

# Stress Management

## Identifying and Coping with Stress



### What is Stress?

Stress is the uncomfortable feeling of severe anxiety or pressure due to what is going on in our lives. It is, by definition, more than simple worry. Stress can happen in response to any single or multiple set of stressors. What is stressful to one person may not be to someone else.

Stress is not only mental or emotional pressure; it can manifest physically as well. Stress can adversely affect day to day function and problem-solving. It can lead to poor decisions and can essentially feed on itself. It can adversely affect relationships, as well.

### What Are Some Signs of Stress?

Clinically, there are common signs of stress. Some are more self-evident than others.

Common symptoms include:

- Excessive anxiety, worry, or preoccupation
- Irritability
- Poor problem-solving capability
- Changes in eating, sleeping habits
- Poor concentration
- Anger outbursts
- Shaking, tremor
- Using alcohol or drugs to “cope”
- Social avoidance
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Other atypical physical symptoms
- Headaches and/or muscle tension

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**We are here to help**

Please call **800-279-1301 (TTY: 711)**  
or visit **ssmhealth.com/mental-health**



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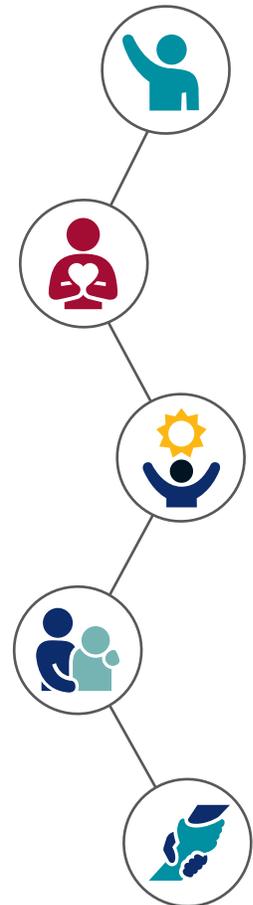
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### What To Do About Stress:

- Identify the cause(s). This can be more difficult than it sounds. Be honest with yourself.
- Try to sort out what you can change vs. what you cannot.
- Avoid taking on more responsibility.
- Do what you can. Realize that there are some things we cannot change.
- Focus on specific changes you CAN MAKE as opposed to things you cannot.
- Eat regularly and healthily. Avoid binge foods.
- Exercise regularly; if you are not used to exercising, start gently.
- Try something new that you have always wanted to do.
- Be “mindful”; this means reflecting on our feelings accurately.
- Take time each day for yourself. Do not hide out in more and more work.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Do something nice for someone else.

Seek help from professional therapists or counselors if you need more help. They are very helpful if you cannot control stress alone. It is not a weakness to seek professional help!

If you are in emotional crisis, thinking about suicide, or are concerned about someone who might be, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You can also call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.



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