

# Stress and anxiety

## What's normal?

**From time to time, everyone feels stressed or anxious – these feelings are quite normal reactions to challenging events in our lives... and indeed, they can be useful since they can act as warning signs and tell us that perhaps we need to slow down or to be careful and think about what we are planning to do.**

## How stress and anxiety affect people

Stress and anxiety can affect you physically and mentally – they can make it hard to:

- Concentrate.
- Take decisions.
- Deal with frustration.
- Control your temper.
- Keep your sense of humour.

Or they can make a person feel restless and jumpy, to have problems sleeping, to feel breathless, to feel fearful, to have headaches or even to feel sick or dizzy.

When stress or anxiety builds up to the point that the feelings are really strong, some people can also have what are called “panic attacks”. They may “freeze” and be totally unable to deal with the situation that is worrying them.



## Ideas for relieving stress and anxiety

It can be very helpful to think ahead about the situations that stress you or make you anxious and to plan how you might deal with them differently – visualise the situation going really well and how this might feel.

Take decisions one at a time and plan in small steps what you can achieve – trying to do everything can often feel overwhelming and can lead to nothing being done... which then adds to the stress and anxiety you are feeling. Remember to have enough to eat and drink and to get enough sleep.

Do something you enjoy beforehand – go for a walk, listen to some music, do some cooking, talk to your friends – and plan something nice for afterwards as well.

Take regular breaks from what you are doing – sometimes it is better to stop, review what the situation is and re-plan rather than battling on to complete something.

## What helps?

It's important to look after your own health needs and to take action and get some help if you feel that the stress or anxiety you are feeling is building up.

Sometimes people who are stressed or anxious feel very trapped and can't think of a way out of the situation that is bothering them – if this is the case, it can be very helpful to find someone you trust to talk to.

### They can help you to:

- See the situation from another perspective.
- Make a plan of what you need to do – and the things that can wait.
- Work out what you might do differently.
- Share the load – which might include identifying someone who can take over some tasks for you.

## For more information

Visit our website at  
[www.rethink.org/youngpeople](http://www.rethink.org/youngpeople)

If you want to talk to someone about anything that is worrying you childline offer a free helpline for young people which you can call on – **0800 1111** or visit at [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

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