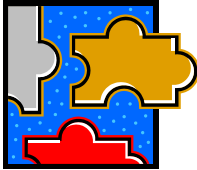
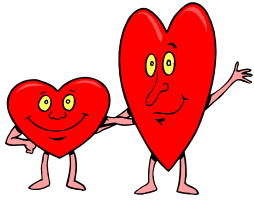


# Sound Mind: I CAN DO IT!

Whether you are a child or an adult, you will experience difficulties. Finding a way to deal with these times in your life is often hard because you may not recognize you have a problem. Stress and depression are real and affect you daily – whether at home, school, or work. Nancy Starewicz and Sherry Finnerty, the School City of Hobart's Home School Coordinators reflect on what it is like to be troubled and ways to start looking ahead for a healthier outlook.

Issue	Solution
<p><b>Stress</b> is like driving in the fog for the first time. Your first reaction when you can't see what is ahead is to turn on the bright lights. When the lights are turned to bright, the road becomes even harder to see and driving becomes harder to manage. The possibility of a crash increases. This is much like stress. Whether it be something unexpected, a loss, physical ailment, disorganization or just too many things to do, stress can make you unable to see a clear vision and emotionally you may think you are ready to crash!</p>	<p>What you need to do is the same as you would for driving in the fog. In the fog you slow your vehicle down and focus on one part of the road until the fog begins to lift. As the fog lifts you are able to see more of the road and can gradually increase your speed. In life we need to prioritize and determine what we have control over vs. what we do not have control over. We need to slow down and work on one issue at a time until the fog clears.</p>
<p><b>Problems</b> in life are sometimes like a puzzle. At times when you are working on a challenging puzzle you might find yourself stuck. Have there been times when you felt that a couple pieces were missing out of the box and no way to finish the puzzle?</p> 	<p>When you get to that point it is a cue to take a break. When you return to the table start organizing the pieces: put all the end pieces in one area the blue pieces in another the red ones in another, etc. Too many times people feel broken and think their life will never be right because some piece is missing. Really by rearranging the pieces, our life picture will come together beautifully. Once the pieces start fitting together one realizes that they were not broken--all the pieces were there, they just needed to be arranged differently. Focus on what you have in life, not on what is missing. This will give you a renewed spirit.</p>

## Stress and problems can turn into depression. What are some signs of depression?

Preschooler	School-Aged Children	Teenager-Young Adult
<p>Preschoolers may wet their pants or fail to control their bowels. Their play may be reckless, aggressive, destructive or show preoccupation with morbid even suicidal themes.</p> 	<p>School-age children may lag in social and academic skills that show up as school phobias, social problems, excessive worrying, psychosomatic complaints such as frequent headaches, stomach aches, etc. Many times there is a change in sleeping and eating patterns. Some children experience crying spells while others may show increase in frustration or anger. Undue fatigue and excessive guilt over minor mistakes could also indicate depression.</p>	<p>Among older children and teenagers, depression assumes more classic symptoms: sad, empty, bored feelings. Lack of interest in activities, bored feelings, extreme mood swings, engaging in risky activities, grades dropping, change in behavior-such as running away, talking about suicide, sleeping/eating changes, change in friendships.</p>

## What you can do to help a child in need?

<p><b>Encouragement!</b></p> <p>The Home School Coordinators do a positive thinking program with 2<sup>nd</sup> graders called <u>Free the Horses</u>. The message of this poem lives on because it can help ALL of us get through stressful situations. The message is this:</p> <p><b>"I can do it.</b>  <b>It may be hard,</b>  <b>And it may take time.</b>  <b>But stick with it and I'll be fine."</b></p> <p>Think about it ... most things worth doing take effort, time, and perseverance. We believe that saying these words can provide the optimism it</p>	<p>takes to keep going. Plus, we do not need to handle our problems alone. Keeping a positive attitude does not mean we do not see what is bad or hard about our lives. A positive attitude means that we believe that whatever comes our way, we will be able to handle it and that we can always find people to help! Try saying the <b>"I can do it"</b> poem the next time you are facing a problem, and remember, we are here to help! As George Eliot said, "What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for each other?"</p>	<p><b>Families may contact their school counselor, Home/School coordinator or building principals with concerns any time.</b></p>
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