



# Beating the blues

Do not let stress get you down. **Kimiko Chan** shares some tips

PHOTO ISTOCKPHOTO

To feel stressed is to feel worried, nervous or uncomfortable about something. Although adults are more likely to feel stress and children are usually more carefree, someone your age can feel stressed about all sorts of things too.

Stress can affect a person in many ways. It can lead to feelings of sadness, fear, frustration, moodiness, loneliness or anger. There may even be physical effects such as headaches, tummy aches, skin problems and trouble sleeping.

A stressed child sometimes finds it harder to remember or focus on tasks at home or at school. He may even lose confidence and start behaving differently.

It is totally normal to feel stressed sometimes. This can even help you get excited about important things such as examinations and motivate you to do better.

But if those feelings get too strong and become

overwhelming, they may no longer be healthy or helpful.

Many things can lead to stress. For young people, school work and relationships with one's family or peers are often near the top of the list.

If you feel stressed about something, here are some tips from the Health Promotion Board and the website Kidshealth.org on how to deal with it:

◆ Talking about how you feel can help. An adult whom you trust – such as a parent, teacher or counsellor – is a

good place to start because they might be able to help you think of ways to solve the problem.

Talking to friends can make you feel better too – you never know, they might be going through the same thing as you are.

◆ Try to relax by doing something you enjoy or that clears your head, such as listening to music, going for a run, writing in your diary or playing with a pet.

◆ Similarly, spending time with family and friends can help you

take your mind off the stress. Having good relationships with the people you enjoy being with also means you will have lots of support when you are feeling down.

◆ Make sure you get enough sleep and rest and take care of yourself physically. Exercise, for example, can be a great way to de-stress.

◆ Stay positive and focus on your strengths. Don't be too hard yourself – nobody is perfect so you do not have to be so afraid of making mistakes.

Different people are good at different things, so you should be proud of what you are good at. This attitude can help you see your situation in a new way. You can also tell yourself things such as, "I don't need to get upset about this" or "I'm okay".

Stress is a normal part of life, especially as you get older, so learning how to cope with it is one of the most important skills you can have.

Sources: Health Promotion Board, Kidshealth.org

## ACTIVITY



1. Look for a story in The Straits Times that inspires you or makes you feel happy. What is it about the story that you like? And what do you think we can learn from it?

2. What are your ideas for beating stress? Come up with as many as you can and compare your list with those of your classmates.

