

# Weekly Wellbeing Updates

Friday 12 March 2021

## STRESS

### 5 tips to help manage it



We are entering the time of year that for various reasons, creates more stress. Whether you have lab reports, project deadlines, endless tutorial sheets to catch up on, or you are starting to worry about exams, please know that you are not alone.

#### 1) Learn about your stress response

Often, when we talk about stress, we may actually be referring to the **stress response**. The stress response is the way our brain tells us that there is a problem in our environment that we need to deal with and is the signal that causes us to adapt to the situation. Our cortisol and adrenaline spike and our bodies prepare to act (fight or flight!).

In the right circumstances, stress is a necessary motivating factor, however, if the stress response is activated too often and we are faced with multiple or prolonged problems, it may become debilitating. Acknowledging that we are experiencing a stress response, however, can help us identify the problem and react accordingly.

#### 2) Identify the causes

Some stressors, such as an imminent deadline or interview may be fairly straightforward to identify and subsequently prepare for. However, if we have various pieces of work to complete in the background (like an FYP!), it may not be initially obvious why we are experiencing a stress response.

Likewise, sometimes you may experience symptoms of the stress response (for example feeling physically tense, have sharp breathing, stomach issues, and changes in temperature, etc.) and not know why. Slow down and retrace your steps. Did you read a headline or see a post that put you on edge. Are you reacting to sensory overstimulation (such as loud noises and unpleasant scents)? Sometimes you may identify that there are hidden stressors that you can remove.

#### 3) Learn how to complete the stress cycle

Sometimes removing the stressor (such as submitting a report) may provide instant relief. However, there may be occasions where this is not possible, or we feel lingering symptoms. In such circumstances, it may help 'complete' the stress cycle. Essentially you need to re-direct that adrenaline. It's a cliché but exercise or movement can really help with this. If that isn't an option, try talking to a friend or loved one, watching something that makes you laugh, crying or do something creative (ie playing an instrument, craft, singing, dancing, etc).

#### 4) Try calming/regulating activities

You're probably sick of hearing me say this but **mindfulness** and **mediation** can be especially helpful at creating a 'relaxing response' to help minimise both acute and chronic stress. There are several free headspace meditations on google that you can quickly access on your phone. If you are feeling tense, try a **progressive muscle relaxation** exercise. You can also try resetting your state by taking shower, running your wrists under cold water or walking outside.

#### 5) Get Support

The College **student counselling service** has lots of great resources to help manage stress, such as online CBT through **Silvercloud**, workshops, and the **Kind Mind Series**.

If Stress feels out of control please seek help. We can also confuse stress with underlying anxiety conditions, so please reach out to discuss your symptoms if unsure, or contact your **GP**. Furthermore, if you have a disability, physical or mental health condition, or specific learning difference (such as dyslexia or ADHD) it may be worth checking what additional support is available through The **Disability Advisory service**.

Register for confidential  
Counselling

Book an appointment with the  
Disability Advisory service



Book a wellbeing  
appointment