

# Sandra's strategies for life and well-being



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## Summertime blues?

Anxious? Stressed, Depressed? At the Montreal Center for Anxiety and Depression we are getting a lot of calls... hmmm it is summer – happy time right? Not always. But why not? Change of any kind can bring on stress and anxiety. You are not alone (though we often feel we are which is part of the problem).

This is the first article in a regular series on topics like this; please write us and let us know how anxiety or stress impacts your life and what you would like to learn more about. Send in your questions: We are excited to start this dialogue. See below for how to write us.

Back to the summer time blues. Here are some simple tips and strategies that can help you combat any feelings of overwhelming stress. Firstly validate it; it does make sense. Summer can be challenging- disrupted schedules in general can bring on these feelings. Summer can be expensive and that pressure alone can trigger a stress response. Secondndly remind yourself that you are not alone. Anxiety is one of the most common challenges Canadians struggle with and yet so very treatable which leads to the third strategy- get help if you need it. Both anxiety and

depression respond so well to treatment and yet tend to get worse if not dealt with.

In day to day operations consider trying these very simple but effective strategies:

When you have thoughts of panic, anxiety or worry try making a self-statement something like this “STOP! These thoughts are not helpful and I have decided to think differently.” (Each time you do this you are reinforcing your brain to think in a more positive way). Remember anxiety is not dangerous -it is just uncomfortable.

**EXERCISE...** Exercise relieves stress as well as relieving depressed feelings.

Get enough sleep. Try not to drink alcohol or caffeinated beverages in the evening; take a warm bath one hour before bed; go to bed at the same time every night.

Listen to some music you like- this can soothe the nerves as well as lifting the spirit. Watch what you eat. A healthy diet can help you handle stress. Eat breakfast, cut back on caffeine, watch sugar intake, and stick to a regular meal schedule.

Take a breath from your belly: Abdominal breathing brings much needed oxygen in to the body and relaxes the muscles. It also slows down your heart rate and helps calm the mind.

Talk it out: When you are stressed, a quick call to a friend can instantly make you feel better. Make time for fun.

Come say hi to us at one of our upcoming FREE talks. In the meanwhile- breathe in the sunshine. Looking forward to this journey together