

Strategies to Manage Emotional Stress

Concerns about work, health, finances, and world events can be challenging and can lead to emotional stress.

Common triggers include serious health diagnoses, relationship conflicts, changes in the economy, new technology, and social issues. While we may not always be able to fully eliminate triggers for emotional stress, we can learn strategies to manage our emotional response to it.

- 1. Use mindfulness practices to increase self-awareness.** Mindfulness teaches us how to respond to stress with awareness of what is happening in the present moment. It can help us to pause, reflect, and listen. Rather than simply acting instinctively, unaware of emotions or motives, mindfulness practices can help us to tune into our intuition to make wise decisions.
- 2. Identify helpful resources.** A lack of information associated with the source of our stress can lead to heightened worries. Knowing where to turn to increase your knowledge and to obtain guidance reduces feelings of helplessness and empowers a sense of control in situations that might feel out-of-control.
- 3. Cultivate a support network.** No matter how busy you are, prioritize time to connect with a few good friends and confidants. Trusted work-related peers can be included in this group. Your network should be people who care about you and your well-being. Share your struggles and seek their input. A lack of such support can make it more difficult to overcome problems and facilitates a sense of isolation and loneliness.
- 4. Balance stress with relaxation.** Sustained stress creates physical havoc that can lead to fatigue, cognitive difficulties, emotional irritability, and influences numerous illnesses and diseases. Relaxation whether through exercise, reading, or participating in the creative arts and music, helps to decrease the production of the stress hormone, cortisol, and increases the release of “feel good” endorphins. Relaxation exercises practiced throughout the day can be helpful in creating mini breaks to reduce stress symptoms.
- 5. Nurture hope.** Too much stress can lead to feelings of dread, angst, and despair. Hope is the belief that circumstances in the future will be better. Create daily rituals that promote faith in your ability to manage through whatever circumstances might come your way. Allow yourself to be inspired. Take time each day to make small changes that lead to big changes whether it is for your direct welfare or the welfare of others.
- 6. Seek professional assistance.** Symptoms of prolonged emotional stress can serve as warning signs for us to slow down, obtain helpful information, seek guidance, and care for our physical and mental health. Your free and confidential EAP benefit can assist you with responding to the stressors of life. Support is available by calling 800.437.0911, 24/7 or emailing clientservice@carebridge.com. Additional resources can be found on mylifersource.com and the Carebridge EAP App.

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