Santa Paula Unified School District

Mental Health Matters

April 2025

National Stress Awareness Month

Is it stress or anxiety?

Life can be stressful—you may feel stressed about performance at school, traumatic events (such as a pandemic, a natural disaster, or an act of violence), or a life change. Everyone feels stress from time to time.

What is stress? Stress is the physical or mental response to an external cause, such as having a lot of homework or having an illness. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time.

What is anxiety? Anxiety is your body's reaction to stress and can occur even if there is no current threat.

If that anxiety doesn't go away and begins to interfere with your life, it could affect your health. You could experience problems with sleeping, or with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems. You also may be at higher risk for developing a mental illness such as an anxiety disorder or depression. Read more about anxiety disorders.

Stress vs. Anxiety

Stress	Both Stress and Anxiety	Anxiety
• Generally is a response to an external cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend. • Goes away once the situation is resolved. • Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.	Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as: • Excessive worry • Uneasiness • Tension • Headaches or body pain • High blood pressure • Loss of sleep	• Generally is internal, meaning it's your reaction to stress. • Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life. • Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.

It's important to manage your stress.

Everyone experiences stress, and sometimes that stress can feel overwhelming. You may be at risk for an anxiety disorder if it feels like you can't manage the stress and if the symptoms of your stress:

- Interfere with your everyday life.
- Cause you to avoid doing things.
- Seem to be always present.

Full article found at https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet

Need Mental Health Support?

OPTUM EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) OFFERS **FREE CONFIDENTIAL HELP**

Call toll-free

888-444-8624 any time

OR

Go to www.liveandworkwell.com and browse as a guest using code **CSEBO**



SPUSD

This newsletter is brought to you by the Mental Health Counselors:

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In case of an Emergency:

- **911 For Immediate Support**
- **Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 –(24 hours)**



Building your resilience

Build your connections

Prioritize relationships. Connecting with empathetic and understanding people can remind you that you're not alone in the midst of difficulties. Focus on finding trustworthy and compassionate individuals who validate your feelings, which will support the skill of resilience.

The pain of traumatic events can lead some people to isolate themselves, but it's important to accept help and support from those who care about you. Whether you go on a weekly date night with your spouse or plan a lunch out with a friend, try to prioritize genuinely connecting with people who care about you.

Join a group. Along with one-on-one relationships, some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based communities, or other local organizations provides social support and can help you reclaim hope. Research groups in your area that could offer you support and a sense of purpose or joy when you need it.

Foster wellness

Take care of your body. Self-care may be a popular buzzword, but it's also a legitimate practice for mental health and building resilience. That's because stress is just as much physical as it is emotional. Promoting positive lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, ample sleep, hydration, and regular exercise can strengthen your body to adapt to stress and reduce the toll of emotions like anxiety or depression.

Practice mindfulness. Mindful journaling, yoga, and other spiritual practices like prayer or meditation can also help people build connections and restore hope, which can prime them to deal with situations that require resilience. When you journal, meditate, or pray, ruminate on positive aspects of your life and recall the things you're grateful for, even during personal trials.

Avoid negative outlets. It may be tempting to mask your pain with alcohol, drugs, or other substances, but that's like putting a bandage on a deep wound. Focus instead on giving your body resources to manage stress, rather than seeking to eliminate the feeling of stress altogether.

Find purpose

Help others. Whether you volunteer with a local homeless shelter or simply support a friend in their own time of need, you can garner a sense of purpose, foster self-worth, connect with other people, and tangibly help others, all of which can empower you to grow in resilience.

Be proactive. It's helpful to acknowledge and accept your emotions during hard times, but it's also important to help you foster self-discovery by asking yourself, "What can I do about a problem in my life?" If the problems seem too big to tackle, break them down into manageable pieces.

For example, if you got laid off at work, you may not be able to convince your boss it was a mistake to let you go. But you can spend an hour each day developing your top strengths or working on your resume. Taking initiative will remind you that you can muster motivation and purpose even during stressful periods of your life, increasing the likelihood that you'll rise up during painful times again.

Full article found at https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/building-your-resilience