

My Plan to Manage Stress

Stress is part of life, and most of the time we manage it pretty well. However, sometimes many small stressors pile up. Other times a big life event feels over whelming.

Stressors are those things that stress you out. Stress can take a toll on your health and wellbeing. Try these skills to manage your stress.



Catch – Challenge – Change

Use these 3 to help you to better manage stress.

Catch

Catch yourself. Be aware of how you feel when you are under stress. Everyone feels stress differently. **What are some things you notice about your:**

- **Body:** such as headache or nausea (feel like throwing up)

- **Feelings:** such as anger or sadness

- **Thinking:** such as being worried or thoughts that go by real fast

- **Behavior:** such as changes in sleep or eating, drinking or drug use

- **Relationships:** such as isolating (wanting to be alone), quick temper or snapping at others.

Challenge

Challenge yourself. Ask what is in your control and what is not. For example being late for an appointment. You can control what time you wake up and what time you make the appointment. You cannot control the weather, how other people drive, or street construction.

Think about one stressful issue in your life. Write down the things that can be controlled and things that cannot.



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Change

Change how you cope, how you deal with things and people. Sometimes we waste time and energy on things we cannot change.

Think about the stressor you listed above. Check a few ways below that may be helpful, or write in some of your own ways you can change.

For stressors you can change, try and make that change, try to do something. For example: Set your alarm for 10 minutes earlier. Give yourself plenty of time to get to your appointment.



- Make a decision
- Set a goal
- Ask for advice or help
- Make an action plan
- Get more information
- Resolve a conflict

Other ways I can make changes:

For stressors you cannot control, try to manage your emotions.

For example: I cannot change the weather, so I will get there when I can.

- Talk with friends and family
- Change the way you think about the issue
- Do fun, relaxing activities
- See back of handout for more tips

Other ways I can manage my emotions and how I feel about things:

Other Changes or Challenges

- **Set a goal.** From the coping tools listed above, what strategy will you try in the next week to manage stress?
- **Relationships can be a big source of stress or comfort.** Are there people you need to set limits with or distance from for a while?
- **Who helps you manage stress?**



Tips to Manage Stress

Stress can take a toll on your health and wellbeing. Try these skills to manage your stress

- **Get active.** Even just a simple walk around the block can lift your mood. Get outside every day.

- **Spend time reflecting, praying, or meditating** to clear your mind and recharge.

- **Ask yourself a simple question: Is it worth it?** If the stressor is really important, use the coping tools listed here. If not, can you let it go? How freeing may that feel?

- **Distract yourself.** When things feel out of control, get your mind off of the stress by doing a fun activity.

- **Ask someone you trust for support.** Tell them exactly how they can help you with your stress (for example, a hug, a walk, movie night).

- **Try therapy.** Having a professional listen and help you manage stress can be very helpful.

- **Use relaxation and deep breathing strategies to calm your mind and body.** Many phone apps and online videos can guide you with activities such as progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, or meditation.



Adapted from Change that Matters www.changethatmatters.umn.edu