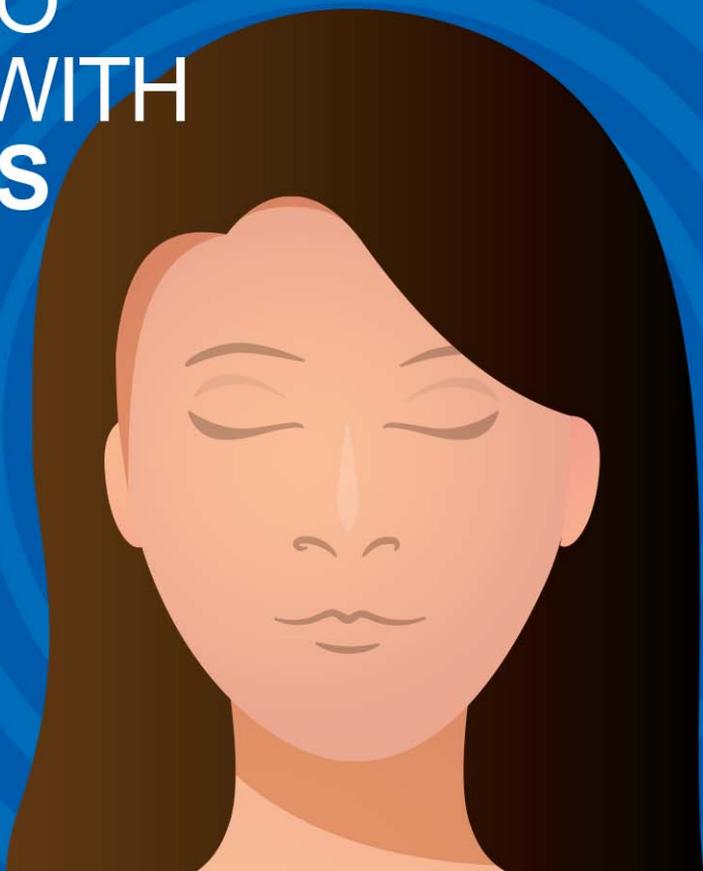


HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS



STRENGTHENING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN'S HEALTH STATUS

IN SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

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for every child



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WHAT IS STRESS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

Do you know the difference between good and bad kind of stress?

Stress helps to successfully deal with problems and is important during crisis situations because it enables us to react quickly. A little stress helps fight challenges, like in the times when we have to work hard, be on the move, avoid danger, etc.

But when stress increases, when it recurs, or when it doesn't stop, stress becomes a problem. Prolonged, constantly present low-intensity stress makes you feel tired, overwhelmed, can weaken your immune system, or cause other problems.

Coping with stress is a part of every person's life. Stress at a young age does not always look like stress that adults are experiencing. But like adults, children and teenagers can find healthy ways to cope. Together, young people and their community can learn to spot signs of excessive stress and to deal with it using the right approach.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE UNDER STRESS?



Physical signs of stress:

- ▶ strong heartbeat
- ▶ redness of the skin
- ▶ trembling arms and legs
- ▶ headache
- ▶ clenched fists
- ▶ muscle cramps

Emotional signs and signs of long-term stress:

- ▶ anxiety
- ▶ frequent and sudden changes in mood and behavior
- ▶ inability to concentrate
- ▶ change in appetite
- ▶ avoiding people
- ▶ more frequent illness
- ▶ inability to make decisions
- ▶ distraction from obligations
- ▶ abuse of substances such as alcohol, drugs or medicines
- ▶ difficulty sleeping



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STRESSED?

These problems tell you that you are under too much stress. If you notice that you feel this way every day, you should take some steps to reduce the things that make you stressful, as well as try some steps that will help you reduce stress.

When feeling stressed, do this:

- ▶ breathe in slowly through your nose, breathe out long through your mouth
- ▶ imagine a favorite place, take deep breaths
- ▶ play or sing your favorite song
- ▶ take a break
- ▶ it's ok if you cry
- ▶ find a corner, place or a view to enjoy or have a piece of mind and remember what it looks like
- ▶ go for a walk, go for a run, do exercises, dance...
- ▶ talk to someone about how you feel when you are under stress
- ▶ get a good night's sleep
- ▶ try massaging one hand with the other

Once the stress stops, it is important for the body and mind to relax. Choose a couple of techniques that seem interesting to you and try them out. If these ideas help reduce stress, repeat them daily or once a week. If not, try something else on the list or make your own list. Talk to a trusted adult about what they do to relax.

Maybe they have some good ideas!

These strategies help keep stress under control:

- ✓ physical activity (Walk, run, play sport, exercise)
deep breathing exercises (Just breathe!)
- ✓ good rest (Teenagers need 10 hours of sleep)
- ✓ balanced diet and regular meals (No harmful substances!)
- ✓ plan your time to have a routine without feeling hasty
(Plan how you will spend the day)
- ✓ combine activity and rest (Find your balance)
- ✓ expressing feelings (Write down, memorize or share with someone
what is going well for you)
- ✓ positive relationships with others (hang out)



A little tip:

Make a list or drawing of your favorite stress-reducing activities and keep it always close by. When you are under stress, choose one thing from the list and do it!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE UNDER VERY STRONG STRESS?

Sometimes things which cause stress in your life are very serious and can have lasting effects on your health. Talk honestly with someone you trust and who is reliable. Trusting someone and turning to them helps you feel less lonely, and that person can also advise you to find a way to reduce stress. In addition to the help of close or nearby trustworthy persons, you can organize a conversation with professionals in the center: a psychologist, a social or health worker, or a social protection worker. This person will help you understand the cause of stress, what are the ways to prevent it, as well as what are the steps for dealing with stress. A doctor may decide to prescribe a medicine that would reduce the symptoms of stress.

Expressing feelings helps us cope with stress.
Use this space to note down or draw what's on your mind lately...



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