



COMMUNITY  
HEALTH CARE  
ASSOCIATION  
of New York State

# Community Care Corner

Health Center Staff Wellness Resources

## **Trauma-Informed Toolbox Strategy Session: Simple Ways to Manage Stress in the Moment**

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**No feeling is final.**

*(Rainer Maria Rilke, 20th-century German poet;  
Safety Quote~ From Seeking Safety by Lisa M. Najavits, 2002, adapted from p.132)*



# Stress

- A natural feeling of not being able to cope with specific demands and events
- When faced with a stressful situation the body produces larger quantities of the chemicals cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine, triggering the following reactions:
  - Increased blood pressure
  - Heightened muscle preparedness
  - Sweating
  - Alertness
- **A person's ability to cope/manage stress influences overall mental and physical health.**

*(Felman, 2020)*



# Normal Responses To Stress

## Physical

- Sweating
- Cramps/muscle spasms
- Headache
- Pins and needles sensations
- Pain (especially in back and chest)

## Emotional

- Anger/Irritability
- Difficulty focusing
- Burnout
- Restlessness
- Sadness
- Feeling overwhelmed

## Behavioral

- Changes in appetite
- Sudden angry outbursts
- Nail biting
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Social withdrawal
- Frequent crying

**\*\*This is not an exhaustive list, however there are many responses to managing stress.**

*(SAMHSA 2014; Felman, 2020)*



## UNDERSTAND STRESS

Not all stress is bad – stress can be helpful in motivating us to complete tasks.



## IDENTIFY YOUR PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESS REACTIONS

Knowing how your body responds and noticing the signs allows you to address what is happening in the moment.

## PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SELF TALK

Negative self-talk increases stress. Positive self talk can help you calm down and control stress.



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# "Take 10"

## Intentionality and Making Time for Yourself



**YouTube Video: Amy Cunningham – Drowning in Empathy**





# 50 Ways to Take a Break



# What We Can Do....



Breathe – deep breathing evokes a powerful physical relaxation response.



Ground or Anchor yourself in the moment – use your senses to interrupt the stress response.



Assess – What do you notice about yourself? Pinpoint what is contributing to your stress.



# What We Can Do....



Get Moving – walk away from your desk; Engage the class in a stretch or physical activity break



Remind yourself of what you can control – your thoughts, responses, and actions



Have tools readily available – music, essential oils, pictures, quotes

# Moving Past the Moment...



## **PRACTICE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES**

Identify one or two “in the moment” strategies and try them out.



## **GET ENOUGH SLEEP**

A good night’s sleep helps improve performance and stamina.



## **EAT HEALTHY FOODS**

A balanced diet can help maintain the immune system in times of high stress.

# Moving Past the Moment...



## **GET ORGANIZED & PRIORITIZE TASKS**

This can help you gain perspective, uncover tasks that you can combine to save time, and discover pieces of the puzzle you hadn't considered.



## **WRITE IT OUT**

By writing it down, you can save energy by releasing your brain from the exhausting task of holding on to all those thoughts.



## **EXERCISE**

From stretching to kickboxing, engaging in physical activity can help improve your physical and mental health.

# Moving Past the Moment...



## **CONNECT WITH OTHERS**

Take intentional time with friends and loved ones.

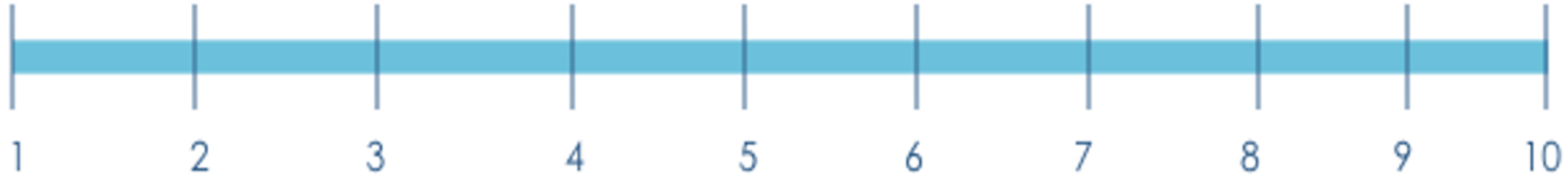


## **MAKE YOURSELF A PRIORITY**

Figure out what works for you and block off the time to make it happen!

# Reflection Activity: Taking 10

- On a scale from 1 to 10, **where are you on the scale right now?**



1 = I do not make time for myself

10 = I intentionally take 10 minutes for myself each day

- What are you **already doing** that lets you know you're at that number?
- What will you notice that is **different** once you've moved up **just one point higher** on the scale?
- What do you suppose is the **next small step** you can take in order to get to that one point higher on the scale?



# Additional Resources: Managing Stress

- American Psychiatric Nurses Association – [Managing Stress and Self-Care During COVID-19](#)
- Braive (YouTube) – [How Stress Affects Your Body and Mind](#)
- Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress – [Sustaining the Wellbeing of Healthcare Personnel During COVID-19](#)
- Harvard Business Review – [How to Handle Stress in the Moment](#)
- National Center for PTSD – [COVID-19 Resources: Managing Stress for Healthcare Workers](#)
- NYS Office of Mental Health – [Managing Anxiety in an Anxiety-Provoking Situation](#)
- Triple Peak Wellness - [5 Simple Steps to Manage Stress the Moment It Hits](#)

