

Identification of common Stress symptoms and solutions



Common Physical reactions

- Muscle tension
- Indigestion
- Sleep difficulties
- Rapid uneven or pounding heartbeat
- Frequent urge to pass urine
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Chest discomfort
- Change in appetite, constipation or diarrhea
- Backache/headache
- Cramps

Common Psychological reactions: While some amount of anxiety is imperative for good performance. Stress can lead to both anxiety and depression. Few visible signs can be:

- Disinterest in studies; seeing more TV, sleeping more
- Irritable/ crying / cranky
- Preoccupied, absent minded
- Wanting to be alone
- Major changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Lack of attention, concentration and forgetfulness
- Staying out longer, stop communicating with parents and having health problems.
- Feeling under pressure, frustration and aggression
- Feeling tense and unable to relax
- Feeling mentally drained out
- Fussy, gloomy or suspicious,
- Self depreciating comments “I knew I’ll never pass or never do well or....Mohit’s much brighter than me.....”

Psychosomatic Symptoms

These refer to physical symptoms that the student shows but there is no biological basis for them and the root cause is in psychological factors.

Symptoms

- Nagging headaches
- Backache
- Fainting spell
- Diarrhea/gastric trouble
- Asthmatic attacks
- Breathlessness
- Vomiting
- Feeling tensed and unable to relax
- Writing cramps bloomed or
- Absent vision

Do not deny the symptoms as the student may be genuinely in trouble and is not pretending pain. Professional advice may be taken in such cases.

Stress Management

Simple Tips for Students

(A) For improved concentration, motivation and work blocks

- Know your concentration span, study with breaks.
- Work out best time for concentration.
- Follow a normalized routine atmosphere at home.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Contact the teachers or counselors if feeling low or anxious or disinterested in studies.
- Make realistic study plans; assess priorities, assets and difficulties.
- Imagining extreme consequences and worst situations is of no use.

- Choose a place to study with minimum distractions and autosuggest yourself about your resolution.
- Try to coincide study time with the time, you would be taking an exam.
- Master what you know and are comfortable with.
- Master the essential information first.
- Prioritize the workload. Give your best concentration time to the toughest subject.
- Repeat your learnt work so the recall in exam is easy. Work not repeated or revised is easily forgotten.
- Try to plan your revision time by drawing up a timetable.
- Build in time for the things you enjoy – like watching your favorite TV programme, going out with your friends, or going to play football in the park and listening to music **after** you have finished your revision.
- Relax before entering the exam hall.
- Learn to take examination in a normal way, tackle questions and manage time.

(B) Eating Healthy

- Balancing food choices over time is what counts.
- Breakfast provides the energy needed through an active morning.
- Children who skip breakfast may have trouble concentrating.
- Fast foods supply more fat, salt and calories than good nutrition.
- Fast foods in moderation won't ruin a healthful diet, especially when consumed with green salads.
- Finger chips should be replaced with an apple.
- Roughage added to the diet like Dalia, Corn helps prevent stomach discomfort and to feel lighter.
- The golden rule for food and health is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

(C) Good Sleep

Good sleep is very essential for well being and concentration. Insomnia (the inability to fall or stay asleep) can be caused by stress and anxiety of exam. If there is a disturbance in the sleep/wake cycle during exams and if unable to sleep a doctor may be consulted.

(D) Physical activity and Yoga

- **Exercise:** planned and structured leisure time physical activity should be included in daily routine for improving and maintaining physical fitness.
- **Sport and Yoga:** any choice of outdoor game for a brief period. Playing badminton, squash, tennis or doing yoga, taking a walk should be part of daily routine.

Must Dos for Parents

- Do not nag the child. Be supportive and encouraging.
- Help the child to develop self-discipline, self-direction, self-confidence and a sense of achievement. Just good schooling and tuition are not substitutes for emotional cushioning.
- Help the child in maintaining his/her confidence especially when he/she seems discouraged by low marks or grades.
- Do not displace your anxiety on the child.
- The achievement goals should be realistically set according to the child's capability.
- Praise the child when she/he does well. Encourage the child's performance with positive statements like, "well done", "you can do better", rather than saying "that was not enough".
- Do not harp on previous failures or results.
- If achievement expectations are too high it may lead to greater anxiety.
- Humour relieves tension. Be light and humorous with the child.
- Try to gain your child's confidence and discuss problems. Help to find a solution.
- Exams are not the end of the world.
- Involve the child in decision making.
- Many students do better after school because of maturity and greater focus, course of interest, rise and awareness level and exposure to options.
- Avoid criticizing or comparing the child with others.
- Make the child feel important and loved.
- Listen to your child.
- Take help of a professional counselor in case of a conflict.