

I AM so stressed!

Some studies indicate that men and women react differently to stress. Our reaction to stress is very individual and is dependant on what we do to react to or cope with stress, what supports we have at hand, how long the stress is in place and of course the type of stress. We have all heard of the fight or flight (or freeze) analogies regarding stress, the reality is , our current way of living isn't how we were hardwired. We need to be able to manually override our own system (or rewire it) and de-stress ourselves.

WHAT TO DO?

1: Identify your stress triggers. Job pressures, relationships, boredom, money, lining up, waiting on hold, planning for something, ruminating about what might be or what was. These are just a handful of things that can drop stress onto us.

2: Develop some strategies. Easier said then done really but even the process of developing a strategy and trying to implement it has benefits. The curiosity and action involved in this step alone helps to place a small amount of distance between you and the situation you are experiencing. This sometimes allows you to "take a breath" and then move forward. Strategies might involve blocking out time, moving things or even removing things (thinking TV's , laptops, phones from the bedroom as an example). The strategies are endless but many have some common themes which I will touch on in ther next few points..

3: Check In on your own health. Exercise has a lot of evidence behind it to help with so many different aspects of our mental health. It provides a distraction for us, it improves social connection if done with others, it improves sleep and helps our energy levels. Overall it improves our health in a variety of areas. Importantly it also gives us back some sense of control which helps with stress. Exercise doesnt have to be a workout or a run, it is going to be different for each of us, yes, there is evidence tha tintense exercise ticks a lot of positive boxes but if you aren't up to that, then getting off the couch and walking up the road and back is still better then nothing.

4: Diet: By diet I mean , healthy eating and also for me, how much I eat. When it comes to stress , things like alcohol or drugs are the classic slippery slope. When you are stressed, be really careful with these and preferably just give them a miss.

5: Other: The danger of telling myself that I would have five points for each of these sheets is that I end up with point number 5 being "other".... Journalling, yoga, meditation, mindfulness, getting more sleep, and practising gratitude, getting into nature, getting in the water, watching a movie are all options that can help us. We take note of the stress and use these to let it *move on by*. But the biggest of the lot is friends and family, get out and be with people when you can, remember...

Don't do it alone! Regards
Evan