



Identifying Stress

AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS

The Youth Mental Health Report (Ivancic et al., 2014), found one fifth of 15-19 year olds reported high levels of distress. The top two stressors: 1) coping with stress, & 2) school and study stress.

The final years of secondary school can be stressful for many students, with the end of year exams as the high point. Academic stress is common during this period, with most students experiencing mild to moderate levels of stress. To manage and alleviate stress, the first step is to learn how to identify it.

WHAT CAN STRESS FEEL LIKE?

Stress can manifest through physical and emotional sensations such as:

- racing heart
- feeling agitated and tense
- irritability
- constant fatigue
- difficulty concentrating
- sleep problems
- nausea
- headaches, jaw pain
- ulcers
- diarrhoea/constipation
- shaky

CAUSES OF HSC STRESS

- increased workload
- increased task difficulty
- number of deadlines
- high expectations:
 - external high expectations (parents, teachers, schools)
 - internal high expectations (the students themselves)
- beliefs about the future and significance of the HSC
- juggling study and other commitments (work, social life, relationships, family, extra-curricular)

Ultimately, the level of stress experienced is related to each individuals' ability to cope.