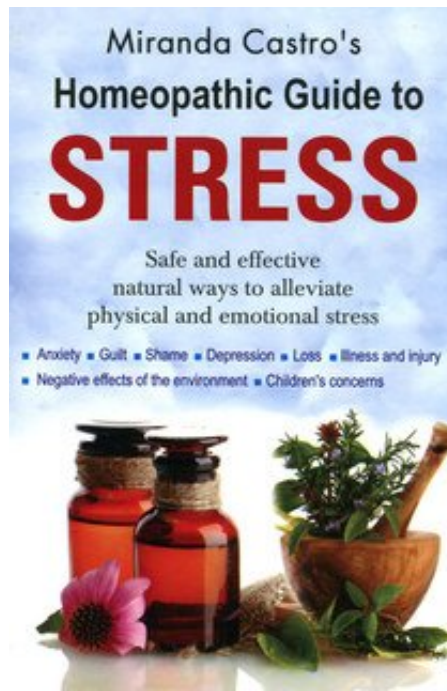


# Miranda Castro

## Homeopathic Guide to Stress

Reading excerpt  
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to be painful and difficult, but they can be, with some stages bringing new or additional responsibilities and others asking of us that we let go of things or people that we don't feel ready to say goodbye to.

These transitions give us an opportunity to take stock to look back and see how far we have travelled, to assess our achievements and our hard times; to look forward and reassess our goals, our hopes and dreams for the future, to make plans which take into account any updated expectations. In the present we can use them as an opportunity to make lifestyle changes, to make necessary adjustments to work and/or relationships.

**Do:**

- Build an awareness of transitions into your life and the lives of those close to you. Remind yourself that this is a staging post, to put it into perspective, especially if you are going through some difficult changes.
- Focus on what *is* happening to you - your body, your thoughts, your feelings - not on what *should* be happening to you or on stereotypes that you may have picked up from the media or your culture. Be wary of doctors, parents or even a critical inner voice, that tell you what you should be feeling or how you should be behaving at this time in your life.
- Be kind and considerate towards yourself, and compassionate if the changes become difficult to cope with, especially if others in a similar position have 'sailed through'. Being hard on yourself will only add insult to injury and make your transition more difficult.
- Take appropriate action to maintain or improve your health. Slow down if necessary, to provide an opportunity to integrate the changes, however mundane. Stop for a cup of tea on the way home to think through work problems in order to let them go so that you can arrive home without your mind racing. Or add something challenging into your life if your transition has left you feeling empty and bored, after, say, your retirement.
- Consider marking your transition with a 'rite of passage' - a ritual, celebration or ceremony - that is meaningful to you. You may want to be alone, for an hour or a weekend, to think and

write, or just be. You may want to throw a big party and invite everyone you know or gather certain important friends and/or relatives around you for a more intimate dinner.

- Get information and/or reassurance about what you are going through. Not knowing can be the biggest stress of all.
- Use this transition as an opportunity to take stock. Use the challenges that *your* life change throws up for you to explore your relationships with yourself and the world (including those close to you), your beliefs, your health - your life! To let go of the past and contemplate the future whilst embracing the 'here and now'.
- Make a 'time line'. Draw a long line on a large piece of paper. Put your birth at one end of the line and 'now' at the other end and fill the bits in between with important and significant events from your life. Add in some words (or even pictures) that represent how these events affected you, both then and now. Add in any illnesses or periods of ill health. As you look back down that line, try to get a sense of what has shaped you, what has made you who you are. Children love to do this too.
- Help your children to understand and adjust to changes in their lives. This can be a struggle with adolescents but it is still worth trying. Be tolerant of those who are going through tough times, without making a doormat of yourself.
- Be patient - some transitions go on for years. It's not over until it's over!

### **Don't**

- Ignore the signals that your body is giving you about the transition you are going through.

### **Homeopathic treatment**

Homeopathy can help those whose health has been affected by a major life change. The remedies below are very general, and as such, should only be used if they fit with what you are going through. You may want to cross-reference this section with another, like loss for example, in order to find a remedy more suited to how you feel. If you don't find one that matches, seek the advice of a local homeopath for a constitutional prescription to help ease the passage of this transition.

- ***Anacardium orientale*** (*Anac.*) See also p. 259.  
Identity crisis at any age. Discontented, gloomy and anxious. Feels isolated and separate. Finds it hard to integrate the new energy, new feelings. Tries to cut off and hardens up.
- ***Arsenicum album*** (*Ars.*) See also p. 266.  
Finds change difficult. Worries about the future, their health, and fears death (especially in the elderly, the very sick, and the dying).
- ***Baryta carbonica*** (*Bar-c.*) See also p. 271.  
Emotional immaturity at any age (from birth through to old age). Children are late developers, slow to 'grow up' (emotionally and/or physically). The elderly can regress back to childish scattiness.
- ***Calcarea phosphorica*** (*Calc-p.*) See also p. 281.  
Generally dissatisfied and discontented. Nothing is right. A physical growth spurt causes a general depletion.
- ***Lycopodium*** (*Lyc.*) See also p. 305.  
Finds reality too much. Bright mentally but becomes allergic to responsibility, to work, to family duties. Generally lacking in confidence, they become indecisive and anxious.
- ***Natrum muriaticum*** (*Nat-m.*) See also p. 310.  
Sad about letting go of the past. Dwells on memories, idealizes them. Becomes unhappy and discontented. Keeps feelings hidden inside.
- ***Pulsatilla nigricans*** (*Puls.*) See also p. 330.  
Has difficulty separating, at any age, from those they are dependent on - although typically it is the child who finds it hard to grow up and leave home. Clings to family, or familiar territory. Feels lonely and isolated. Fine at home but shy in the world.
- ***Sepia*** (*Sep.*) See also p. 334.  
Overwhelmed with work, and hormones. For puberty, menopause and childbearing years. Becomes sluggish and indifferent to loved ones.
- ***Sulphur*** (*Sul.*) See also p. 345.  
Self-obsessed and idle. Adolescents (at any age!) who become dirty, dreamy and discontented. They make many plans, but do nothing.

## UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty is always stressful and can make you feel as if you are living in a sort of vacuum, putting your life on hold (or a part of it) whilst you wait: not knowing what is happening to your body when you are ill; not knowing what is happening to those close to you when you can see something is going on but they won't say; not knowing what is happening at work when a threat of redundancy is talked about; not knowing what is going to happen next in your life until you get your exam results, and so on. There are some situations that are desperately painful, for example, when a child leaves home without saying where they are going and the family is left not knowing, for months and sometimes for years. It is a tragedy if someone close to you goes missing and can be worse than a bereavement as there is always the chance that they may be found, which can put those who are waiting into a painful limbo.

Even everyday uncertainty, such as getting stuck in traffic without information, or when the train stops unexpectedly in a tunnel for half an hour, can be stressful; the uncertainty of being unemployed can have devastating repercussions on families and communities; those with relatives or friends in the forces have to get used to waiting, but when the posting is to a war-torn area those periods of uncertainty are harder to live with.

Uncertainty fills us with a complex mixture of feelings: worry, fright, frustration, anger, confusion and powerlessness. Helplessness may be particularly difficult to live with, especially for independent types who like to be in control, or it may bring up painful childhood memories of feeling powerless. Waiting without knowing how long the wait will be, or without knowing what the outcome will be, for oneself or for others, can be an unbearable strain. Most people can handle almost any situation, however difficult or painful, as long as they have some idea what is happening.

People respond to uncertainty according to their personalities: stoical types tend to take it in their stride, others become frightened that something dreadful is going to happen and some worry themselves silly.

There is a myth that you shouldn't worry or be upset if there is

nothing to worry or be upset about. Often you *know* something is not as it seems, that information is being withheld or, worse, that you are being lied to. If such a situation does not resolve, you may doubt your own feelings and lose your trust in others, or yourself.

**Do:**

- Identify areas of uncertainty in your life, whether they are at home, at work or at school, with people or things.
- Explore your choices for dealing with any situation where you are waiting and make a decision about the position you are going to take. This will help you to feel that you are active rather than passively waiting for something to happen to you.
- Listen to those inner feelings. They may be accompanied by an apparently irrational anxiety but there will be *something* you can do to alleviate the situation for yourself.
- Remember, information is power. If you feel you need information in any situation then do what you can to get it.
- Find out if there is a way you can get information quicker than waiting for it to arrive in the mail. You can usually telephone to find out the results of an exam, a medical test or a job interview, or to find out how a sick relative is, but think through the consequences of asking for information if you can't then talk it through fully, i.e. with the results of medical tests. And consider how you need to give information to others, especially to children, and try to do it in a way that is age-appropriate so as not to frighten them or create unnecessary anxiety.
- Ask those close to you to take your feelings into account if you find not knowing particularly difficult to handle. For example, to ring home if they are late so that you are not pacing the carpet imagining all sorts of blood-and-guts scenarios.
- Ask yourself what is the worst that can happen in an uncertain situation so that you can face it. And look at what you would do if the worst came to the worst. It won't always be that bad but sometimes it is, in which case you will need to get all the information and/or support that is available.
- Get philosophical in situations where there is nothing you *can* do. Sometimes we have to just wait and see — there's actually nothing

to be done except acknowledge that this is a difficult time. Distract yourself and try to get on with your life.

- Fight like fury if you feel instinctively that something can be done and it won't be unless you make it happen.

### **Don't**

- Let an uncertain situation fester on in your life. Any action you take will enable you to feel you have some measure of control over what is happening.
- Put your life on hold whilst you wait for an uncertain situation to resolve.

### **Homeopathic treatment**

Use one of the remedies below only if you have a clear picture and can match it, otherwise seek the advice of a homeopath.

- ***Argentum nitricum*** (*Arg-n.*) See also p. 262.  
Anxious and hurried. Feels out of control and hates it. Incredibly anxious about what may happen.
- ***Arsenicum album*** (*Ars.*) See also p. 266.  
Concerned for self with anxiety about the future. Fears for own welfare, especially own security, particularly financial.
- ***Calcarea carbonica*** (*Calc-c.*) See also p. 277.  
Concern over others with great anxiety about anything and everything but especially about the future. Fear that something bad will happen. Feels like they are going crazy and tries to hide it.
- ***Causticum*** (*Caust.*) See also p. 286.  
Pervading sense of gloom, that something bad is going to happen.
- ***Gelsemium sempervirens*** (*Gels.*) See also p. 297.  
Anticipates the worst. Dreads anticipated ordeals/bad news. Feels anxious about being out of control.
- ***Phosphorus*** (*Phos.*) See also p. 325.  
Uncertainty with fear and anxiety about what will happen, often centred around others' welfare.

## WORRY

Worry, or anxiety, is bad for your health! It is an emotion that serves little purpose, because worry in itself achieves nothing, although short term anxiety can be beneficial in that it alerts the sufferer to an issue that requires resolution: it may signal a need for a change in pace, additional support, more study or training, or even a break.

Those who are shy are often anxious, as are those who are exceedingly conscientious and perfectionist. Anxiety can be mild to severe depending on the situation and your own tendency to get wound up. Typical symptoms that accompany it are tension, restlessness, nervousness, loss of appetite, sleep difficulties, sweating, difficulty concentrating, a racing pulse and, eventually, fears and phobias. If acute anxiety isn't attended to, ill health may result: it isn't the exams that made you sick but the days or weeks before them when you became increasingly uptight, stopped eating regularly and couldn't sleep.

Anxiety may develop into a full-blown panic attack, in which you may find it difficult to breathe, experience palpitations and even chest pain. If you start to feel faint because you are panicking and breathing too fast (therefore taking in too much oxygen and hyperventilating) then the following steps will help you to cope:

- Stop what you are doing and sit down wherever you are - even on a pavement or a supermarket floor. This is less stressful than fainting and possibly hurting yourself if you fall awkwardly.
- Breathe *slowly* into your cupped hands or a *paper* bag if you have one, to decrease your oxygen intake and increase your carbon dioxide intake. This will make you feel better immediately.

If you are always anxious in certain situations which occur frequently then you may be suffering from deep-seated, chronic anxiety, for which it is important that you don't self-prescribe. You will need to seek the advice of a professional homeopath and possibly a counsellor trained in stress management. Seek help if your anxiety is accompanied by weight loss (because you may have an hormonal imbalance) or obsessive thoughts, or if it follows drug or alcohol withdrawal.



**Do:**

- Take your anxiety about an event or situation seriously as it will give you information about how stressful it is for *you*. Use this information to plan a strategy for dealing with both the situation and your anxiety so that your health doesn't suffer.
- Be honest with yourself about how well prepared you are for an up and coming event such as an exam, interview or driving test. Is your anxiety telling you that you need to do some more ground work, preparation and/or revision? There's nothing more worrying than knowing, deep down, that we've left everything until the last minute and it'll be a matter of chance if we succeed. Some people are luckier than others!
- Be honest with others if you are a worrier. Make sure those close to you come home when they say they will, or ask them to telephone you to put your mind at rest. It isn't good for your health to stay up all night waiting for the hospital to call when your teenager missed the last bus home, decided to sleep over with a friend, and forgot to phone you. If others complain that you are being over-protective you can tell them how stressful it is for you to worry needlessly.
- Write your worries out in full. Especially if it is the middle of the night and you can't sleep. Break your problems down into their component parts and list them down the page. Then troubleshoot: take each problem and list the action/s needed to deal with it as well as a date and time for each one. You'll find there is surprisingly little you can do at 3.00 a.m. to solve any of your worries.
- Do something, however small and 'easy', to get you going, to give you a sense of achievement and boost your self-confidence: tidy your room or your desk or both! It's remarkably easy for anxiety to get out of hand if you can't find anything. Or worse, if you start to lose things.
- Consciously think about something else.
- Take a glass of warm or cold milk last thing at night - calcium can help anxiety. Add a spoonful of honey for a soothing drink.
- Work out what's the worst that could happen (both fact and fantasy) and talk it through with a tried and trusted friend to put it in perspective. For example, if you don't get this job, or you

have to sit the exam again, it is not the end of the world. Remind yourself of the things in your life that *are* working.

- Do something nurturing or fun to take your mind off your worries. You'll be amazed at how much better you'll feel if you can have a good belly laugh or a tender moment reading a bedtime story to a young child.
- Help your child to understand their own worries and to deal with them so that they don't affect their health.

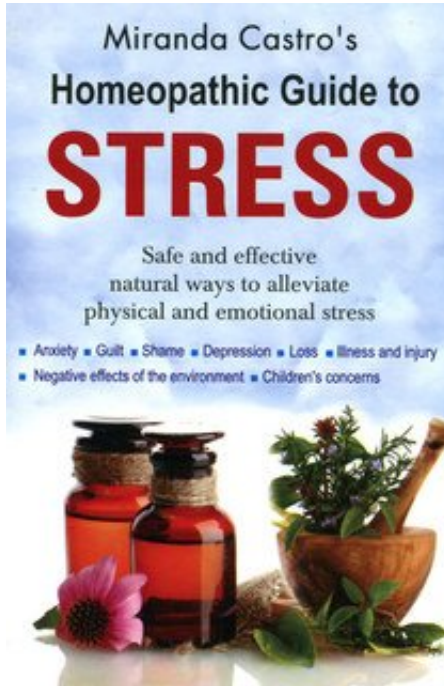
#### **Don't**

- Isolate yourself and think you have to deal with a stressful and anxiety-inducing situation on your own. It isn't healthy for you.
- Wind yourself up further by sticking to the thing that is making you anxious and becoming more and more inefficient.
- Put your head in the sand by saying 'it'll be all right on the night'.

#### **Homeopathic treatment**

The following remedies are for some common anxiety-producing situations. If you find a remedy that works for you then you can use it again in similar circumstances.

- ***Aconitum napellus*** (*Aco.*) See also p. 255.  
Anxious and fearful. Suffers from a panic attack in a crowded place where they cannot easily get out.
- ***Ambra grisea*** (*Antbr.*) See also p. 257.  
Anticipatory anxiety in those who are shy and easily embarrassed. Dreads the pressure of performing in front of others - at an interview, oral exam, social event, etc.
- ***Anacardium orientale*** (*Anac.*) See also p. 259.  
Extreme anticipatory anxiety with difficulty concentrating in those with low self-confidence and a fear of failure.
- ***Argentum nitricutn*** (*Arg-n.*) See also p. 262.  
Acute anticipatory anxiety with restlessness, before an exam, an interview or for stage fright. They get so wound up that they may even forget everything when the ordeal comes.
- ***Arsenicum album*** (*Ars.*) See also p. 266.  
Anxious, restless and fussy. Dislikes being in a situation where they aren't in control. Increasingly fussy and critical when anxious.



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[Homeopathic Guide to Stress](#)

Safe & Effective Natural way to Alleviate  
Physical & Emotional Stress

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