

# STRESS AND SELF AWARENESS

## WHAT IS STRESS

Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure. It is our body's response to pressure. Many different situations or life events can cause stress. It is often triggered when we experience something new, unexpected or that threatens our sense of self, or when we feel we have little control over a situation.

## HOW YOU MIGHT BEHAVE

- withdraw from other people or snap at them
- be indecisive or inflexible
- be tearful
- have problems getting to sleep or staying asleep
- experience sexual problems
- smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs more than usual.
- If the stress is long-lasting, you may notice your sleep and memory are affected, your eating habits change, or you feel less inclined to exercise.

Some research has also linked long-term stress to gastrointestinal conditions like Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) or stomach ulcers, as well as conditions like cardiovascular disease.

## SIGNS OF STRESS:

You may feel:

- anxious
- afraid
- angry or aggressive
- sad
- irritable
- frustrated
- depressed.

These feelings can sometimes produce physical symptoms, making you feel even worse.

## HOW YOUR BODY MIGHT REACT

- headaches
- nausea
- indigestion
- digestive problems such as constipation, bloating or diarrhea
- shallow breathing or hyperventilating
- sweating
- heart palpitations
- aches and pains.

# STRESS AND SELF AWARENESS

## WHO IS AFFECTED?

All of us can probably recognise some of the feelings described above. Some people seem to be more affected by stress than others. For some people, getting out of the door on time each morning can be a very stressful experience, whereas others may be less affected with a great deal of pressure.

Some people are more likely to experience stressful situations than others. For example:

- people with a lot of debt or financial insecurity are more likely to be stressed about money
- people from minority ethnic groups or who are LGBTIQ+ are more likely to be stressed about prejudice or discrimination
- people with disabilities or long-term health conditions are more likely to be stressed about their health or about stigma associated with their condition.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF

- Recognize when stress is a problem
- Think about where you can make changes
- Build supportive relationships
- Eat healthily
- Be aware of your smoking and drinking
- Get some exercise
- Take time out
- Be mindful and practice meditation
- Get some restful sleep
- Be kind to yourself
- Get professional help when needed

# DE-STRESS CHECKLIST

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS TO INSTANTLY DE-STRESS

- Did you get 8 hours of well rested sleep last night
- When was the last time you ate something nutritious
- Will this matter by next year?
- When was the last time you were alone with your thoughts
- Have you been outside today?
- Are you placing unrealistic expectations on yourself
- Is there something you can learn from this experience ?
- Will you miss this moment in the future?

# SELF AWARENESS

## WHAT IS SELF AWARENESS

Psychologists Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund proposed this definition:

"Self-awareness is the ability to focus on yourself and how your actions, thoughts, or emotions do or don't align with your internal standards. If you're highly self-aware, you can objectively evaluate yourself, manage your emotions, align your behavior with your values, and understand correctly how others perceive you."

## WHY IS SELF AWARENESS NEEDED?

Do you want to be happier, have more influence, be a better decision-maker, and be a more effective leader? Self-awareness, then, is the most important muscle you need to develop. It's what will keep you on target to be the best version of yourself and the best leader you can be.

## BENEFITS OF SELF AWARENESS

- It gives us the power to influence outcomes
- It helps us to become better decision-makers It gives us more self-confidence — so, as a result, we communicate with clarity and intention
- It allows us to understand things from multiple perspectives
- It frees us from our assumptions and biases
- It helps us build better relationships
- It gives us a greater ability to regulate our emotions
- It decreases stress
- It makes us happier

# SELF AWARENESS CHECK IN



## Your Thoughts

How do you explain and think about what happens to you? What's your self-talk like?



## Your Emotions

How well do you understand your own emotions and moods? Do you observe and try to understand your emotions or do you react impulsively to them?



## Your Behaviors

Are you aware of why you tend to act in certain situations the same way? What types of events trigger you?

# IMPROVE SELF AWARENESS

Reflect on your thoughts

Create a timeline of your life

Pay attention to what bothers you about others

Reflect on your thoughts

Create a timeline of your life

# SELF AWARENESS HAPPINESS ASSESSMENT

USING 3 VERBS,, DESCRIBE THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BECOME

---

---

---

WHAT TYPE OF PERSON YOU ARE TODAY?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

I AM HAPPIEST WHEN I :

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

I AM MOST UNHAPPY WHEN I :

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1 PERSON THAT MAKES ME FEEL MOTIVATED AND INSPIRED:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3 THINGS THAT INSTANTLY PUT ME IN A GOOD MOOD:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3 THINGS THAT MAKE ME LAUGH :

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---