



What is it?

Stress affects us in a number of ways, both physically and emotionally, and at varying intensities.

While research has shown that some stress can be positive, making us more alert and helping us perform better in certain situations, stress is only healthy if it is short-lived. Excessive or prolonged stress can lead to debilitating illnesses such as heart disease and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

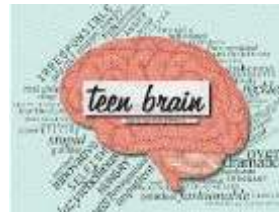
Stress is a feeling that you get when you struggling to cope with the pressures of life.

What is stressful for one person may not be for another.

Often stress is a help to tell others about how you feel; it is not harmful in itself, you are not weak because you struggle with it.

Physical feelings are experienced when our bodies react to stress, fear or anxiety. These symptoms are often referred to as the “fight, flight or freeze” response. These physical systems react quickly and helpful in preparation for action: to protect against or escape danger.

TEENAGERS BRAIN/ADULT BRAIN



Because a teenager’s brain isn’t as developed as an adult; teenagers’ brain are most likely to:

- Act on impulse;
- Misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions;
- Get involved in fights;
- Engage in dangerous or risky behaviour;

While, a fully developed brain results in adults:

- Thinking before they act;
- Pausing to consider the potential consequences of their actions;
- Modifying their dangerous or inappropriate Behaviours;

CAUSES OF STRESS IN TEENAGERS

Parents Beware!

Some of the things that cause stress in teenagers include study worries, looking after other family members, friendships, family conflict, body image, work, bullying, discrimination; tension between cultural worlds, high personal expectations or high expectations from parents, teachers and friends.

SIGNS OF STRESS IN TEENAGERS

- withdrawn from activities she enjoys;
- anxious;
- sleeping too little or too much;
- eating more or eating less;
- isolating;
- tearful;
- school refusal;
- having less energy than usual;
- short tempered;
- low self-esteem;
- not caring about her appearance;
- moody/angry;
- irritable;
- Feeling sick/is sick more often;
- Poor Concentration;

HOW TO RELIEVE STRESS

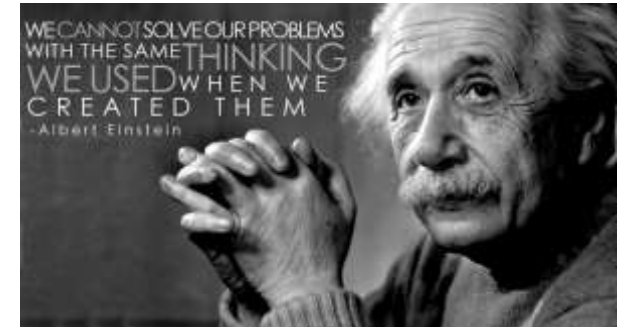
- Parents note: if you can manage your stress, you will help your child to do the same, so start with yourself and do the things which will help you de-stress.
- Examples of activities you and your child can do:
- Join the gym if you your child is old enough. Stress releases cortisol which can leave your child feeling tense. Exercise burns off cortisol and helps the body relax.
- Encourage them to go to bed early; ensure all electronic devices are switched off early.
- Health eating: include the whole family: eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetable, lean meat, dairy foods and wholegrains.
- Relax and unwind with music, reading a book, watching TV. Mindfulness: take long slow deep breaths in through the nose for 6, holding for two and out through the mouth for 7. Ensure your feet are firmly on the ground, hands on lap and sitting straight.
- Saying no to friends who demand/require more of your time, is ok if you explain why.

- Organisation: do so in advance. Don't leave what you can do today for the last minute.
- Plan ahead: use a timetable to plan schoolwork, fun activities and any other reminders.
- Study time: know how long you can study for before taking a break. Usually its 30/40 minutes at a time – your brain usually tells you when it had enough: **LISTEN!**
- Wear earplugs. If you don't have somewhere peaceful to study.
- Perfectionists: don't exist – a mistake is only a mistake if you don't learn from it. Seek help/support if you need to. **PLEASE DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP!**

WHEN TO SEEK FURTHER SUPPORT FOR YOUR TEENAGER

If your child's stress won't go away, your child's worries have got worse over time, or your child's stress is getting in the way of sleep, appetite, energy levels, enjoyment or socialising, it's a good idea to see a professional (speak to your doctor, school, counsellor).

FAILURE IS ANOTHER STEPPING STONE TO GREATNESS (Oprah Winfrey)



Further Resources

Young Minds

Relax Kids

Anxiety UK

ww2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/managing-stress.

NHS Website

Blame My Brain: Nicola Morgan(paper back)

(The above have been taken from various sources)