

## **Keeping Stress at Bay**

### **Step 1: Identifying the reasons**

These are some reasons young people give for feeling stressed:

- Exams
- Relationships
- Career
- Money
- Looks
- Home circumstances.

Which ones affect you? Add some of your own.

- What do you worry about most?
- Is something constantly on your mind?
- Does anything in particular make you sad or depressed?

### **Questionnaire**

(If you are lucky enough not to suffer from stress, answer these questions by interviewing someone else.)

When did your feelings of stress, tension or anxiety begin? Do your feelings relate to anything in particular like an event in your life or a circumstance that scares you?

Do you have physical symptoms along with your feelings of anxiety? What are they? Some possible symptoms of anxiety are given below:

- Brain - fatigue, aches and pains, crying spells, depression, anxiety attacks and broken sleep
- Gastrointestinal tract - ulcers, cramps and diarrhoea, colitis (inflammation of the colon) and irritable bowel syndrome
- Glandular system - thyroid gland malfunction (controls weight gain)
- Cardiovascular - high blood pressure, abnormal heartbeat
- Skin - itchy skin rashes
- Immune System - decreased resistance to infections.

Does anything make your anxiety better? Does anything make your anxiety worse?

### **Step 2: Talking**

Find someone you trust who will listen to you. Often, just talking to a friend or loved one is all that is needed to relieve anxiety. Most communities also have support groups and hotlines that can help. Some situations may benefit from the intervention of a social worker, psychologist or other mental health professional for therapy and medication.

### **Step 3: Clear your work place and clear your mind**

- Clear your work area and get rid of any distractions
- Sort your work paper into separate subjects
- File them in colour-coded files.

### **Step 4: Keep healthy**

- Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet
- Don't eat for comfort
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Limit caffeine and alcohol
- Don't use nicotine or so-called recreational drugs
- Learn and practise relaxation techniques like Dr Hamilton's visualisation technique, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, tai chi or meditation
- Take breaks from long spells of homework. Make sure you balance fun activities with your responsibilities. Spend time with people you enjoy being with.