

# Support Guide

# Stress



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## What is Stress?

There are many causes for stress, from individual genes, upbringing, experiences, major life changes, to health and money issues.

As well as being an exciting and fun experience, studying at university can be stressful. Most students will experience stress from time to time and it's perfectly natural. When stress starts to impact your everyday life you may wish to consider taking some positive steps to reduce the amount and level of stress you are feeling. This self-help sheet outlines some simple suggestions to try to help you manage stress. Stress can cause a number of negative symptoms; it might affect how you feel physically (muscle tension, chest pain, digestion issues), mentally (difficulty concentrating, over worrying, being forgetful) and how you act (being irritable and snappy, eating too much or too little, avoiding places and people).

### How to handle Stress?

#### ✓ Breathing exercises and relaxing music

Controlled breathing has been shown to have a calming effect. Try breathing in deeply through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5 while they breathe. You may not be able to reach 5 at first but you can practice if you find this approach useful.

#### ✓ Be Active

Exercise can help you to burn off nervous energy and emotional intensity. Exercising releases chemicals in your body called endorphins. These endorphins trigger a positive feeling in the body and can help to reduce your level of stress.

#### ✓ Have some 'me' time

Do things that you really enjoy, see friends, read a book, go shopping, whatever you enjoy doing that will take your mind away from the source of stress and let you relax. Set some time aside for quality 'me time'.

### ✓ Challenge yourself

Setting yourself goals and challenges, whether at University or in your free time, such as learning a new skill or a new sport can help to build confidence and either distract you from the source stress or allow you the confidence to overcome it. There is evidence to support the idea that people who help others, through activities such as volunteering or community work, can become more resilient to stress themselves.

### ✓ Split up big tasks

If a task appears overwhelming and problematic to start, try breaking it down into simpler chunks, and give yourself praise for finishing them. Review the Support Guide on How to Study Effectively from Home for more hints and tips on time management.

### ✓ Plan ahead

Planning out upcoming events can help you to better manage them and reduce any associated stress. Many individuals find that a to-do-list is therapeutic in managing tasks or events that may otherwise cause stress.

### ✓ Stay positive

Take time to positively think about the good aspects of your life. Try to focus on positive, peaceful, and relaxing feelings. Try to look at the issues causing you stress relatively and in perspective.

### ✓ Take control

Do not remain passive. Being proactive in addressing issues is a crucial part of finding a satisfying solution to the cause of stress. A feeling of loss of control is often associated with, and a cause of, stress. If your approach is not working, change it and try something new.

### ✓ Accept the things you cannot change

Changing a difficult situation is not always possible. Try to concentrate on the things you do have control over and identify the things that are outside of your control. For the latter accept that there may be nothing you can do to change them.

### ✓ Talk to someone and connect to others

In the vast majority of cases talking to someone about the source of your stress will help you to relieve it. Share with friends or family and try to look on the bright side. Laughing is the best form of stress relief. Long-term stress can be difficult to resolve by yourself, do not struggle alone, reach out to someone, whether that be a friend, family member or doctor, and get help

Speak to someone at **the BUE Student Hub Counselling Service** where advisors can help you with the techniques above.

You can pass by our offices at the BUE Library Lower Floor.

Not on campus and want more information? You can contact us anytime via our email address **[thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg](mailto:thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg)**

The student Hub is a safe, friendly and free space for you. We are here to help you. We are listening.

