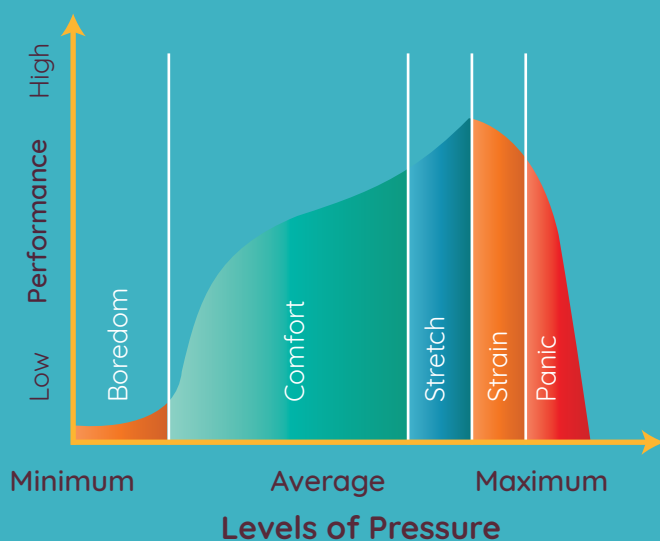


More resilient people recognise the warning signs of too much pressure (the tipping point between the stretch and strain zone); and are able to effectively employ mental coping strategies to deal with the circumstances when the pressure gets too high (escape to the comfort zone to refresh & regroup).

They can do this because they are able to recognise the signals their bodies give them that they're under stress and not reacting well:

- Their feelings and emotions
- Changes in their behaviour and attitude
- Changes in their appearance

(Read the fact sheet 'Signs and symptoms of stress') And they are then very good at responding appropriately.



This is because they have already developed the ability to:

- Live a more balanced life;
- Talk and seek help from others when it's needed; and
- Employ positive and proactive coping strategies

#### Living a more balanced life

You may be experiencing stress because your life has become out of balance. You may be spending too much time and energy on work or on caring for others, at the expense of your own health and well-being. The following strategies can help you to live a more balanced and stress-free life:

- Delegate or share your responsibilities at work and at home
- Avoid difficult colleagues, family members, and acquaintances
- Learn to be more assertive – SAY NO
- Participate in regular exercise
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables
- Never take on more than you know you can cope with
- Organise your time better to get as much done as possible
- Listen to music or relaxation tapes
- Take frequent breaks
- Schedule time for YOU



## Accepting support from others

One of the most effective things we can do when we are stressed is to talk to a friendly listener who remains calm and listens in a way that makes us feel understood. Studies show that people who are active socially are most capable of dealing with stressful situations and major illnesses. To help reduce stress, develop a network of friends and family members to turn to when stress threatens to overwhelm you. If you are a naturally private or independent person, it might seem challenging to build a support system, but in order to cultivate a circle of friends, you need to take the first step. Your efforts to create a strong social network will serve you well when you are confronted with serious issues and pressures. So:

- Think of individuals who care about you and with whom you can share your most personal thoughts.
- Reach out to the people you feel close to. Call them; make dates to see them; be open and available to them.

## Developing proactive & positive coping skills

Your attitude has a lot to do with whether events and occurrences produce a feeling of stress. Once you admit that you are not able to control everything, you will be better equipped to handle unexpected situations. Stress management comes down to finding ways to change your thinking and manage your expectations. Other important ways to adjust your attitude include:

- Being realistic - shed the Superman/ Superwoman image. Don't expect too much of yourself or of others.
- Being flexible. Give in sometimes.
- Rehearsing/preparing for work and life situations.
- Thinking positively - look at each stressful situation as an opportunity to improve your life.
- Don't take work problems home or home problems to work.
- Laugh each day - rely on humour to relieve tension.

