

STRESS

Solbridge counselling services



What is stress?

Stress is a normal response to situational pressures or demands, especially if they are perceived as threatening or dangerous. Stress is the result of brain chemicals, called hormones, surging through the body. These hormones make people sweat, breathe quicker, tense their muscles and prepare to take action. When this happens, a person's built-in alarm system—their “fight-or-flight” response—becomes activated to protect them.

A certain amount of stress is a normal part of daily life. Small doses of stress help people meet deadlines, be prepared for presentations, be productive and arrive on time for important events. However, long-term stress can become harmful. When stress becomes overwhelming and prolonged, the risks for mental health problems and medical problems increase.

FACTS ON STRESS
(ACCORDING TO WHO)

IT CAN AFFECT ANYONE

FORM PART OF THE TOP
3 MENTAL HEALTH
CONCERNS AMONG
COLLEGE STUDENTS.

45% OF COLLEGE
STUDENTS SAY THEY
EXPERIENCE STRESS

80% OF STUDENTS
LEAVE STRESS
UNTREATED



*"Calmness is the
cradle of power."
—Josiah Gilbert
Holland*

Long-term stress

Long-term stress increases the risk of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, substance use problems, sleep problems, pain and bodily complaints such as muscle tension. It also increases the risk of medical problems such as headaches, gastrointestinal problems, a weakened immune system, difficulty conceiving, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and stroke.



Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of stress may be cognitive (thinking-related), emotional, physical or behavioural. Their severity can range from mild to severe.

Cognitive symptoms include:

- difficulty concentrating or thinking
- memory problems
- negativity or lack of self-confidence
- constant worrying
- difficulty making decisions.

Emotional symptoms include:

- moodiness
- low morale
- irritability
- feeling hopeless or helpless
- feeling apprehensive, anxious or nervous
- feeling depressed
- feeling unhappy or guilty
- feeling agitated or unable to relax.



Physical symptoms include:

- headaches
- muscle tension or other physical pain or discomfort
- stomach problems
- nausea, diarrhoea or vomiting
- loss of sex drive
- rapid heart rate
- high blood pressure
- fatigue.

Behavioural symptoms include:

- changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- social withdrawal
- nervous habits such as nail-biting, teeth grinding or foot-tapping
- increased use of caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol or other drugs
- neglect of family or work responsibilities
- the decline in performance or productivity.



Severe stress may be a symptom of an anxiety disorder. Seek professional help if the signs and symptoms of stress have been present for a long period of time; if your functioning at work, school, home or socially is affected; or if you experience increased stress and emotional difficulties. Recovery from chronic stress is possible.

Causes and Risks factors

Stress often results if a person feels that there are high pressures or demands, that there is a threat to their well-being or that they don't have enough resources to cope with the demands.

Common sources of stress include a person's physical environment (e.g., noisy streets or unsafe living space), relationships, work, life situations and major life changes. These situations can include negative events such as financial problems, relationship breakup, difficulties at work or school, injury, illness or death and grieving. However, situations leading to stress can also include positive changes, such as work promotions, getting married or buying something new.



Diagnosis & Treatment

Practicing self-care is important for reducing stress. Some good ways to reduce and manage stress include eating well, exercising regularly, trying to reduce negativity, prioritizing leisure time, limiting alcohol and caffeine, avoiding cigarettes and other drugs, and adopting proper sleep hygiene.

Other ways to help reduce and cope with stress include:

- prioritizing, organizing and delegating tasks
- seeking support from family and friends
- attending a support group or stress management program, consulting a health care professional or accessing self-help materials.

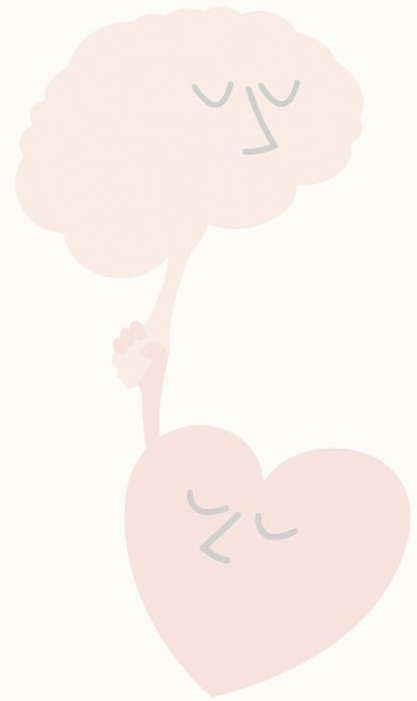
Once a person feels a sense of emotional well-being, they feel stronger and more able to bounce back from stress. This helps them feel that they can cope better with difficult life events.

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For more information please visit the counselling services on campus

www.solbridgecounsellingservices.org

0426308896



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