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Dealing with stress

Many people seeking asylum feel very stressed. You may feel angry, upset, anxious, ashamed, sad, confused or disturbed by memories. It can be hard to sleep, and hard to feel calm after you have talked about your situation. If you live through painful experiences, it is normal to be affected like this. Most people can feel better in time. There are various things that can help.

Eight things that can help

Here are some simple things that can help. If you are feeling bad, you may not feel like doing them. But they are still important for your wellbeing. These things will help most if you keep on doing them.

1. **Connect with other people**. Try to spend time with other people when you can, perhaps watching TV, eating or going out together.
2. **Stay physically active**. Going for a walk and being outside in nature can really help. Try to do some kind of exercise every day.
3. **Find support**. Get to know at least one refugee organisation that can help you
4. **Distract yourself** from thinking too much. Spending time with friends and being physically active can help take your mind off memories and worries
5. **Look after your body**. Eat and drink water regularly, even if you do not feel you want to. Keep active. See a doctor if you are concerned about your health.
6. **Learn calming exercises** such as breathing exercises, relaxation, mindfulness exercises or butterfly hugs. Many people find these useful. You can find exercises on YouTube or you could use the mindfulness app *Headspace.*
7. **Talk to someone** about how you feel. Find someone you trust to confide in. This might be a friend, a health professional, or someone at a local support group.
8. **Sleep well**. You may find sleep very difficult but it can help a lot to learn good sleep habits. Some habits that help are: getting up at the same time every day; avoiding sleeping in the day time; avoiding caffeine.

   There are some good videos in several languages on the Solace website about sleep and relaxation
   https://solace-uk.org.uk/training/helpful-resources-for-refugees- and-people-seeking-safety

Talking about how you feel

It can help to talk to someone you like and trust, for example a friend or relative, or someone else supporting you. Sharing your worries with someone can be hard but it also often helps.

If you don't feel you can speak to anyone you know, there are services that can help. Your GP will know what is available in your local area. If you are in touch with a refugee support group, they may also be able to help.

You can also speak to your GP about how you are feeling. This can be hard, but your GP will be used to hearing from people who are distressed.

Finding more help if you are distressed (These services are free of charge)

- **A GP** will know what is available in your local area.
- **Samaritans** Phone 116 123 to speak to a trained volunteer. You can ask for an interpreter.
- **The Refugee Council** can tell you if there are other services near you. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/infoline/

Additional services for young people (These services are free of charge)

If you are under 25, there are other services that can help:

- **Young Minds** Text YM to 85258. A trained volunteer will text you back
- **Childline** www.childline.org.uk. Try the 'Get support' tab. Or phone 0800 1111
- **The Mix** www.themix.org.uk

If you feel really bad

If you feel really unhappy or agitated, are experiencing very disturbed sleep or many more nightmares, then it is especially important to ask for help.

If you are thinking about dying, do not keep these thoughts secret.

In an emergency, you or someone helping you can ring your GP or ring 111 for advice on getting help urgently.

If you can't get help anywhere else, you can go to the Emergency department of the hospital.

Personal Support Plan