

Stress Management Strategies

The MAIN POINTS to remember:

- ♦ Keep yourself physically healthy so that you are better able to deal with stressful situations.
- ♦ Have an outlet for your reactions to stressful events.
- ♦ Be aware of what situations cause/trigger your stress response.
- ♦ Change the way you think or act in order to reduce the stressfulness of situations.
- ♦ Have a balance between your work, rest (sleep) and recreation (play).

Nutrition



Alcohol & Drug Control



Regular Exercise



Relaxation



Enough Sleep



Leisure



Support from Others



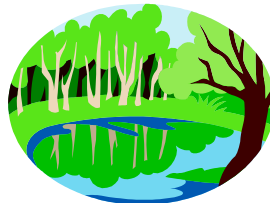
Effective Communication



Self-Esteem



Diversion



Realistic Goals

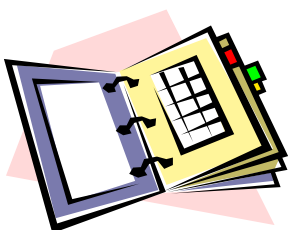


Change in Thinking



Negative...to....Positive

Time Management



Problem Solving

Problem:	
Solution No1:	
Solution No2:	
Solution No3:	

Humour



Remember:

Don't get yourself "Stressed-out" about Stress Management.

Pick only one of these suggestions to try at a time.... and.... DO IT!



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NUTRITION:

- ◆ Adequate nutrition increases stress tolerance.

ALCOHOL & DRUG CONTROL:

- ◆ Caffeine irritates the nervous system – increasing agitation
- ◆ Caffeine stimulates production of Hydrochloric Acid in stomach – gastro upsets & ulcers
- ◆ Alcohol & drugs “fog the brain” - misperception of situations
- ◆ - behaviour which may exacerbate the problem
- ◆ Nicotine in cigarettes is a stimulant therefore every one you have speeds up your body systems, which only exaggerates what is already happening. Minimise smoking if you can

REGULAR EXERCISE:

- ◆ Can be an outlet for frustrations and clears your head
- ◆ The fitter you are the more able you are to deal with stressful situations

RELAXATION:

- ◆ e.g. visualisation, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, slow movement, calming music, breathing exercises
- ◆ Reduces the physical reactions to stress
- ◆ Sometimes allows “time out” (i.e. diversion) from the problem – better able to deal with problem when calmed down

ENOUGH SLEEP:

- ◆ Allows a clear mind to deal with situations
- ◆ Try a warm drink or bath before bed; think calming thoughts; avoid caffeine, cigarettes or a heavy meal just prior to bed; relaxation exercises can help you get to sleep

LEISURE:

- ◆ Satisfaction of own interests
- ◆ Opportunity to achieve in something – & increase your self-esteem
- ◆ Diversion from hassles
- ◆ Outlet for frustrations



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SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

- ◆ i.e. family, friends, counselors, support services
- ◆ Talk things out – outlet for feelings & hear another perspective
- ◆ They may offer ideas or help to deal with situation (share the burden)
- ◆ Provide encouragement (build you up)
- ◆ Avoid negative people and places. Stress is “infectious”

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

- ◆ Involves getting your message across in such a way that others understand. This frequently requires speaking assertively, rather than aggressively or passively
- ◆ Be yourself. Every person is unique and of value
- ◆ Is a skill that will enable resolution of many stressful situations
- ◆ Is an outlet to share and express your feelings
- ◆ Improves self-esteem as you feel more capable of dealing with situations

SELF-ESTEEM:

- ◆ ie a person's opinion of themselves. Assess your strengths and weaknesses and accept yourself for who you are. A high self-esteem means you feel ok about yourself, both the good and bad points.
- ◆ Feel more capable of dealing with stressful situations

DIVERSION:

- ◆ Do something else to occupy your mind or consciously decide not to think about a situation until a set time later
- ◆ Allows a break from the situation after which you can approach the problem with freshness rather than frustration and despair

REALISTIC GOALS:

- ◆ Don't strain for absolute control of the situation. Sometimes the best way is to just go with the flow
- ◆ Don't expect too much of yourself. Set attainable goals
- ◆ Reduce the level of demand placed on your coping resources



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CHANGE IN THINKING

- ◆ There are a variety of ways you can change how you think about stressful situations; choose those appropriate at the time
 - imagine the situation in the future. How much will it really matter then?
 - consider the good consequences and feel glad about them
 - think positive thoughts. Don't let the negative pull you down
 - exaggerate it - picture the worst that can happen. How likely is it?
 - imagine yourself being successful and focus on that
 - say to yourself 'STOP', pause, and take a fresh look at the situation
 - be as fair to yourself as you would be to others
 - accept yourself as you are
 - choose not to over-react to situations. Be objective about the situation
 - use 'could' and 'want to' instead of 'should'
 - analyse the 'self-talk' that led to you feeling stressed by a situation and change that 'self-talk'
- ◆ Allows you to alter your feelings and response to a stressful situation because THOUGHTS lead to FEELINGS which lead you to BEHAVE in a certain way, a way which may be exaggerating your stress

TIME MANAGEMENT/ SELECTING PRIORITIES

- ◆ List all the things you need to get done. Separate them into what HAS to be done and what you WANT to get done. Then list what HAS to be done in order of priority. Act on this by working on only ONE thing at a time (sometimes this means saying no).
- ◆ Balance work, rest and leisure in life. Give yourself time to yourself. Take regular breaks from work and develop leisure pursuits
- ◆ Get up 15 minutes earlier and start the day calmly

PROBLEM SOLVING

- ◆ List all of the practical options to the stressful situation. Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each option and decide on the best one (or maybe more than one). Commit yourself to carrying out this solution and give it a good try. If it doesn't work, try again, taking into account the outcome of the first solution
- ◆ Consider taking an opposite approach - explore the alternatives
- ◆ There is always an effective way to deal with each situation - it just may not be obvious. It may not be easy but it is always possible to do something

HUMOUR

- ◆ Laugh off the situation - maybe even exaggerate it until the point of absurdity
- ◆ Allow yourself the freedom to forget how stressed you feel and laugh at the funny things that happen in life