

Stressing the Positives

The motto of last year's National Stress Awareness Day (4 November 2009) was 'Stressing the Positives'. Yet, how do you stress the positives when things go wrong in your life?

- First of all, stay active: Get out of bed in the morning, groom yourself, and set yourself a task for the day.
- Take care of yourself: Eat healthily, exercise, and get a decent amount of sleep. Avoid unhealthy comforters, such as alcohol, drugs and smoking.
- Do something enjoyable each day.
- Set yourself small, achievable goals that will help you improve your situation and make a list of actions that will help you achieve these goals. These action lists should include a timeframe/deadline.
- Make a chart on a piece of paper, and write down on one side the disadvantages and problems of your situation and on the other side the advantages and opportunities. If you can't think of anything positive ask yourself: 'If there was anything positive, what would this be?'.
- Stop negative thoughts: If you get carried away by worries and anxieties, say to yourself in a firm and convincing tone (silently or aloud): STOP! Then think exactly the opposite (even if it is not true or you don't believe it). Or use an encouraging phrase like 'I'll be all right', 'I can handle this', 'This will pass'.
- Surround yourself with supportive and cheerful people and avoid moaners, groaners and pessimists.
- Smile.
- Get help if necessary.