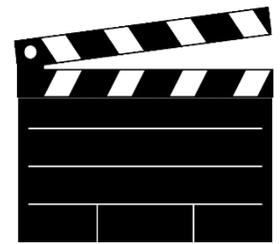


MANAGING STRESS: CALMING OUR ACTIONS



Chronic stress has a significant impact on our actions and behaviour.

We might act in the following ways:

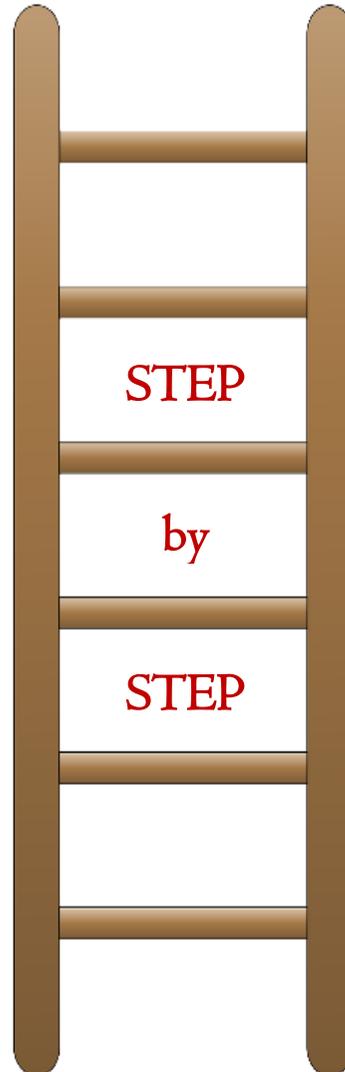
- Avoiding going to places.
- Reducing the time we spend socialising with others.
- Withdrawing from situations.
- Becoming disorganised.
- Spending time procrastinating.
- Delaying making a decision or taking responsibility.
- Taking on too many tasks at once.

Stress-based actions can make us feel better in the short-term, but compromise our mental health in the long-term.

They reinforce & maintain our anxiety. They put strains on our relationships with others.

Our self-esteem & confidence deteriorate.

We become preoccupied with what we aren't doing or what we feel we can't do.



How can we respond in calm and healthy ways?

Construct a positive daily routine

Track how you feel throughout the day and give each hour or activity a stress rating of 1 - 10. Use calming strategies (e.g. exercise, breathing, 54321 grounding) for the worst times.

Schedule things you enjoy (e.g. reading in the bath, revisiting a favourite TV show) to help you feel relaxed and fulfilled.

Do you need "worry time" in the evening to contain anxiety?

Slow down and prioritise

Make a small number of specific goals with "To do" lists.

Consider what you "must do" in a given day - you might feel good when you complete the worst thing first.

The "should do" items are bonuses, but they can be deferred.

Focus on results, rather than how much time you spend.

Face your fears with a plan

Define the problem and clarify what you want to work towards. It should be something you feel is achievable.

Break up the plan into small steps. You might do something you have been avoiding for just 1 minute, then 2 mins, then 5, etc.

Review the plan - what worked well and what can you change?