

“ I have always liked to play sports like rugby and I can be very competitive. I have learnt that there is such a thing as a “good” amount of stress. Some stress is good because it gets my adrenaline going which motivates me. However I have also learnt that too much stress is bad and decreases my performance. It is really important to find the right balance or strength to reach optimum performance level. ”

“ I recommend using methods to manage stress and keep it under control. I enjoy one-minute meditation, the Calm Harm app and breathing exercises. ”

“ What I’m trying to say really is don’t stop trying, even if things are bad right now: please find someone who you trust and talk to them about it. ”

Useful contacts

Samaritans

Provide confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Helpline: **116 123**

(Every day, 24 hours)

Website: www.samaritans.org

Childline

Counselling service for children and young people. Phone, talk to a counsellor online, send Childline an email or post on the message boards.

Helpline: **0800 1111**

(Every day, 24 hours)

Website: www.childline.org.uk

YoungMinds

Information for both parents and young people on child and adolescent mental health.

Parents’ helpline: **0808 802 5544**

(Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm)

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

stem4

The Old Town Hall
4 Queens Road
Wimbledon
London SW19 8YA

e: info@stem4.org.uk

stem4.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1144506



Stress



stem4

stemming teenage mental illness
supporting teenage mental health

Stress

Key Facts:

Stress is the body's reaction to a challenge. Depending on how you perceive this challenge, stress can be experienced as 'good' or 'bad'.

For example:

- When you are about to go on the rugby pitch you may feel stressed, but this type of stress will make you sharper and increases your performance
- When you are exhausted and have left lots of homework to the last minute, you may feel stressed and this will decrease your performance

How do I know if I'm stressed?

- Are you feeling more **irritable** or **angry** than normal?
- Do you feel **agitated**?
- Are you having **difficulty sleeping**?
- Are you making **more mistakes**?
- Have you become **absent-minded** or **forgetful**?
- Are you constantly **tense** and **on the go**?



- Have you experienced any unusual physical symptoms such as **aches and pains, nausea** or **felt unusually tense**?
- Do you find yourself not enjoying time spent with friends?

More 'yes' answers may indicate higher rates of stress that could affect you negatively.

Why deal with stress?

Reducing stress is essential in maintaining overall health. It can help in boosting immunity, reduce the probability of triggering the start of stomach, skin or heart related problems and help manage mood. Being stressed around people can often affect relationships negatively. Overly increased stress can negatively affect your performance, for example how you feel before an exam.

What can I try to do?

- Boost your body's reaction to challenge by eating a balanced diet and by eating regularly; have sensible amounts of stimulants such as caffeine and have moderate amounts of sugar
- Have a minimum 8 hours of sleep a night
- Start a diary to note what triggers your stress
- Calming yourself by practicing controlled breathing often helps – breathe in for a count of five, hold for two and breathe out for a count of seven

- Make sure you build in some breaks and times to relax during the day
- Manage your time effectively
- Work on not taking on too much. Learn to say no if you can't do something
- Have a lot of work? Draw up a plan of how you are going to manage it and decide on which work requires the most immediate action
- On a short fuse? Tense and relax your body a few times, breathing out your anger or irritability
- Exercise regularly, half an hour, five times a week
- Work on developing a positive mindset. Can you change something you find worrying into a challenge?
- Talk to someone you trust about your symptoms and how they are affecting you
- Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. You can always take your diary with you in order to help this process. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment

