



# Increasing Stress among the Youth – A Sociological Study

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**ABSTRACT:** Youth are the leaders for the next generation who govern the country and helps in the nation's economic development. However, an academic, social pressure and pressure of getting a good job with good salary etc. factors affect their performance and life. These different kind of mental pressures can leads to stress among the young people. Stress is an unavoidable reality of life which can be good where it can trigger our fight-or-flight mechanism to help in case of emergencies but too much stress can harm our health and body. Different individual will have different kind of response to the stress; therefore, it is important to learn what stresses us out and how to cope with it. Among all types of stress faced by youth, academic stress is one of the reasons why some students fall into deeper problems such as depression and anxiety. They obtain stress from overworking, over thinking, over exaggerating any situation and by working too hard or keeping up too long to do something, this lead to an awful effect on their lives. There are various components like not having enough sleep, troubles in education and job stress, and pains occur due to all these situations, are very bad to their body. Thus, this paper aims to discuss the various kind of stress among youth, level of stress, effect of stress, causes of stress and remedies to cure the stress at different stages.

**KEYWORDS:** stress, youth, work, education, job, increasing, body

## I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is one of the persistent causes of concern today. Research suggests stress is being linked to more and more psychological and physiological disorders. While dealing with stress is a necessity, it is how we deal with stress that truly impacts us.

As long as we are alive, we will all have stress. There goes a false assumption of parents that if their child does not have bills to pay or chores and responsibilities, their child will live a stress-free life.

But the truth is, adolescence is an incredibly stressful time of life. Teenagers experience a myriad of different issues resulting in stress. Their stressors appear insignificant to parents only because they're looking at these problems with an adult mind. The youth, however, are getting a hang of handling life issues, which impact their mental and physical health as well.

The first step in stress management is identifying the stressful life events that cause them.

### Academic pressure

At school, there is a range of academic pressure that the youth feels; pressure that's derived from a need for perfection, worry over grades, exams, parents' and teachers' expectations, homework, assignments, competition, sports, or a tough class load.

No matter what goals we have, we all struggle with a tremendous amount of stress and pressure, and stress management becomes difficult – and this is just as true for teens as it is for grown-ups.

### Parental pressure

Parents and home environments can also add up to teen stress.[1,2,3]

High expectations of parents often turn out to be a hurdle in teenagers' life. Out of love, parents want their youth to excel in everything. While the idea is nice, it certainly is an unrealistic expectation.

After-school activities are important, but become a stressor when parents expect their youth to be involved in too many or expect them to win in every match or tournament they take part in. Winning boosts confidence and self-esteem. But



it should always be kept in mind that participating and enjoying is much more important than winning. Youth needs to have some free, unscheduled time each week where they can do whatever they want.

Finally, stressed parents do transfer their stress onto their youth. If they are frequently stressed, it's reflected in how they treat their teen. The unpredictable behavior may leave them worried and anxious since they don't know what to expect next. Likewise, if the parents are emotionally unavailable to them, they may feel neglected and worthless. These feelings increase stress levels as they try to get their parent's attention, only to fail each time.

#### Pressures of social life

Social roles or relations become an important part of a teen's life.

Peer Groups: Peer pressure, not getting along with friends, and worrying about fitting in cause a significant amount of stress in youth. If they sense the peer group is unreliable or disrespectful, it increases their stress levels as they feel pressured to impress the social group.

Relationships: With the onset of puberty, youth start to have romantic relationships - or not, both states can be equally stressful for youth.

#### Personal stressors

Pay attention to your teen's actions and words as they reflect what's going on inside their head. They are often overwhelmed by self-esteem issues, deadlines, etc. in the long run, such stressors can lead to changes in sleep and nutrition.

Sometimes stress can build up before you even know it and leave you feeling overwhelmed. Here are some ways to recognize stress before it takes over.

#### Changes in appetite

Disturbed sleep

Fatigue

Irritability

Indecisiveness

Forgetfulness

Lack of focus

Headaches

Digestive issues

Restlessness

Hypervigilance

Increased heart rate

Loss of interest

You eat standing up

We are all aware of the fact that stress is one of the leading causes of both physical and mental health conditions, especially among the youth. Research indicates that around 36 percent of our youth are victims of chronic stress. This was mainly a result of parental pressure, COVID-19, and more.

When stress crosses a threshold, it leads to anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, and poor coping skills and may lead to drug and/or alcohol use.

In the face of challenges, changes occur in our minds and bodies which prepares us to respond to danger. This "fight, flight, or freeze" response causes a rapid increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate. It also can lead to cold or clammy hands and feet, upset stomach, and/or a sense of dread, etc.

Listen carefully to your teen and watch for signs of stress.

Monitor if stress is affecting your teen's health, behavior, thoughts, or feelings.

Help your teen decide what is within his control and what isn't. The youth, nowadays, are often involved in multiple activities. Parents can help them learn to pace themselves by identifying which activities are likely to be helpful and which could be detrimental. They can also give them some lesser responsibilities. This can make them take off the pressure which paves the way for perfect stress management.



Help them find stress-relieving distractions. Assist your teen to figure out how they can incorporate fun, stress-relieving activities into their day, week, and month. No matter what it is or how briefly they do it, enjoyable activities act as a great distraction from stress.[4,5,6]

Help your teen find time for relaxation. Relaxation looks a bit different for everyone. Some youth find it relaxing to spend time with their pet while others might like to sit in silence and meditate. It might take a couple of attempts to find something that sticks, but encouraging your teen to explore activities that quiet the mind in the heat of the moment can serve them well now and even later in life.

Be a good role model for your teen. Whether they like to admit it or not, the youth do learn from their parents. And one of the best ways to teach them stress management techniques is by setting a good example. In addition to basic lifestyle practices, several treatment approaches can help your teen manage and overcome stress. A few of them include-

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

Mindfulness-based Therapy

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Solution-focused Therapy

Stress management strategies play a major role in determining triggers and adaptive techniques to cope with said stressors. Consider the following steps to prepare a stress management strategy.

1. Identify the root of the problem and address it

Sometimes problems can feel bigger than they are. Focus and approach the problem with clear thinking. If you see that the problem is the result of overthinking or due to a certain thought that makes you perceive the problem as a disaster, you can cope by trying to break down the problem into smaller yet achievable tasks.

2. Let some things go

This doesn't mean that you can ignore the problems. It is crucial to face a problem and then try to fix it, but sometimes, you won't be able to do much about it. For instance, exams do cause a lot of stress in youth, but you can't eliminate exams.

The right thing to do here is to focus more on how you can manage things and study well and think less about how unfair problems are. Accepting some things and people is an essential part of stress management in youth. Besides, it is also important to not take things too personally. That can make you feel bad for reasons that will have nothing or little to do with you.

3. Dealing with emotional tension

You will be so overwhelmed at times that you will feel like stuffing all your problems in a mental box and dealing with them later. But this 'later' won't make things any easier. Later you may have more things and emotions to deal with that can make your head go spinning and even make you more frustrated.

Hence, it is better to take one problem to handle and leave the rest for the moment. This will help to make your problems less scary to deal with. To help you release your emotional tension, you can try out the following:

Focus on creative outlets like music, painting, and poetry to express your feelings.

Talk to your loved ones or a responsible adult and ask for advice.

Build a habit of journaling your day

Take time to meditate every day

Understand that it is completely okay to feel your emotions fully

Slow Down: What you cannot do/finish today, do not stress yourself too much about it. Take out some time, breathe, and relax. A few minutes away from the problem can help. During that time, you can find something to laugh at, play, take a bath, listen to music, play some instruments, etc.

Exercise: Do you know that one of the best ways to deal with stress is exercise? Choose the type of activity that will help you to relieve your stress and is conducive to your lifestyle.



Get Plenty of Rest, and Eat Well: Maintain a balanced diet and sleep schedule as this will help you effectively cope with stress and improve your overall well-being.

Discuss your problems: Chances are that there will be other people dealing with similar stressors, you are not alone. Ask for help. If you feel too stressed, talk to your parents, siblings, a friend, or a counselor.

Stress virtually affects every aspect of your life. And if this state prolongs, it can result in many long-term effects, coming in your way of having a healthier, happier, and normal life. So, owing to the high impact of stress on our well-being, seeking the expertise of a professional can play a major role in effectively managing and overcoming its consequences.[7,8,9]

## II. DISCUSSION

Stress is a normal and healthy part of our nervous system. However, too much stress can be difficult to manage and become problematic.

Everyone experiences stress for different reasons. This can vary for different generations.

Research has shown that stress in teenagers and young adults is higher than in older Australians. The good news is that most of us can usually manage the stress caused by issues with relationships, finances, and health.

Stress is a natural human response to the pressure you feel from challenging or dangerous situations. In healthy amounts, it motivates us to respond to the challenging thing. In unhelpful amounts, stress can lead to less useful coping strategies like avoidance.

Common symptoms and signs of too much stress include:

- feeling anxious or overwhelmed
- feeling wound-up or worried
- feeling irritable
- disturbed sleep
- sweating
- headaches
- appetite loss
- muscle tension
- an upset stomach
- difficulty concentrating

Stress can last for a long time or overwhelm your coping abilities. Stress can have a negative impact on every aspect of your life including your:

- work
- relationships
- physical and mental health

Unmanaged stress can contribute to mental illness.

Stress and young people

Research shows that young Australian adults are more stressed than older generations. They are also more likely to report mental health concerns than older Australians.

There are differences in the high levels of distress reported in 2019-2019 in younger and older Australians. These figures are:

9% of Australians aged 65 to 85 years report high levels of distress

28% of Australians aged 16 to 34 years report high levels of distress

There are many reasons why young people will experience stress. These include:

- academic pressure
- body image[10,11,12]
- bullying



emotional and physical abuse  
family dynamics and violence  
personal finances  
relationships  
substance abuse  
trying to keep a healthy lifestyle  
How do I manage stress?  
There are ways that you can reduce feelings of stress.

If you are feeling stressed, it is important to try and find the cause of your stress. First of all, find out what is stressing you. Consider what you can change and what you can't control.

What can I do?  
Do things you enjoy regularly, even if you don't feel like doing them.

This may include:

being with people who care about you  
dancing  
listening to music  
walking in nature

You may also be able to help keep stress levels down by:

recognising unhelpful sources of stress — including pressures you place on yourself — before they become a bigger problem

thinking about changes you can make to improve your situation and change the way you behave

To manage feelings of stress, you can:

practice deep breathing, meditation and other relaxation techniques  
practice positive self-talk  
write in a 'stress diary' to record when you feel stressed and why  
exercise regularly  
eat a healthy diet  
avoid smoking  
reduce alcohol and caffeine intake  
avoid overworking

It can be difficult to talk about stress with your school, college, university, or employer. However, if you are feeling stressed about work or study, they may be able to provide support.

Talk to others if you can — you may well have family and friends who are willing to help.

Keep things in perspective. Don't underestimate yourself. However, if you cannot control something, try to direct your energy elsewhere.

Seeking help

Many people need professional help to make lasting changes to reduce their stress levels. This may include talking to your doctor.

Your doctor may recommend stress management classes. They can also help diagnose any mental health issues or refer you to a psychologist. By addressing the cause of your stress, they can help provide you with the best advice and treatment.

There are also programs and resources available to young people experiencing stress and mental health issues.[13,14,15]



### III. RESULTS

Stress, anxiety, extreme fear, and nervousness have become common in the Youth. With covid-19, Stress on people has aggravated. It is a feeling when people work under pressure. It is believed that Youth is more stressed nowadays, which is much contributed to an unhealthy lifestyle and working under extreme pressure.

Stress could be emotional or physical, and extreme Stress leads to unwanted results. Stress directly affects the mental health of the person. Everyone faces pressure in their life; it is how you deal with it that is more important. A person should have a clear understanding of how Stress is affecting their mental health. Experts point out that little degree of Stress is good for humans, but extreme Stress is disastrous for the human mind. Earlier, children did not experience Stress in their life, but the scene has changed. Now children between 9-12 claim that they are under Stress. It is primarily attributed to study overload and academic routine.

#### Symptoms of Stress

Experts treat Stress as long-term or short-term. Chronic Stress is hazardous and significantly impacts the human mind and health. Common signs of Stress are:

- Low Energy
- Dizziness
- Grinding Teeth
- Changes in Mood
- Anxious Feeling
- Decreased Sex Drive
- Problems in digestion
- Sleeping problems
- Headaches
- Clammy

#### Types of Stress

All Stress does not produce a negative result. A little stress is required to break the inertia and is good for the human mind. Different types of Stress are:

- **Chronic Stress:** This type of Stress is inescapable and never-ending, and this Stress generally happens due to an extremely tiring job or bad marriage. It can also be generated if the person remembers their past traumatic experiences.
- **Episodic Acute Stress:** This Stress is treated in the short term and could act as a positive for the person. This Stress is very common among people, and people experience it very often. This Stress is generated due to certain events that have occurred in their ongoing life.
- **Eustress:** This Stress is exciting and amazing. It is related to the flow of adrenaline. It is treated as positive Stress that keeps people energetic.

#### Cause of Stress

A lot of factors contribute to generating Stress in a person's life. Some major causes of Stress are parenting, relationships, pressurized work, financial problems, and inconvenient day-to-day activities.

Stress happens as a response to these challenges, and certain hormones like cortisol and adrenaline are released in this process. Experts say that Stress is a response to a perceived threat. When this perception is passed, the mind automatically goes to a relaxation response. This relaxation response is seldom generated in the body as the body is constantly fighting the perceived notion of threat. Stress can turn people to adopt unhealthy habits. For example, people start smoking or eating too much to avoid Stress. These things directly affect human health and will have negative consequences.



### Stress Hormones

When you see a perceived threat, the Hypothalamus, which is present at the base of the human brain, starts reacting. It generates hormone and nerve signals to the adrenal glands, which causes the production of many hormones. Hormones make you prepare to fight the threat and your probability of survival increases. Adrenaline supplements in:

- Stimulate perspiration
- Increase your breathing rate
- Inhibit insulin production
- Contraction of the blood vessel to direct blood into the muscles
- Help the muscle to use glucose
- Enhances the rate of heartbeat

Surges of Adrenaline can produce results like

- Weight gain
- Headaches[16,17,18]
- Ruptured blood vessels
- Increased risk of stroke and heart attack
- Anxiety
- Ruptured blood vessels
- Insomnia

### Cortisol and Stress

Cortisol, the important stress hormone, has a significant role in a stressful scenario. Function include are

- Alteration of immune system response.
- Increasing the quantity of glucose in the bloodstream.
- Affects that area of the brain that controls mood, fear, and motivation.
- Aids the brain in the utilization of glucose in an effective way.
- Dampens the reproductive system and growth process
- Increasing the accessibility of material that supplements tissue repair.

A high level of cortisol will have negative repercussions on your body:

- Weak immune system (Vulnerable to infections)
- Memory problems and memory cloudiness
- Weight gain
- Diabetes (type 2)
- Sleep problems
- Osteoporosis
- Lack of energy

### Stress and Anxiety

People treat Stress and anxiety as the same. An immense feeling of Stress generates feeling of anxiety. Anxiety makes it very difficult for people to cope with Stress. Anxiety could lead to digestive problems, increased depression, and susceptibility to illness.

It also leads to muscle tension, high blood pressure, and poor sleep. Experts say that anxiety is an internal reaction to Stress. Stress might get away from the body, but anxiety remains in the body for a longer period.

### Effects of Stress

Stress severely damages the well-being of a person. It makes daily life challenging and damages personal relationships, and have a damaging effect on human health. When a person is under immense Stress, they behave accordingly. It sometimes takes an emotional toll on people, and a light degree of Stress may generate frustrations and mild anxiety, but prolonged Stress could generate depression, anxiety disorder, and burnout. Some of the stress-generated problems are:

- Diabetes
- Ulcers



- Obesity
- Tooth and Gum Disease
- Heart Disease
- Hair loss
- Sexual Dysfunction
- Hyperthyroidism

#### Stress Treatment

This problem does not have a particular treatment. Some of the experimented techniques that have been useful in dealing with problem stress are complementary and Alternative medicine, therapy, and medication, but stress treatment mainly deals with the development of Stress coping skills and the implementation of relaxation techniques.

- Medication: Medications are given to treat some symptoms of Stress. Such medication involves anti-anxiety medications, sleep aids, antidepressants and antacids.
- Psychotherapy: Some known therapies for successfully treating Stress include mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). MBSR uses mindfulness and meditation as a tool to lower Stress. Cognitive Behavioural therapy uses to generate positive feelings and avoiding negative emotions.
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Complementary methods that help lower stress levels are meditation, yoga, acupuncture, massage, and aromatherapy.

#### Source of Stress in Young Minds

Tension at home for the young is a common source. Children may be affected due to separation, divorce, loss, or family discord, but tension and Stress are not limited to the home. Experts claim that one of the major sources of Stress in young kids is school. School burdens children with an overload of work. They get anxious, nervous, and stressed when they hear about tests, grades, and exams.

#### Stress in Teenagers and Adolescents

As children grow up, the sources of Stress grow up. Study shows that Teens get more easily stressed than young kids. Experts see a significant rise in mental health problems in both age groups. Earlier, this was prevalent mostly in the adult group, and now they have also started affecting teens and children. It is a cause of concern. Peers can help reduce Stress, and the development of social relationships helps reduce Stress, particularly during adolescence.

#### Signs of Stress

- Sleeping Problems: A person may feel tired, sleep more than the required time, and not fall asleep at night.
- Eating Behaviour: It is seen that people under Stress start eating too much or eat too little. These reaction points toward the issue of Stress.
- Irritation and Anger: Youth sometimes tries to avoid showing its feeling, and this leads to frustration and anger among Youth. Stressed youths may behave as argumentative and short-tempered.
- Frequent Change in Behaviour: Mood swings problems are common who are stressed out. Some of the observed symptoms are that once active Youth does not intend to leave his home.[19,20]
- Sickness: Stress can also be visible with physical symptoms. Youth of today claims stomachache, headaches, and pain.

## IV. CONCLUSION

#### Simple Ways to Cope with the Stress

Stress affects all people, but it is manageable. There are some simple steps that you can adopt to combat Stress and lower its impact:

- Regular Exercise: Experts and Scientists from every corner of the world have advocated for regular exercise. They have said that simple exercises lower the stress level. Simple exercises could include jogging, long walking, stretching, skipping, jumping, pull-ups, and push up if possible. Performing simple exercises regularly will keep your mental health in a balanced state.
- Identifying the Signs of Burnout: High levels of burnout contribute significantly to enhancing stress levels. Burnout is the condition of emotional or physical exhaustion that gives a sense of reduced fulfilment and loss of





identity. Depression is also a reason behind burnout. When you experience emotional exhaustion, you need to understand that time has come to handle the Stress.

- Care Yourself: Bring regular care activities into your daily life, which is an important element in lowering Stress. Give your soul, mind, and body some time to recover, replenish, and reboot. Explore the methods to live life to the fullest.
- Performing Mindfulness: Mindfulness is a simple human ability and state of being conscious. Explore ideas and methods to live your day in a state of mindfulness.

#### Role of Parents in Dealing with Stress

Parents and close friends are crucial in healing stressed, depressed, and nervous people. Loss of parental contact and family problems are listed as causes of Stress, but they can help significantly reduce the Stress of their child. They can make their children's lives bright by incorporating a healthy lifestyle and stress-managing strategies.

- Fighting Negative Feelings and Thinking: Youth is easily susceptible to negative thoughts and seen pronouncing sentences like "I'm horrible in maths", "My life has become hell", and "There is nothing good in the world". When your child demonstrates such feelings, remind them how they have worked hard to improve their lives and faced the same situations while growing up.
- Let Youth Fight Themselves: It is obvious that every parent wants to fix their child's problems. Parents helping their child at every level will deprive him of developing his coping skills. Give your son a chance to solve problems involving a low level of risk. Through it, they will have confidence in dealing with setbacks.
- Become a Model to Your Child: Parents can narrate their stories of how they have dealt with problems while growing up. It will motivate their child.[20]

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