



Managing Stress



Content on this side is intended for the educator's reference. The information on the back can be photocopied and shared with clients.

Objective: Clients will identify healthy and unhealthy ways to manage stress and explore ways to employ healthy coping strategies in the future when stressed.

Audience: Use this tool with clients who display signs of high stress, or any client who uses unhealthy coping strategies.

Estimated Time: 10-20 minutes

Educator Instructions: After reviewing the tool with an individual, encourage them to choose two or three healthy coping strategies and commit to put them into practice. After reviewing the lists and identifying other healthy and unhealthy coping strategies, help the client create an action plan to curb those behaviors and incorporate more healthy coping strategies into his or her life.

Discussion Starter: You know, a lot of behaviors that we label as “unhealthy” are really just attempts to cope with stress. Look at these two lists with me. When you are stressed, do you tend to do things that are healthy, or that are not healthy?

Follow-up: If you have another visit with the client, review the action plan. Ask if the coping plan has been helpful. If not, discuss alternate coping plans that he or she could try. Talk about other changes he or she has made to deal with stress and how well different strategies are working.





Managing Stress



When it comes to stress, sometimes we need to take care of ourselves before we can care for others. How we take care of ourselves and react to stress is important. There are many ways to cope with stress. Some are healthy and some are not.

What are some ways that you deal with stress?

HEALTHY

- Go for a walk or exercising
- Sit quietly and breathe
- Read a relaxing book
- Listen to music
- Do a favorite hobby
- Eat just enough healthy food
- Pray or go to religious services
- Use humor, share a laugh, watch a funny movie
- Get enough sleep at night
- Seek help from a professional
- Talk to your partner or a close friend
- Write your concerns down in a journal
- Think positive thoughts
- Look for the good in your life

UNHEALTHY

- Yell, shout, scream, or curse
- Dwell on things that make you angry
- Smoke
- Drink
- Use drugs
- Hurt yourself or others
- Eat unhealthy food
- Eat too much or too little
- Sleep too much or too little
- Buy things you do not really need
- Avoid being with or talking to others
- Complain a lot to others
- Take things out on other people
- Destroy or damage things

List other healthy coping strategies you use:

List other unhealthy coping strategies you use:

Make an Action Plan:

How can you use more healthy coping strategies the next time you feel stressed?

What do you need to help you cope with stress?

Who can you turn to for help when you are stressed?

When we are healthy, our relationships with others are healthier!