



# COPING WITH STRESS

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Queensland  
Government

# FOREWORD

We all know what stress feels like. For many of us, stress forms part of our daily lives. Handled well, stress encourages us to take action and may even shift our thinking patterns to be open to new perspectives, and even enrich our lives with new meaning and excitement. However, too much stress often has a negative impact upon us, sometimes without our even noticing. It can affect our family, work life, friendships, and our emotional and physical wellbeing.

Do you find it a struggle to cope with the demands of everyday life? Do you feel overwhelmed, or unable to manage the things required of you? If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes,' you may find this booklet helpful. This booklet, which includes contributions from young people who have experienced stress and anxiety just like you, may remind you that these difficult times will pass. A number of issues introduced in this booklet are expanded upon in other sources - check their websites for more information.

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The update of this resource is an initiative of the child and Youth Mental Health Service, children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service. The last version of this booklet was produced by the child and Youth Mental Health Service, Royal children's Hospital District in 2008. Information in this booklet is intended as a guide only. Queensland Health accepts no responsibility for the way in which this booklet is used. In addition, Queensland Health accepts no responsibility for changes in service details. Quality of service is the responsibility of individual providers.

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For more free copies of this resource, please contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Service on 1800 177 833.

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# WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?



**STATISTICS SHOW THAT ABOUT HALF OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL STRESSED AT ANY ONE TIME. UNFORTUNATELY, TOO MUCH STRESS CAN GET YOU DOWN.**

**THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS YOU CAN DO TO TAKE CONTROL. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS...**

## **EVERYONE NEEDS SOME STRESS**

It's a normal part of being alive. In small amounts, stress gives you the energy you need to get up and go! It can help you with exams, getting a job, playing sport and getting to know someone new.

It also helps you to take action in difficult situations.

## **EVERYONE COPES WITH STRESS DIFFERENTLY**

Your stress levels can change. Sometimes things seem OK, sometimes it's just a bad day and sometimes it's more serious.

## **WHEN DOES STRESS BECOME A PROBLEM?**

Usually, if stress goes on for too long without a break, it can have a negative impact on wellbeing. This may lead to you feeling overwhelmed and finding it hard to make good decisions. If you feel like this, seek out help (see inside back pages).

## **WARNING SIGNS OF TOO MUCH STRESS**

- Being cranky - trouble concentrating or getting things done - tiring easily
- trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep - can't relax and your muscles are tense - feeling sweaty with a racing heart - feeling nervous or worried
- butterflies in your stomach - fear of going places - doing risky things
- hurting yourself or others

# THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF

## 1 CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOUR

- ✓ Take it one step at a time.
- ✓ Big problems can be broken into smaller parts. Start with the easier parts first and build on your success!
- ✓ Talk about it or write it down - don't let stress build up.
- ✓ It's OK to say 'no' when it gets too much.
- ✓ cut down your use of drugs and alcohol - they don't make your problems go away.
- ✓ Take time out for yourself.
- ✓ Stay off or cut down your use of social media. comparing yourself to others can make you feel worse, and take away from the time available to do more positive things for yourself.

## 2 CHANGE HOW YOU TREAT YOURSELF

- ✓ Look after yourself.
- ✓ Eat well and drink lots of water.
- ✓ Find time to exercise or play sport at least three times a week - walk the dog, ride your bike, go to the gym, etc.
- ✓ Slow down
- ✓ Take a break to clear your head and relax - stretch, listen to music, make a healthy snack, talk to a friend, take a bath, play sport, read a book or magazine.
- ✓ Have some fun - play sport, go for a walk, watch a movie, meet with friends, do something new e.g. rock climbing, listen to music, or use the apps suggested at the end of this booklet.



For more ideas on relaxing, see over page.

For more ideas on looking after your wellbeing, check out [www.wheelofwellbeing.org](http://www.wheelofwellbeing.org)



**"JUST PERSIST WITH YOUR PROBLEM AND  
HAVE FAITH TO RESOLVE IT."**

**SAM, 14**

# TIPS TO BEAT STRESS

## TAKE A BREATH BREAK

- Get comfy, close your eyes.
- Take a deep breath in and count to four.
- Hold your breath and count to four again.
- Breathe out slowly, see the word 'relax' in your mind.
- Keep going until you feel relaxed.



## IMAGINE

- Get comfy, close your eyes.
- Breathe deeply and slowly.
- Picture yourself in a place you find relaxing and enjoyable.
- Imagine you can smell, hear, touch and feel this place.
- Let it surround you for five minutes while breathing deeply.

## HAVE A SIGH

- Anytime, anywhere Sigh deeply.
- Let out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs.
- Don't think about it - just let the air flow naturally.
- Do it again.

So you've finished working out, you've eaten really well and you've found time to pause and relax. Now it's time to get it together and get your head straight!

## QUICK PAUSE

- Pick up one of the five senses (taste, touch, sight, sound or smell).
- Focus on this sense. Notice things around you in relation to this sense (i.e. sounds you can hear, colours and shapes, smells, tastes in your mouth, clothes touching your body).
- Let thoughts flow - don't get stuck on one thought.
- Keep going for 30 seconds to two minutes.
- choose another sense and do it again.

**"IF YOU DON'T SPEAK UP,  
NOBODY CAN HELP YOU."**

**BRANDON, 14**

### 3 CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK

A lot of stress comes from worrying about what MIGHT happen. When you're stressed, it's easy to focus on the bad things. This can make you feel worse.

**INSTEAD OF THINKING "I'M A LOSER BECAUSE I DIDN'T GET THAT JOB," TRY "I DIDN'T GET IT BUT THERE'S MORE OUT THERE FOR ME."**



For extra help with changing stressful thinking, check out [www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au)

Stand up to these thoughts and change them. If you feel stressed, instead of saying 'I can't cope', try something like 'I'm under lots of pressure, but if I take things one step at a time I will get through it'.

A lot of stress comes from worrying about what MIGHT happen. It's easy to focus on the bad things. This can make you feel worse.

Things don't have to be all good or all bad. Nobody is good at everything.

Don't jump to conclusions. Check out what else might be going on.

**REMEMBER - EVERYONE GETS STRESSED FROM TIME TO TIME.**

# SO WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

WRITE DOWN SOME STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE TO COPE WITH STRESS:



**WHEN YOU NEED HELP, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CARE. CHECK OUT THE DETAILS OF THE SUPPORT SERVICES OVER THE PAGE.**

It can seem like a big step when you first seek help, but keep in mind that it's not nothing if it's bothering you.

# YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Too much stress can add to mental health problems. Mental health problems change how we cope with life. Some of these problems might include:

- Depression - feeling sad all the time
- Anxiety - worrying all the time
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours - feeling like hurting yourself or dying
- Psychosis - out of touch with reality
- Eating Disorder - starving yourself, overeating or making yourself throw-up your food
- conduct Disorder - fighting, stealing, setting fires, getting into trouble with Police.

UP TO ONE IN SEVEN  
AUSTRALIAN YOUNG  
PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE  
A MENTAL HEALTH  
DISORDER IN ANY 12  
MONTH PERIOD.

Everyone can feel a little sad or worried from time to time but when it stops you living your life, it is a problem.

## GETTING HELP EARLY:

### INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Families and friends are often the first to notice changes but they may be unsure about how to talk about this with the person they are worried about. They or the young person may also be embarrassed about seeking help or may decide to wait, hoping that problems will sort themselves out. For most mental health problems, early help gets the best results. Even if someone is unsure about the problem, it is best to seek professional advice, potentially from your GP or one of the

services listed on the inside back cover of this booklet.

The chances are that there is not a serious problem and time and support are all that are needed. However, if there is a developing mental illness then getting help early is very important as there is a good chance of managing symptoms through counselling and/or low doses of medication. There is also a better chance a young person will maintain good relationships and

have more time for normal life experiences and activities, which help keep them emotionally healthy. Some of the following agencies may be able to help with these or other problems a young person is experiencing.

Information included on getting help early for young people and their families can be obtained from the websites listed in this booklet or at:

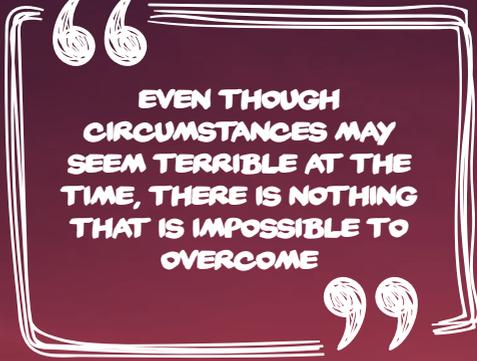
[www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/information-for-families/mental-health-information](http://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/information-for-families/mental-health-information)



**WE ALL HAVE GOOD AND BAD MENTAL HEALTH, JUST LIKE PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WE ALL NEED TO LOOK AFTER IT**



**MY MESSAGE TO OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE IS THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE**



**EVEN THOUGH CIRCUMSTANCES MAY SEEM TERRIBLE AT THE TIME, THERE IS NOTHING THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERCOME**



**OUR MESSAGE IS TO NOT GIVE-UP AND DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP**



**I HAVE LEARNT THAT TALKING ABOUT WHAT I AM EXPERIENCING AND LETTING IT OUT IS VERY HELPFUL**



**THESE ARE SOME MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DIFFICULT TIMES.**

**ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW, THERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR WHERE YOU CAN ACCESS HELP.**

# PHONE SUPPORT

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE**

Free counselling, information and referral details for drug and alcohol problems. Available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

1800 177 833

## **BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION**

Online and phone counselling, information and support groups for people concerned about eating disorders.

1800 334 673

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINE**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1800 811 811

## **FAMILY DRUG SUPPORT**

Free telephone support for those affected by a family member's substance use.

1300 368 186

## **HEADSPACE**

Internet chat, email or phone support for young people (12-25 years) with a range of issues.

1800 650 890

## **HOMELESS PERSONS INFORMATION LINE**

Information and referral line for access to accommodation and tenancy advice, welfare and finance assistance.

1800 474 753

## **KIDS HELP LINE**

Free telephone counselling for young people across Australia 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1800 55 1800

## **LIFELINE**

Free counselling and support, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

13 11 14

## **PARENTLINE**

counselling and support for parents, available 8am-10pm, seven days a week.

1300 30 1300

## **QLIFE**

Online chat and phone counselling for LGBTIQ+ people.

1800 184 527

## **QUEENSLAND HEALTH LINE**

Information on health conditions and referral options across Queensland.

13 432 584 (13 HEALTH)

## **SANE AUSTRALIA**

National charity aimed at enhancing mental health through campaigning, education and research.

1800 187 263

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICE**

Support for people who have been sexually assaulted at any point in their lives.

For women: 1800 010 120

For men: 1800 600 626

## **SUICIDE CALL BACK SERVICE**

Free national telephone support service for those displaying suicidal behaviour, carers of those at risk and those bereaved by suicide.

1300 659 467

# USEFUL RESOURCES

## WEBSITES

Beyondblue | [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Black Dog Institute | [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)

children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI)  
| [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au) | [www.kookaburrakids.org.au](http://www.kookaburrakids.org.au)

Eheadspace | [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)

Headspace | [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

Kids Helpline | [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays  
(PFLAG) | [www.pflagaustralia.org.au/about](http://www.pflagaustralia.org.au/about)

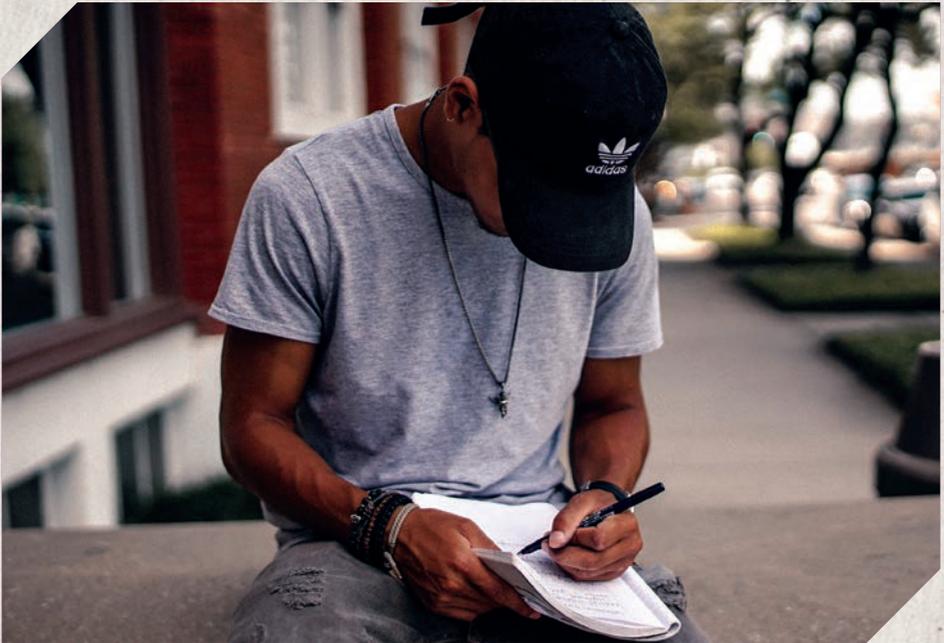
Reachout | [www.au.reachout.com](http://www.au.reachout.com)

Reachout Parents | [www.parents.au.reachout.com](http://www.parents.au.reachout.com)

Tune In Not Out | [www.tuneinnotout.com](http://www.tuneinnotout.com)

Youthbeyondblue | [www.youthbeyondblue.com](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com)

Wherever you are on your mental health journey, **HEAD TO HEALTH (H2H)** is here to help you find the information, resources, and services that most suit your needs. Whether you want to improve your overall sense of wellbeing, or you need help with something that is concerning you, or you are helping someone you care about—Head to Health can point you to great online mental health resources.  
[www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)





## PROGRAMS AND APPS

### **BITE BACK**



Online activities, psychoeducation and positive psychology aiming to promote wellbeing and resilience in young people (12-25 years).  
[www.biteback.org.au](http://www.biteback.org.au)

The Brave Program. 

### **THE BRAVE PROGRAM**

An online program to help children (8-17) overcome anxiety. comprises both youth and parent component.  
[www.brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au](http://www.brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au)

### **MOODGYM**



An online program teaching cognitive behaviour therapy skills to manage symptoms of depression and anxiety.  
[www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au)



### **RECHARGE**

A six week program aiming to improve mood and energy levels by establishing a good sleep/wake routine.  
Available from the App store and Google play



### **SMILING MIND**

A mindfulness and meditation program helping people deal with the pressure, stress and challenges of daily life.  
Available from the App store and Google play

# INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY YOUTH HEALTH SERVICE

3240 8970

[youthservice@atsichsbrisbane.org.au](mailto:youthservice@atsichsbrisbane.org.au)

55 Annerley Road, Woolloongabba QLD 4102

## CLARENCE STREET

3163 8400

[www.mater.org.au/Home/Services/Mater-Young-Adult-Health-centre-Brisbane/clarence-Street](http://www.mater.org.au/Home/Services/Mater-Young-Adult-Health-centre-Brisbane/clarence-Street)

Clarence Street aims to support young people to achieve some of their goals around their drug and alcohol use, such as having a break from using, cutting back how much you use, how often you are using. The 11-day live-in program is available to all young people living anywhere in Queensland wanting to detox or withdraw from alcohol and/or drugs.

## EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND

3077 7320

[www.eda.org.au](http://www.eda.org.au)

Individualised counselling, group support, education, information and referral to carers, families and friends of someone with an eating disorder.

## HEADSPACE CENTRES

[www.headspace.org.au/about-us/who-we-are](http://www.headspace.org.au/about-us/who-we-are)

Find your nearest Headspace centre by using our website. Check under "Health" in your local White Pages directory or call 13 HEALTH (13 432 584).

## HOT HOUSE (METRO NORTH MENTAL HEALTH ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICE)

1800 177 833

Free and confidential alcohol and drug counselling service for young people. Located at Biala (Brisbane city), Redcliffe and Caboolture.

## OPEN DOORS

3257 7660

[www.opendoors.net.au](http://www.opendoors.net.au)

Support service for LGBTIQ+ young people.

## QUEENSLAND TRANSCULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

3317 1234

[www.metrosoth.health.qld.gov.au/qtmh](http://www.metrosoth.health.qld.gov.au/qtmh)

Statewide service providing transcultural mental health information, referrals and resources.

Talk to your General Practitioner (GP) for other ideas about who can help, or ask for a referral to your local Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS).

Some of these services are Brisbane-based. Check with your GP, school counsellor or other supportive adult about local services that might be able to assist. Or check out

[www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/queensland](http://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/queensland)



**BE ACTIVE · HELP OTHERS · LOOK AFTER YOURSELF · STAY  
CONNECTED · LOVE · ACCEPTANCE · STRENGTH · HOPE · HOBBIES**



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[www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au)



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