

# ask Dr Roshan Jain

Your *mental and emotional health* questions answered

**Q** I am a 34-year-old, single, IT professional with a very busy but well paying job. I try to keep physically fit and follow a healthy diet. However, I feel tired and exhausted all the time and I am losing the motivation to do the things I need to do. My friends have observed that I am easily irritated. I can't imagine being stressed out! What should I do?

Your presentation is very similar to the countless people I see and counsel. We can term it as burnout or a stress-related state. Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the demands of life. Up to a certain point, increased stress results in increased productivity; beyond it, things go rapidly downhill. The peak point or the thin line where stress makes a better performer of you or unravels you is specific to you or is different for each of us. You need to be sensitive to the early warning signs that suggest a stress overload.

Typically, affected individuals like you will present a case of being overworked. You will experience exhaustion, loss of enthusiasm, and reduced creativity. You will refuse to take risks, even becoming indecisive and disorganized. Relentless stress leads to psychological problems like anxiety, depression and psychosis, and physical health problems like recurrent infection and hypertension. Here are some basic rules for coping:

- ◆ Recognise and admit that you are feeling stressed and anxious, be aware of your body's symptoms and respond to them.
- ◆ Take time out from the regimented grind, spend time on your interests

and hobbies and with your family.

- ◆ Connect with nature and things around you.
- ◆ Exercise regularly, as it will improve your resilience.
- ◆ Eat a balanced diet, and sleep well.
- ◆ Learn to say 'NO'. In modern work environments, it is almost stigmatizing to decline work. Just risk it. Saying 'no' to something may open other doors and have you saying 'yes' to better things!

**Q** What is the difference between 'counselling' and 'psychotherapy'? We often hear about both but are never sure which one to go for.

First, know that counselling has become a lay term (especially in India) for all forms of interactions and consultations with a psychiatrist, psychologist and a therapist! 'Psychotherapy' and 'counselling' are terms that are often used interchangeably. They are very similar, but have subtle differences as well.

Literally speaking, counsellor means advisor and counselling as a process involves two people working together to solve a problem. The term 'counselling' is used in conjunction with many types of advice giving. For example, advice on health and career and spiritual guidance. In the context of mental health, 'counselling' is generally used to denote a relatively brief treatment that targets a particular symptom or problem with suggestions and advice on dealing with it. The counselling sessions offer scope for venting the emotions

associated with an issue.

Psychotherapy or talking therapy, on the other hand, is a more structured long-term treatment. It focuses on gaining insight into the client or patient's thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The individual is referred to as a 'client' as s/he doesn't always have an illness, rather it is a problem that needs working through. From exploratory therapies like psychoanalysis to the popular Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which focuses on changing thoughts and behaviour, there is a range of psychotherapy to choose from. In practice, there can be quite a bit of overlap between the two. Either can address problems like low self-esteem, lack of confidence, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, impulsivity and anger. Consulting a professional would be the first step towards seeking the desired change.

Our doctors will answer all queries on emotional and mental health. Got mind trouble of your own? Drop us a mail at [bpositiveQA@apollolife.com](mailto:bpositiveQA@apollolife.com)  
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