

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF STRESS AND METHODS FOR MANAGING STRESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract

Stress is a mental state of pressure experienced by individuals facing challenges related to their environment and social well-being, often leading to various health issues. Youth is a particularly critical phase of life, marked by significant changes and expectations. During this period, young individuals are often seen as the future leaders of society, making it essential for them to develop effective stress management skills to ensure a healthy transition into adulthood. As young people navigate this stage, they must adapt to new environments, build relationships with unfamiliar people, and deal with numerous life changes. The pressures they face during this time are substantial. Therefore, understanding the sources of stress in youth and identifying effective coping strategies are crucial. Research indicates that major sources of stress among youth include academic demands, interpersonal conflicts, relationship issues, life transitions, and career planning. Such stress can manifest in psychological, physical, and behavioral problems. This study investigates the root causes of stress in young individuals and emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive environment during their developmental stages. Encouraging a positive upbringing, promoting outdoor activities, and creating a conducive learning atmosphere with minimal exposure to negative stressors are essential strategies. These measures can help mitigate the harmful effects of stress and contribute to healthier development. The findings of this study are valuable for students, educators, scholars, career advisors, and counselling centres.

Keywords: Stress, symptoms, stressors, youth, effects

Introduction

In today's competitive world, reports indicate that the younger generation experiences higher levels of stress. Cases of depression, suicide attempts, and various psychological symptoms are increasingly prevalent among youth. Instances of mental health issues, such as academic dropout, depression, and even suicide, highlight the pressing need to address stressors affecting college students. Fortunately, there is growing awareness about the factors contributing to stress among young individuals. Efforts are being made to foster environments that promote positive thinking and well-being. Both individuals and organizations have initiated various programs to help reduce stress and provide support.

Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable phase characterized by self-discovery and potential role confusion. For many, stress arises from academic pressures, interpersonal conflicts, relationship challenges, financial difficulties, and career uncertainties. This stress often manifests in psychological, physical, and behavioral problems, significantly impacting their well-being.

This study seeks to examine the stressors impacting modern youth and the emotional strategies they use to cope. By gaining insight into these aspects, the research aims to support improved emotional well-being and academic success, fostering smoother and more positive transitions into adulthood.

Literature Review

National Institute on Mental Health (2023) emphasizes the prevalence of stress and anxiety in adolescents, noting the impact on emotional regulation and mental health. The article underscores the importance of early intervention and provides strategies such as open communication and professional help to mitigate these issues National Institute of Mental Health National Institute of Mental Health

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (2023) discusses mind-body approaches such as mindfulness meditation, yoga, and other practices. These techniques are shown to reduce stress-related physiological responses and improve

emotional well-being. The resource highlights scientific backing for these interventions and their long-term benefits NCCIH

MedlinePlus (2023) focuses on recognizing when adolescent stress becomes problematic. It highlights symptoms like irritability, trouble sleeping, and withdrawal. Recommendations include creating a supportive environment and encouraging stress-reduction habits such as regular sleep, healthy eating, and physical activity National Institutes of Health (NIH)

National Institutes of Health (2023) provides a practical emotional wellness checklist, emphasizing regular exercise, mindfulness practices, and building strong social networks. These tips aim to enhance emotional resilience and prevent chronic stress National Institutes of Health (NIH) NIH News in Health

National Institute on Mental Health (2023) outlines helpful practices for managing stress, such as reframing stressful situations and seeking professional help when needed. The guidance includes leveraging cognitive-behavioral techniques to improve resilience National Institute of Mental Health

National Institutes of Health: News in Health (2023) explores stress management strategies to build resilience, such as setting realistic goals, maintaining a work-life balance, and engaging in enjoyable activities. It provides a balanced view of self-care and when to seek professional interventions NIH News in Health.

Office of Research on Women's Health (2023) highlights gender-specific responses to stress and the importance of resilience training. It recommends recognizing stress signals, practicing mindfulness, and fostering gratitude to manage stress effectively ORWH

American Psychological Association (2023) discusses trends in stress management across different age groups in the U.S., emphasizing coping mechanisms such as therapy, social support, and stress-reduction activities. The association identifies a need for greater awareness of stress impacts and accessible resources National Institute of Mental Health

Mayo Clinic (2023) offers actionable advice for stress management, advocating for regular physical activity, relaxation techniques like deep breathing, and a focus on positive thinking. The resource encourages integrating these habits into daily routines to prevent stress escalation National Institutes of Health (NIH) NIH News in Health

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (2023) provides insights into public health approaches to managing stress, such as community-based programs and educational campaigns. The CDC emphasizes addressing stress early to prevent its physical and mental health repercussions.

Social Support Networks Maintaining connections with friends, family, and mentors helps alleviate stress by creating a support system. This approach is supported by findings from the *American Psychological Association (2023)* and *National Institute on Mental Health (2023)* National Institute of Mental Health NIH News in Health

Professional Guidance Consulting mental health professionals for cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or counselling is recommended for severe stress and anxiety, as highlighted by the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* and *National Institutes of Health* NIH News in Health ORWH

Digital Tools for Stress Management Digital interventions, such as mobile apps for mindfulness and stress tracking, provide accessible means for young people to manage their stress. The *National Institute on Mental Health (2023)* discusses their growing popularity among adolescents National Institute.

Sources of Stress

Threats

Whenever we fear something or feel its threat looming over us, we enter a stressful state. For example:

- A threat can be losing a job.
- A threat can be incurring a loss in business.
- A threat can be not progressing in life.

- A threat can be having a conflict with someone. Any kind of fear puts us in a stressful situation.

Frustration

Sometimes, we feel disturbed or troubled due to certain things or individuals. Negative situations or negative people around us can also push us into stressful situations, leading to frustration and stress.

Pressure

Whenever we find ourselves in a pressure-filled situation, it invites stress. Pressure can come in many forms, such as:

- Pressure to earn profits.
- Pressure to achieve sales targets.
- Pressure to maintain a relationship.
- Pressure to move ahead in life.
- Pressure to achieve success.

All these pressures can lead to stress in our lives.

Conflict

The fourth source of stress is conflict, which can cause significant tension. In human life, we build many relationships with others, and everyone has different opinions. While some opinions may align with ours, others might not. This disagreement can lead to conflict. Whenever we find ourselves in a situation of conflict, it often results in stress.

Causes of Stress Among Students

Stressors are the events or situations that trigger stress, ranging from physical dangers to everyday challenges like giving a class presentation or managing a tough academic schedule. Some of the major stressors faced by students include:

Academics:

Academic pressure is a significant source of stress for students concerns about performance often lead to symptoms like anxiety, sleep, disturbance, or changes in appetite and mood., many students, as noted by more house state university, struggle

with poor study habits and often cram for exam for last minute. The fear of exam, heavy work load, and a constant stream of assignments are primary causes of stress among university student.

Finances:

Financial issues are another common stressor for young people. Many students lack a steady income, and those with part-time jobs often find their earnings insufficient to meet their needs. The pressure to maintain a desired lifestyle or afford items like mobile phones, bikes, or cars can create significant stress if these demands go unmet.

Relationships:

Navigating relationships, whether friendships or acquaintanceships, is another major source of stress. The desire for meaningful connections can become stressful when students struggle to make or maintain friendships, leading to feelings of isolation or inadequacy.

Career Concerns:

Career-related stress is increasingly prevalent among students. High competition, fear of job insecurity, and the pressure to perform can negatively impact mental and physical well-being. Students often worry about finding job opportunities after graduation and struggle to cope with the intense competition in the job market.

Time Management:

Poor management of time is another critical stressor. Balancing academic, extracurricular activities, and personal life can be overwhelming. Adding a part-time job to the mix makes it even more challenging. The inability to effectively manage time often results in heightened stress levels among students.

Research Methodology

The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire survey aimed at young individuals, including students and professionals working in different organizations. Both primary and secondary sources of information were utilized in the data collection process.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the symptoms of stress experienced by young individuals.
- To assess the intensity and levels of stress among young people.
- To explore the coping strategies adopted by young individuals to manage stressors.

Research Design

The study's sample consisted of young males and females randomly selected from the regions of Pauri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand in India. A total of 310 questionnaires were distributed, and 220 valid responses were collected.

Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section focused on identifying symptoms of stress, the second explored potential stressors, and the third examined coping strategies used by the youth. To meet the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data sources were employed. Primary data was collected through the structured questionnaire and further enriched by discussions with students.

Data Collection

Data Sources:

- **Secondary Data:** Information was gathered from various sources, including the internet, magazines, journals, and books.
- **Primary Data:** Collected using a structured questionnaire.
- **Contact Method:** Involved direct communication with respondents.
- **Personal Interaction:** Engaged through face-to-face discussions to enhance data reliability.

The questionnaire consisted of three key sections: The first section assessed various stress symptoms using a seven-point scale. The second section explored the causes of stress through 25 statements measured on a ten-point scale and last section covers the ten coping strategies.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The respondents are from the different places of Pauri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand India, some are working and some are doing studies. The table shows that total numbers of respondent were 220. The maximum respondent belong from the age group 21-22 years i.e. 40.45%, 23-24 represents 55 years ie 25%, up to 20yrs represents and 19.09% from >23years. The male respondents are 130 and female are 90. Maximum respondents are from the income level of 10000 to 20000/. Respondent are from the environment where single parent working.

Table 1: Distribution base on age

Age	No	%
Up to 20Years	42	19.09
21-22 Years	89	40.45
23-24 years	55	25.0
Above 25 years	27	12.27
No Response	7	2.27
Total	220	100

Table 2: Gender - Based Distribution

Gender	No	%
Male	134	60.90
Female	86	39.090
Total	220	100.00

Table 3: Distribution Based on Family Monthly Income.

Income	No	%
Up to Rs 10000	36	16.36
Rs. 10000 – Rs. 20000	50	22.72
Rs. 20001 – Rs. 30000	38	17.27

Rs. 30001 Rs. 40000	25	11.36
Rs. 50000 -Rs Above	28	12.72
No Response	43	19.54
Total	220	100.00

The table illustrates the

employment status of parents. It reveals that 13.63% of respondents have both parents working, while 86.36% have only one parent who is employed.

Table 4: Distribution According to Working Status of Mother

Working Status of Parents	No	%
Mother & Father Both Working	30	13.63
Working Father	190	86.36
Total	220	100.00

Stress Symptoms among youth

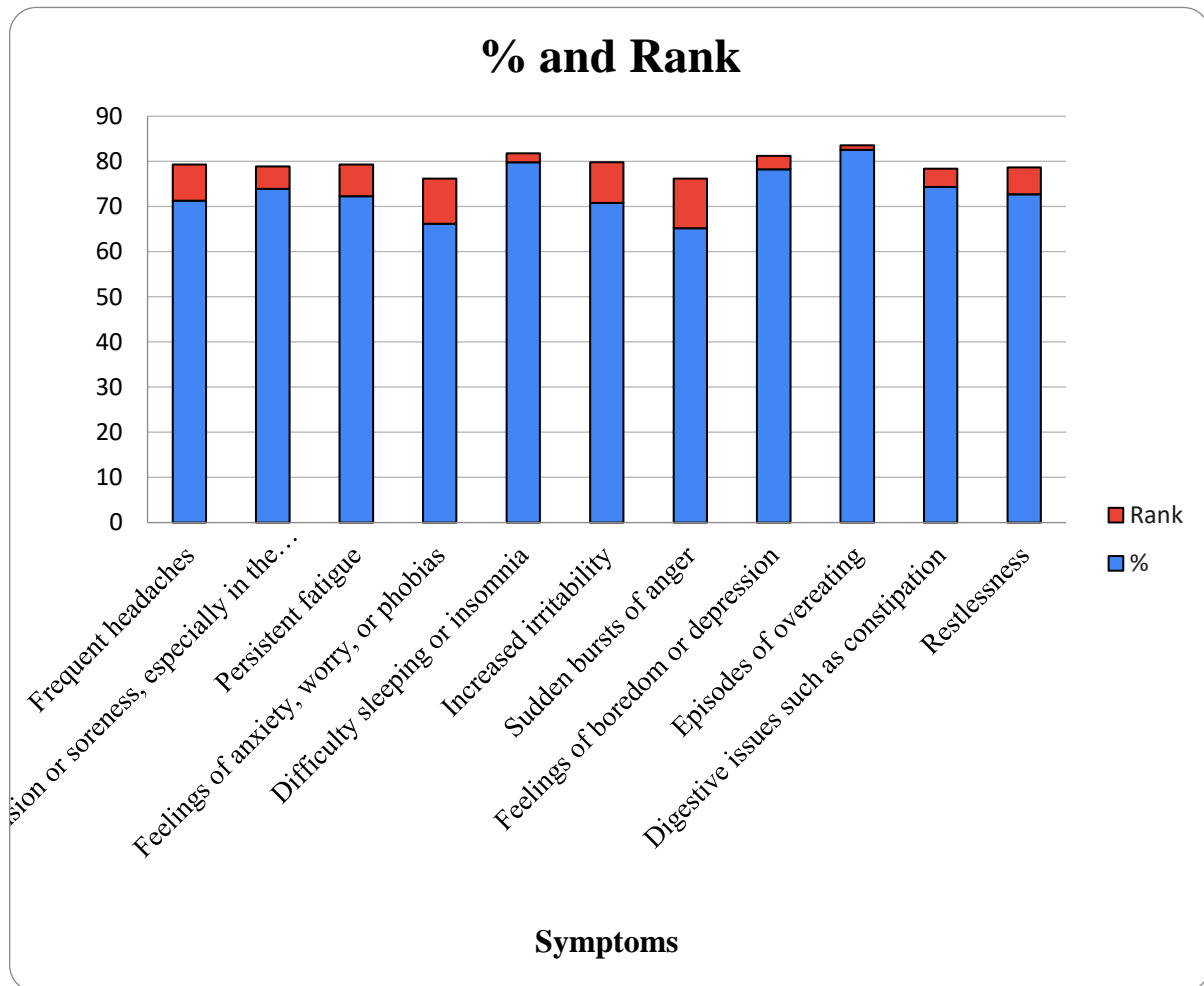
The findings, as presented in Table 5, reveal that students commonly experience stress and its associated symptoms. Depression is the most prevalent, affecting 81.60% of respondents, followed by insomnia (79.82%) and unhealthy eating habits (82.60%). A significant proportion of youth report struggles with depression, tension, and related challenges.

The contemporary lifestyle of young individuals is shaped by diverse ambitions. However, when these aspirations go unmet, it frequently results in stress. This stress often manifests with intense symptoms that hinder their concentration on academics or involvement in sports. Many tend to withdraw from family engagements and social interactions with peers. Furthermore, adolescents may resort to risky behaviours, such as experimenting with drugs or alcohol. Other prevalent concerns include loss of appetite and a decline in immunity.

Table 5: Symptoms

Symptoms	%	Rank
Frequent headaches	71.29	8
Muscle tension or soreness, especially in the neck	73.91	5

Persistent fatigue	72.30	7
Feelings of anxiety, worry	66.20	10
Difficulty sleeping	79.82	2
Increased irritability	70.84	9
Sudden bursts of anger	65.18	11
Feelings of boredom or depression	78.22	3
Episodes of overeating	82.60	1
Digestive issues such as constipation	74.38	4
Restlessness	72.69	6



Causes of Stress

The questionnaire results highlight various factors contributing to stress. Academics account for a stress level of 62.71%, while relationship-related stress emerges as the highest contributor, influenced significantly by the growing use of social media. Psychological factors are responsible for 72.34% of stress, financial stress affects 70.45% of the younger generation, and career-related stress impacts 68.49%. The elevated percentages across all stressors indicate the pressures of maintaining a modern lifestyle.

Table 6: Level of Stress of Each kind

Kind of stress		Level of Stress	Rank
Stress of Academic		62.71	5
Stress of Financial and Economic		70.45	3
Stress of Relationship		73.14	1
Future / Career Growth Stress		68.49	4
stress of Psychological		72.34	2
Overall Stress		69.42	

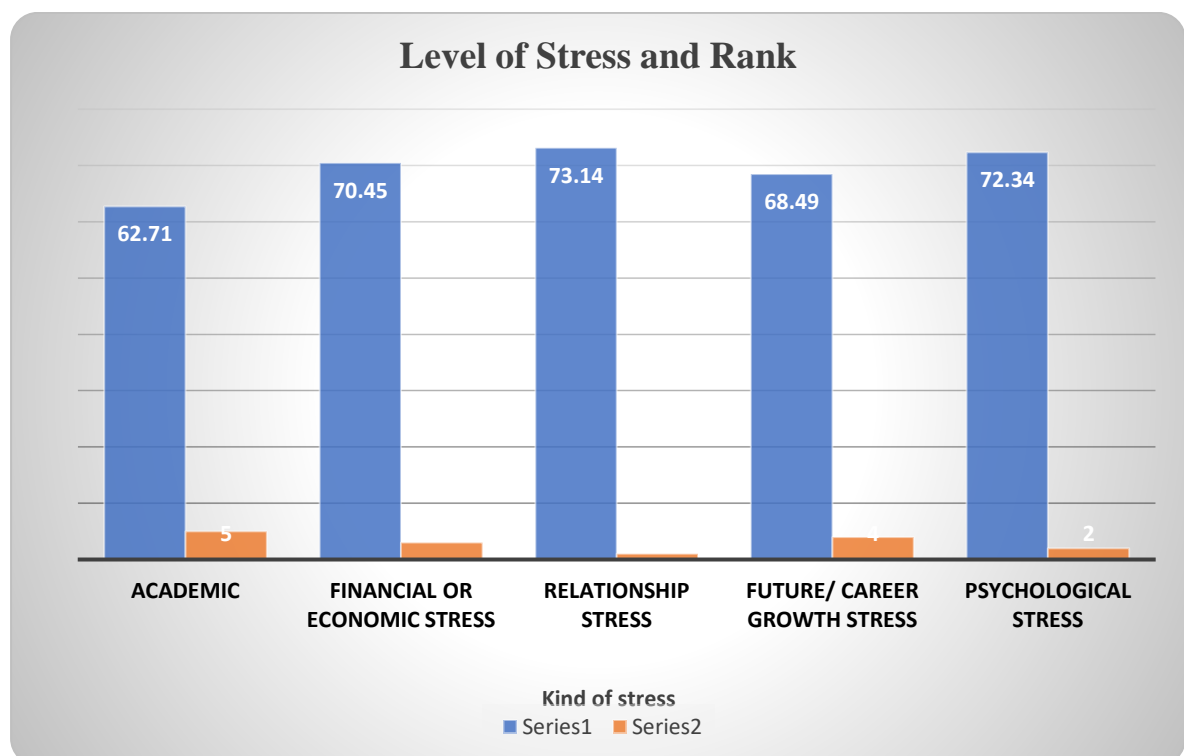
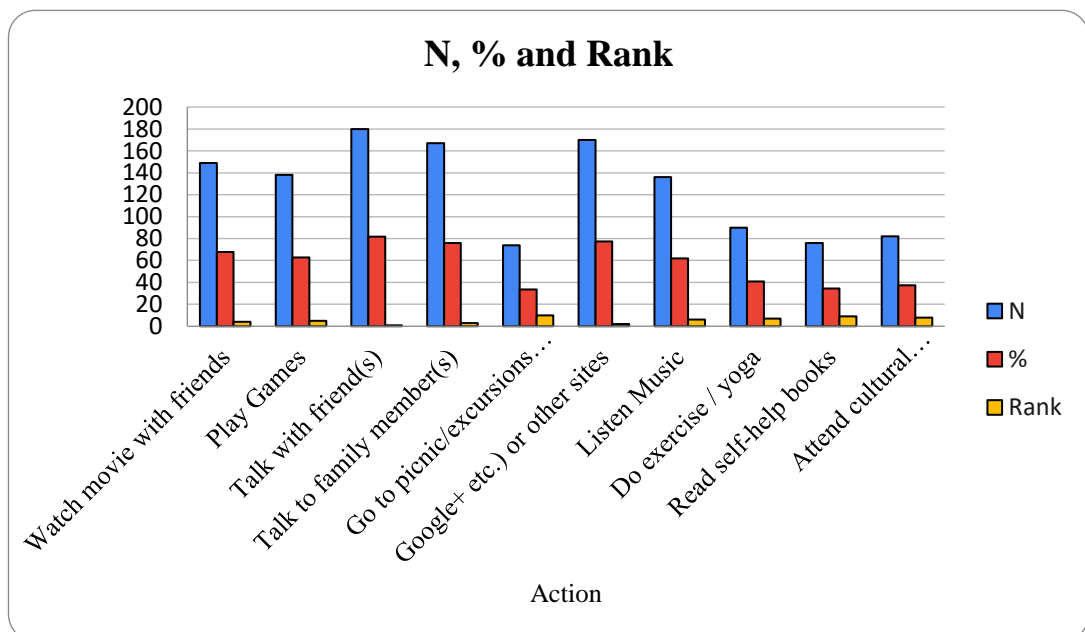


Table 7: Activity to Reduce Stress

Action	N	%	Rank
Watch movie with his friends	149	67.72	4
Games Play	138	62.72	5
Talk with his friends	180	81.81	1
Talk to Family Members	167	75.90	3
Go for Picnic /excursions use of Internet (social networking sites – face book	74	33.63	10
Google and other sites	170	77.27	2
Music Listen	136	61.81	6
Exercise & Yoga Practices	90	40.90	7
Study Self-help Books	76	34.54	9
Go for Cultural Programmes	82	37.27	8



Suggestions to Reduce Stress Among Youth

The youth are the backbone of any nation, serving as the future leaders and innovators. Therefore, addressing the causes, symptoms, and consequences of stress in students is crucial for their individual well-being and the overall development of society.

To mitigate stress among youth, the following strategies are recommended:

Organize Stress-Management Workshops: Integrating stress-reduction workshops and motivational sessions promoting a healthy lifestyle into academic curricula can inspire students to adopt positive habits and realize their inner potential.

Set Goals: Encourage youth to set clear personal and professional objectives to maintain focus and direction.

Stay Organized and Plan Ahead: Effective organization and planning help manage tasks efficiently, reducing the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed.

Practice Time Management: Properly allocating time for studies, extracurricular activities, and leisure ensures a balanced routine.

Stay Current with Coursework: Keeping up with assignments and studies prevents last-minute stress.

Engage in Extracurricular Activities: Participation in hobbies and recreational activities helps in relaxing and rejuvenating.

Maintain Family Communication: Regular interaction with family members provides emotional support and a sense of security.

Build Healthy Relationships: Cultivating meaningful friendships and positive social connections is essential for emotional well-being.

Express Thoughts and Share Problems: Sharing feelings and challenges with a trusted person can alleviate stress and provide fresh perspectives.

Focus on Self-Awareness: Getting to know oneself, including one's strengths and values, helps in building self-confidence and resilience.

Adopt Positive Thinking: Developing an optimistic outlook can improve coping mechanisms and reduce stress levels.

Enhance Life Skills: Adolescents should focus on building competencies, including academic, social, and life skills, to handle challenges effectively.

Embrace a Healthy Lifestyle: Consuming a nutritious diet and engaging in regular physical activity are vital for maintaining physical and mental health.

- Adolescents should dedicate time to unwind and engage in recreational activities.
- Young people should prioritize relaxation and participate in leisure pursuits.
- Teenagers should make time for enjoyable activities or relaxation.
- Adolescents should explore hobbies and spend time on recreational interests.
- Youth should focus on relaxing and engaging in activities they find enjoyable.
- Taking breaks to relax or pursuing hobbies is essential for adolescents.
- Adolescents should allocate time for leisure and develop interests in hobbies.
- Relaxation and recreational activities should be a part of every adolescent's routine.

Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that stress levels among youth are alarmingly high. Common symptoms of stress include episodes of overeating, difficulty in sleeping and feeling of boredom or depression are most prevalent among students while feeling of anxiety, increased irritability and frequent headaches are found to be the least common symptoms. The primary causes of stress identified include stress of relationship issues, psychological pressures and financial challenges while stress of academics is found to be the least common cause of the stress among students. Further the study concludes that the most common activities to reduce stress among young people include talk with his friend, google and other websites, talk to family members while go for picnic or the use social networking sites and study self-help books are least common activities.

Many youths strive to maintain their social networks, often relying heavily on technology to do so. Career-related stress is another significant concern, with fears about job opportunities and survival in a competitive environment being particularly prominent. Young respondents highlighted coping strategies such as practicing meditation, getting adequate sleep, spending time with friends, and seeking counselling as effective ways to manage stress. However, it has been observed that the excessive use of social media is leading to a self-centred lifestyle among the younger generation. This over-reliance on technology reduces physical activity and limits meaningful

interactions with family and friends, further contributing to stress, depression, and even suicidal tendencies.

To tackle these challenges, young individuals should focus on setting clear goals with a structure plan, maintaining a balance use of technology, and opening to loves once about their emotions. These practices can promote a healthier more balanced, and stress-free life style.

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