

TD
READS

THE DOOR TO UNDERSTANDING

STRESS



THEDOOR.ORG.UK

 THE DOOR

The logo consists of the word "THE" in a small, sans-serif font above the word "DOOR" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. To the left of the "D" in "DOOR" is a stylized graphic element resembling a door handle or a series of vertical bars.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

In this booklet you will find information about stress, a bit about what can cause it, what it can feel like and hints and tips on how to deal with it.

For each part of the booklet there are bits to read and places where you can write down your thoughts, feelings and ideas. This is your personal copy so feel free to underline, get your highlighters out or doodle in the margins.

There are no rules about how you use it as long as you make it work for you.

WELCOME

Before we go any further, **congratulations** for asking for help!

Asking for help it is a sign of your **strength** not your weakness, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.



WHAT YOU MIGHT BE FEELING

There are lots of different ways to tell that you might be stressed:

Are you feeling fed up, like you are about to explode?

Do you feel like anything else will be the last straw?

Or do you find yourself losing it over the smallest thing?

Perhaps you are finding it difficult to concentrate or have lost your drive.

These are all signs that you may be under stress and it is getting on top of you, so well done for reaching out for help.

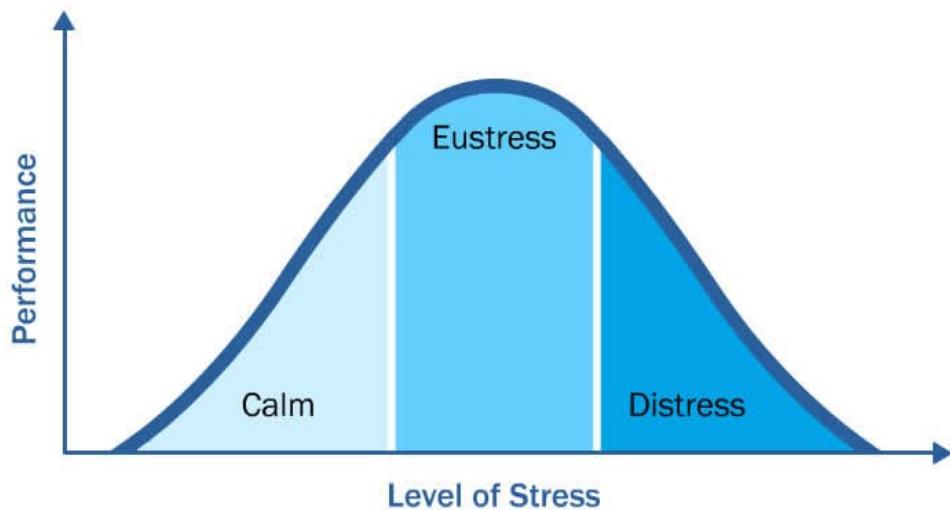
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

Write or draw, choose from the things above or put it in your own words



WHAT IS STRESS?

Life is full of things that put us under pressure and there is no escaping from it. Some of it may be coming from your parents; some may be from your teachers, or from your friends. TV and the Internet are both piling on expectation in the form of what they say you should have, what you should be wearing or what you should look like.



Now, some stress or pressure is good for us, it makes us work harder or think better, even makes us run faster. This is often called Eustress. In many cases, more stress makes us perform better, helping us reach our full potential.

We will be at our best, achieving amazing things and for a while we can keep this up. But we then need a break, we need to unwind and let our body and mind recover. If the pressure is maintained, things will start to go wrong. We will perform badly and start to suffer. We will be in Distress.

Think of ourselves as a big water butt (trust me). As things happen in our lives the butt will fill up with stress. Luckily we have the capacity to hold some stress, and there is a sort of tap at the bottom where we can get rid of stress.

Sometimes we take on more than we can get rid of and the butt fills up which is fine if we can take it. However if this goes on too long we can fill up and start to overflow, this may be how you are feeling now.

If you don't do something about it, the stress could start to make you ill: it could affect your appetite, digestive system and more seriously affect your mental health. It could cause anxiety, depression and many other related difficulties.



WHAT IS FILLING UP YOUR WATER BUTT AT THE MOMENT?

Make a list or perhaps draw some of them.



WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

Start by considering if you can do this without medical help. If you have been pushing too hard for too long you may need help to allow you to work on your recovery. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure. They will not be annoyed at you for wasting their time or sneer at you because they think you should be able to cope. They can talk to you about how you feel and will help you choose the best way forward.

Either way you need to do two things: reduce the stress you are under, and do more to help you deal with the pressure you are under. It may not be easy but there are some key things to remember.

Some things you cannot do anything about, as they are out of your control. Wasting valuable stress capacity worrying about these will not be helpful. Concentrate on what you can do something about.

Some pressure is put on you for others' benefit. Are you trying to live up to other people's expectations, pushing you to do something that is of little benefit to you? Decide what you want, and work towards that. Look after yourself physically and mentally, so you are more able to handle things.

Don't be afraid to reach out for support or professional help.



WHAT STRESSES DO I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER?

Make a list or draw the things you cannot control.

WHAT STRESSES DO I HAVE CONTROL OVER?

Make a list or draw the things you can control.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THESE?

Make a list of ways to combat the stresses you can control.



TIPS AND STRATEGIES TO HELP YOURSELF

Think positively. Use positive expressions like: *I can do this. I will try my best. I will get there.* Negativity will make you more negative. If you think positively you will be more positive.

Don't think of things as a success or a failure, but as degrees of success. If you try to jump a stream and nearly make it you will get as wet as if you only got half way. If you instead see it as a stepping stone across a stream you can see it as varying degrees of success. This will reduce the pressure you feel.

Make sure you get restful sleep, so ensure your room is dark and cool. No mobile phones or computers on at night. No caffeine, eating or screen time for at least an hour before you go to bed. Keep a notepad and pen by your bed. If you wake up worrying about something, write it down. This can help you to go back to sleep.

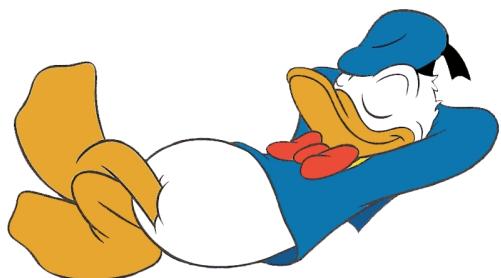
Eat healthy foods. If our bodies are healthy it will help our minds function better.

Set time aside for when you can relax and not think of the things that worry you. This is not easy and will take practice. You can try meditation, breathing exercises or mindfulness techniques to help better control your thoughts.

Find something that works for you, and be kind to your mind.

Get regular exercise. This will help the body get rid of the effects of the pressure, keep you fit, work tension out of your muscles and help you sleep better at night.

And don't feel you have to do them all perfectly straight away. Take each one a step at a time.



MY ACTION PLAN

What are the top 3 things that I can do right now to help me?

1.

2.

3.

THINGS I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO DO TO HELP ME GOING FORWARD

Write or draw the things you want to do.



WAYS TO GET HELP

IN A CRISIS

If you are in danger call one of these numbers:

The Samaritans 116 123

The Police 999

HELP FOR HELPING YOURSELF

If you are just looking for some extra support then there are lots out there. Some will suit you, some will not, so here are some websites to start your search:

onyourmind.nhs.uk

ticplus.org.uk

mind.org.uk

gloscounselling.org.uk

talk2gether.nhs.uk

youngminds.org.uk

USEFUL READING

Borrow them from a library or pick up your own copy.

Stress Related Illness by Tim Cantopher

Calm by Fern Cotton

Happy by Fern Cotton

NOTES:

Some space for you to write or draw anything else that is useful to you about stress.



For more information about The Door

visit thedoor.org.uk , call 01453 756745 or message us @TheDoorStroud

