

THRIVE

enmasse
changing behaviours

REDUCE STRESS FOR A HEALTHIER YOU AT WORK AND HOME

Stress can be broadly defined as physical, emotional or psychological strain in response to an event or situation that a person feels unable to deal with. But not all types of stress are harmful or even negative. Sometimes we need a little bit of stress to motivate us into action.

As odd as it may sound, some people feel energised by the challenge of a stressful event or situation. However, unrelenting or chronic stress in the workplace can lead to long-term harmful physical and emotional issues, such as poor health, depression, and anxiety.

Building our ability to cope and be resilient can significantly reduce the impact of stress on us physically and emotionally. Resilience does not mean being emotionally bullet proof. Essentially, the basis of resilience is having the confidence and ability to “bounce back” from life’s hardships and stresses, rather than trying to avoid undesirable feelings or situations that might lead to pain, stress, or adversity.

So what are the things we can work on to help us boost our ability to deal with stress effectively and become more resilient?

KEY STEPS FOR MANAGING STRESS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

- **Face the issue.** While this seems obvious, a common response when faced with stress can be procrastination, blame or denial. Take time to think the issue through and accept it in your head. Taking time to plan how you’ll resolve or manage the situation can be a great way to start processing confronting emotions or potential hurdles.
- **Be proactive in your coping.** Good stress management is about using a range of coping strategies. Resilience is built by tackling problems directly (problem-focused coping) and/or by handling the feelings of distress caused by the problem (emotion-focused coping). Avoiding the problem might work in the short-term, but is not helpful long-term and is more likely to lead to further emotional distress.
- **Simplify things for a while** by breaking issues into little chunks and tackling a bit each day. If you have too many commitments and things on your plate, try to pare things back during stressful periods. Scheduling “time-out” time on weekends and making time for a daily lunch break are great ways to buffer stress. Small shifts in behaviour and attitude can lead to big changes overall.
- **Keep active and prioritise sleep,** making time for regular exercise and adequate sleep can really boost resilience. Exercise triggers the release of our happy hormones and sleep boosts our overall wellbeing and ability to cope with life’s daily stresses.
- **Become more aware/mindful of your stress-related behaviours.** Do you tend to work more as a way of avoiding the issue; withdraw from family and friends; ditch the exercise in favour of alcohol and drugs? These are common responses to stressful events but aren’t sustainable or helpful long-term. Tune into your behaviours and think about healthier and more helpful alternatives: switching off on your way home; making small shifts to your work schedule; carving out time for enjoyable activities; and getting out of the city as often as possible. These may seem like small things, but they can make a big difference. Making a couple of positive changes is enough to see a shift in how you feel both mentally and physically.
- **Keep perspective.** Remind yourself that stress is a normal part of life, but how you deal with it is the important part. How we feel about a situation is largely determined by how we choose to perceive and respond to it. So try to choose a calmer, more optimistic or more realistic approach. And keep those irrational and unhelpful thoughts at bay. When facing a stressful situation, focus on the things you can control and keep telling yourself, “This too shall pass. I can deal with it.”

- ❑ **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Friends and family are there to support us. As the saying goes: “a problem shared is a problem halved”. They won't know to offer their help and support if you keep putting on a brave face in front of them. Don't be afraid to get professional support too, such as counselling. We all need an impartial ear from time to time and it can be a great opportunity to process some painful feelings in a confidential space.

FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT AT TELSTRA

🔗 Thrive

thrive.inside.telstra.com

🔗 Work Life Coaching (EAP)

www.in.telstra.com.au/ism/hse/eap.asp



HEALTH
SAFETY
ENVIRONMENT

