



Supporting your wellbeing

Session 2: Managing academic stress

SUMMARY OF TOPICS

What is stress?

Positive vs negative stress

Dealing with stressful situations

Academic stress

Tips for managing stress

Wellbeing toolkit

What is stress?



Jot down a few key
words or phrases...

STRESS

WHAT IS IT?

There's no medical definition of stress, and health care professionals often disagree over whether stress is the cause of problems or the result of them. Stress can feel different to each person..



DEFINITION OF STRESS:

Stress is the body's reaction to feeling threatened or under pressure. It's very common and can be motivating to help us achieve things in our daily life, and can help us meet the demands of home, work and family life. But too much stress can affect our mood, our body and our relationships – especially when it feels out of our control. It can make us feel anxious and irritable, and affect our self-esteem.


POSITIVE STRESS

- Motivated.
- Excited.
- Problem solving.
- Good level of challenge.



NEGATIVE STRESS

- Feeling irritable.
- Nervous or afraid.
- Can't switch off
- Physical symptoms such as racing heart or headaches.



How do you deal with stressful situations?

Make a list of the ways that you feel and act when you feel stressed – both healthy and unhealthy responses.

DEALING WITH STRESS

HEALTHY TECHNIQUES

- Speak to a friend to get your worries off your chest.
- Go for a walk in the fresh air to clear your mind.
- Sweat it out and raise your heart rate.
- Relax with a film or book.
- Do some crafting.
- Meditate to clear your mind.

UNHEALTHY TECHNIQUES

- Using substances such as drugs or alcohol.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Ignoring the problem in the hope that it will go away.
- Focusing only on the negatives.
- Poor eating habits.
- Overworking.



ACADEMIC STRESS

It can be quite common to experience stress at university related to your academic studies. This can be for a number of reasons:

- Under pressure to perform well.
- Juggling multiple commitments.
- Change in environment and learning style.
- Finding the work overwhelming.
- Worrying about the future.

Reflect back on a time when you have experienced academic stress. What made the situation so stressful for you and what could you have done differently?

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC STRESS

Further guidance available from Student Minds

1

KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE

- There's much more to life than just your assessments.
- Even if you do badly in an assessment, you can improve your grade in future.
- You can still be successful in life even if you do badly in a module.
- Employers are interested in your attitude and transferable skills just as much as your degree results.
- Academic success doesn't define you as a person.
- Think about the good things that you have achieved, rather than focusing on things that haven't gone well.
- Once you've done an assessment, try to forget about it. There's nothing you can do about it, and worrying won't change your mark.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC STRESS

Further guidance available from Student Minds

2

GET ORGANISED

- Work backwards from when your deadlines or exams are.
- Set yourself small, achievable challenges to complete each day – this will help you to avoid any stress about what to work on each day.
- Work out the basics – exam dates, deadlines and how each component is weighted.
- Prioritise according to dates and how easy or difficult you find a topic.
- Make sure you include study breaks into your timetable.
- Give yourself free time to relax and unwind after a study session.
- Don't panic if you don't always achieve what you set out to, you can review and adapt your schedule.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC STRESS

Further guidance available from Student Minds

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TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC STRESS

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3

HEALTHY STUDY HABITS

- A healthy routine can help with concentration and reduce stress.
- Take regular breaks – it's better to study attentively for 30–45 minutes then take a break, than spend hours at the screen but not focused.
- Use a timer or app to help chunk your day into study and rest.
- Eat a well balanced diet to ensure that you are getting plenty of nutrients and brain food.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Keep active, as exercise can help you to de-stress.
- Get plenty of fresh air to clear your head and reduce stress.
- Try to get about 8 hours' sleep a night, and make sure you relax before going to sleep.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC STRESS

Further guidance available from Student Minds

4

AVOID BAD HABITS

- Don't set yourself unachievable goals, as this will lead to more stress when you don't reach your target.
- Try not to be too hard on yourself. If you have a negative inner voice this can lead to higher stress.
- Don't leave assignments to the last minute. You never know when IT could let you down!
- It can be tempting to feel that you should spend all day long studying, but this can be counterproductive.
- Avoid stimulants like caffeine or drugs, as they can affect your concentration in the long term.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC STRESS

Further guidance available from Student Minds

5

SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

- Try to set up study groups with friends, however make sure that you don't start comparing yourself to others.
- Discuss your goals with other people, such as friends or tutors. This will help you to stay focused.
- If you feel worried, talk to someone else to get things out of your system.
- Look after your overall wellbeing.
- Make use of university support systems, they are there for a reason!

STUDENT TOP TIPS

These tips and more available from:
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/14-ways-to-beat-exam-stress/>

START SMALL


"If you struggle with motivation, start in good time by doing SOMETHING. It doesn't matter how small, just something that helps with the upcoming exams early on."

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

"Looking over some past exam questions or even answering some in exam conditions can help calm your nerves."

TAKE A BREAK

"Break up your revision with some exercise! Whether it's a brisk walk or a session in the gym, not only will it let your mind relax for an hour, you'll also get a burst of energy."



**Write your own tip for
managing academic stress
that you could pass on to
others.**

These will be shared
(anonymously) with
the group.

WELLBEING TOOLKIT

Download a wellbeing toolkit to help you to manage your academic stress levels, and improve your overall wellbeing:

http://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/wellbeing_toolkit.pdf



THANK YOU

IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS
FOR FUTURE SESSIONS PLEASE
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