

# Coping with Stress



## What is Stress?

Stress can be a normal reaction to everyday pressures. It can also occur in response to difficult events or new experiences. Stress can include feelings of being overwhelmed, anxious, hopeless, excited, or feelings of anticipation.

## Think ahead. Cope ahead.

### Make a plan to manage stress by:

- Breaking things down into smaller steps
- Focusing on one thing at a time
- Scheduling time to relax, exercise, and connect with others
- Asking for support

### Use a calendar or planner to stay organized and prepare for future events. Think ahead about which ones might be stressful and how you can manage them by:

- Looking at past experiences
- Thinking about what has helped and what hasn't helped in the past
- Knowing your triggers. Think about how you've felt during similar events before, like feeling anxious during exams

**Mindset matters! People who cope well with stress often have a way of thinking that supports resilience and problem-solving.**

### Use the 3Cs:

- Commitment: Wanting to be involved in what is around you.
- Control: Working to be active not passive.
- Challenge: Viewing stress as an opportunity for learning and growth.

### View signs of stress as a chance to take action:

- What can I do to help myself get through this situation?
- Why is it important for me to manage this stressor?
- How can I break this down so I can manage better?
- I've had stress before and got through it!



# Strategies for Managing Stress



## Setting realistic expectations

Try not to take on more than you can manage. Focus on what's realistic for the time you have, and use past experiences to guide you.



## Make a plan for your goals

Break things down into smaller steps and make a schedule. Allow yourself to be flexible if you need more or less time.



## Seek support!

Ask others if your goals or plans seem realistic. You can ask for their tips on how they might manage or approach similar situations.

Remember, stress is a normal part of life. Trying to avoid it completely, or coping in unhelpful ways like using substances or procrastinating, can actually make stress feel more overwhelming.

When you're feeling stressed, here are a few helpful things to keep in mind:

- Maintain a healthy routine, don't let stress change habits that work for you
- Make sure you are getting enough sleep, exercise, social contact, and regular meals
- Write things down: your goals, your plan, and things you want to remember
- Take frequent breaks
- Focus on progress, not outcomes
- Make it easy! Start with something you can say YES to. For example, start with 5 minutes of reading or cleaning - and build from there
- Engage in activities that relax you (deep breathing, going for a walk, doing something you enjoy)

## Your Stress Bucket

What are the raindrops (stressors) that fill up your bucket?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What are the holes (coping strategies, healthy habits, supports) that help drain your bucket?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

