

Practicing "Safe Stress"

A Stress Management Workshop for Educators

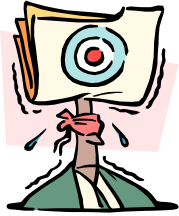
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Signs That You're "Stressed Out"

Checklist:



- Headaches
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Sleeplessness or too sleepy
- Boredom
- Ulcers
- Frequent Colds
- Pain in neck and back
- Pain in joints and muscles
- Weight gain/ loss
- Cardiovascular problems
- Gastrointestinal problems
- High blood pressure
- Absenteeism
- Apathy
- Disregard for appearance
- Lack of energy
- Mood swings
- Paranoia
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Loss of sense of humor



How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?

(Adapted from the work of Dr. Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith, Stress Directions; reprinted with permission)

Score each item either 1 (almost always), 2 (a lot), 3 (sometimes), 4 (almost never), or 5 (never) according to how each statement applies to you.

- ___ 1. I eat foods that are healthy.
- ___ 2. I get 7 to 8 hours sleep at least four nights a week.
- ___ 3. I give and receive affection regularly.
- ___ 4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
- ___ 5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least 3 times a week.
- ___ 6. I refrain from smoking.
- ___ 7. I take fewer than 8 alcoholic drinks a week.
- ___ 8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
- ___ 9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.
- ___ 10. I get strength from my religious beliefs
- ___ 11. I regularly attend club or social activities.
- ___ 12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
- ___ 13. At work I feel capable and valued.
- ___ 14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth).
- ___ 15. I drink less than 3 cups of coffee, glasses of tea, or colas a day.
- ___ 16. I am able to use my sense of humor to balance my reaction to boring and stressful situations.
- ___ 17. I do something for fun at least once a day.
- ___ 18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
- ___ 19. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
- ___ 20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

TOTAL: To get your score, add the figures. Any number over 50 indicates a vulnerability to stress. You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 60 and 75, and you are extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.



WONDERFUL WATER

- **75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated. (Likely applies to half the world's population)**
- **In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger.**
- **Even MILD dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3%.**
- **One glass of water shut down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a U-Washington study.**
- **Lack of water, the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue.**
- **Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers.**
- **A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen or on a printed page.**
- **Drinking 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.**

**Are you drinking the amount of water
you should every day?**

Some Simple Suggestions For Managing Stress:



1. **TALK TO SOMEONE.** Confide your worry to some levelheaded person you can trust; spouse, parent, friend, clergyman, family doctor, teacher, school counselor. Talking things out often helps you to see things in a clearer light and helps you see what you can do about it.
2. **BE HONEST IN IDENTIFYING THE REAL SOURCE OF STRESS.** Eliminate the source if possible. At least decide on a plan to keep it from getting the best of you.
3. **ACCEPT WHAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL.** Death and taxes are just a few of the things in life you can't avoid. Try to prepare for them as much as possible.
4. **TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF.** Eat right. Get enough sleep. Exercise. Learn a relaxation technique. Schedule recreation where you do something for pleasure, something that helps you forget about your work.
5. **GO EASY ON YOUR CRITICISM.** Don't expect so much of others and you won't be disappointed. Instead, look for the good in others. You will feel better about yourself.
6. **SHUN THE "SUPERWOMAN" or "SUPERMAN" URGE.** Don't expect so much of yourself. Nobody is perfect, or capable of doing everything. Decide what you can do well and what you like to do and put your effort into those things.
7. **DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.** Then give yourself a pat on the back.
8. **TAKE ONE THING AT A TIME.** Attack the most urgent task -- one at a time. Don't overestimate the importance of what you do. Your mental and physical health are vitally important.
9. **ESCAPE FOR A WHILE.** Making yourself "stand there and suffer" is self-punishment and not a way to solve a problem. Recover your breath and balance, but be prepared to deal with your difficulty when you are composed.
10. **WORK OFF YOUR ANGER.** If you feel like lashing out at someone, try holding off that impulse for a while. Do something constructive with that energy. Cool down, then handle the problem.
11. **GIVE IN OCCASIONALLY.** No one is right all of the time. And, even if you are right, it is easier on the system to give in once in awhile.
12. **IF YOU NEED HELP, GET AN EXPERT.** These simple suggestions may not be enough to help you handle your stress. If emotional problems become so distressing that you can't cope, you need **PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT**, just as you would for any other illness.





AAA Stress Management Form

SCENARIO:

ALTER: (How could you remove the source of the stress?)

AVOID: (How could you get away from or avoid the source of stress?)

ACCEPT: (How could you live with the stress?)

Build up resistance by . . .

Change self and/or perceptions by . . .

BEST OPTION IS:

Adapted from "AAAbc's of Stress Management," Nancy Loving Tubesing and Donald A. Tubesing (1983).

Serenity Prayer



**God, grant me the Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
Courage to change the
things I can, and
Wisdom to know the
difference.**



THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

(adapted by Debbie Silver)

1. Each day make someone else's life a little brighter. Whether it is students, staff, colleagues, or administrators, make someone's day a little better because you were there.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down; avoid them.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, your subject area, your students, pedagogy, psychology, pop culture, history, or whatever interests you.
4. Enjoy the simple things. If you are a teacher that is all that you can afford!
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. Laugh so much that you can be tracked in the school by your distinctive laughter.
6. Let the tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be alive while you are alive! Life is not a spectator sport.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it is family pictures, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your classroom is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Go visit another classroom, take a time-out outdoors, travel to the library, go find a friend. Trek wherever you like, but not to guilt country.



10. Tell the people you love, that you love them, at every opportunity. Remember that the most unlovable are those who most need our love.

I Wish You Enough . . .

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive.

I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish enough "Hello's" to get you through the final "Good-bye."

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