

## What is stress and anxiety?

Stress is the feeling that you get when you believe that the demands made upon you exceed your ability to cope with them.

Anxiety is when you feel you are worried, tense or afraid, particularly about things that are about to happen, or which you think could happen in the future.

Stress and anxiety are normal, every day emotions. Everyone experiences these emotions, so it's not just you. You are not alone!

Stress and anxiety are not bad/ negative, but they might feel more uncomfortable than other emotions/ feelings. There are no right or wrong emotions/ feelings.

Stress and anxiety are an important part of life; Without them nothing would get done!

We all have a daily continuum of emotions/ feelings depending on what we are doing and the demands on us. The causes of stress and anxiety are very individual for each person e.g. someone might relish the thought of having a test or exam whereas someone else might dread this. One person might love social gatherings and another may feel very stressed and anxious about them.

## How might we know if we are feeling stressed or anxious?

Our bodies can show us we are feeling stressed or anxious with physical symptoms. You may not have all of these symptoms and they may differ depending on the stress or anxiety you are feeling:

What happens to our body? (Physical symptoms/ Adrenaline Rush)

- Heart beats faster
- Rapid breathing/ tight chest
- Butterflies/ knot in stomach
- Muscles tense
- Need to go to toilet
- Feel hot and flushed



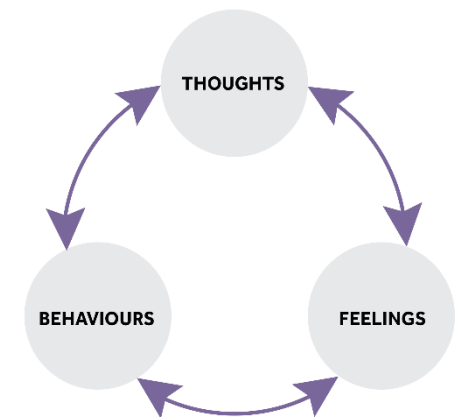
- Start to sweat
- Start to shake
- Wobbly/ Jelly legs
- Volcano head
- Feel like crying
- Start to panic
- Feel sick

We have probably all had times when we have felt this way, especially when we are faced with demands, change or a difficult situation with friends or family. But if you feel like this most of the time, it's important to start to implement strategies to help you manage stress and anxiety more effectively so you feel happier and healthier.

### Stress/ Anxiety Behaviours

- Sleep issues/ constant tiredness
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Change in appetite
- Loss of interest in activities
- Increased irritability
- Aggression
- Avoidance/ withdrawal
- Isolating from friends/ family
- Palpitations/ panic attacks
- Migraines/headaches
- Trouble concentrating
- Drinking too many caffeinated/energy drinks
- Health conditions/feeling 'run down'
- Low mood
- Risk taking behaviour
- OCD behaviours

When we are feeling anxious or stressed we may start to experience distorted or unhelpful thinking. This thinking makes us feel more negative feelings and this is likely to affect our behaviour e.g. if you wake up in the morning and feel anxious or stressed about a situation at school and we think about all the things that may happen or go wrong for us that day it will increase our anxiety and stress and we are more likely to pull the covers over our heads and try avoid the situation. You are what you think you are so thinking positively can change how you feel and what you do!



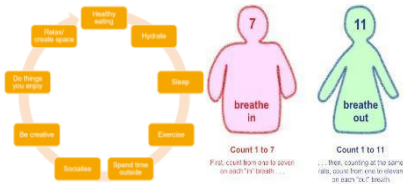
## Strategies to help when you feel stressed or anxious.

There are many strategies that can support you if and when you are feeling stressed or anxious. Some that we have tried and recommend are:

- 7/11 breathing: Breathing calms the emotional brain and reduces the levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Breathing has instant results and if you practice breathing techniques every day it will help to reduce anxiety and stress

## Feelings, thoughts and behaviour... it's all linked!

- ## ANXIETY GROUNDING TECHNIQUE
- Focus on your breathing and identify
- 5 things you can see
  - 4 things you can't touch
  - 3 things you can hear
  - 2 things you can smell
  - 1 thing you can taste



Childline 0800 1111

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