

# Coping under Pressure



An information leaflet  
for young people with  
spina bifida and/or  
hydrocephalus

## Do you feel that you are 'under pressure'?

Everyone has demands made on them in life, but sometimes this can make us feel under pressure. We all need some demands on us to get us going. For example, we need to know that we have to be somewhere by a certain time – such as school by 9am. This is a demand on us but it does help us to get up in the morning!

It is when the demands of everyday life seem too hard to meet, or when too many demands are made at the same time, that we can feel unable to cope and under too much pressure.

If you have hydrocephalus, you may find that you need to have demands or tasks given to you one at a time or broken down into stages.

This is not because there is anything 'wrong with you' but it can be an effect of having hydrocephalus.

Your teachers and your family need to understand this so that they can help you to succeed.

## It can happen to ANYONE

Feeling anxious or worried is nothing to be ashamed of. **Everyone** feels like this at some time in their life. Some of us find things stressful while others seem to cope easily.

Often people become worried when faced with new tasks. They wonder if they will be able to cope. Sometimes things just 'get too much'. It could be pressure from parents or teachers at exam time or just a general feeling that there is too much to do.

## How to handle pressure

Everyone handles pressure differently. But you need to find a way that works for you.

### **DON'T** hide the problem

Some people try to cope by pretending a problem doesn't exist, for example – shutting a difficult piece of work in a drawer and leaving it, or playing truant so that they don't have to face a stressful day at school. But this doesn't solve the problem - just delays it.



## DO

**Get help** – talk to a friend / parent / teacher (show them this leaflet and tell them this is how you are feeling).

**Make a list** – of the things you have to do and tackle them one at a time – it will really make you feel good when you can cross them off because you have dealt with them.

**Ask for more time** – to complete your work or for it to be broken down into smaller steps.

**And make people aware of your needs (see next page)...**

## Making people aware of your needs

These are some ways of asking for work to be given to you in a way that makes it easier for you to deal with:

**“ Could you please go over that again, slowly and in small steps. ”**

**“ Could you put that on tape so that I can take it home and listen to it again. ”**

**“ Can I have my work one item at a time and not all together. ”**

**“ I can do this work but I need longer than you have given me. ”**

You can use these sentences if you find them helpful or make up some of your own. You could even put them on a piece of card and carry them with you as a reminder to use when needed – then you can stop the stress from building up.

## RELAX

If you take time for relaxation, this will help you to deal with the busy times in

your life. Some people like to relax by watching TV, reading a good book or taking part in a hobby.

But you can also try to relax completely – some colleges hold relaxation classes and audio tapes or books on how to relax are available. These tapes, books or classes will show you how to release tension – probably starting with lying down in a quiet room and imagining a happy, peaceful scene.

Try asking at your local library about books or tapes you can borrow and about local classes.

## Useful contact

**CARELINE** - a confidential phone counselling service for children and young people and adults  
Tel: 020 8514 1177 Monday - Friday from 10am-4pm and from 7pm-10pm.

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