

# COPING WITH STRESS

Student life can at times be stressful. During your university years, you may experience challenges and demands like never before. You may need to critically think, problem solve, make a decision or experience a particular situation i.e. presentation, academic assignments, etc. Along with the academic expectations, you are also seeking independence from your parents and families and taking responsibility for yourself. Thus, it is normal to feel some form of stress in your daily life.



**DEFINITION** ( There are two kinds of stress - eustress and distress )

Eustress can be defined as positive stress whereas distress is known as negative stress. Stress is merely the body's response to changes that create taxing demands. In everyday situations, stress is often perceived as negative, however, stress can also have a positive influence on the individual's thinking and behaviour. Eustress can be beneficial as it can provide motivational energy due to a hormonal reaction which enhances the individual's performance and ability to cope with the adverse situation.

## PERCEIVED CAUSES OF STRESS

- Pressure with work.
- Financial problems.
- The loss of a family member.
- Relationship difficulties.
- Medical illness.
- Exam nerves.
- Crisis.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

### Physical :

- Tension, migraine or headaches.
- Irritable bowel syndrome.
- Lethargy.
- Aches and pains.
- Perspiration.
- Weight loss or gain.
- Sleep disturbances.



### Emotional :

- Irritability.
- Sadness.
- Frustration and anger.
- Tension.



### Cognitive :

- Lack of concentration.
- Poor memory recall.
- Difficulty in communication.
- Exhilaration.



## FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

Generally, we do not face major challenges in our daily lives. However, they can still be sufficient to produce a fight or flight response in the individual. It depends on how you perceive whether or not you have the ability to cope with a given situation.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

The following are a few suggestions you might like to try:

1. Living a more balanced life (e.g. engage in some sport or fitness activities).
2. Accepting support from others.
3. Developing coping skills for relief (e.g. assertiveness, conflict resolution or time management).
4. Organizing and simplifying your life.
5. Taking a break.
6. Joining a peer support group.