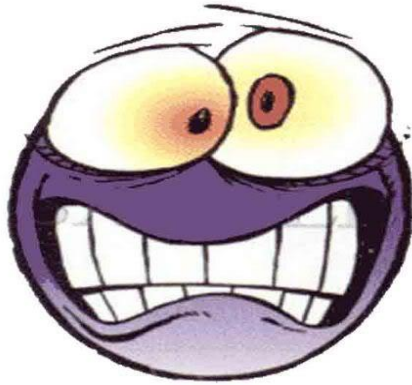


THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE &  
WHY GUIDE TO **STRESS**



# WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is what we feel when demands made on us go beyond what we are able to cope with.

## WHY DO WE GET STRESSED?

It's in our nature! Historically, humans became stressed because of the dangers that faced us (think sabre tooth tigers), and our sympathetic nervous system developed a response that would help us react when faced with danger. This is the **'fight/flight/freeze'** responses. These responses are what make up part of our survival instincts – and it is why we have continued to exist for as long as we have.

Sympathetic =  
Fight or Flight!



## **SO, STRESS IS...NORMAL?**

Yes! Stress is something that we can all experience when our lives become challenging, and a little bit of stress can be a good thing (it sharpens our senses, raises our game, helps us step up to challenges)

## **WHAT CAUSES STRESS?**

- School (course work, exams)
- Relationships (friends, parents, siblings)
- Change/transitions (future, endings, new beginnings)
- Difficult and challenging life events

## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO NOTICE WHEN I'M FEELING STRESS?**

Too much stress, which goes on too long, and without letting up, stops being helpful. It can damage your health, your mood, your relationships, and your quality of life

# HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M STRESSED?

## PHYSICAL SIGNS:

- Tired (can't relax enough to sleep)
- Health problems (digestive, tummy troubles)
- Headaches, muscle aches, back pain
- Dizziness, nausea
- Changes in appetite

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNS:

- Irritable, moody
- Arguing more with friends and family
- Feeling anxious, worried, racing thoughts
- Low mood, feeling 'stuck'
- Hard to make decisions about everyday things



# WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP EASE THE STRESS?

## 10 STRESS-BUSTING TIPS

- **ORGANISE** your time and reduce demands by taking them on one-at-a-time
- Take up regular **EXERCISE**
- Eat **HEALTHY** food (fruit and veggies)
- Make sure you get enough **'ZZZZS'** by creating and sticking to a regular **SLEEP** routine
- Make time to do things you **ENJOY** and that make you feel **GOOD**
- **TALK IT OUT**: share with people you trust how you are feeling
- **CONNECT** with people: spend time with friends and/or family
- **ACCEPT** that you can't control everything (like taking exams)
- **BE KIND** to yourself (there is only one you and you have so much to offer)
- Make sure you find ways to **RELAX** and leave room to **BREATH** (try Mindfulness breathing or meditation)

**FEELING STRESSED?** Try some 'Mindfulness Colouring'; it helps to calm your mind, centre your thoughts, and focus your brain.



## SOME USEFUL WEBSITES WITH MORE ADVICE & INFORMATION

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0215sqv> (BBC Radio 1 'Advice' page with information on different issues affecting young people)
- [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net) (The Campaign Against Living Miserably focuses on supporting men of all ages across the UK who feel anxious or depressed; with information on a range of different issues)
- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) (lots of information for young people on all aspects of mental health)
- [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) (free & confidential online support, including counselling, for young people in Lewisham; all you need to get started is to register with them)
- [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) (website has lots of information OR you can phone them at **any time** on **0800 1111**; calls are free & confidential)

Try out a ten minute mindfulness exercise using the link below:

<https://soundcloud.com/mentalhealthfoundation/mindfulness-10-minute-practice>