Introduction
Stress is a part of day-to-day living. It is a common human phenomenon and part of life as a college student. As college students you may experience stress meeting academic demands, adjusting to a new living environment, or developing friendships. The stress you experience is not necessarily harmful. Mild forms of stress can act as a motivator and energiser. However, if your stress level is too high, medical and social problems can result.

What Causes Stress?
Although we tend to think of stress as caused by external events, it is the way in which we interpret and react to events that makes them stressful. People differ dramatically in the type of events they interpret as stressful and the way in which they respond to such stress. For example, speaking in public can be stressful for some people, and not for others.

Symptoms of Stress
There are several signs and symptoms that you may notice when you are experiencing stress. These symptoms fall into four categories: Feelings, Thoughts, Behaviour, and Physiology. When you are under stress, you may experience one or more of the following:

Feelings
- Feeling anxious
- Feeling scared
- Feeling irritable
- Feeling moody

Thoughts
- Low self-esteem
- Fear of failure
- Inability to concentrate
- Easily embarrassed
- Worrying about the future
- Pre-occupation with thoughts/tasks
- Forgetfulness

Behaviour
- Stuttering and other speech difficulties
- Crying for no apparent reason
- Acting impulsively
- Startling easily
- Laughing in a high-pitch and nervous tone of voice
- Grinding your teeth
- Increase in smoking
- Increased use of alcohol and/or other drugs
- Being accident prone
- Losing your appetite or over-eating

Physiology
- Perspiration/sweaty hands
- Increased heart beat
- Trembling
- Nervous ticks
- Dryness of throat and mouth
- Tiring easily
- Urinating frequently
- Sleeping problems
- Diarrhoea / indigestion / vomiting
- Butterflies in stomach
- Headaches
- Premenstrual tension
- Pain in the neck and/or lower back
- Loss of appetite or over-eating
- Susceptibility to illness

Tips to Help you Cope with Stress
Remember our goal is not to eliminate stress but to learn how to manage it and learn how to use it to help us. Insufficient stress acts as a depressant and may leave us feeling bored or dejected. On the other hand, excessive stress may leave us feeling tied up in knots. What we need to do is to find the optimal level of stress which will individually motivate but not overwhelm each of us.
Some tips to help you.

- Exercise regularly
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Do your best, as opposed to trying to be perfect
- Talk to your friends or family members
- Practice relaxation exercises, for example, when you feel tense, slowly breathe in and out for several minutes
- Do not use alcohol or any other drugs to alleviate your stress
- Recognise your negative thoughts (e.g. “that was a stupid thing that I did”) and replace them with more positive thoughts (e.g. “it’s o.k. to make mistakes”)
- Make time for fun activities
- Get a hobby or two
- Avoid unnecessary competition
- Recognise and accept your limitations
- Learn how to use your time wisely:
  - monitor how you are using your time
  - plan ahead and avoid procrastination
  - make a weekly schedule

Where to find Help

Student Counselling Service
Room 010. Left after the yellow stairs on the ground floor and left again.
Tel: ext 2635 (from outside 4042635)
E-mail: aisling.obrien@ittdublin.ie

Student Health Centre:
Room 110. off first floor corridor of the main college building. Extension 2613.
E-mail: orlagh.fleming@ittdublin.ie

Some Reading

There is a wealth of literature on anxiety in most large book shops. Below are some books which are available in the Institute Library.

Manage your mind
- Gillian Butler

Calm Down
- Paul Hauck

Feeling Good Handbook
- David Burns

Complete Guide to Stress Management
- Chandra Patel

Overcoming Stress
- Vernon Coleman

Student Counselling Service
Student Services
Institute of Technology, Tallaght