



Building Resilience

A simple guide to help you feel calm, centred and in control.





When you're feeling stressed, anxious or overwhelmed, it's easy to focus on what's missing from your life, and consequently fall into patterns of feeling stuck or helpless.

The Building Resilience program by MediHerb® has been specially designed to help you work with your healthcare practitioner to build on your existing strengths, develop new ones and improve your ability to cope when times are tough.

This empowering program also includes helpful information and lifestyle strategies to help you better manage stress, anxiety, insomnia and related issues.

Contents

4	What is Stress
8	What is Anxiety
12	Building Resilience
22	The Role of Sleep in Stress, Anxiety and Resilience
25	Further Assistance

Important

The information in this booklet has been specially designed for use under the guidance of a suitably qualified healthcare professional and is not suitable for everyone. Your practitioner will determine which parts of this program are suitable for you and which need to be modified for your personal circumstances.



What is Stress?

Stress is normal and often healthy. In everyday life, stress plays a role in alerting us to life's occasional dangers and challenges, so we can prepare ourselves for them and find solutions to impending problems.

Stress is the body's natural way of responding to demands and pressures. In days long gone, it was our defence mechanism against danger and predators. Our 'fight or flight' mechanism, brought on by changes to hormones released by the body, tells us how to respond to the stress. We either confront the danger or escape it. Too much stress or prolonged stress can trigger physical, emotional or mental symptoms e.g. muscle tension, mood swings or racing thoughts.

Negative stress is a feeling of being overwhelmed and unable to cope with demands. These demands can be external (e.g. related to finances, work, relationships) or internal (e.g. illness, or a medical procedure).

For example, having a family and running a household can feel stressful and even chaotic at times. Trying to multi-task between kids, your spouse and work can add up and leave you feeling overwhelmed and even anxious at times.


We can deal with negative stress by incorporating self-management tips and speaking with a healthcare practitioner, who can guide and support us.

What's Causing Your Stress?

Stress can be triggered by a vast number of different issues. Some are short-term (acute) problems, while others are long-term (chronic).

Below is a list of some of the most common causes of stress. Use it to rate the relative impact of those you're currently dealing with, and those that have impacted you in the past, then discuss your ratings with your practitioner.

Your Sources of Stress

 Source of stress	Current impact 0 = not at all stressful 5 = extremely stressful	Previous impact 0 = not at all stressful 5 = extremely stressful
Work stress		
School or study pressures		
Financial difficulties		
Relationship problems (partner, family, friends, others)		
Feeling isolated or lonely		
Caring for children or other loved ones		
Coping with life changes (e.g. moving home, losing your job, preparing for a child)		
Grieving and bereavement		
Chronic and/or painful health problems		
Other: Insert your own as needed		

Coping with Stress

Under normal circumstances, your body and mind rely on several mechanisms that help you cope with stress and recover from stressful circumstances. This is called adaptation and is a normal and healthy response to the stressful events we all encounter from time to time.

However, when stress is severe, cumulative (caused by multiple issues piling up on top of each other), or present for a long period of time, your ability to cope with or recover from it may be compromised.



Other factors that may have a negative effect on your ability to cope with and bounce back from stress include:



Being in less than optimal health



Inappropriate diet and lifestyle habits i.e. excess alcohol or caffeine, lack of wholefoods and exercise



Not having strong coping skills and strategies to draw on when you need them*







*Refer to the Resilience Toolkit on page 13 for tips

What are Your Stress Symptoms?

Stress affects all of us in different ways and can cause a vast number of different symptoms.

Use the checklist below to identify those that are most relevant for you, then review them with your practitioner at your next appointment.

Your Stress Symptoms

 Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Excess nervous energy<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension, headaches or grinding of teeth<input type="checkbox"/> Indigestion (heartburn), nausea or vomiting<input type="checkbox"/> Change in bowel motions (e.g. diarrhoea, constipation or both)<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in libido or sexual performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Exacerbation of menstrual or menopausal symptoms<input type="checkbox"/> Palpitations (racing heart)<input type="checkbox"/> Increased susceptibility to infections e.g. colds or flu<input type="checkbox"/> General feeling of being run down, or fatigue
 Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Short temper or feelings of anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Irritability, mood swings or low moods
 Mental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Poor self-esteem or self-confidence<input type="checkbox"/> Racing thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Forgetfulness, or inability to concentrate<input type="checkbox"/> Making bad decisions (poor judgement) or pessimistic outlook
 Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Appetite changes (increased or decreased)<input type="checkbox"/> Food cravings (e.g. sugar, chocolate, carbohydrates, salt or fat)<input type="checkbox"/> Increased use of alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes or drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Tendency to work overly long hours<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal from social situations and relationships<input type="checkbox"/> Changes to sleeping habits or exercise routine

Other:



What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal and often healthy emotion.

However, when you feel that levels of anxiety have become disproportionate and are characterised by continuous worry, fear, nervousness and apprehension it might become a disorder that requires further intervention.

For example, you may become short of breath and break out in a sweat for reasons that may be known or unknown to you.

If you feel that anxiety is having a negative impact on your life, speak to your healthcare practitioner. Additionally, the following pages provide useful tips to implement and help you to develop better coping mechanisms.

However, anxiety can be a problem if:



It occurs on most days of the week, or frequently over several months



The level of distress you experience is out of proportion to your circumstances



It occurs even when there's no objective reason for you to be worried



It prevents you from carrying out your day-to-day activities, engaging with others, solving problems or making appropriate and well-considered decisions

References

Rose M, Devine, J. Dialogues Clin Neurosci, 2014;16(2):197-211
Coles, M.E. et al. Current Psychiatry Reports, 2015;17:73

Beyond Blue. Anxiety disorders: fact sheet 21. 2009
Nechita, D. et al. Rom J Morphol Embryol, 2018;59(4):1045-1051

Types of Anxiety (and related symptoms)



Generalised anxiety disorder

Worries are pervasive (covering a wide range of issues and circumstances) and persist for a long time



Obsessive-compulsive disorder

Experiencing intrusive thoughts (obsessions) that make you feel the need to engage in certain rituals (compulsions) to relieve anxiety, sometimes repeatedly



Panic disorder

Characterised by intense, uncontrollable symptoms of anxiety



Specific phobias

A severe fear of specific items (e.g. spiders) or activities (e.g. flying)



Social phobias

Characterised by extreme fear of criticism and humiliation, often leading to social withdrawal



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Occurs after a major emotional shock or trauma

If you think any of these symptoms apply to you please consult your healthcare practitioner.

Tip: The Building Resilience Toolkit in the following pages can provide further inspiration and guidance.

"I change my thoughts;
I change my world."

Norman Vincent Peale

References

Beyond Blue. Anxiety disorders: fact sheet 21. 2009
National Health Service (UK). Overview: generalised anxiety disorder in adults. Published 2018 and accessed April 2019 from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder>



What's Contributing to Your Anxiety?

The causes of anxiety haven't been fully determined. However, we do know that it isn't usually due to a single isolated cause, but instead can be contributed to or triggered by a combination of factors, which can include*:



Ongoing stress



Caffeine



Having a family history of mental health or anxiety problems



Nutritional deficiencies or imbalances



Imbalances in brain chemistry (e.g. the neurotransmitters serotonin and noradrenaline, which are involved in regulating moods)



Certain personality traits, such as poor self-esteem, shyness, perfectionism, or having a tendency towards pessimism



Physical health problems or chronic illness



Substance abuse (e.g. drugs, alcohol) and/or withdrawal from such substances

References

Beyond Blue. Anxiety disorders: fact sheet 21. 2009

Nechita, D. et al. Rom J Morphol Embryol, 2018;59(4):1045-1051

National Health Service (UK). Overview: generalised anxiety disorder in adults. Published 2018 and accessed April 2019 from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/>

What are Your Anxiety Symptoms?

Anxiety can cause a wide variety of feelings and symptoms. Use the checklist below to identify those you tend to experience and talk to your healthcare practitioner about them at your next appointment.

Your Anxiety Symptoms

 Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Palpitations (a racing heart), or feelings of tightness in the chest<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in body temperature (e.g. hot and cold flushes), sometimes with excessive sweating<input type="checkbox"/> Rapid breathing or shortness of breath<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Stomach pain, nausea or vomiting<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension (e.g. in shoulders, neck, back or jaw) or headaches<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling dizzy or shaky<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling ungrounded or disconnected from your surroundings
 Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Fear, worry or panic (or panic attacks)<input type="checkbox"/> Dread (the sense that something terrible is going to happen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelm<input type="checkbox"/> Nervousness, tension or edginess<input type="checkbox"/> Catastrophising (focusing on the worst-case scenario)
 Mental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Obsessive thinking (constantly going over things in your mind)<input type="checkbox"/> Intrusive thoughts (being unable to quiet unwanted thoughts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing flashbacks or dreams of past trauma<input type="checkbox"/> Negative or fearful self-talk<input type="checkbox"/> Concentration difficulties (inability to focus)
 Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive behaviour<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawing from situations that tend to make you feel anxious or on edge<input type="checkbox"/> A tendency to startle easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawing from people or social situations<input type="checkbox"/> Having difficulty making decisions

Other:

Building Resilience

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to prevent, minimise or overcome the effects of adversity.

Like many other aspects of health and well-being, your level of resilience is not set in stone. Instead, think of it as a toolkit you have access to during times of stress, anxiety or hardship.



“I make mindful
choices every day”

What's in Your Resilience Toolkit?

You already have a unique set of tools in your resilience toolkit, which can be summed up as:

- ✓ Your personal strengths and characteristics ('I AM...')
- ✓ Your skills and know-how ('I CAN...')
- ✓ The external resources available to you ('I HAVE...')

Here are some examples for each category. Which ones do you already have in your toolkit, and what would you like to add to them?

'I AM...' (Examples of personal strengths that can be fortified or developed)	'I CAN...' (Examples of skills and know-how that can be practiced and learned)	'I HAVE...' (Examples of external resources available)
<input type="checkbox"/> Courageous <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent <input type="checkbox"/> Hardworking <input type="checkbox"/> Kind and respectful to myself <input type="checkbox"/> Self-disciplined	<input type="checkbox"/> Know when to ask for and accept help <input type="checkbox"/> Find ways to solve problems <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate well with significant people in my life <input type="checkbox"/> Control myself when I'm tempted to make a decision I'll regret	<input type="checkbox"/> People around me that I trust and who love me <input type="checkbox"/> An ongoing relationship with one or more health professionals I can turn to when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Support available from my community, family or peer group
Add your own: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Add your own: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Add your own: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

The tools in your resilience toolkit become stronger every time you use them, especially when they're woven together.

Talk to your practitioner about ways that you could combine your personal strengths, skills and external resources to help you cope during times of stress or anxiety, then list your ideas here to remind you what to do when you feel stressed or experience a setback.

For example: When I feel tempted to overeat due to stress, I'll use my self-discipline [personal strength] to control my cravings [skill] and phone my counsellor for a check-in [external resources]

References

Grotberg, E. A guide to promoting resilience in children: strengthening the human spirit. Early Childhood Development: Practice & Reflections Number 8. Bernard van Leer Foundation, 1995.

Worsley, L. Building Resilience in Three Australian High Schools, Using the Resilience Doughnut Framework. In Resilience Interventions for Youth in Diverse Populations, (Eds, Prince-Embury, S. & Saklofske, D.H.) Springer Science and Business Media, New York, 2014.

A Resilient Lifestyle

A healthy, well-balanced and sustainable lifestyle enhances your ability to manage stress and anxiety and provides you with additional strategies to employ when faced with life's inevitable setbacks.

Below are just some of the many areas you might decide to focus on when it comes to creating a lifestyle that equips you to better manage stress and anxiety. Talk to your practitioner about which to prioritise over the long term and which to employ as a short-term measure when you're feeling under pressure.

Journalling

A gratitude journal may help to re-focus your attention on the positive aspects of your day. This way, your mind can be re-trained to concentrate less on feelings of stress and overwhelm.

Today I am grateful for...

Exercise Tips

Have a weekly household sports night in the backyard or local park; or a regular 15-30 minute post-dinner walk as a household or with friends or family that live locally.



My Resilience Strategies

Work with your healthcare practitioner to identify one to three strategies you'd like to focus on, from below. Once selected, create S.M.A.R.T. Goals to ensure your success! (Use the template on the following page).



My S.M.A.R.T. Goals Template

Taking a strategic and mindful approach to setting goals will help to ensure you meet them, so work with your healthcare practitioner to ensure your goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based (S.M.A.R.T.).

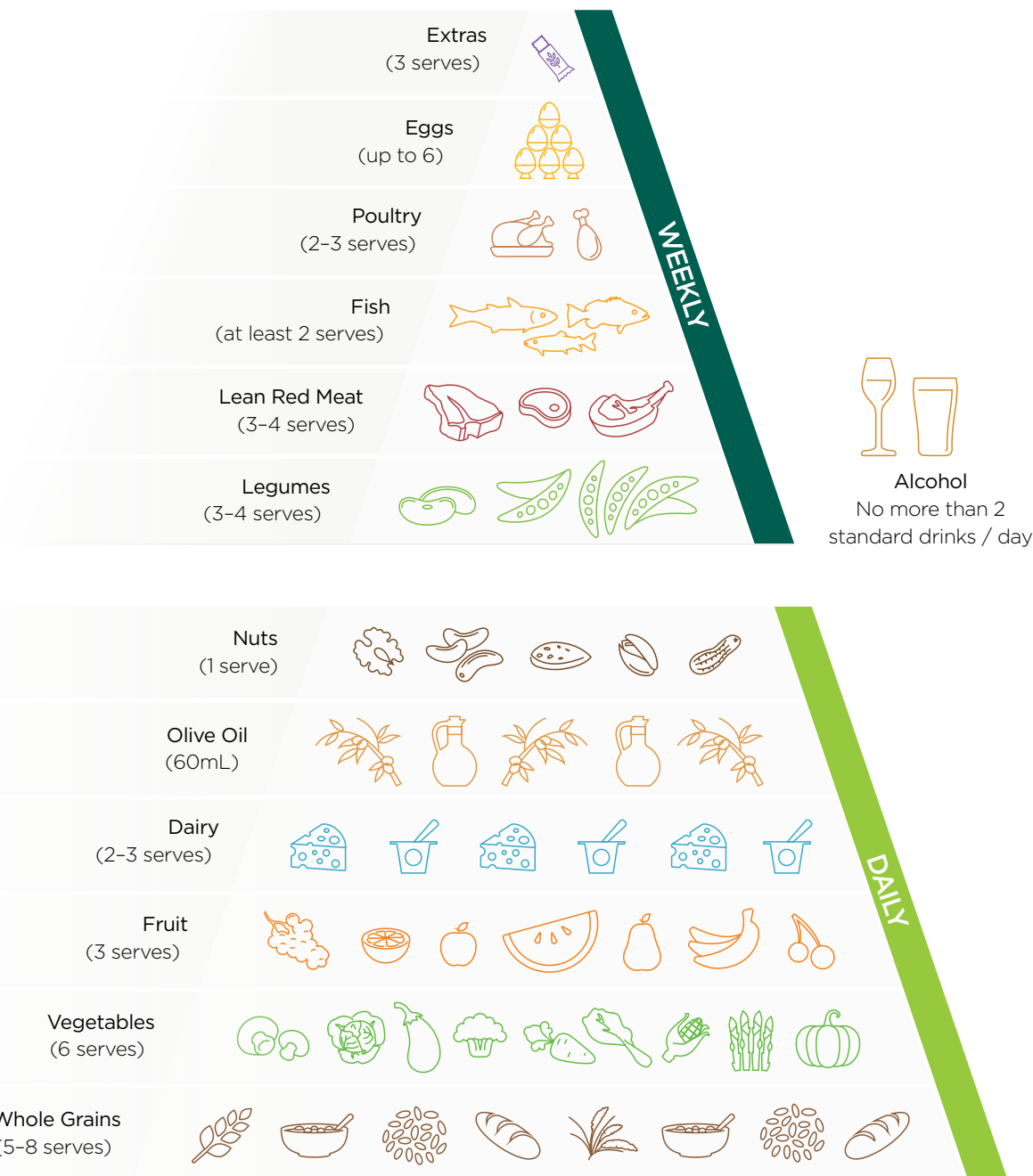
An example you could use would be to attend my Pilates class for 30 minutes a day, three times a week for the next 6 weeks.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals	
S. Specific	What exactly do I want to do? i.e. I will Join a Pilates class
M. Measurable	How will I track my progress? e.g. I will write it in my journal that I attended 3 x a week.
A. Attainable	Is this realistic for me? Should I ask for more support from my healthcare practitioner?
R. Relevant	Why am I doing this? Does it matter to me? e.g. This is going to help me sleep more soundly.
T. Time-based	When will I have this goal completed? e.g. In 6 weeks.

Nourish with Food

Food is your fuel. Strengthen your body with the correct food and nutrients to lay the foundation for a healthier nervous system, brain and body.

Your healthcare practitioner may advise you follow the ModiMed Diet to ensure you're using a research-based approach to help improve mood and resilience. Below you'll find the ModiMed food pyramid outlining simple recommendations for your diet. This easy-to-use guide shows what a daily and weekly intake could look like. Speak to your practitioner to personalise it for your specific needs.



Brain Boosters & Busters

How does your diet affect, enhance or inhibit your brain-power, moods and stress-coping ability?



BOOSTERS



Have an Avocado

They're a power house of nutrients including B vitamins, magnesium and good fats that help keep you feeling satisfied



Oily Goodness

Good fats such as Omega-3 are essential for a healthy mood. Try sardines, almonds, chia or hemp seeds



Bring on the Berries

The perfect snack, rich in antioxidants to help you think clearly



Go Nuts for Nuts

They're packed with the building blocks e.g. food fats, protein and vitamins, that promote a feeling of calm



BUSTERS



Processed Foods

Artificial additives can affect mood and behaviour in both adults and children



Fatty & Fried Fast Foods

Unhealthy fats can increase feelings of stress due to the cellular damage they cause



Caffeine

Limit coffee and caffeinated drinks, which can increase feelings of nervousness and a racing heart



Alcohol

Too much can make you feel fatigued, add to stress and disrupt your sleep

Tip

Choose a wide array of colourful vegetables to ensure an optimal variety of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.



Nourish with Nutrients



B Vitamins

B vitamins help support a healthy nervous system and improve energy levels. If levels of these vital nutrients are low, symptoms such as low mood, headaches, poor concentration and irritability may occur.



Magnesium

Magnesium is an essential mineral that cannot be made by your body. When stressed, the body uses higher amounts of magnesium, so replenishing these stores is vital. Some of the benefits include increased cellular energy production, reduced feelings of anxiety, and it provides support for muscular cramps and tension.



Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential fats, that we need to obtain from our diets as our bodies can't produce them. These good fats can help to reduce anxiety, reduce the frequency of mood swings and help with improving sleep.

Your Building Resilience Shopping List

	Fruit	Vegetables	Meat / Poultry	Seafood	Nuts	Seeds	Dairy & Eggs
Magnesium	Avocados	Spinach	Red Meat		Almonds	Sunflower	Eggs
	Kiwifruit	Leafy green vegetables	Chicken		Cashews	Sesame	Goat's milk
	Blackberries	Parsley	Liver		Brazil nuts		
	Raspberries	Cabbage	Turkey		Hazelnuts		
	Passionfruit	Green Beans			Walnuts		
	Bananas						
B Vitamins	Passionfruit	Broccoli	Chicken	Salmon	Cashews	Sunflower	Eggs
		Mushrooms	Turkey	Sardines	Peanuts	Sesame	Cheese
		Eggplant		Anchovies	Almonds		
		Silverbeet		Tuna			
		Spinach		White fish			
		Cabbage					
Omega 3 Fatty Acids	Avocados			Salmon	Walnuts	Chia	
				Tuna	Almonds	Flaxseeds	
				Sardines	Brazil nuts	Hemp	
				Mackerel			
Tryptophan			Turkey		Almonds	Sunflower	Eggs
			Red meat		Cashews	Sesame	Cheese
			Chicken		Brazil nuts		
					Hazelnuts		
Zinc	Tomatoes	Spinach	Turkey	Oysters	Brazil nuts	Sunflower	Eggs
		Mushrooms	Red meat		Almonds	Sesame	Cheese
		Green peas	Chicken		Cashew		
		Parsley	Duck		Walnuts		
Glycine			Turkey	Salmon	Almonds		Eggs
			Red meat	Sardines	Cashews		Cow's and Goat's dairy products
			Chicken	Anchovies	Brazil		
			Duck	Tuna	Hazelnuts		
				White fish	Walnut		

Note: Speak to your healthcare practitioner to determine which foods are right for you.

Nourish with Herbs

Kava and Passionflower

These herbs calm the mind and body, whilst reducing symptoms of irritability and anxiety.



Lemon Balm, Lavender and Zizyphus

Used in times of emotional stress, nervous fatigue and/or anxiety. These herbs can help improve sleep quality.

Withania and Gynostemma

Withania is used traditionally for improving energy levels, reducing physical stress and promoting resilience. Gynostemma is a rejuvenating tonic that supports overall health.



Rehmannia

Helps support the adrenal glands in times of stress. The adrenal glands play many roles within the body, primarily responsible for producing adrenaline and cortisol, which can become burdened in times of stress.

Rhodiola, Schisandra and Siberian Ginseng

A potent group of herbs for improving the body's ability to adapt to stress. Rhodiola promotes vitality. Schisandra supports the nervous system and may help low mood. Siberian Ginseng can act as a tonic to improve mental focus and physical performance.



Supportive Herbal Teas

Dried herbs can be blended to make a tea, which is the perfect way to help you feel calm, whilst increasing your fluid intake too.

Talk to your healthcare practitioner to know which herbs would suit you as a tea!

Your healthcare practitioner can assist you with formulating a herbal blend based on your current needs. This ensures that you are using high quality products that help you to achieve optimal health.

The Role of Sleep in Stress, Anxiety and Resilience

In a vicious cycle, stress and anxiety can both contribute to and be caused or exacerbated by poor quality sleep.

Among many other functions, sleep is essential for refreshing both the mind and the body, building up the mental, emotional and physical energy you need to get through each day. That's why forming healthy sleeping patterns is an integral aspect of the Building Resilience program.



Common Symptoms of Poor Sleep

- Finding it difficult to get to sleep
- Waking frequently
- Restless sleep
- Not allowing yourself time for adequate sleep (e.g. going to bed too late)
- Feeling unrested after sleeping
- Daytime fatigue or drowsiness

Your healthcare practitioner may prescribe some herbal and/or nutritional supplements to help your body and mind relax and ease into sleep, which should be taken as directed.

Did you know?

The average time to fall asleep is 20 minutes.



Setting Yourself Up for Healthy Sleep



A Regular Bedtime

Choose a regular time to go to bed, ensuring you're getting at least 7-9 hours sleep (children may need up to 13 hours dependent on age). Tip: set a reminder for when to go to bed.



Journaling

Jot down your worries, thoughts and to-do list before going to bed to help prevent over-thinking and the 2 am 'to-do list' thoughts from waking you. Don't forget to write in your gratitude journal too!



Avoid Stimulants

Stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine, exercise and even eating can disrupt your sleep cycle. Therefore, avoid these activities in the lead up to bedtime.



Unplug

Avoid TV, tablets, PCs or smartphones in the evening, as the 'blue light' disrupts your circadian rhythm, which is your sleep cycle. This is known as chrono-disruption. Other causes include shift work and jet lag. This may lead to detrimental effects to health in the long-term.



Keep Cool

A well ventilated room aides sleep. Ensure it is quiet and dark. Tip: Use fans, block-out curtains, white noise machines or other devices to create the perfect ambience.



Develop an Evening Ritual

Repetition will train your body to relax and prepare for sleep. Shower, drink a herbal tea or read a book as you ease into bedtime.



Naps

If they occur, limit to 20-30 minutes, which is enough to boost your mood and alertness but not enough to disrupt your circadian rhythm.






References

National Sleep Foundation. Sleep hygiene. Published 2019 and accessed April 2019 from: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene>

Your Healthy Sleep Tracker

Utilise this daily tracker to develop new, healthy habits to improve the quality of your sleep. Ask your healthcare practitioner which habits they'd recommend you focus on.

Remember to bring this tracker to your appointments so your healthcare practitioner can provide valuable feedback, guidance and motivation. New habits take time to form, so see each day as an opportunity for positive change the Building Resilience program.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 <p>I unplugged from technology this evening</p>							
 <p>I followed my evening ritual</p>							
 <p>I went to bed on time</p>							
 <p>I avoided the foods, drinks and habits that affect me adversely</p>							
 <p>Number of hours of sleep</p>							
Other habits							

Practitioner Recommendations:

Further Assistance

Important: In an emergency or crisis, call "000" for immediate assistance, contact your local mental health crisis service or go to your local hospital emergency department.

Other resources that may help include:

Lifeline – Crisis care and suicide prevention
www.lifeline.org.au | 13 11 14

Beyondblue – Support for anxiety and depression
beyondblue.org.au | 1300 224 636

Head to Health – Government directory of online mental health resources
headtohealth.gov.au

Headspace – Mental health support for 12-25-year olds
headspace.org.au

Heads up – Mental health in the workplace
headsup.org.au

This way up – Courses on stress management, mindfulness, healthy sleep etc.
thiswayup.org.au

Raising Children Network – An Australian website supported by the Government, with up-to-date information for supporting parents and their children
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Black Dog Institute – Mental health research and resources across the lifespan
www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

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