

SMILE

RUN

SLEEP

RELAX

THINK

CREATE

MUSIC

WRITE

Nelson's Journey
Stress Buster Tips

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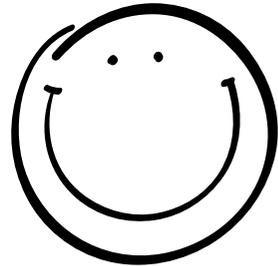
Nelson's Journey supports children and young people when someone close to them has died. We know that when someone dies you can experience a range of different emotions and feelings. This booklet has been designed to give you some tips and ideas on how to look after yourself if you are feeling a little down and a bit stressed. We hope you find it useful.

I have been involved with Nelson's Journey for around a year. Nelson's Journey supports bereaved teenagers in areas which can help improve how we feel. During my time with Nelson's Journey I have felt supported and had fun whilst remembering the person who has died. Being around other young people my age who are going through the same as me is comforting and helps me realise I'm not the only one.

Katie, aged 17yrs

It is ok to smile

Smiling is a good stress buster. It is quick, easy and free! When you smile your body releases 'feel-good' hormones and the stress hormone (Cortisol) is reduced. Smiling can help you feel calm and in control. It can help you feel good about yourself.



Think positive

Changing your thoughts is not as difficult as you might think. Try and look at life in a positive way and reduce the negative thoughts that you have. Negative thoughts lead to tension and that leads to stress. Try to use humour when you can to help focus your thoughts.

Get enough sleep

A good night's sleep is very important in helping your body and mind cope with stress. We all need to sleep for energy, good concentration and general health. Chronic sleep deprivation can affect your performance at school or college, which can lead to you getting stressed.

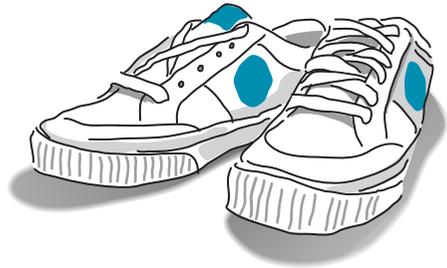
Take time out

Doing nothing is not the only way to get rest and relaxation. Rest and relaxation can mean looking at what you do in your leisure time e.g. hobbies and sport and balance this against your school/college work. You can relax in lots of ways for example, going to the cinema, meeting with friends, doing something fun and exciting.



Be active

Exercise is a good stress buster and is good for your general health but it can also help you when you feel stressed. It improves blood flow to the brain and helps you think more clearly. Exercise helps the body to release endorphins, the body's natural painkiller and 'feel good' hormone.



Eat healthily

A balanced diet delivers all the nutrients your body needs to function at its optimum level to help it deal with stressful situations. Cutting back on stimulants like caffeine, sugar, depressants like alcohol and nicotine will help your blood sugar levels keep constant and help you avoid mood swings.

Be creative

Do something creative that you enjoy for example, painting, taking photographs, writing poetry, writing short stories or making collages.

Write down your thoughts

Write a journal or diary. You can write down everything you are feeling and what you would like to do. Some people write letters to people (that they may never send) just to help get out their thoughts and feelings. Seeing everything on paper may make it look more manageable.



Listen to music

Listen to music of your choice. Make yourself playlists with your favourite music tracks. Consider making 'mood' music playlists so you can listen to them when you need to. You can even write your own music and/or song lyrics or play a musical instrument.



Share a hug

Make sure you get and give your fair share of hugs. Not only does hugging feel good, it has been proven to help reduce stress.

Pamper yourself

Make yourself feel better by looking after your appearance. You can give yourself a makeover, for example, change your hairstyle, dye your hair, paint your nails or go shopping for a new outfit.

Pamper your pets

It is a well-known fact that relaxing with your pets can help relieve stress. Take your dog for a walk. You can cuddle and stroke your pet, which can be really soothing. You could also spend time playing with your pet. You can also talk to them about anything, as they will not tell anyone your secrets!



Be safe when you are angry

It is normal to feel angry sometimes. When you feel angry, try to stop yourself getting hurt or hurting others. Take your anger out on something else, for example, punch a pillow, throw wet sponges at something (like a wall), get on the floor and have your own little temper tantrum, use a punch bag or something else that helps you get your anger out safely.



It is ok to ask for help

Talk to someone you trust and tell them how you are feeling. Get someone else's perspective on your situation, as it is good to see things from a different view. Be open about your thoughts. Avoid being on your own when you are feeling down, contact your friends and ask for their support. They will understand.

Remember

If you feel that despite all your efforts you are still getting stressed then there are lots of people who can help you.

Here are some useful websites:

www.nelsonsjourney.org.uk

www.winstonswish.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

Get plenty of rest, exercise and eat well. You will be able to handle stress much better.

Take care of yourself.



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