

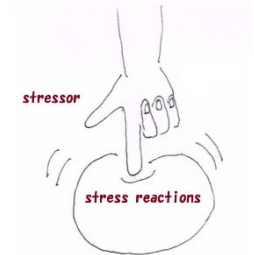
How to cope with your stress

Student life is more stressful than you might expect. Everyone experiences stress to a certain degree. Let me explain what stress is, what reactions to stress are, and how to cope with stress.

1. What is stress anyway?

Stress is like pressure on a soft rubber ball – stressor(cause) is a finger pressing the ball, and stress symptoms(effect) are the dent on the ball.

- **Stressor: the cause. For example, exams, fights, virus, weather.**
- **Stress reactions: losing sleep, feeling depressed, fast heartbeat**



We all think stress is a bad thing, but there is stress called eustress which has positive effects on us. “I practiced hard because of the game and improved my skill.” In this case, “the game” is eustress. On the contrary, when you say “My stomach aches when I think about the game,” “the game” is a bad stress. Depending on the circumstance and how it is perceived, stress can be either eustress (good stress) or distress (bad stress).

2. Stress Reactions

When we are constantly under stress, there will be negative effects on our physical and mental health. Stress reactions are manifested in body, mind and behavior.

- **Body: stiff neck/back, headache, stomachache, fatigue, poor sleep**
- **Mind: anxiety, depression, irritability, inability to concentrate**
- **Behavior: overeating, gambling, alcohol intake, being violent, missing classes**



These symptoms can be signs of stress, which some people never realize until symptoms are manifested. Be aware of the signs – they are telling you “I am under too much stress! Do something!”

3. How to cope with stress

So, do you have any coping strategies? The followings are some of the ways to cope with your stress. Try any that fit your circumstance or your style!

- **Getting rid of the stressor – There are situations where this is not possible.**
- **Behavioral activation: releasing stress by engaging in healthy activities**
Ex: chat with friends on the phone, take a walk, exercise
- **Relaxation: Calm your nervous system**
Ex: sleep, take a bath, do a breathing technique, drink herb tea



* Easy relaxation techniques coming up next!