide them into stressors that you can change and stressors with which you must live. Create a plan as to how you will address the stressors that you can change and plan how you will cope with the stressors that can't be changed (most stressors people experience fit into the second category). Consider both categories seriously and ensure that you have an effective plan.
- Ensure that you have realistic expectations of yourself and other people. Remember that everyone is different and what might be realistic for one person may not be realistic for the next. Make sure that your expectations are not setting you up to feel like you are never doing or achieving enough.
- Tune in to your self-talk. Replace negative thinking with soothing, realistic and constructive problem-solving thoughts.
- Do things that you really enjoy. Make this a priority.

- Learn to talk about both your current day stressors and previous relationships and experiences which have caused you stress. Talking about stressors helps to keep them in perspective and may let people around you let you know that you need some help.
- Exercise regularly. Do exercise that you enjoy and that gives you a break from your day to day life. E.g. find a nice place to walk, join a sports team, swim laps of a pool.

Please feel free to contact Life Supports on 1300 735 030 if you would like to discuss your situation with a professional counsellor. You can find more information about Life Supports services by visiting www.lifesupports.com.au.