

How to deal with stress and anxiety?

Stress, the body's fight-or-flight response to perceived threats, can be a useful tool in small doses. It amplifies focus, fuels motivation, and pushes us towards achievement. However, chronic stress, like the kind often seen in students, over activates this system, leading to detrimental physical and mental effects. Anxiety, often a companion to stress, adds a layer of mental turmoil. Intrusive thoughts, worry, and fear of failure can paralyse individuals, hindering their ability to perform and cope.

The stress factors for students:

Several unique factors make students particularly vulnerable to stress and anxiety. Stepping away from the comfort of home and navigating uncharted social territory can foster loneliness and isolation. Financial burdens, whether from tuition fees or the pressure to contribute to household expenses, can exacerbate anxieties about the future. The relentless pursuit of academic excellence, fueled by societal expectations and competition, adds another layer of pressure. The looming specter of "life after graduation" further amplifies anxieties. Will their studies translate into career success? Will they find their place in the world? These uncertainties can trigger existential dread and feelings of inadequacy.

The impact on performance and well-being:

Left unchecked, stress and anxiety can significantly impact student life. Difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbances, and physical ailments like headaches and fatigue can hamper academic performance. Reduced engagement in social activities and withdrawal from support systems can exacerbate feelings of isolation and loneliness. In severe cases, anxiety can escalate into mental health conditions like depression, jeopardizing overall well-being.

The positive thing to focus is that stress and anxiety can be managed by adopting effective coping mechanisms, students can manage these internal challenges and navigate the academic journey with greater resilience.

Key practices to consider managing stress and anxiety:

Recognise your stress triggers: Identify the situations, thoughts, or events that trigger your stress and anxiety. This self-awareness empowers you to develop proactive strategies for managing them.

Prioritise and plan: Set realistic goals and break down tasks into manageable chunks. Utilise effective time management techniques like scheduling and to-do lists to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

Embrace healthy habits: Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep are essential for maintaining physical and mental well-being. Prioritise these non-negotiables for optimal stress resilience.

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques: Practices like meditation, deep breathing exercises, and mindfulness can help regulate the stress response and cultivate inner calm. These techniques can be especially helpful when anxiety escalates.

Connect and seek support: Building strong social connections is crucial for combating loneliness and isolation. Reach out to friends, family, or trusted mentors for emotional support and guidance. Use free counselling and therapy service offered by university.

To refer yourself for talking therapy please complete the online self-referral form, and write that you would like to speak with a therapist or talking therapy on your form. If you feel unable to complete the form for any reason, please don't hesitate to contact us for assistance at: therapy.mh@solent.ac.uk.

Additional support: Additional support for our students is available through Student Assistance Programme (SAP). This is confidential resource intended to assist you in managing personal and professional issues that may be impacting your general well-being, health, or life at home or school.

The SAP service we've selected, supplied by the outside business Health Assured, offers a comprehensive support network that covers a wide range of concerns and includes knowledgeable advice and sympathetic guidance. You are covered by Health Assured's SAP for 365 days a year, seven days a week.