



If we decide that the demands of the situation outweigh the skills we have, then we label the situation as stressful, and react with the classic stress response. If we decide our coping skills outweigh the demands of the situation, then we don't see it as stressful.

"It is human nature for many when presented with a choice will always stay within their comfort zone."

Sir Richard Branson 1996

Everyone sees situations differently, and no two people will respond in the same way to any given situation.

Some situations in life seem less stress provoking, however once again it is our **thoughts and thought responses that are key.**

5 MAIN CAUSES OF STRESS.

1. Work Pressure and commitment.	33%
2. Death and Bereavement.	24%
3. Divorce	14%
4. Family Illness	11%
5. Financial	8%

The main symptoms of stress are insomnia, lack of appetite, and in more serious cases anxiety and depression.

It is important we keep our life and health in balance to avoid such symptoms but if we start to notice any of these symptoms we should contact a doctor or appropriate specialist immediately to avoid the stress getting out of control. If we allow this to happen and stress takes hold it can render us non functional without an ability to cope with everyday life.

CONQUORING STRESS

Last month we looked at some simple mind exercises to help teachers deal with stress, here are some bigger stress management busting techniques we can all use to help us manage our stress better

1. YOUR GP The first step to take is to ensure you contact your GP immediately. He will either prescribe appropriate meditation or refer you to an appropriate specialist.

2. EXERCISE Ensure you begin an exercise routine immediately however limited as exercise produces the bodies opiates endorphins which directly combats stress. Try and build up to a minimum of twenty minutes cardio vascular exercise three times a week.

3. DIET How we fuel and put in our bodies is vitally important when dealing with stress. Ensure you drink three litres of water a day and cut out all stimulants such as coke or caffeine. These provoke adrenalin and will increase stress levels. A balanced diet is important and good supplements to ensure you take are Omega 3 fish oils which are said to assist depression and raise serotonin levels, and also vitamins B and C, Vitamins B also being suggested is good for any mental health issues.

4. ALCOHOL has the opposite effect on serotonin levels so avoid large amounts of alcohol. It can also act as a depressant and hangovers can be more intense when severely stressed and magnetise issues several times over.

5. RESTFUL SLEEP Sleep plays a major part in keeping our minds and bodies balanced correctly. One of the first signs of stress is disturbed sleep normally because your mind is active and you cant switch off. Keep a notebook by the bed and write things down before you go to bed. Its important to get yourself into a bedtime routine not eating or drinking for at least four hours before going to bed. Caffeine can stay in the body for up to forty hours so cut all caffeine out if you can. Don't get hung up on feeling you need a certain amount of sleep and if you don't get it you'll just worry more and add more pressure to your current stress levels. The body needs a minimum of four hours sleep a night to function correctly.

6. WORK / HOME LIFE BALANCE Ensure you make the required changes to relieve your stress. This includes taking regular holidays, and regular daily breaks. Also ensure you have meaning and purpose in your life. Its good to have a twelve moth life plan to keep you focused and appropriately challenged.

And remember don't take yourself too seriously and beat yourself up all the time. Life is not about winning or losing, its what you learn that's important.

For more details on stress management courses and programs visit

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