

# Stress management

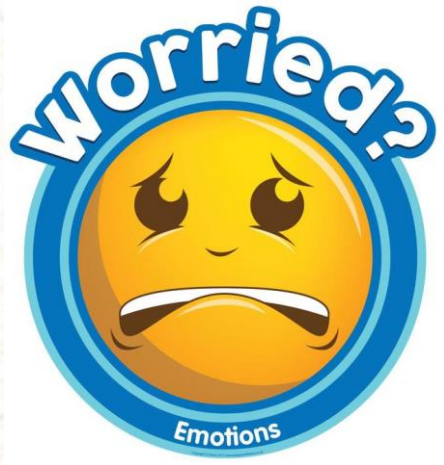
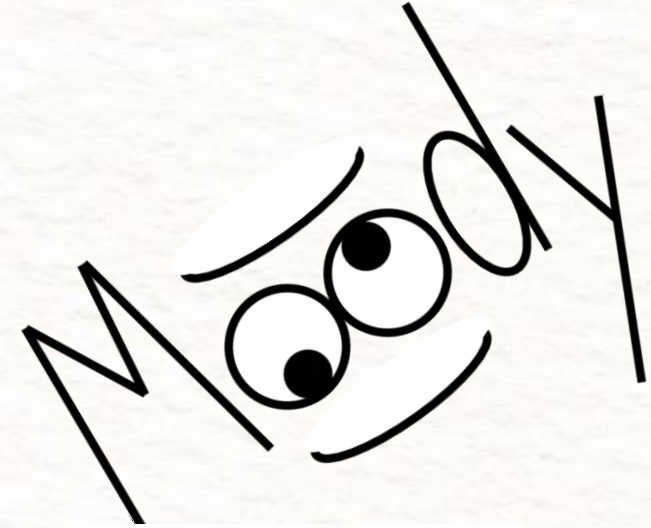
## and how we can help as parents/carers

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How can we tell when young people are stressed...?



# Stress that stress is normal!

- **Stress is part of life and at times unavoidable**
- Psychologists agree that while chronic or traumatic stress can be problematic, the stress experienced over an exam for example— is typically a normal and healthy part of life, which can in fact help put us in the optimal position to perform.
- We should appreciate that healthy stress is inevitable when we push ourselves out of our comfort zones. Stretching beyond familiar limits doesn't always feel good, but growing and learning happens as a result of this.
- As parents / carers we may want to protect our young people from stress, but what good is this really doing? Changing our own attitude to stress by seeing it as an opportunity for growth can help young people to do the same.





# What can we expect?



During the adolescent stage of development some of the typical behaviours we can expect are:

- Struggles with identity
- Worries around body image and comparing themselves to others
- Moodiness and a desire for more privacy
- Distancing from family and more involvement with friends
- A desire for more independence and rebellion or pushing against rules and boundaries (parental / school / authority figures)
- Worries about the future

# What can we expect?



During the adolescent stage of development some of the typical behaviours / feelings we can expect are:

- Worries about fitting in / being popular
- Stress around achieving (academically, in sports, hobbies)
- Remember, as with adults, life events / changes can also cause inevitable stress – parental separation, moving house, birth of new sibling, parent / carer in a new relationship, moving school.



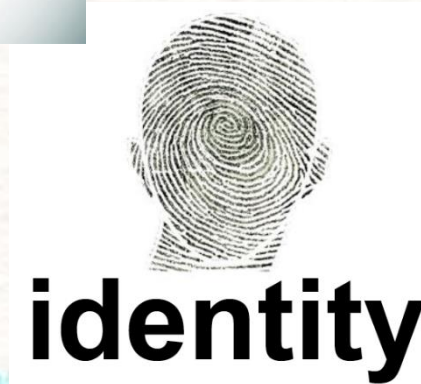
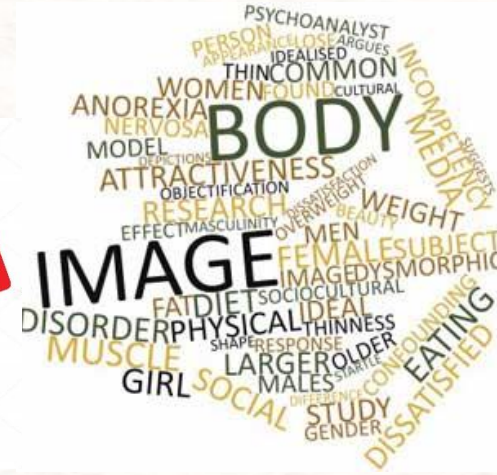
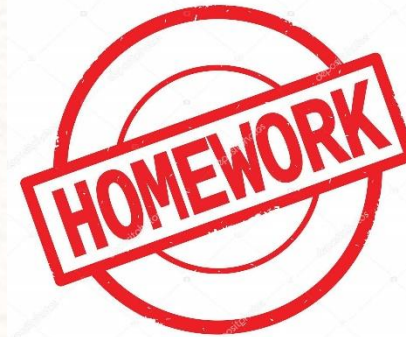
# How can we help as parents / carers



- **Don't panic!** If you see a change in behaviour, remember all young people go through stages of feeling worried / stressed/ angry, this could all be in context of the world around them and be short lived, so allow some time to monitor this.
- **Be Available.** Let your young person know that you care for them and you are there and available should they want to talk. Sending a text or email can work well.
- **Ask them what they think might help** – As parents / carers we can be quick to try and fix things or think we know best. Allowing space to enable young people to problem solve with our support can be more helpful.
- **Have a joint approach.** If you can, talk to the young person's other parent / carer about your worries, when your child is not around. Having a joint approach can be helpful and young people are quick to spot when parents disagree and can try and use this to their advantage.
- **Set boundaries.** Boundaries even for young people communicate safety. Even though developmentally they will be pushing these, it is important for young people to know what is ok and not ok and the consequences when they cross the line. Follow through with any consequences put in place.



# Young people are balancing more now than ever before





# Balance is key

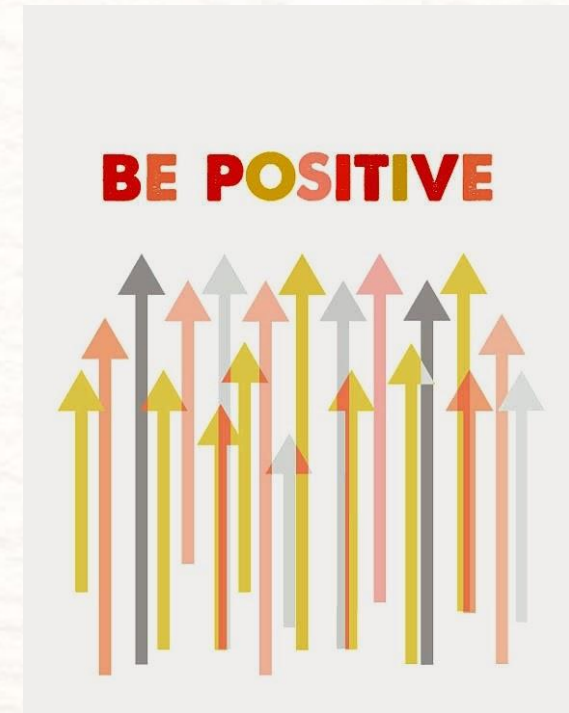


- Finding a healthy balance between all of the demands of a young person can be tricky – but essential for positive well-being
- Encourage routine – establishing a rough routine around meal times, homework, leisure time, screen time, and sleep.
- Social time is important – many young people spend their social time online. Encourage face to face interactions with friends.
- Make time for family – despite young people having the urge to separate from family during adolescence, family remains important. Create opportunities to spend time together, even if it as simple as eating a meal together.



# Be Positive

- Help challenge any negative ways of thinking that will increase stress by.....
  - Recognising and feeding back the positives
  - Tell them you are proud of them / their efforts
  - Highlight when they are coping well to reinforce these skills
  - Help keep them focus on reality / the here and now
  - Help foster positive self-belief by highlighting what they are good at
  - Send messages of encouragement
  - Try to give at least one piece of positive feedback a day



## Talk to other parents / carers

- Talking to others can help give reassurance that other families are going through similar experiences
- Get tips! Learn from others.
- A chance to offload.

