

## PBS Helpline Resources

### The impact of stress

Stress is completely natural – we all experience it. It's not just you! It's a natural reaction to challenging events, and it's not a bad thing; in fact it's designed to protect us. Stress activates our flight-fight-freeze response to prepare us to deal with whatever's in front of us. It powers us up, ready for action, and then rebalances and deactivates. This is healthy stress.

When that goes wrong – if we keep dipping in and out of stress or are stressed all the time - then it has a negative impact (insert slide here). Stress affects us all a little differently – it targets our weak areas. The problems arise when we get stuck in stress.

A few key tips:

- Look after yourself – cut yourself some slack. Remember that stress happens to everyone. Try to be gentle with yourself, and recognise what's going on for you.
- Try to put things into your life that help you feel good; so notice things that make you feel calm, happy, relaxed – all the positive emotions – and try to make time for them, as well as things that you can really focus on and that give you a sense of achievement.
- Invest in relationships that can be nurturing and supportive.
- Look after your physical health – try to have good sleep, healthy nutrition, and exercise. Get outside when possible (research suggests that even as little as 5 minutes a day in nature can boost our mood).

It can be hard to motivate ourselves to do things when we're stressed, but these things can really help to boost our mood and rebalance our nervous system so that it recovers and deactivates as it should.