



# *Managing* **STRESS**

SHORT COURSE

STUDY GUIDE

# HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS COURSE

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Over the following pages, you will move through a logical, self-paced learning experience that can enlighten and educate you in Managing Stress.

It is important from the outset to understand that learning about something is not the same as just reading about it. Learning implies a permanent change in what you know and can do.

Anyone can read a book and understand it; but for most people the detail of what you read is largely forgotten.

Reading something once only puts information into short-term memory. It is soon lost if you don't 'work' on it. Studying the same information takes longer, but by thinking about it and processing it you can transfer that information to long-term memory. This way, you will enhance your ability to recall and apply that information for years to come. If you take your time to work through the twelve lessons that follow, you will learn.

## Read, Reflect, Research, Revise

Throughout the following pages, you will find not only things to read about, but also things to do:

1. Throughout each lesson, there are suggestions of things to do under the headings "Learn More". These are all sorts of ideas about things you can do in order to explore the subject further.
2. At the end of each lesson, there is an interactive selfassessment test (assignment), for you to undertake. When you click on this, your computer needs to be online. You will be taken to our cloud-based online school. The answers you choose will be evaluated immediately, and your results can be seen on completion of each test. You can return and repeat tests if you wish.

Undertaking these tasks will involve reflection, research and revision of the topics you read about. By repeatedly encountering each topic in different ways, your perspective on each subject will broaden, and the commitment of information to longer term memory will strengthen.

You don't need to undertake all of the suggested tasks if you don't want to; but we strongly recommend that you do some in each lesson, and that you take all of the self-assessment tests.

The more time you spend doing these things, the stronger your learning will be.

## Completing the Course

After completing all 8 lessons you will be presented with a final assessment which can also be undertaken online.

Do not attempt to do this until you have worked through all 8 lessons, and feel like you have learnt the subject well.

Upon finishing this final assessment you will immediately see your final results, and you can save a pdf copy of those results as a "Certificate of Completion".

## Welcome Audio

Click the button below to listen to the welcome audio for this course. This feature is supported by most computers and some mobile devices.



# THE CONTENTS OF THE COURSE

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<b>HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS COURSE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LESSON 1 NEGATIVE EMOTIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
Introduction	6
What are negative emotions?	7
The need for control	8
Overview of negative emotions	8
Causes of negative emotions	9
Physiological arousal	11
The impact of negative emotions	13
Negative emotions and mental health disorders	14
Review what you have been learning	15
<b>LESSON 2 STRESS CONTROL</b>	<b>16</b>
Why do we need to control our stress?	16
Physiological response to stress	17
General adaptation syndrome	17
Responses to chronic stress	18
Long-term outcomes	19
Cognitive responses to stress	20
Defence mechanisms	20
The stress epidemic	23
Stress and war	23
Stress and disease	23
Stress and relationships	24
Stress and crime	25
Dealing with stress	27
Stress management techniques	27
Poor coping strategies	28
Useful coping strategies	28

Relaxation strategies .....	29
Review what you have been learning.....	32
<b>LESSON 3 ANGER MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>33</b>
The impact of anger.....	33
Anger as physiological arousal.....	34
Ways of conceptualising anger.....	35
Passive aggressive anger.....	35
Aggressive anger.....	36
Anger management.....	37
Ways to diffuse anger.....	37
Counselling strategies.....	39
Review what you have been learning.....	42
<b>LESSON 4 DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY .....</b>	<b>43</b>
Depression.....	43
Depressive disorders.....	44
Symptoms of depression.....	44
Causes of depression.....	45
Other physical illnesses.....	46
Anxiety.....	46
Anxiety disorders .....	46
Symptoms of anxiety.....	47
Causes of anxiety.....	47
Combatting anxiety and depression.....	48
Review what you have been learning.....	49
<b>LESSON 5 DEALING WITH SHAME, GUILT AND SELF-DOUBT .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Other common negative emotions.....	51
Shame.....	51
Guilt.....	53
Self-doubt and reduced self-esteem.....	54
Other negative emotions.....	54
Review what you have been learning.....	59

Lesson 6 coping with negative emotions at home.....	60
Overcoming negative thoughts.....	60
Helpful techniques for well-being.....	62
Things to avoid.....	68
Case studies.....	70
Review what you have been learning.....	73
<b>LESSON 7 COPING WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AT WORK.....</b>	<b>74</b>
Work life.....	74
Causes of negative emotions at work.....	75
Anger.....	75
Stress.....	76
Fear.....	76
Disappointment.....	76
Dislike.....	77
Bringing negative emotions to work.....	77
Helpful techniques for wellbeing at work.....	78
Case studies.....	79
Review what you have been learning.....	82
<b>LESSON 8 ACHIEVING BALANCE.....</b>	<b>83</b>
Too much positivity.....	83
What is normal? What is healthy? .....	84
Some stress is fine.....	85
Dealing with conflict.....	86
Case studies.....	87
Hedonic and eudemonic approaches.....	89
Review what you have been learning.....	90
<b>FINAL ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>91</b>

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# LESSON 1 NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

There are a range of so-called negative emotions which can affect our daily lives. Negative thoughts are often linked to these feelings and situations, such as those which bring about stress, can initiate and maintain unhealthy psychological conditions. If left unchecked, negativity can slowly destabilise even the most well adjusted individuals.



## INTRODUCTION

Today's world is very different, not just in terms of what we have but the way we interact with each other. Communication has changed, and is continuing to change; we are far more connected to each other (across the globe) than we ever were in the past. That connection though, is more likely to be digital, rather than face to face - as it was before. And the digital world is fast moving, it means instant access to news from across the

world; what you read in the morning news online, can change within a day, or an hour, or even within minutes. News is not only instant but far more confronting; we see graphic images of terrorism, famine or war. We have constant warnings of impending doom from wars or climate change, or the latest world financial crisis. To the average individual the news may therefore seem more stressful than it was ever was in the past.

We have more food, and have the potential to eat better, but we are

constantly being warned about what we eat. Last year's 'super food' or 'miracle diet' is this year's poison. Most processed food is packed with preservatives and other chemicals that may affect our body chemistry. We have medicines that can fight illnesses, but we have more pollutants in our environment that can cause illnesses.

We have more things available to buy, but to buy them we have to earn more hence there is a greater impetus to perform at work.

We are constantly bombarded with information and spend an inordinate amount of time gathering it. However we also have a tendency to confuse information with knowledge. And because we don't have the time to fully deconstruct, analyse and to learn from the vast amount of information we gather, we focus more on the 'gathering', rather than on acquiring the skills needed to truly understand, absorb, learn and gain wisdom from it. When we don't understand the information this rapidly changing digital world thrusts at us, we are also more likely to be stressed by it.

A rapidly changing world can cause stress, but it is how we deal with that stress that matters. We can look at change from another angle - rather than a threat to our way of life, we could see it as an opportunity for new experience and new knowledge.

Some people cope with stress by understanding and minimizing the things that stress their body. Others use medication to mask problems caused by stress, such as pain. Some people simply do not cope, and develop negative emotions.

This course is designed to help you understand the things that cause stress, the problems that can arise, and the broad range of ways people might manage their stress.

## WHAT ARE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS?

Negative emotions are feelings which cause people to feel sad, upset, lonely, angry, empty, bored, and the like. The reason we call them 'negative' is because they undermine our sense of wellbeing. All emotions whether positive or negative can be said to have two components. These are:

- What we feel - the biological part.
- What we think - the psychological part.

Although it is normal and usual to experience negative emotions in response to everyday events, they become problematic if they are enduring. If the conditions or the thoughts which are producing negative emotions remain in place, then people often become trapped in a negative way of responding and they can quickly head downhill. Sometimes this happens without people realising what is happening to them. In other cases they may be aware of what is happening but feel powerless to change their circumstances or to regain control over how they feel.

Emotions are very powerful determinants of behaviour. When they are intense they can be overwhelming. Often it is difficult to make sense of them, to fully understand what they mean and why we are experiencing