

What to do when you feel overwhelmed by life's pressures



What is Stress?

When faced with a situation or event that creates tension or stress in you, your body responds by activating your nervous system and releasing hormones including cortisol and adrenalin.

These hormones bring about certain physical changes that increase our reactivity. This means we do not always deal appropriately or effectively with the challenges presented.

People respond differently to stress based on their current circumstances, past experiences, personality, health, access to resources, support and other factors. What one person finds stressful, another may not.

Knowing yourself, how you respond to different situations, and your body's personal stress signs is important as you can then seek support early. Ongoing stress can result in you feeling overwhelmed and lead to ongoing physical and mental health issues.

Stress can lead to a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion. Prolonged and untreated stress can lead to decreases in productivity, engagement and energy. It can make you feel helpless, hopeless, angry, resentful or combative.

It can also cause long-term changes to your body that make you vulnerable to illness.

What to do if you're feeling overwhelmed

Identify the cause of your stress

Write down a few of your current key challenges, focussing on what is contributing to you feeling overwhelmed. You may identify one particular issue, or a range of things.

Make a positive plan

Work out ways to deal with each issue, approaching it step-by-step. You may have some goals or values, friends or family that help you approach this.

Identify the actions that could be taken to bring about some change. Start at the beginning and focus on one thing at a time. Remember that a 1% change or redirection can make a difference. Seek support where needed to help achieve change.

Review your coping mechanisms

There are always things that we can do to improve our health and wellbeing. What activities are helpful to your health and wellbeing? What helps you feel confident and calm? What gives you a sense of meaning and purpose?

Recognising these things will help to identify the coping tools and strategies that are most helpful to you.

Sometimes we choose coping strategies that are not always helpful.

Reviewing your coping mechanisms and expanding your helpful tools and strategies is a good way to make positive changes in your life.

(Continued next page)

(from page 1)

Practice acceptance

Often we put pressure on ourselves for things to be a certain way. Acceptance may help you come to terms with outcomes that are beyond your control, rather than battling to fix things over which you have little or no influence.

Be aware of your thoughts

Our thoughts directly impact our emotional state and can influence our behaviour. When our thoughts are negative and self-critical, we may begin to feel overwhelmed, so instead of doing the things we need to do to deal with the stressful situation, we may in fact do things that are unhelpful.

Some suggestions include:

- **Set realistic expectations as unrealistic goal setting can set you up for failure and disappointment.**
- **Call out negative thoughts and interpretations.**
- **Catch unhelpful thinking styles in action (e.g. black and white thinking; catastrophising).**
- **Work on being flexible so you can respond to change positively.**



Positive feedback

Demonstrate self-compassion and give yourself some positive feedback for the things you have been doing well.

Take care of yourself

Eating well, exercising and getting plenty of sleep are the basic building blocks of resilience, helping you to better meet life's challenges. Take time out to engage in activities you enjoy and find rewarding. Practice mindfulness to help you live more in the moment and learn relaxation breathing techniques. Remember you can't pour from an empty cup.

Access local support services

If you feel like you are struggling to stay afloat, please reach out for support. You may consider talking to your GP or health professional as they can check your general health and assess for any physical signs of stress. In addition, Lifeline Northern Beaches offers a number of services to support you in times of need, including counselling and support groups.

Lifeline Northern Beaches – We're here for you

Whether you need immediate crisis support, counselling, a support group where you can work through a particular issue, or financial counselling, we're here to help.

All too often, people feel like they're going through tough times alone – and we are here to let you know that non-judgemental, confidential help is available.

Lifeline's 24/7 Support – Call 13 11 14 or text 0477 13 11 14

When you need immediate support.

Counselling

Face-to-face counselling is an integral part of Lifeline's local services. Counselling involves a process of clarifying issues, encouraging self-awareness, exploring available options and developing coping strategies.

Counselling service:

- **No referral is needed**
- **No limit to number of sessions**
- **Low cost - \$30 per session (\$15 concession)**
- **Bulk-billing for clients with a Mental Health Care Plan**
- **Sessions are held in Balgowlah, Manly and Mosman - face-to-face or via Zoom**

Youth Counselling

Safe, confidential support for young people aged 15-24-years-old in Balgowlah. No GP referral required.

Financial Counselling

Facing financial challenges can be overwhelming, but you don't have to go through it alone.

Our goal is to help you manage your current situation and build a foundation for long-term financial well-being.

Financial Counselling is:

- **Free of charge**
- **No referral required**
- **Led by tertiary trained, accredited professionals**
- **Held face-to-face or via Zoom, during business hours**
- **Available to aged 18+ (individuals + small business owners).**

Support Groups

Sometimes the best way to work through an issue is by connecting with other people who can relate first-hand. Through our support groups, we give people the chance to do just that. We run several groups focussing on a range of issues, including:

- **Managing Emotions**

Visit our website for information about all of Lifeline Northern Beaches support groups.

Workplace and Community Training

Lifeline Northern Beaches offers regular community training session to empower our community to better support each other and understand how to recognise possible crisis, respond with compassion and refer to appropriate services.

Find a full list of upcoming workshops online at: www.lifelinenb.org.au/training