



camh

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

COPING WITH STRESS

“I prefer to stay in a small city like St. Catharines, Because when I tried to live in Toronto I found it too stressful. If I stayed there I knew I would get depressed or sick. There were too many people and too many immigrants with problems. You need to be strong to live in a big city. St. Catharines is better for me. It is easier to make friends here than in Toronto.”

Vlad, from Romania

Stress is the physical, emotional and mental strain that you feel when life uses a lot of your energy. Everyone experiences stress as part of daily living. Adapting to a new country and creating a new life for yourself can be very stressful. The stress can come from difficult tasks, like looking for work or learning English, and also from things that should be fun, like going out to meet people to make new friends.

You cannot avoid stress, but you can learn to manage it so that you are able to enjoy life and reduce the chance of becoming physically or mentally ill. Perhaps you can continue the activities that helped you feel calm and well when you were back in your homeland. Or may need to try new ways to reduce stress.

Tips on Dealing with Stress

Here are some ways that you can deal with stress.

1. Be flexible – know what you can change and what you cannot. Focus on things that you can control.
2. Laugh as much as you can – it releases tension. Tell some jokes, watch a comedy on television or a funny movie, or read the comics.
3. Breathe slowly – take a few minutes of your day to slow down and take in some breaths. This relaxes your mind and body.
4. Allow yourself to make mistakes – be gentle with yourself when you do so. No one is perfect. Learn from your mistakes.
5. Face your problems – one at a time. It is easier to solve your problems if you divide them up, rather than try to deal with everything at once.
6. Talk to someone – sharing a problem can make it seem more manageable. Your friend, advisor, or co-worker may be going through the same thing. They may even be able to offer some advice.
7. Allow yourself to feel sad – change can bring a sense of loss for the way things used to be. This is true even when the change has improved your quality of life. Take the time to grieve the loss and to adjust to it slowly. Grieving also releases tension.
8. Learn to say “no” to doing too much. This may be hard at first, but be realistic – you can’t do everything.
9. Get some fresh air – exercise and being outdoors can make your body and mind feel better.
10. Play more – have fun is a natural way to loosen stiff muscles. Try to have some fun with a friend, a child, or a pet.
11. Read a book or a magazine that you enjoy. It may take your mind off your problems for a few hours.

12. Meditation or yoga can help you to relax by quieting your mind. Also, yoga gently stretches your muscles.

You don't have to suffer alone. Help is available.

Where to get help or more information:

McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre
1 800 463 6273
In Toronto 416 595 6111

Your local Public Health Unit – look in the blue pages of your local telephone directory or call 411.

Your local Community Information Centre – look in the blue pages of your local telephone directory or call 411.

Your local Settlement Services

www.settlement.org
www.ocasi.org
www.camh.net
www.211Toronto.ca

Adapted from:

Alone in Canada: 21 ways to make it better

A self-help guide for single newcomers

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