

STRESS MANAGEMENT

What is stress?

Stress is a natural response to a life event that may be out of your control or it can also result from daily activities that become too overwhelming. You must think of stress as a reaction to an event rather than the event, it will be easier to figure out ways to deal with the stress.

FIRST STEP: IDENTIFY SOURCES OF STRESS

- Work
- Family/house
- Environment
- Unexpected events
- High self expectations
- Perfectionism
- Negative attitude
- Poor self esteem
- Life Events (Birth, Death, unexpected illness, car accidents etc)
- Daily hassles and pressures

Remember you do have some control over certain stresses. Identify causes of stress in your life (e.g. your job, your children, money), then concentrate on what you can control and focus energy into making changes in those areas.

LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Healthy living has been identified as a way of preventing sickness. Making healthy lifestyle choices may also help you to develop skills to deal with daily stresses in your life.

Some suggestions include:

- Take small relaxation breaks during the day. 1-3 minutes to close your eyes or stretch.
- Start an exercise program; but remember to check with your physician first

- Choose a healthy and nutritious diet that is low in fat, and high in fiber
- Try new relaxation methods and stick with the best one for you. (See Relaxation Techniques Page)
- Visualize a relaxation plan for yourself. Put your plan into action and change your plan as needed
- Maintain a sense of humor
- Do activities that you enjoy

SAMPLE STRESS RELIEVERS

KISS, Keep it Simple Silly

Prioritize and plan ahead your daily activities

Set up a “just in case” plan

Surround yourself with people with a positive attitude

Get enough sleep

Exercise...Make it fun!

Take time for yourself every day

Take slow deep breaths

Learn to share responsibilities

Tell yourself you are “doing the best you can”