Stress Recognition

Stress affects people differently. What you perceive as a stressful trigger may not be a stressful trigger for someone else. Stress can be purposeful when it alerts you to take action, for example – alerting you to study for an exam. However, stress can also become burdensome leaving you to feel totally overwhelmed and unable to cope with life challenges.

1. Consider the ways you experience stress by considering the symptoms you experience when you are stressed. Refer to Table 1 for symptom examples to assist you in answering the following questions. Add symptoms you experience that may not be on the list.
2. What physical symptoms do you experience?
3. How do you feel?
4. What do you think?
5. What behaviours do you display?
6. Which of these symptoms are the most troubling to you?
7. From your answers to question 2 list 2 or 3 things you could do that could help you to reduce those symptoms.

Table 1

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Physical Symptoms** | **Feelings** | **Thoughts** | **Behaviours** |
| Changes in weight  Tiredness/fatigue  Trouble sleeping  Aching muscles  Nausea  Headaches  Getting ill more often  Shaking/twitching  Changes to bowel movements | Sadness or depression  Feeling overwhelmed  Feeling restless  Reduced enjoyment in activities you once enjoyed  Feeling irritable  Feeling negative | I am not good enough.  I have too much to do.  I cannot cope.  I wish people did not keep asking me to do things.  Why do people put pressure on me?  I do not want to do this.  I just want to sleep | Change in eating habits.  Sleeping more or sleeping less  Decline in work/school performance.  Using drugs  Biting nails  Wanting to be alone  Avoiding contact with others |