

## Managing School Stress

### 1. Take time for self-care.

You have to give your body and mind the means to cope with stress, and that includes healthy food, non-harmful substances, sleep (dramatically more than most kids think they need), down time, etc. Build into your day creative, expressive, or mindful activities that let you digest what you've been going through, process it, and release it.

### 2. Learn to change your thinking.

When you start stressing about not finishing your project on time, your mind builds a case for why what you *believe* is going to happen *will* happen — and this can be paralyzing. When combating negative thinking patterns, come up with specific examples to counter the stressful thoughts. Think instead of concrete ways that you can create the time to work on a project, and how your previous line of thinking is not accurate.

### 3. Be organized and take assignments one step at a time.

Chunk work down into manageable, bite-sized portions that feel less overwhelming than looking at the big picture. List what you have going on, and list how much time each thing is going to take. Chunking things down makes them feel more manageable and less anxiety-inducing.

### 4. Set realistic goals and expectations

“Lowering” your goals often allows you to achieve more. Setting SMART goals provides for accurate feedback, empowerment, and growth. Learning to focus on what is in our power and letting go of that which is beyond our control reduces our list of stressors and empowers our actions.

### 5. Stay balanced during exam periods.

The importance of taking breaks and working in time to relax during your busiest and most stressful periods can't be overestimated. No matter how hard you push yourself, nobody can maintain constant focus, and you will burn yourself out if you try. Take frequent, short breaks for fun activities so that you'll be able to go back to your writing or studying refreshed.

# Symptoms and Signs of Stress

There are four primary types of symptoms of stress:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive (thinking)
- Behavioral (actions)

Depending on the individual and the cause of the stress, the number of symptoms from each category can vary. The chart below will give an overview of types of symptoms that may be present in someone suffering from stress.

<b>Physical Symptoms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irregular bowel movements</li><li>• Involuntary twitching or shaking</li><li>• Irregular or missed periods</li><li>• Getting sick more often than normal</li><li>• Reduced libido</li><li>• Chest pain with or without tachycardia</li><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Nausea</li><li>• Muscle aches</li><li>• Trouble sleeping</li><li>• Heartburn or indigestion</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Flushed skin</li><li>• Clenched teeth</li><li>• Unusual changes in weight</li></ul>	<b>Emotional Symptoms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less than normal patience</li><li>• Feelings of sadness and/or depression</li><li>• Feelings of being overwhelmed</li><li>• Restlessness</li><li>• Reduced or eliminated desire for activities once enjoyed or regularly done</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Sense of isolation</li><li>• Trouble coping with life's issues</li><li>• More frequent or extreme pessimistic attitude</li></ul>
<b>Cognitive Symptoms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impaired concentration</li><li>• Trouble with remembering things, such as homework assignments or deadlines</li><li>• Chronic worrying</li><li>• Anxious thoughts or feelings</li><li>• Reduced or impaired judgment</li><li>• Impaired speech (mumbling or stuttering)</li><li>• Repetitive or unwanted thoughts</li></ul>	<b>Behavioral Symptoms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change in eating habits</li><li>• Change in sleeping habits</li><li>• New or increased use of drugs, tobacco or drugs</li><li>• Nail biting</li><li>• Pacing</li><li>• Abnormal failure or delay to complete everyday responsibilities</li><li>• Significant change in school or work performance</li><li>• Unusual desire for social isolation</li><li>• Frequent lying</li><li>• Trouble getting along with peers, such as coworkers, classmates or teachers</li></ul>