



# When To Be Concerned About Stress and Distress?



**Stress is a normal response to everyday pressures and is a part of daily life.** We might experience stress depending on how we react to our responsibilities, decisions and relationships. Some stress can help us to stay focused and motivated.



**Stress can turn into distress when we experience or witness an event that is overly threatening and challenging, which overwhelms our ability to cope.**



Look out for **D.I.S.T.R.E.S.S.** signs so that you can provide timely support for your child:



**D**eliberately avoiding others



**I**ncreased irritability, restlessness, agitation, stress, and anxiety



**S**ending or posting moody messages on social media



**T**alking about death or dying



**R**eacting differently or losing interest in things they used to enjoy



**E**ating more than usual or having a significantly smaller appetite



**S**leep pattern changes, such as difficulty falling asleep or oversleeping



**S**lowing down of energy levels



**D.I.S.T.R.E.S.S.** signs are just a guide and are not meant to replace professional advice. Scan the QR code at the top right corner for more information on signs of common mental health conditions to look out for.

**Note:** Some children may be able to complete daily tasks, or even excel in them, while feeling down, worthless and hopeless for an extended period. It does not mean that they do not need help or are faking it. Your child's difficulties can be a cause for concern, even if they do not exhibit any outward signs.





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## How to show concern when your child is distressed?

If you notice your child displaying **D.I.S.T.R.E.S.S.** signs, initiate a conversation to understand what they are going through.

When poor mental health seems persistent and is affecting your child's everyday life, it is important to seek help from a school counsellor or a mental health professional.

### 1 Assure your child that you are there for them.



“I know it has been a hard time for you. Whenever you are ready to share, I'm here to listen to you.”

### 2 Find out the cause of their struggles.



“You don't seem to be your usual self and you look sad. I would like to know what you're struggling with. I'm here to listen. Please share more with me.”

### 3 Brainstorm possible solutions together. Role-play to help them to overcome their struggles.



“Let's discuss how we can overcome <issue>. Share with me what you have tried before.”

### 4 If these solutions do not work and your child's distress persists for more than two weeks, speak to them about seeking professional help.



“It must be so tough on you to still be struggling to cope. What do you think about speaking to your school counsellor?”