

## **STRESS**

Everyone experiences it!!!  
Everyone talks about it!!!  
Everyone wants to reduce it!!!

Stress is any change that requires adaptation to in our constantly changing world. Range of intensity can be extreme (being in physical danger) to joyful (completing a desired goal).

### **Symptoms of Stress**

- Physical: clenched muscles neck, shoulders and fist, grinding teeth, jawpain, elevated blood pressure (hypertension), fatigue, speaking fast, eating fast, constant competition, over scheduling, and doing two things at a time.
- Behavioral: instability, quick to anger, rage, frequent speeding tickets and auto accidents, excessive alcohol and drug use, put-downs and sarcasm of others, over/under eating, insomnia, and isolation.
- Emotional: negative/self-critical thinking, low self-esteem, paranoia, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and panic attacks.

### **Assess Stressors**

List events producing stress:

- location-work/home/school,
- marriage/divorce,
- moving to new job/home,
- self/family illness,
- financial difficulties,
- new child, or
- parenting difficulties.

### **Coping Strategies**

Physical:

1. Initiate and maintain an exercise program. Don't allow this to be a self-competition ritual.
2. Eat a balanced diet avoiding high calorie/fat foods. Eliminate soft drinks, coffee, fast foods, and unhealthy between meal snacks.
3. Take a ten minutes break for every hour of any activity (work, driving, reading).
4. Develop and follow a sleep routine, eliminating watching T.V. in bed, purchase a new mattress, and get 7-8 hours of sleep per night.
5. Rest eyes, relax mind and body, meditate, take long warm baths, and journal daily events.

Behavioral:

1. Control your environment by controlling who and what is surrounding you. Either eliminate who and what are around you or get support for yourself from them.
2. Schedule more leisure time with spouse/children/friends.
3. Change usual routine. Go to a movie during the day, take a different routine to work, eat at different restaurants, and stay out of the habit rut.

4. Learn to say “no”, and don’t over commit.

Emotional:

1. Be aware of yourself, identify stress signals: headaches, nausea, tiredness, sweaty palms, racing heartbeat, and insomnia.
2. Prioritize needs and goals, identifying acceptable standards and deadlines.
3. Love yourself with positive self-talk, and remember you are unique and doing the best you can.
4. Develop a support network, participate in self-help programs, and take advantage of community services.
5. Focus on the here and now. If you made a mistake stop blaming yourself and others. Past resentments will make you miserable and living in the future will cause you fear and anxiety.
6. Seek professional help if these strategies still cause you stress regarding your decision and choices.

**GETTING HELP**

If you are concerned about someone that is presenting these symptoms or behaviors, be aware that many facilities and counselors are available to help individuals deal with anger. If you are a University of Louisiana at Lafayette student seeking help with anger, please contact the Counseling and Testing Center at 337-482-6480 for more information. The center offers unlimited confidential sessions free of charge to all university students and staff.