

Wellbeing Tip of the Week

Taking control of our stress



When we are stressed or in danger, our brain detects this and automatically triggers our stress response to protect us. This response is known as fight, flight, freeze. Certain hormones are released to prepare our body to face the stressor head on, run away from it or freeze. For this to happen, the emotional part of our brain takes over and the thinking part shuts down: when facing a threat, we don't have time to weigh up our options, our body just needs to act. Although this instinct keeps us alive, nowadays our stress response can be triggered often and when we're not in real danger. If we feel very overwhelmed, we can get stuck in our emotional brain. This means we can find it harder to calm ourselves down, to focus and to problem-solve. To try and wake up our thinking brain again, here are a few things we can do:

1. BREATHE! We need oxygen to get back from our muscles to our brain – try deep breathing exercises: breathe in for 5 seconds and out for 7
2. How do I feel when stressed? – Take notice of your physical and emotional response to stress, the more you are familiar with it, the earlier you can recognise when you're feeling stressed so you can start your deep breathing
3. Try some healthy coping strategies: walk away from the situation, scribble on some paper, talk to someone, listen to some calming music