

Stress – Techniques for Handling Stress

Time management

- Delegate effectively
- When you're under stress, be focused
- Separate your work from your personal life; don't let work eat into family time

Cope with your own emotions

- Recognise your feelings, don't ignore or deny them
- Use your feelings as a guide as to what you have to sort out
- Avoid 'monstrifying' people. This means not excessively blaming others or exaggerating their inadequacies
- Try to describe your emotion rather than display it

Decision making

- What is the best time for this decision? Why now?
- Do I have strong feelings? Are they appropriate? Try to resolve before making decisions.
- Don't feel inadequate if your decision is difficult
- Be prepared for new reactions from family and friends as you cope differently with stressful situations.

Dealing with stress you can't avoid

- Your reaction to stress is something you can change. We learned our stress reaction from others. You can choose how you react to stressors.
- Ask yourself: 'Is this really what I want to do or am I reacting to stress in this way because it's the only way my parents/teachers/colleagues showed me?'
- How well you cope with stress corresponds to how much you feel in control of your life, and your self-esteem
- Keep your goals as close to reality as you can – form realistic goals within the scope of what is possible.

General strategies to help you cope better in all situations – Looking after your body:

Healthy eating habits

- regular meals
- don't miss breakfast
- fat intake less than 30% of total calories
- 15 grams or more fibre daily
- daily bowel habits
- avoid binge eating
- avoid excessive caffeine or alcohol
- eat 80% of free-feeding diet (for healthy individuals)

Exercise

- something you enjoy e.g. a brisk walk
- 3 x weekly at least 30 minutes
- not something which causes you stress (e.g. golf)

Healthy Sleeping Habits

- don't eat large meals closer than 2 hours before bed
- don't drink tea/coffee/cola less than 4 hours before bed
- warm bath or shower (not hot) before bed
- cat-naps can help (short nap during day up to ½ hour)
- learn how to fall asleep – set the scene, think about pleasant, non-stressful events

Relaxation

- set aside some time to unwind
- use audiotape/CD, imagery, meditation or breathing

Quit Smoking

- Nicotine causes blood vessels to constrict; increasing blood pressure (it doesn't relax you!)

Please contact your therapist if you have any queries or concerns.

Therapist: _____

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