



Partners in Quality Care

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In-Home Aides Partners in Quality Care is a monthly newsletter published for member agencies.

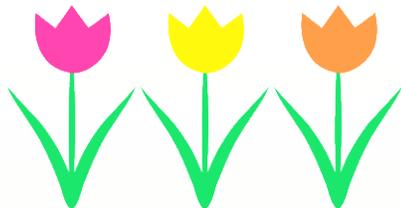
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Visualization

In this relaxation technique, you form mental images to take a visual journey to a peaceful, calming place or situation



Learning Objectives:

- Define Stress
- Define How Stress Affects Health
- Review Strategies For Managing Stress

MANAGING STRESS

Stress - Just the word may be enough to set your nerves on edge! Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively or recover from stressful events quicker than others. It's important to know your limits when it comes to stress to avoid more serious health effects.

Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. Many things can trigger this response, including change. Changes can be positive or negative, as well as real or perceived. Changes can be mild and relatively harmless, such as winning a race, watching a scary movie, or riding a rollercoaster. Some changes are major, such as marriage or divorce, serious illness, or a car accident. Other changes are extreme, such as exposure to violence, and can lead to traumatic stress reactions. Changes may be recurring, short-term, or long-term.

There are at least three different types of stress, all of which carry physical and mental health risks:

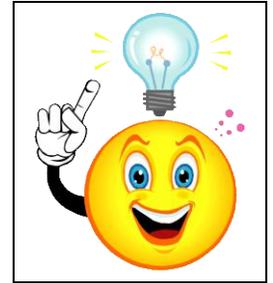
- Routine stress related to the pressures of work, family and other daily responsibilities.
- Stress brought about by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness.
- Traumatic stress, experienced in an event like a major accident, war, assault, or a natural disaster where one may be seriously hurt or in danger of being killed.

The body responds to each type of stress in similar ways. Different people may feel it in different ways. For example, some people experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, depressed mood, anger and irritability. People under chronic stress are prone to more frequent and severe viral infections, such as the flu or common cold, and vaccines, such as the flu shot, are less effective for them.

Of all the types of stress, changes in health from routine stress may be hardest to notice at first. Because the source of stress tends to be more constant than in cases of acute or traumatic stress, the body gets no clear signal to return to normal functioning.

Over time, continued strain on your body from routine stress may lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety disorder, and other illnesses.

WELL BEING AND BALANCE



- ❖ *Confront stress-face and manage stress rather than hide it with unhealthy coping*
- ❖ *Face change-accept change as a challenge and opportunity, not a threat*
- ❖ *Focus on the present-stay in the present, It doesn't help to worry about the future*
- ❖ *Stress management is not one-size-fits-all*
- ❖ *It's important to experiment and find out what works best for you*
- ❖ ***Become a problem solver***

- Make a list of the things that cause you stress
- From your list, figure out which problems you can solve now and which are beyond your control for the moment
- From your list of problems that you can solve now, start with the little ones
- Learn how to calmly look at a problem, think of possible solutions, and take action to solve the problem
- Being able to solve small problems will give you confidence to tackle the big ones. And feeling confident that you can solve problems will go a long way to helping you feel less stressed

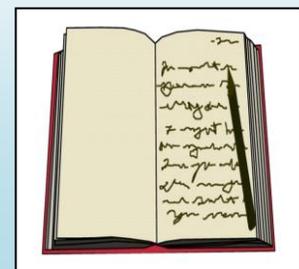


- ❖ Listen to your mind-examine beliefs and how they influence life
 - ❖ Integrate love, work, and play-learn how to live fully in each area
 - ❖ Practice acceptance-accept the things that cannot be changed and change the things you can
 - ❖ Accept yourself-honor and love your inner self
 - ❖ Seek professional help in managing difficult stress
 - ❖ A way of Healthy coping with stress is- talking to someone
- Venting your feelings, worries, stressors to a trusted friend or family member- may be in person, or telephone. People you talk to don't have to be able to fix your stress, they simply need to be good listeners
 - If there is no one to talk to writing thoughts/feelings may be helpful and then you may destroy the document when finished
 - See a therapist if needed

Identify the Sources of Stress in Your Life

Start a Stress Journal

- ➔ A stress journal can help you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them
- ➔ Each time you feel stressed, keep track of it in your journal. As you keep a daily log, you will begin to see patterns and common themes
- ➔ Write down:
 - What caused your stress (make a guess if you're unsure)
 - How you felt, both physically and emotionally
 - How you acted in response
 - What you did to make yourself feel better

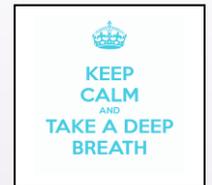


WORKPLACE STRESS

In the Home Care setting, the uniqueness of the work and workplace in providing home care may create stress for the In-Home Aide, such as:

- The resources from one home to another may vary. For example, one may have running water and the next may not.
- The travel is constant within the service area.
- The supervisor is not on site, although available.
- Family dynamics may cause stress.
- If you have a stressful situation related to working with your client or other aspects of work, reach out to your agency supervisor to discuss the situation and work on solutions.

RELIEVE STRESS IN THE MOMENT



- The fastest way to reduce stress is by taking a deep breath and using your senses
- What you see, hear, taste, and touch or through a soothing movement
- By viewing a favorite photo, smelling a specific scent, listening to a favorite piece of music, tasting a piece of gum, or hugging a pet, for example, you can quickly relax and focus yourself
- Not everyone responds to each sensory experience in the same way. The key to quick stress relief is to experiment and discover the unique sensory experiences that work best for you.

RELAXATION

- Relaxation techniques are an essential part of stress management. Because of your busy life, relaxation might be low on your priority list. Don't shortchange yourself. Everyone needs to relax and recharge to repair the toll stress takes on your mind and body.
- Almost everyone can benefit from relaxation techniques, which can help slow your breathing and focus your attention. Common relaxation techniques include meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, tai chi and yoga. More-active ways of achieving relaxation include walking outdoors or participating in sports.
- It doesn't matter which relaxation technique you choose. Select a technique that works for you and practice it regularly

Resilience is defined as- an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or **change** (Merriam Webster).

A link to the American Psychological Association "**The Road to Resilience**" which discusses resilience, resilience factors, strategies and other resilience topics is at: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

If you or someone you know is overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional. If you or someone close to you is in crisis, call the toll-free, 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).