

Parent Wellbeing Tip Sheet



Stress Relief and Relaxation

Stress is a necessary part of life. It can help you to learn, prioritise and be creative. However, if stress becomes overwhelming it can be very harmful. Extreme stress triggers your "fight or flight" response. This response can be lifesaving in emergency situations, but when constantly activated by the stresses of everyday life it can wear you down both physically and mentally. The easiest way to manage stress is to learn and practise relaxation techniques.

These are some simple tips to follow:

- There is no one relaxation method that covers every circumstance. Consider your specific need and mood and tailor your relaxation technique accordingly.
- If you are angry or agitated, try deep breathing exercises.
 - Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
 - Breathe through your nose and from your abdomen. Inhale as much air as possible. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
 - Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- If you are depressed or withdrawn, try rhythmic exercise.
 - This includes running, walking and cycling.
 - Make sure you are engaged in the present, do not think about the past, future or anything else while you exercise.
- For more relaxation techniques follow the link below:
http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_relief_meditation_yoga_relaxation.htm
- Try to set aside at least 10 to 20 minutes a day to practice these relaxation techniques. If possible aim for 30 minutes to an hour.
- Remember that many of these techniques can be incorporated into your existing routine.