

# ALCDSB MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

October 2016

## How Stress affects your Health

**Stress can have far-ranging negative effects on your health. Learn what happens when you live with long-term stress.**

When stress grips your body, you know it. Your heart starts pounding, your muscles tense, your stomach feels tied in knots. Sometimes this response can be a good thing. It may help you escape from an attacker or win your tennis game. However, continued stress can have negative effects on your physical health.

**Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4: 6-7**



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## Stages and effects of Stress

Over 50 years ago, a scientist named Hans Selye recognized that stress was a major cause of illness. He broke the stress response into three stages, which he called the general adaptation syndrome. The **alarm stage** occurs when you are frightened or under threat. Your body goes on red alert, releasing stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These increase strength and concentration. Your heart speeds up, sending more blood and oxygen to your muscles so you can take quick action. -is “fight or flight” response can be lifesaving, but if it is prolonged it can take a toll on your body. The **resistance stage** occurs after the initial extreme reaction. Your body tries to adapt to the continued stress. If the stress passes, you can start to rebuild your defenses. If it becomes long-term, you move to the third stage. The **exhaustion stage** is the “burnout” or overload phase. Continued pounding by stress depletes your body’s reserves, which puts you at risk for disease. This sequence may happen in response to either a physical threat (such as being in a car accident) or an emotional one (such as being laid off from your job). Facing multiple long-term stressors piles extra strain on your system and can quickly lead to exhaustion.

### Regaining your Balance

If stress has taken over your life, it’s time to regain some control. Your health depends on it. Here are some ideas:

**Make time for regular, moderate exercise.** It’s one of the best stress-busters, and it can improve your mood and help control your weight. Check with your doctor to see what activity level is right for you.

**Spend some time doing things you enjoy.** Go to a funny movie, take your kids fishing or have dinner with a friend.

**Learn some relaxation techniques,** such as deep breathing or Christian meditation. To learn more about Christian meditation and how to practice it, visit [www.theschoolofmeditation.org](http://www.theschoolofmeditation.org).

**Treat yourself well.** Make time for prayer, Christian music, healthy meals and getting enough sleep. Avoid smoking, drinking too much and overeating. If you still cannot get a handle on your stress, talk to your doctor. He or she might recommend a counselor who could help you find other ways to reduce or manage the stress in your life.

## Six Soothing Ways to Ease Stress

1. Breathe— take a breather!
2. Relax your muscles— this can relax your mind too.
3. Say yes to prayer— prayer is our relationship with God.
4. Try tai chi— improves body awareness and enhances strength and coordination
5. Christian Meditation— a powerful stress buster
6. Get a massage— relaxing with healing

## Reduce Stress with Time Management

**The key to getting stress under control is effective time management. With good time management, you'll get more done, feel better about yourself and lower your stress level.**

**Make a plan:** Using a to-do list is the most powerful way to get control of your time. Spend a little time at the start of each week making a list of what you need to accomplish. Some people use a planner, electronic device or spreadsheet, even a simple notebook.

**Prioritize:** Once you have made a to-do list, rank each item by importance. Some people use a system of high, medium, and low. Concentrate on things of high importance or urgency. Move those that are medium or low to the bottom of the list.

**Be realistic:** Allow a reasonable amount of time for each task. Don't schedule every moment. Leave some space in your day when you can take breaks or fit in the unexpected.

**Include time for yourself:** Your health and well-being are important, so make sure you allow time for good meals, exercise, relaxation, and your family and friends.

**Review your to-do list every day:** Check off items as you finish them. This can give you a sense of accomplishment. What you don't finish one day can be moved to the next day.

**Avoid Procrastination:** Putting off things you need to do just creates more stress. If you feel overwhelmed by a task, break it down into smaller parts. Tackle one part at a time. Give yourself a little reward when you finish each part.

**Learn to say “no”:** Accepting more and more responsibilities is guaranteed to increase your stress. If you already have a full plate, don't take on more.

**Get Organized:** Spend a little time setting up your workspace so you know where things are. Choose a spot where you put your keys, bags, purse, or other items you use every day. This can save a lot of frustration and hours of wasted time.

**Beware of time-wasters:** Phone calls and email can interrupt concentration and eat up productive hours. Set up your phone to take messages and schedule a time of day to return calls. Do the same email. Set aside a time for it—maybe 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes after lunch. Identify other timewasters and how you could deal with them.

## Contact Us

Contact your school for more information from the school's Child and Youth Worker or school principal.

For more information from ALCDSB Mental Health Lead, contact Kaveh Khanverdi

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**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. -John 14:20**

## Resources

[ABC's of Mental Health](#)

[Child and Youth Mental Health Information Network](#)

[Mind Matters](#)

[Centre for Addictions and Mental Health](#)

[Mind Your Mind](#)