



Handout 13

Parenting stress

How do we become so stressed?

Whether you are a working parent, a work at home parent, a single parent, a married/in a relationship parent, or a parent of one or several children, parenting can be a difficult time. It can be helpful as a parent to be able to recognise what makes you stressed about parenting and to look at ways to manage the stress.

Why do we become stressed?

When we are worried, anxious, annoyed or feeling under pressure, our bodies begin to feel tense.

Stress and anxiety are natural reactions for people to feel during parenthood as they have to juggle many different things at once, but the symptoms of stress may vary for each of us.

We should also bear in mind that a small baby or young child crying is naturally designed to gain a reaction from us, as this is the way that small children communicate.

How to manage stress

Below are some things that may help us begin to think about managing parent stress.

- Use your support network.
- Increase 'quality time' with your family.
- Write things down.
- Do what is manageable.
- Get some relaxation/enjoyable time.
- Prioritise.

These are just some suggestions that could help you manage parent stress. However, it is important to remember that if things are becoming too overwhelming then you should try to seek the help you need by speaking to your GP, social worker, parental mental health worker, or any other health/social service.