



Info-Exchange: Stress – How to Manage It

Share this information with a trusted adult. Ask him or her to complete the checklists.

Stress is a normal part of everyone’s life. Stress is the physical, mental, and emotional response to life’s changes and demands. Some stress can encourage a person to try harder or motivate a person to meet a challenge. Ongoing stress or too much stress can cause physical, mental, and emotional health problems.

The events that provoke stress are called “stressors.” Stressors can be positive or negative events. Stressful events can come and go quickly or be ongoing and overwhelming.

What are the signs that someone is stressed out?

These signs tell you to pay attention and manage your stress. Only you can determine if you are experiencing stress overload and whether or not you need help to manage it.

With an adult, review these lists. Ask the adult to circle the signs he or she notices in him or herself. Then, ask him or her to place a check mark by the signs he or she has noticed in you when you are stressed out. Add any signs that are not found on the lists.

Physical Signs	Emotional Signs	Behavioral Signs
Headache	Restlessness	Overeating
Fatigue	Lack of focus or motivation	Under eating
Unable to sleep	Anxiety	Outbursts of emotion
Upset stomach	Panic attacks	Alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use
Muscle tension or pain	Irritability	Withdrawal from others
Worsening of skin conditions, such as hives or rashes	Anger	More disagreements with others
Heart beats faster	Sadness	
Breathing gets faster	Depression	
Body sweats	Memory impairment	
More frequent illnesses	Feeling constantly pressured, hassled, or hurried	





What can a person do to manage stress?

The good news is that everyone can learn the skills needed to manage stress.

With an adult, review these strategies. Ask the adult to place a check mark by the strategies he or she uses to manage stress. Then, ask him or her to place a check mark by the strategies he or she has noticed you using. Add any strategies that are not found on the list.



Adult's Management Strategies	Management Strategies He or She Noticed You Using	Management Strategies
		• Cut down on the number of activities you commit to.
		• Get regular physical activity.
		• Eat nutritious foods in appropriate amounts.
		• Get a good night's sleep.
		• Make time to relax.
		• Stay calm.
		• Think positively about situations to help prevent feelings of hopelessness and anxiety.
		• Have realistic expectations.
		• Focus on things you can control.
		• Accept that you are under stress.
		• Accept the fact that you will make mistakes.
		• Rehearse feared situations.
		• Reach out to a friend or family member.
		• Do enjoyable activities.
		• Laugh.
		• Get professional help.

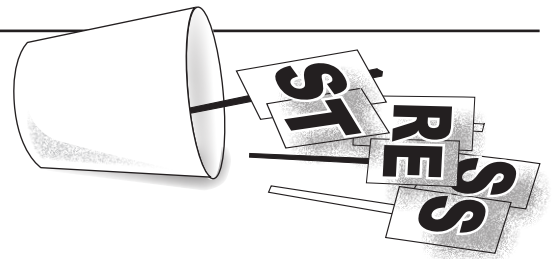
Brainstorm together ways to relax.



What can a person do to be prepared when stressful events happen?

With an adult, review these strategies. Ask the adult to place a check mark by the strategies he or she uses to be prepared before stress occurs. Then, ask him or her to place a check mark by the strategies he or she has noticed you using. Add any strategies that are not found on the list.

Adult's Preparation Strategies	Preparation Strategies He or She Noticed You Using	Preparation Strategies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain healthy habits. Eat nutritious foods in appropriate amounts, be physically active regularly, and get lots of sleep.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate regularly in activities that you find relaxing.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice setting boundaries.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize your time.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a support system.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know where to get professional help.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to your thoughts, feelings, and your physical reactions to avoid letting stress sneak up on you.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on thinking positively about challenges and problems.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice solving problems and making decisions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice asking others for help.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve problems as they occur.



Name of the adult you spoke with: _____

Relationship of the adult to you, such as parent, teacher, neighbor: _____

Adapted From:
American Psychological Association's "Stress in America" Press Room, www.apa.org
Nemours Foundation, www.teenshealth.org
Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.com