

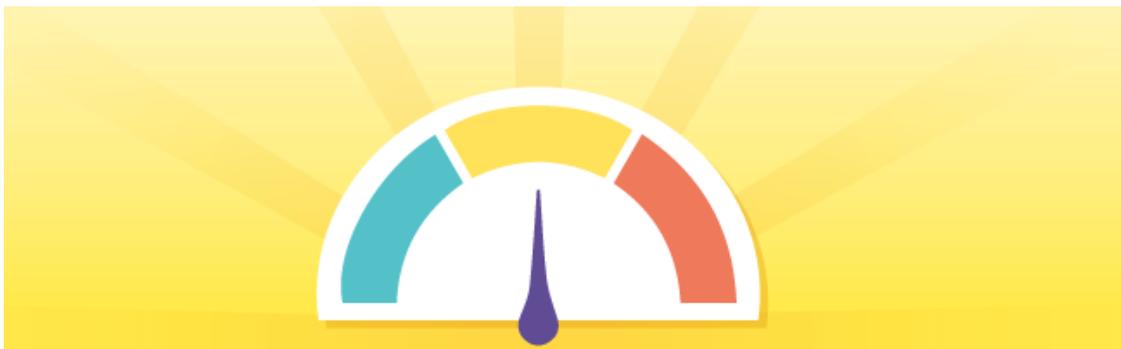


Secondhand furniture, books, phones, vehicles - most of us may have heard of these but what if we told you that 'Stress' could be secondhand too? Seems strange, doesn't it?

Well, according to **research**, simply observing people who are under a lot of stress can lift up our levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, causing 'Secondhand Stress'.

Most of us may now go like - "Wait a minute. This could be why I could have experienced a fall in energy after talking to my colleague who was under work pressure. Woah, now I get it."

Can you relate? Secondhand stress, you see, can come from anywhere. But worry not because it can certainly be dodged it with these techniques -



Evaluate the stress

Before stressing about other people's stress, first, acknowledge it. According to Experts,

some stress can be good which can motivate and help us refocus our energy, called eustress, and then there's the negative stress called distress.

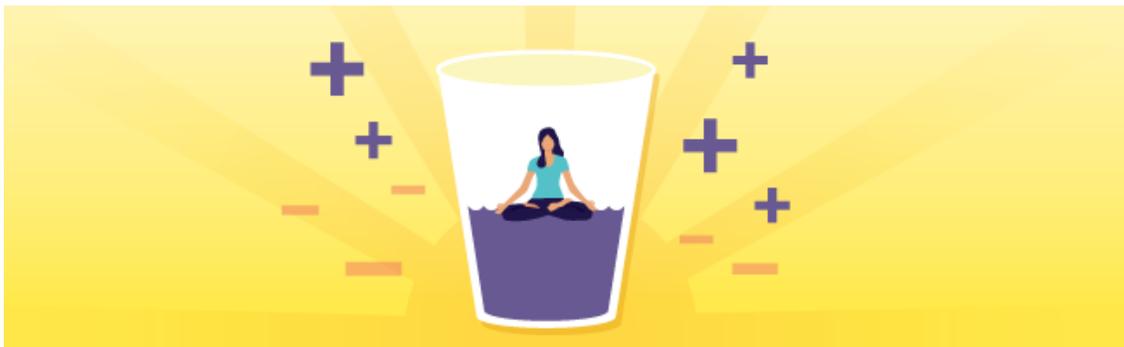
Based on this, ask the other person to describe the stress. If it turns out to be eustress, redirect their stress to positivity and if it's distress, a simple box breathing exercise can bring quick relief.



Change your mindset

By changing our mindset around stress, we can change its effects. Research says that if we stop fighting stress and reframe the situation in a positive way, we can experience a 23% drop in the negative effects.

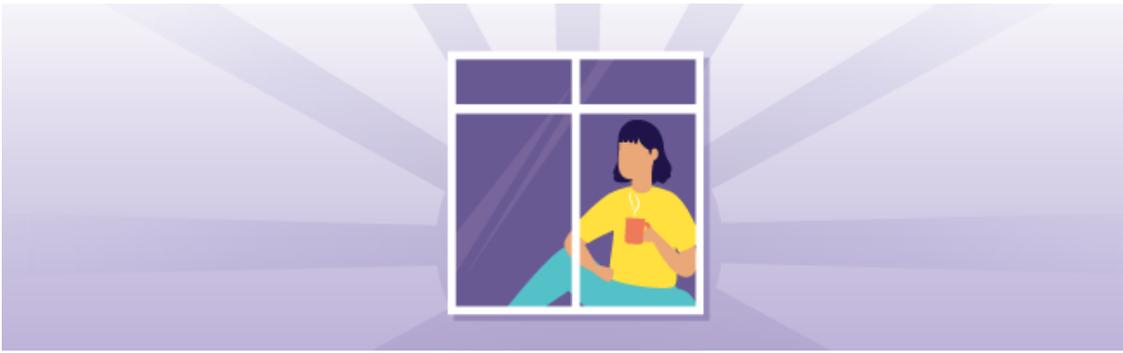
Studies have shown that shifting attention to gratitude can switch off the physiological effects of stress instantly. So try thinking about a thing or a person you are grateful to.



Neutralize the negativity

When people transmit negative emotions, the default is to pick up on that cue and go negative too. Psychologists recommended that instead, one should try to neutralize the negativity with empathy and positivity.

Expressing compassion for a person's stress and then engaging them in positive conversation helps either generate a potential solution or shift their focus away from it. Try using positive statements like "It's good that we're talking" or "Is there anything I can do to help?".



Know when to step back

Creating boundaries to shield ourselves from secondhand stress is an act of self-care. 'Strategic retreats' are recommended by experts to protect ourselves from stressors that don't source from us.

Communicating that you're not in the right state of mind at that moment, turn off social media notifications that create unnecessary feelings of urgency, refrain from watching/reading things that make us stressed also act as shields.



Keep breathing handy

Seeing a stressed person short and shallow breathing, it's natural for us to unintentionally mimic the breathing and overwhelm ourselves in the process. As per Harvard Medical School, a relaxed response is a great way of dealing with such situations.

Deep breathing (belly, abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing) is one such response. By taking deep breaths, our heart rate slows, more oxygen enters our bloodstream, and ultimately communicates with the brain to relax. Deep breathing also ups our endorphins, the "feel-good" chemical.

Remember, first or secondhand, stress if not managed can get overwhelming but you are not alone in this. You can always seek guidance from our experts and make stress work for you.

CONNECT WITH AN EXPERT

If you have any concerns, queries, or simply want to say hi, drop us a mail at campus@yourdost.com.

**Standing with you,
Team YourDOST**
