

WENDY

# STRESS

## DO YOU EVER SAY TO YOURSELF

*I'm so tired, yet I get enough sleep.*

*I don't know what is wrong with me. I should be happy.*

*Other people seem to cope, why can't I?*

People who are under a lot of stress and adapting to new situations often have feelings similar to these.

If we feel down or depressed, there could be a lot of valid reasons why. It does not mean there is something wrong with us, it may just mean that we are in a situation that is difficult to cope with.

Daily life creates stress. We have to learn how to recognize it and cope with it.

## FEELINGS EXPERIENCED WHEN STRESSED

### Physical feelings

headaches, back and muscular pain, loss or gain of appetite, change of sleep patterns

### Emotional feelings

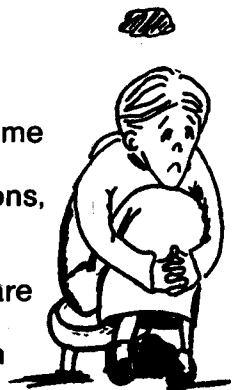
*Depression* — because we feel we are not coping, cannot create change etc., we become critical of ourselves

*Tension* — can be from being in new situations, not having someone to share feelings with, frustrations etc. Often tension is expressed through anger — even against people who are not the cause, such as children

*Avoidance and denial* — ignoring a problem causes more stress

*Guilt* — feeling inadequate for not coping better

*Giving up* — feeling there is no solution. After experiencing stress for a long time, it is easy to blame ourselves for our problems

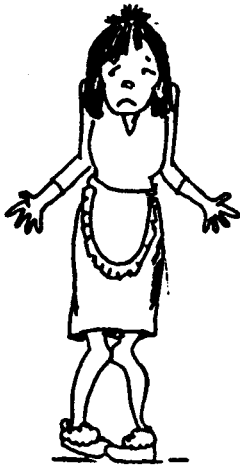


If we experience these feelings, we could find ways to reduce stress. Talking to a friend or counsellor about stressful events could also help.

## REASONS WHY WE FEEL STRESS

**When** we are in a new environment, it can cause a lot of stress such as — transportation; language difficulties; no support from family, friends; don't know where to get assistance; sometimes we immigrate because of family need rather than our own. This could put us in a situation where we have no control and are unhappy.

### OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS



- being in an unhappy relationship
- roles change within family, eg man may not be money earner
- feeling helpless to change how family members treat us
- difficulty in making new friends
- having to depend on others who speak English or French
- others don't understand and discount how we feel
- others may know us well but we cannot confide our real feelings

### OUR WORK SITUATION

- non-recognition of education and skills acquired in our native country
- being unemployed — because of language, no local experience, cannot apply known skills in Canada
- having a job that is physically stressful eg. heavy lifting
- working with loud noise, dangerous machinery or substances
- having a job that is emotionally stressful eg. a job we would not ideally choose, having people see us as inferior because of the work we do, coping with racism
- if employed — conflict due to not fulfilling mother role adequately, specially if child has problems
- having to leave children without adequate daycare

**All** these reasons, and many more can change the way we feel and think. Sometimes, because we cannot recognise our changed feelings and behaviour, we think there must be something wrong with us. In fact, we may be suffering from stress that we do not know how to cope with yet.

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# MENTAL ILLNESS AND STRESS

**B**ecause we experience stress, it does not mean we are mentally ill.

Severe stress that is experienced over a long time can result in mental illness.

However, most people who are stressed from immigration, change of jobs, unemployment, etc., are in need of finding new ways of coping with stress.

## SOME SUGGESTIONS TO CHANGE STRESS

### Make a plan of action.

- try to identify the root of the problem
- whenever possible, make a plan to get change
- put plan into practice
- choose one thing at a time to change
- start out by setting small goals eg. joining a group, learning more English, or other language used in area
- if unable to change source of stress, work out a way of coping with it

## SOME SUGGESTIONS TO COPE WITH STRESS

- recognise that we are not to blame for all our problems many come from outside
- feel good about our own values and recognize our strengths
- if possible, express anger and frustration at the cause
- foster good friendships with other women — women who we really can talk with
- join a group — it is a good place to meet friends
- avoid depending on alcohol, drugs, and caffeine
- if taking medical drugs, we should also have counselling to help us cope with stress without medication
- exercise — such as walking or joining an exercise class in the community



## WHERE TO GO IF STRESS PERSISTS

a counsellor  
a doctor

## RESOURCES

**Mental Health Service**

**734-7626**

**Strathcona Community Care Team**

**253-4401**

223 Heatley St, Vanc. B.C.

**SUCCESS**

**253-5561**

449 E Hastings St, Vanc. B.C.

# 壓力

「我很煩悶，沒心情做任何事，却不知原因何在!？」

一個面對新環境或生活壓力下的人，往往存着以上的感受，這可也是你的心聲呢？

可能我們遇到種種原因，令情緒低落或沮喪，但這並不代表我們軟弱無力，卻意味着我們正處於一個難以應付的情勢，所以我們必須學習分辨出日常生活所構成的壓力，並加以適當的處理。

## 壓力所帶來的影響

### 身體上的變化

一頭痛、背痛、肌肉酸痛、食慾不振或暴食、睡眠失調等。

### 情緒上的變化

- 一沮喪 —— 因無法處理或改變現狀，而認為自己一無是處。
- 一情緒緊張 —— 陌生的環境，缺乏傾訴的對象等，往往導致脾氣暴躁；甚至一些與事情無關的人，如兒女，也成為發洩的對象。
- 一逃避現實 —— 否認問題的存在，只會加重壓力。
- 一自疚感 —— 因不能妥善地處理問題，而怪責自己無用。
- 一放棄 —— 長期生活在壓力下，很容易會把問題的責任推在自己身上，認為與其無結果，不如放棄。



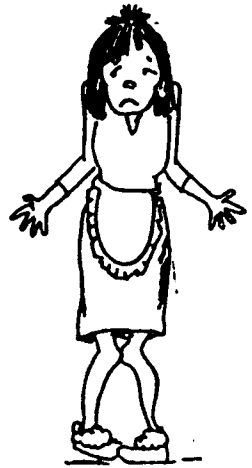
當我們經歷到以上的感受時，應與摯友或輔導員傾談，並尋求解決之法。

## 壓力的成因

新環境新事物，往往對我們構成壓力，譬如因長途跋涉而覺舟車勞頓，言語不通，缺乏家庭及朋友精神上的扶持，不認識本地援助機構，甚至有些人移民的目的，單是為了家庭着想，卻忽略了顧及自己的需要——如此種種原因，足以令我們處於一個毫無自主的地步，怪不得我們會終日悶悶不樂。

### 人際關係

- 不愉快的人際關係。
- 在家庭中所擔任的角色與以前不同，如丈夫可能已不再是肩負家庭擔子的人。
- 無法改變家人對我們的態度及行爲。
- 缺乏交友的技巧。
- 不諳英語或法語，故必須依賴別人。
- 別人對於我們的感受不但不體恤，反倒輕忽。
- 儘管有熟識的朋友，但不能盡訴心中事。



### 工作環境

- 以前所受的教育及訓練，在本地得不到認可。
- 由於語言問題或缺乏本地經驗，所擁有的技能不適用於新環境，只好無奈地加入失業行列。
- 工作過於勞碌而沒有趣味，如工夫艱巨粗重、環境嘈雜、須操作危險機器或物品等。
- 工作帶來沉重的精神壓力——有些工作我們是因情勢所逼才做的，加上職位低微而被人瞧不起，種族歧視因素等，而令情況更加惡劣。
- 一些身為人母的，更因管教兒女方法等問題而成爲被指責的對象。
- 雖願意盡力給與兒女充分照顧，卻事與願違。

以上的各種因素，足以改變我們的思想與感受。直接影響到身體健康，更能導致長期的心理挫折、憂鬱及對生活喪失興趣。不少時候，我們因一時未能察覺自己感情或行爲上的改變，而誤以爲自己有問題。事實上，我們可能只是活在壓力之下，而不曉得如何處理。

## 壓力與精神困擾

我們感到處於壓力下，並不代表我們精神受困擾。然而，長期處於各方面壓力下，卻會引致精神困擾。受到移民、工作轉變、失業等壓力的人，必須找尋新的方法加以應付。

### 改變壓力的建議方法

實踐以下行動：

- 尋找問題的根源
- 在可能的情况下，作改變的計劃
- 將計劃付諸實行
- 不要操之過急，應按步就班，把問題一一解決
- 在初期定下一些較易達到的目標，如參與小組活動、學習英語或當地之語言
- 若無法「改變」造成壓力的根源，應考慮「處理」之法

### 處理壓力的建議方法

- 明白到問題的起源可能是來自外界，所以無須自責
- 勇於表明自己的立場，並賞識自己的長處
- 若可能的話，不妨對構成忿怒或不快之起源有所發洩
- 主動與知心投契的婦女建立更深摯的友誼，藉以取得關懷與支持。
- 參與小組活動，以結識更多朋友
- 避免依賴酒、咖啡、濃茶或葯物等來鬆弛自己
- 慣於依賴葯物的人，更應尋求輔導，找出問題的根源和解決方法，務求壓力可不葯而癒。
- 運動—— 散步、或參加社區體操班等，都是有益身心的活動。



對於處理延續性的壓力可請教：

- 輔導員
- 醫生

以下機構，亦可提供援助

Strathcona Community Care Team      223 Heatley St  
士達孔拿心理衛生局                      253-4401

SUCCESS                                      449 E Hastings St  
中僑互助會                                      253-5561