

## ■ Accepting differences

Do people upset you, particularly when their ways are not agreeable with yours? Cooperation, as opposed to confrontation, can turn tense situations into positive ones. Creating win-win situations rather than fighting and always trying to be “right” can help reduce the strain, allowing both parties to feel more comfortable.

## ■ One thing at a time

Trying to take care of everything at once can be overwhelming. It may even result in us not accomplishing anything at all. Listing and prioritizing our tasks, doing them one at a time, and checking them off as we complete them, can help us keep our stress at manageable levels. Give priority to the important tasks and accomplish those first.

If the level of stress is affecting your sleep, appetite, and concentration, see a psychologist or counselor who can help you learn better ways to manage your stress.

KKH Psychology Service provides clinical psychology services to women and children. To see a psychologist, please discuss your concerns with your KKH doctor.

### Useful telephone numbers

Central Appointments	6294 4050
Clinic Helpline	6394 8412
KK Ask-A-Nurse Service	1900-KK-Nurse or 1900-556-8773 (chargeable at \$0.80 per minute)

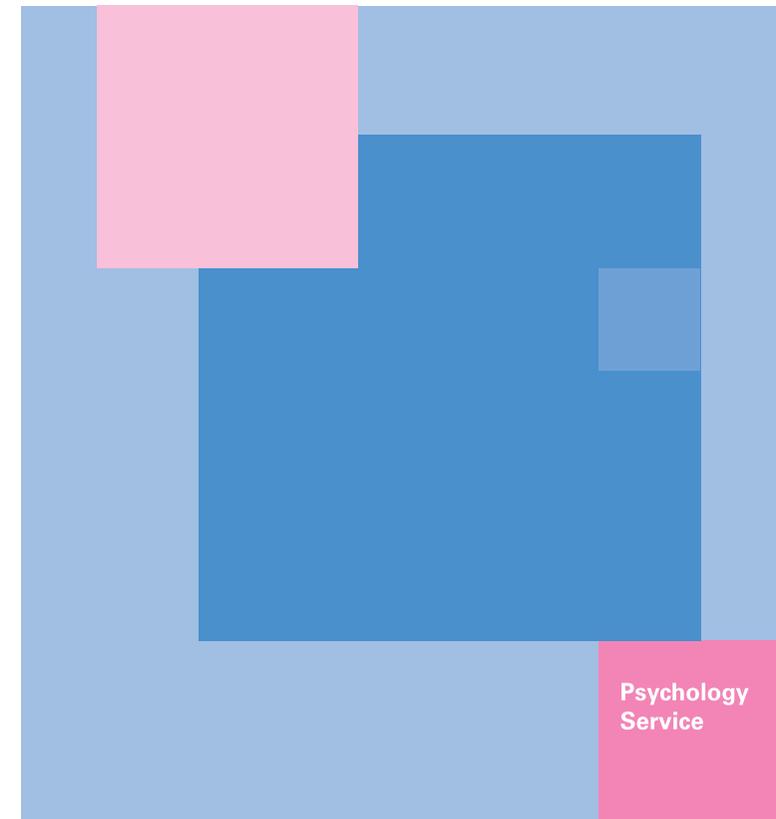


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# Managing Stress



Psychology  
Service

PATIENTS. AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.

**Stress is the body's way of preparing us for a challenge. It enables us to be ready for a tough situation with heightened focus, energy, and increased alertness. Our body's stress response enhances our ability to perform well under pressure. However, too much stress can seriously affect our physical and mental well-being.**

The events that provoke stress are called stressors. We are faced with stressors everyday in our lives. Crowded MRTs and buses at peak hours of the day, school examinations, work deadlines, giving presentations, pressures of family life, relationship conflicts, personal challenges and many more, can all contribute to our daily stressors.

When stress becomes a prolonged and particularly frustrating problem, it can do more harm than good. This is when life becomes distressing and physical illnesses such as high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, heart diseases, muscular tension and discomfort, can develop.

Although it is not possible to live completely stress-free lives, being aware of what causes stress, knowing how to recognise your body's response to stress, and how to reduce the negative effects can help us live healthier and more fulfilling lives. Here are some suggestions that can help you better manage stress:

### ■ **Physical activity**

When you are frustrated, nervous, or upset, engaging yourself in physical activity or exercise can help relieve the pressure. Taking walks, jogging, playing a game of tennis, spending time with your pet, doing some simple stretching exercises, or working in your garden are helpful ways to relief stress.

### ■ **Share your stress**

Often, just talking to someone about your concerns

and worries can do wonders. A friend or family member whom you trust, a teacher or counsellor, can help you see your problems and concerns in a different light. If you feel your problems are serious, you might want to seek professional help from a psychologist, psychiatrist, counsellor or social worker. Knowing that it is OK to ask for help and doing so when you need to, can help you avoid more serious problems in the future.

### ■ **Take care of yourself**

You are important. Be sure to get enough rest and eat well. Feeling irritable and tense as a result of the lack of sleep or from not eating well, can affect your ability to deal with stressful situations. If stress repeatedly keeps you from sleeping properly, you should seek a doctor's help.

### ■ **Learn to relax**

The best strategy for avoiding stress is to relax! Unfortunately, many people do not know how to relax. However, the good news is, relaxation is a skill that can be learned. Deep breathing is a relaxation technique that can help you unwind and reduce bodily tensions. By focusing on your breathing and consciously visualising a pleasant, relaxing scene, you can relief some body tensions. Deep breathing exercises slow down our heart rate and regulates blood circulation, relieving us from stress.

So pause for a moment. Tune out your worries about time and to-do-lists. Take slow deep breaths of gentle, long inhales and exhales. You may also like to take up relaxing exercises, such as Yoga, to help you learn to relax!

### ■ **Being mindful**

Allow yourself to find satisfaction in just 'being' without striving. Being is when you are fully present and mindful of the "here and now." It is when you are not focusing on to-do-lists, unpleasant events of the past or worrying about tomorrow and the future. Instead,

being requires simply noticing your surroundings – the sights, sounds, and sensations around you – without making conclusions about any of them. It allows you to appreciate each present moment instead of being affected by them as a stressor in your life.

### ■ **Make time for fun**

Include time for fun and recreation along-side work in your schedule. Play is just as important to your well-being as work is. Reading a book, listening to beautiful music, spending time with family and friends, are some forms of recreation. We all need a break from our daily routine to just relax and have fun!

### ■ **Know your limits**

Some problems are beyond our control and cannot be changed at the moment. Do not persist to fight the situation. Instead, learning to accept what is, for now, can help reduce the impact of stress on our minds and bodies. Being patient and knowing how far we can stretch ourselves are important in managing our stress.

