HOW TO IDENTIFY COMMON SIGNS OF STRESS

- You feel irritated, anxious and angry most of the times
- You are not able to complete any task on time as you find it difficult to concentrate.
- You feel sad most of the times
- You don’t feel like doing the things you liked to do like going out to play with friends, computer games etc
- You don’t feel like going to school and avoid meeting friends
- You find changes in your appetite
- You feel tired most of the times
- You feel sleepy most of the times or you have difficulty in sleeping
- You feel like crying at times

IT IS **OK** TO FEEL THIS WAY.

EVERYONE GOES THROUGH IT.
YOU CAN COPE WITH IT!
HERE ARE SOMETHING'S YOU NEED TO REMEMBER:

- It is ok to feel angry, sad, and anxious.
- There is no need to be ashamed of these feelings
- Mistakes and problems are opportunities to learn new things and a part of growing up.
- All problems have a solution
- You are capable of solving problems but you can seek help from parents, elder siblings, teachers, friends or a counsellor.
- Your family, friends and teachers will always help

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

- Identify what you are stressed about: Is the reason your school, friends, teacher, homework, exam/test, something at home? Write down the reason.
- Talk to your parents or any older sibling/friend and tell them how you feel and what the reason of your stress is. If you are not comfortable talking, write down your feelings, describe the problem you are facing in as much detail you can. Share this with your parents/friend/sibling.
- Don’t hesitate from sharing the problem with your parents. They are the best guide; they may also have faced similar problems when they were children. And the most important thing is that: They love you!
- You can also talk to your teacher or an elder sibling. They can also help you. And they won’t laugh or make fun. They understand you.
- Play a game you really like for eg- swimming, cricket, any computer games, badminton, cycling and running etc and you can always request your parents/siblings/friends to play with you.
- Do something else you like, drawing, reading, listening to music etc. These will relax your mind.
- If you don’t know how to play any game, learn it. It is never too late.
- Breathe deeply. Inhale deeply and then exhale slowly. When you feel worried angry, irritated or anxious, stop whatever you are doing and breathe deeply for about a minute and then resume your work.
- Close your eyes and think of the times you have been happy. It could be vacation with family, outing with friends, funny joke or movie scene.
- Cherish your happy memories by going through your photographs with family or friends.
- With the help of your parents or elder siblings and Neighbourhood friends finish your homework/notes well in time.
- Discuss with parents, elder siblings and teachers if you are facing difficulties in completing your routine activities.
- Tell yourself daily: “YES, I CAN DO IT”.
- When at home, if you feel that the feeling of worry is too much, go to your parents, teacher, elder siblings or friends. They will always be there.
- Eat well and at regular intervals. Food is important. Drink plenty of water.
- It is ok to cry if you feel like crying.
MANTRAS FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

Just recognize stress as something that can be tackled, controlled, vanquished. Then go ahead and do just that. Make stress work for you. The following are some suggestions to harness the extra adrenaline released by stress.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H - stand on your toes whenever you feel under pressure and stretch your body. Pretend you are reaching out to grasp something a few centimeters beyond your immediate reach. Hold this pose for five seconds and relax.

Laugh hard, as much as you can, see a comic, cartoon film, and share a joke with a friend. They make effective emergency substitutes to relieve stress.

Be a breathing beauty - the right kind of breathing can dispel stress. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly, concentrate on the air leaving your lungs. Slow down your breathing. A two-second inhalation and five-second exhalation is ideal one. Do it five times in morning and five times in the evening.

Listen to music - Music has always had a smoothing effect. Put on the music of your choice-film songs, jazz, ghazals, pop etc.

See the sunlight - Feel the morning sunshine soak into every pore of your body. Feel the incredible sense of well being it brings along.

Discover the yogi in you - Yoga has always been a panacea for stress. Pick up a book on yoga exercises or go to a teacher and get started with half-an hour sessions whenever you can spare the time.

Practice shrugging-shrug - ‘you don’t know you don’t care’. Whenever you feel stressed, roll your neck from right to left a few times. Follow this by shrugging your shoulders. Loosen your muscles. Believe from the bottom of your heart that you don’t care.

Talk less, listen more - an age-old remedy - Listening banishes stress, makes you more popular, more knowledgeable, more sensitive, altogether a nicer person. It doesn’t take much effort.

Count your blessings - There is no better way to banish stress. No one has bad things happening to him or her all the time. Make a mental note of good things. Then put it down on paper, and refer to it every time you feel stressed.

Compare with yourself and see the changes. If you want genuine pleasure in life, compare yourself not with others but yourself.

Do nothing sit out - This requires no effort from us, as nothing stays bad forever! Acceptance of the situation helps to reduce stress.

Express your stress - let the emotions flow- Stress is a highly emotional experience. When we bottle –up our stress we become increasingly dysfunctional. Stress increases as a result of
which health, welfare, relationships suffer. Our anger, depression, fear, frustration and range need to ‘FLOW’ out of us. Flowing out can take the form of writing, talking, poetry, vigorous physical activity etc. Mind and body become clearer and more energized. Situations and opportunities are perceived more clearly. The result is wiser choices and decisions.

**Take charge** - Believe that “I am in charge of my life!” Parts of our stress feelings come from how we react to what is (or is not) happening and others reactions.

- **Sports** – Engaging in some sports activity will help in venting out your frustrations

- **Reading** - Read a book with positive message, to relieve your stress

**STRESS BUILDERS AND STRESS BUSTERS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Builder</th>
<th>Stress Buster</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ll never get this assignment in on time.</td>
<td>If I stay focused and take it one step at a time. I’ll make steady progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teacher did not respond to my saying good morning. He’s probably displeased with my work, and I’ll get a bad evaluation</td>
<td>I’m jumping to conclusions. My teacher may have been in a bad mood. So far all my evaluations have been positive, so unless I get some negative feedback, I’ll assume my teacher is pleased with my work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t get my mistake on Q10 out of my mind. The paper is ruined. I have disappointed everyone.</td>
<td>No one is perfect. I did my best. I’m overreacting to one mistake when the overall paper is fine</td>
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**THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS-**

**One month before the Exams**
- Preparing a study plan.
- Combining favorite and not so favorite subjects in the study plan of a day.
- Trying and completing two Model Question Exams (each subject) in this time.
- Having fixed time of sleep and relaxation (including T.V. time).
- Meditating and doing autosuggestion every day – to be clam in the examination situation.
- Discussing with one’s parent of sibling or friend regarding in the exam preparation from time to time.

**One week before exams- Some DO’s Few Days Before the Exams**
- Try to work to a revision time table.
- Make your books, notes and essays more user friendly with summary notes, headings, subheadings, highlighting and revision cards.
- Find out what way of revising suits you- alone or with a friend, morning or late at night, short, sharp bursts or longer revision sessions.
- Take notes of important points when revising as an aid for future revision. Look at past exam paper and try answering some of the questions.
- If you feel stressed out, talk to someone you feel comfortable to.

**Some DONT’s Few Days Before the Exams**
- Collecting new notes and materials from friends and reading them till the last minute without time for revision.
- Trying to learn new things on one’s own at the last moment.
- Sitting for long hours continuously to read. Not taking breaks for bath, food, relaxation and sleep. It makes one feel more tired, reduces concentration and makes studying boring and anxiety producing.
- Keeping awake whole night and reading for few days before the exams.
- Excessive use of Coffee or Tea or Cigarettes to keep awake the whole night.
- Giving up studying totally as the student feels that his/her mind is ‘BLANK’ and seems to have forgotten everything that was read; hence giving up.
- Spending time to trace the ‘question papers’ or teachers who are probably involved in paper correction.
- Copying large amount of materials on bits of paper thinking that it might help during exams.

**One day before the exams**
- Don’t cram all night before an exam.
- Have a relaxing night before your exams.
- Sit with your family members to come out with your stress.
- Don’t look for some new notes before one day. Try to have light dinner.
- Don’t try to learn anything new, rather focus on already prepared ones.

**On the day - Some DO’s on the Day of the Examination**
- Having a good night’s sleep the previous night.
- Having a light but adequate breakfast.
- Leaving for the examination hall well in advance.
- Checking whether one has taken all the necessary things – pens, pencils, geometry box, and hall-ticket – a checklist of all items is essential.
- Going to the toilet before entering the examination hall.
- Taking deep breaths, making suggestion or a prayer to do well.
- Avoid people who panic
- Make sure you are wearing a watch
- Wait in a place where people are calm

**Some DONT’s on the Day of the Examination**
- Don’t skip your breakfast, getting hungry during the middle of the exam can be distracting especially if your concentration is already waning.
- Avoiding negative thoughts, for example ‘I have not prepared well’, ‘I may fail in this exam’ or ‘I have not covered all the portions’.
- Avoid revising things just before entering your examination hall.
**In the examination hall**

- Reading the instructions carefully. If there are any doubts clarify with the instructor, teacher or invigilator.
- Budgeting the time and planning the answers. Allocating time for each question. Many times students write one answer for too long a time and ends up with too little time for the other questions.
- Choosing the best known questions if choices are available.
- If not sure of an answer, not spending long time thinking and recalling answers. Going to the next known question. Handling the less known questions towards the end.
- Writing legibly – if a mistake is made do not overwrite but cross it out.
- Highlighting important points – underline, write in capital etc.
- Answering to the point and not writing unnecessary information to make the answer appear long.
- Never omit an entire question.
- Giving equal importance to things like formulas (maths, science), drawing figures (science), marking on the map (geography), graphs (maths and physics).
- Trying to finish ten minutes earlier. This helps the student to go through the paper and correct mistakes/underline important points etc.
- Never leave the room early.
- If you start feeling stressed during a test, try relaxation techniques, such as:
  - Taking deep breaths, and letting out tension with each exhale
  - Tensing muscles for 5 seconds and releasing, repeating three times
  - Visualizing a peaceful and relaxing setting
- Most of the students have a habit of discussing answers with friends after the examination. This makes the student anxious and worried. The anxiety may interfere with the reading for the next examination. Once an exam is over it is better to concentrate on the next once. Review and discussion could be done after the last examination.

**WRITING BETTER ANSWERS IN THE EXAMINATION**

- Before you start answering, take few minutes to read through the whole exam. Get an idea of what the exam is like. Read the instructions carefully.
- Notice the relevant value assigned to each question.
- Don’t waste your time on answers that you don’t well. Don’t forget to number your answers.
- Make sure that you answer the question, not answer what you hoped or wished the question would be.
- Be clear about the certain” code words” that examiners use, which indicates what kind of answer they are looking for. Different kind of questions asks you to an answer accordingly. Be very much clear about the terminologies. Few of them are:

1. **DEFINE**: tell what a term briefly means. Definitions can be clarified by giving brief examples.

2. **LIST, ENUMERATE**: give a series of point and number them 1, 2, 3……
3. **STATE:** Give the main points in brief

4. **SUMMARIZE:** Give a shortened account of something longer

5. **EXPLAIN:** Give a longer, more detailed account of a thing or idea, offer more facts and examples to support your answer, state how and why something is.

6. **DESCRIBE, DISCUSS:** Explain in some detail.

7. **OUTLINE:** Develop an organized account of something, distinguishing between main and secondary points.

8. **ILLUSTRATE:** Explain by giving examples

9. **RELATE:** Show connections between things

10. **COMPARE / CONTRAST:** Discuss two or more items, not just one. Compare means to tell how the items are alike, contrast means to tell how they are different.

11. **CLASSIFY:** Follow a process like definition for several items in turn, tell how each item is like and unlike the others.

12. **ANALYZE:** Describe the constituent parts of something and show how they relate to each other.

13. **PROVE, JUSTIFY:** Give well developed reasons for something

14. **INTERPRET:** Explain the meaning and significance of something

15. **CRITICIZE, EVALUATE:** Set out criteria for considering the value of a thing or idea and systematically measure it against those criteria, give negative and positive aspects of something and your overall judgment of it.
FACTS ABOUT STRESS

- Too much change too quickly can be a cause of stress.
- Stress can be caused by pleasant and unpleasant events.
- The cause of stress may not always be apparent.
- Usually stress is a result of build-up of related and unrelated events.
- Often your stress is more apparent to others than to yourself.
- Reactions to stress can be emotional, physical and behavioral.

DIFFERENT SITUATIONS THAT LEAD TO STRESS ARE........

- School demands and frustrations
- Negative thoughts & feelings about self.
- Changes in the body.
- Problems with friends.
- Unsafe living environment.
- Separation or divorce of parents.
- Chronic illness or severe problems in the family.
- Death of a loved one.
- Moving or changing schools.
- Taking on too many activities.
- Having too high expectations.
- Examinations

Why fear..........Exams?

Reason why examination produces so much stress in students is the fear and shame associated with failing or getting low marks. Parents also fix targets for children without being aware of their levels of competence and talents. Thus pass on their anxieties about the expected performance of children in examinations. This further leads them to fear their ability to rise up to the expectations of parents. peer pressure is also one of the major factor that adds to stress.

Success doesn’t mean the absence of failures; it means the attainment of ultimate objectives. It means winning the war, not every battle.