

S4 Steps to Success

Blog: Identifying and Managing Stress



Hi, I'm Jack Development Worker and Student Volunteer Coordinator here at LIFT OFF. Welcome to the first blog in our 'S4 Steps to Success' series – Identifying and Managing Stress.

Many of us experience stress in life and this can be profoundly unpleasant, having a serious effect on our health and our work. However, it is possible to manage stress if you use the right tools and techniques.

So...what is stress? When we are faced with a challenge or threat, our body reacts before our consciousness – the fight-or-flight reaction is automatically switched on! Understanding the types of and sources of stress – short term and long term, internal and external – is an important part of stress management.



Stress can affect you mentally: poor memory and cognition; negative thinking; changes in mood; anxiety, nervousness and constantly worrying; poor judgement and decision making. There are also physical signs of stress: changes in appetite; changes in sleeping habits; nervous habits and behaviours; muscle aches and stiffness; frequent or recurring illness; obsessive behaviours and developing new fears. The lists above are some examples of stressors and it is important that you take time to consider common stressors and how they affect you.

Remember these stress management tips and tricks are for guidance only, and you should take the advice of qualified health professionals if they have any concerns over stress-related illnesses or if stress is causing significant or persistent unhappiness.

You can also speak to guidance staff at your school.

Identifying and Managing Stress

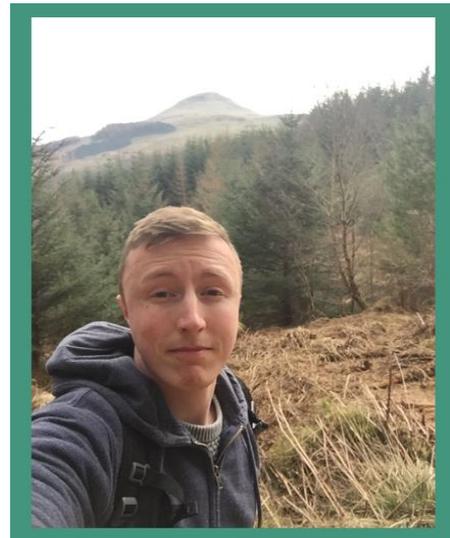
Know your stressors

Recognising a problem is the first step towards solving it!

It is therefore important to identify the warning signs of stress and how to manage them. You can do this by developing strategies for example writing a list of the situations, concerns or challenges that trigger your stress response. Have a look at your list, what do you notice? Most people will notice that some of your stressors are events that happen to you while others seem to originate from within (referred to as external and internal stressors). By visualising a challenge and how you will manage it, will train your mind and body how to react.

Here are some tips and tricks to stress management:

- Practice mindfulness / Positive thinking
- Stay physically activity and eat whole foods – what you eat can improve or hinder the effects of stress. Get outdoors and explore new places >>>
- Learn to embrace change and take things in stride.
- Manage your time – your workload can cause stress, if you don't manage your time well (Graham (LIFT OFF Development Worker) will soon publish a 'Time Management' blog for our S4 Steps to Success series).



As you identify stressors and develop effective stress management strategies you will learn how to cope with change and build resilience, so that you can overcome setbacks.



#StressAwarenessMonth