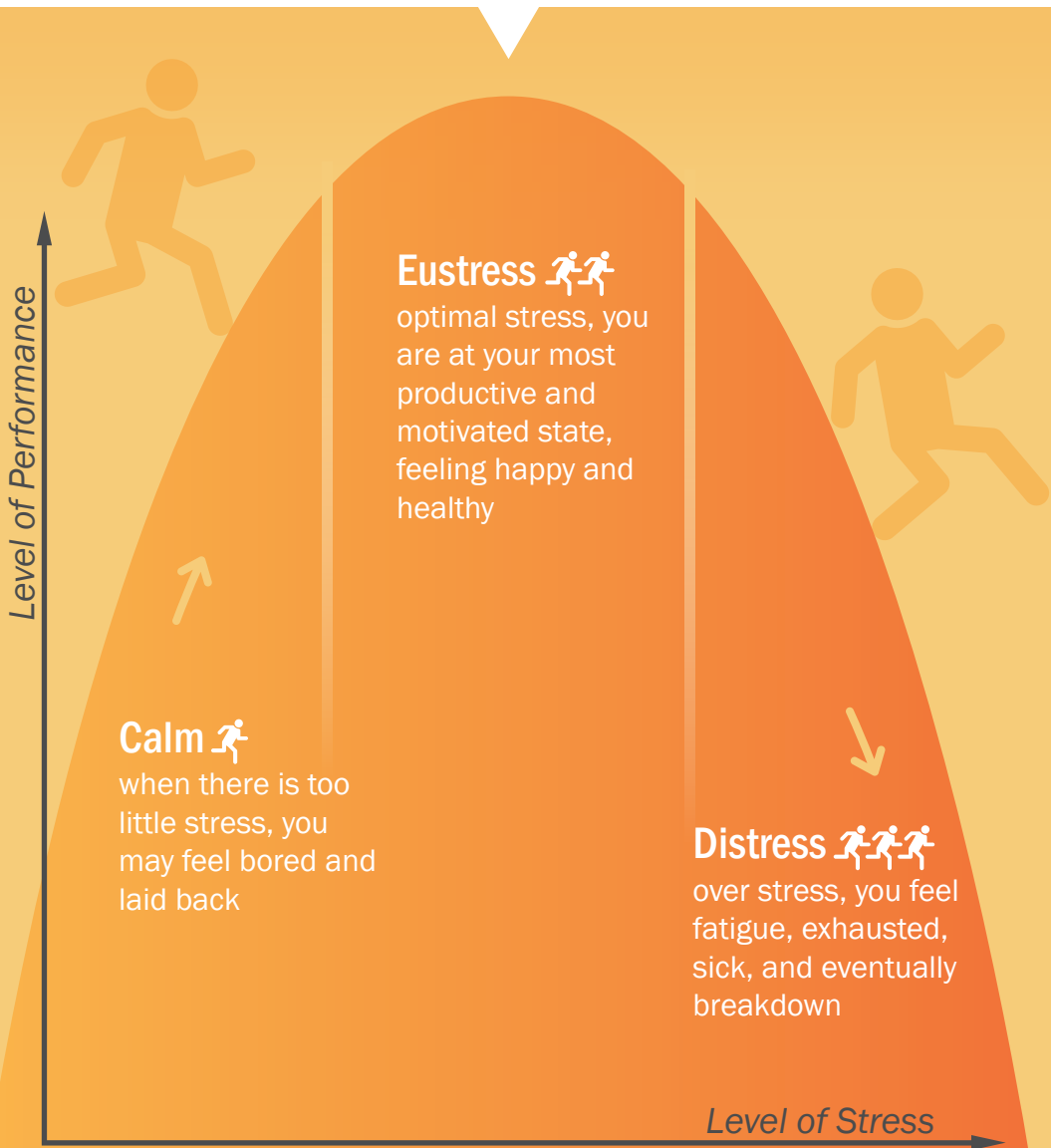


Stress

is our body's response to external challenges.
There are two types of stress: **Eustress** and **Distress**.



Sources of Stress

Identify your internal stressors and external stressors.

External Stressors

This include studies, financial status, career, social pressure, peer and love relationship, family, environmental factors, health issues...



Internal Stressors !

You may have encountered these thoughts in the past...

Procrastination "I'm behind in my studies. Why didn't I start earlier?"

Over-generalization "I always mess up everything."

Perfectionism "I should be perfect all the time."

Self-criticism "I am not good enough."

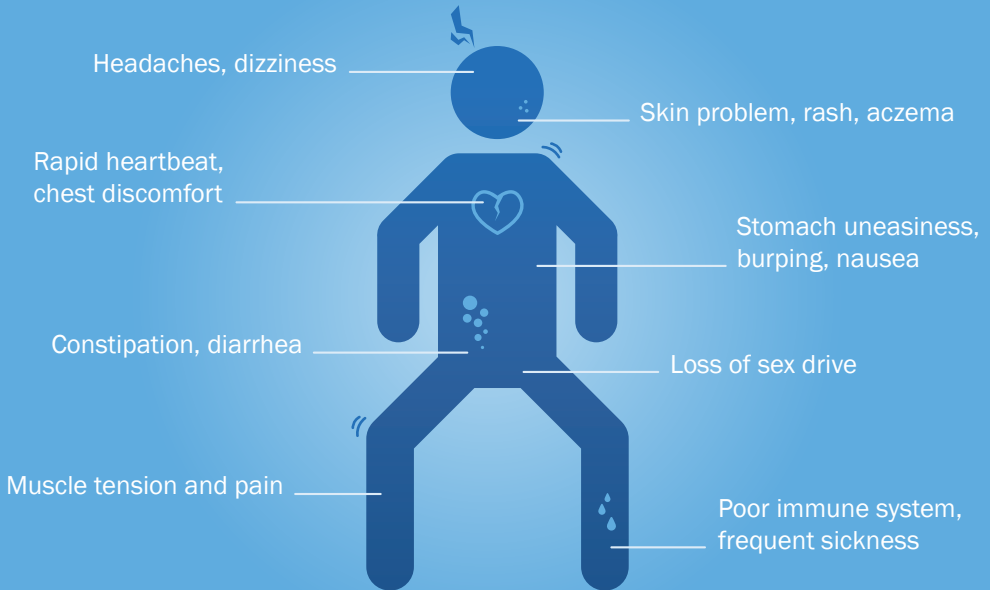
Fear of rejection "If I say no, they will dislike me."



Stress Symptoms

Listen to your body and observe your stress symptoms.

Physical Symptoms



Behavioral

- Over or under eating
- Sleep disturbance
- Withdrawn from others
- In conflict with others
- Procrastinating
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Nail biting, hair pulling
- Using substances to relax
- Self-harm

Cognitive

- Forgetfulness
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgement
- Disorganized
- Indecisiveness
- Negative thinking

Emotional

- Irritability
- Mood swings
- Experience guilt, anger
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Depression



Perceived Stress Scale

The questions below ask you about your feelings and thoughts **during the last month**. In each case, indicate the score in response to how often you felt or thought a certain way.

0=Never / 1=Almost Never / 2=Sometimes / 3=Fairly Often / 4=Very Often

1. How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0/1/2/3/4
2. How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 0/1/2/3/4
3. How often have you felt nervous and “stressed”? 0/1/2/3/4
4. How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0/1/2/3/4
5. How often have you felt that things were going your way? 0/1/2/3/4
6. How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0/1/2/3/4
7. How often have you been able to control irritations in your life? 0/1/2/3/4
8. How often have you felt that you were on top of things? 0/1/2/3/4
9. How often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? 0/1/2/3/4
10. How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? 0/1/2/3/4

Now calculate the total score according to this method:

Total Score = Q1+Q2+Q3+Q6+Q9+Q10+(16-Q4-Q5-Q7-Q8)

How to interpret these scores in relation to stress level?

- 0-11 Lower than average
- 12-15 Average
- 16-20* Slightly above average
- 21 or above* Much higher than average

***If your score is higher than 16, get help from a counsellor.**



Effective Ways to Cop

Here are a few tips and techniques to help relief stress.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a technique that allows you to monitor and control the state of muscular tension.

- Start by tensing and relaxing the muscles in your head and neck, then work your way to your toes.
- Tense your muscles for 5 seconds, then gradually relax for 10 seconds, repeat the process.



Positive Mind-Set

Learn to know and share your feelings, accept your limitations and who you are, be thankful, hangout with positive people, seek support when you need it.



Healthy Diet



Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, consume calcium and high-quality protein, and drink plenty of water. Avoid high sugar food and drinks, excessive salt intake and unhealthy fat.

e with Stress

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally”

- Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mindful Breathing

Practicing Mindfulness facilitates the experience of healing in which we recognize our intrinsic wholeness and a new connection to everything. And we feel a solid sense of peace within.

1. Assume a comfortable posture lying on your back or sitting. If you are sitting, keep your spine straight, shoulders relaxed.
2. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.
3. Bring your attention to your belly, feel it rises gently on the inbreath and falls on the outbreath.
4. Keep your focus on every breath. “Be” with each inbreath and outbreath for its full duration.
5. Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off, notice what the distraction is and then gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
6. Practice this exercise every day, just being with your breath without having to do anything.

Reference: Jon Kabat-Zinn’s “Full Catastrophe Living”, 1990, p.58

Regular Exercise

Perform 20-30 mins of moderate-intensity daily physical activity.



Good Quality Sleep

Target to sleep 7-9 hours with a consistent sleep-wake schedule.



Time Management


Putting time management skills to use can reduce stress.



- Make a realistic to-do list
- Keep your things organized
- Stay away from distractions
- Prioritize what is important and urgent
- Say “No” to unnecessary requests
- Find your productive time
- Take a break from time to time

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”
– William James



Talk to people you trust. Tell them your difficulties. 
Approach a counsellor or health professional for support.

STRESS OUT!



Don't let stress control your life.



Hong Kong Tertiary Institutions Health Care Working Group

Effective Ways to Cope with Stress

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