

STRESS MANAGEMENT & RESILIENCE

Stress is a natural part of life. For adolescents and young people, however, the pressures of academics, examinations, career choices, relationships, peer expectations, social media, family responsibilities and uncertainty about the future can make stress particularly challenging. Learning how to manage stress and develop resilience helps young people respond to difficulties in healthy and constructive ways rather than feeling overwhelmed by them.

Stress management refers to the ability to recognise stress, understand its causes and use healthy strategies to regulate thoughts, emotions and behaviour. It involves developing practical skills such as time management, relaxation, mindfulness, physical activity, adequate sleep, healthy communication, positive self-talk and seeking support when needed. Young people who understand their stress triggers are better able to pause, reflect and choose appropriate responses instead of reacting impulsively.

Resilience is the capacity to adapt, recover and grow when faced with setbacks, challenges, disappointment or change. Resilient young people do not avoid difficulties; rather, they learn to face them with flexibility, confidence and persistence. Resilience can be strengthened through supportive relationships, emotional awareness, problem-solving, realistic thinking, self-belief and the ability to learn from mistakes.

Stress management and resilience are closely connected. Effective stress-management strategies help young people remain emotionally balanced during difficult situations, while resilience enables them to recover and move forward after experiencing challenges. Together, these skills contribute to emotional wellbeing, healthier relationships, improved decision-making and greater confidence in handling life's uncertainties.

Importance for Adolescents & Young People

Adolescence and early adulthood are important periods of physical, emotional, social and psychological development. Young people are gradually developing their identity, independence and future aspirations. Excessive or poorly managed stress can affect concentration, motivation, relationships, emotional regulation and

overall wellbeing. Developing resilience early can help young people cope more effectively with academic pressure, failure, transitions, peer influence, conflict and unexpected life events.

Stress-management and resilience skills also encourage a **growth mindset**—the understanding that abilities can develop through effort, learning and experience. Instead of viewing failure as a permanent setback, young people can learn to treat challenges as opportunities for reflection and improvement. These skills prepare them not only to manage present pressures but also to navigate future personal, educational and professional responsibilities.

Key Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the session/program, one will be able to:

1. **Understand stress** and identify common academic, social, personal and environmental stressors.
2. **Recognise personal stress signals**, including changes in thoughts, emotions, behaviour and physical responses.
3. **Identify healthy and unhealthy coping strategies** and understand their potential consequences.
4. **Practise practical stress-management techniques**, including breathing exercises, mindfulness, relaxation and positive self-talk.
5. **Develop resilience** by building adaptability, persistence, self-confidence and emotional regulation.
6. **Apply problem-solving and decision-making skills** when facing challenging situations.
7. **Develop a growth-oriented approach** towards mistakes, setbacks and failures.
8. **Recognise the importance of support systems** and understand when and how to seek help from trusted people.
9. **Create a personal stress-management and resilience plan** that can be applied in everyday life.

Ultimately, stress management and resilience empower young people to face challenges with greater awareness, emotional balance and confidence, enabling them to develop healthier, more capable and adaptable lives.