

Coping with stress and anxiety



Country
Cancer
Support
South Australia

Stress is a natural response to being in challenging or dangerous situations. It's something that everyone experiences now and then. If you (or your family) have been affected by cancer, no wonder you're feeling stressed!

Identifying triggers and signs of stress

Knowing in advance exactly what triggers stress and how you tend to feel and think when you are beginning to feel this way can help you cope more effectively when faced with difficult situations in the future. This worksheet is designed to assist you with this.

Complete the sections below that are relevant to you. If you find it difficult, consider asking someone who knows you well to help.

When I'm feeling stressed...

I'm at (place):

E.g. At home, doctors surgery

I'm doing (activity/behaviour):

E.g. Sitting looking out the window, waiting to see the doctor

I'm with (company):

E.g. On my own, with Bob

In my body I'm feeling (physical sensations):

E.g. Heart racing, restless, hot, sweaty, tense muscles, difficulty concentrating

I'm thinking (thoughts):

E.g. "This is all too much", "I can't cope", "What if the doctor gives me bad news?"

Working out how others can help

It's not always obvious to the people around you when you are feeling stressed and it can be difficult for them to know the best way to help. It can be upsetting if you don't feel like your needs are being met, particularly during stressful periods. To help you avoid snapping at the people around you when you're feeling under pressure, consider asking yourself the following questions while you're feeling calm.

When you notice yourself feeling stressed, what could you do to let the people around you know how you feel?

E.g. Tell them you feeling a bit overwhelmed and need a bit of space or that you feel anxious about an upcoming appointment

How can you constructively let the people around you know how you would like them to help?

E.g. Ask them if they would mind helping with a job, giving you some space, distracting you, accompanying you to an appointment

Even if you're upset or stressed, don't forget to let people know that you appreciate their help. It will make them feel good about what they've done and make them far more likely to help you again!

Working out how to best help yourself

Sometimes taking control of problems or worries can seem like an overwhelming task. If you feel that you have a number of things you need to deal with, but don't know where to start, using this chart may help.

Notice the worry



Ask yourself exactly what you are worrying about



Write these worries down into two lists



Things I CAN do something about in the next month *(E.g. Working out how I will get to Adelaide for my next check-up)*

Learn how to address these concerns using a structured problem solving approach, the calming technique and relaxation (see other worksheets)

Things I CAN'T directly do something about in the next month *(E.g. Worrying that my cancer will return)*

Learn strategies to help you let worries go, calm down and relax

(see other worksheets)