

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is a normal part of life; in fact, people need a certain amount of stress in order to function at high levels. Adjusting to a different culture is almost always stressful and there is a fine balance between “good stress” and “bad stress”. Bad stress is “distress” when people start to feel overwhelmed, irritable, paralyzed, and behind in their work. Humans feel stressed when situations demand more of them than there are resources or coping skills to meet the demand. The following situations almost always create stress:

1. Life changes (like coming to the U.S.).
2. Challenges or threats by an outside force (difficulty with language, new university system)
3. Experience of loss of personal control (loss of friends, loneliness, homesickness)

Physical symptoms include headaches, fatigue, gastrointestinal problems, inability to focus and concentrate, sexual problems, sleep disturbance, anxiety, heart palpitations, sweaty palms.

Behavioral symptoms of stress include irritability, over- or under-eating, increased use of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, compulsive behaviors, difficulty communicating.

## 15 Tips for Everyday Stress Management

1. Realize that you are stressed out.
2. If you are unsure of a medical reason for your symptoms, check in with a physician.
3. Generate a list of current stressors in your life.
4. Identify how you are addressing these stressors (coping skills).
5. Take a deep breath, work on relaxing your body and mind, and/or exercise more.
6. Work on managing your time effectively.
7. Connect with at least one other person once a day and have fun on a regular basis.
8. Talk about your concerns.
9. Take good care of your body: eat well, sleep enough, decrease use of alcohol, cigarettes, and caffeine.
10. Laugh.
11. Know your limits and adjust your self-expectations.
12. Change negative thoughts.
13. Take a “mini-vacation” (a walk, a dinner out, a movie, a quiet evening at home).

14. Remember that you cannot and do not have to do everything today—you can try again tomorrow.

15. Practice good self-care every day so you don't get overly stressed out in the first place (adequate physical self-care, supportive friends, a balance between work and play).

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