



Helping Hands



Common Myths about Stress and Helpful Strategies

(*excerpts from *CareNotes*: "What Everyone Wants To Know About Stress", by Tom McGrath)

Everyone experiences stress. In fact, stress is a necessary part of life and growth. Life begins with the stress of labor and birth. And every moment of growth and change throughout our lives is accommodated by stress. That includes the joyful moments, as well as the sorrowful ones.

Challenge Common Myths About Stress

Some people believe "There's nothing I can do to reduce stress". Others are convinced, "I need to be stressed to succeed" Yet others feel that adapting their behavior to avoid stress is wimping out. They say to themselves, "I ought to be able to (fill in the blank: be perfect, work around the clock, handle anything that comes my way) without a problem." Another dangerous myth is that a good way to deal with the stress in life is to "treat yourself" by overindulging in alcohol, junk food, cigarettes, etc. These myths are learned and reinforced throughout our lives. Think about which myths you might subscribe to and what you can do to replace them with other principles to live by.



When the body experiences a stressful event, it gears up for either flight, fight or freeze responses. These responses are appropriate when there is a credible threat. True life threatening circumstances are unusual in our modern society. Yet - we still respond as if there is a threat when stressed. Stress can be temporary, or it can be chronic - lasting a long time. Chronic stress can result in serious physical complications.

Stress alerts us to the fact that something is amiss in our life. And the threats aren't always external. If we pay attention to our emotional and physical reactions we can discover valuable clues about how we are interpreting what we are experiencing. For example, thinking negatively about events will lead to more stress than seeking the positive. Most situations have some positive aspect to them - often it is simply a matter of searching for the positive.

Remember - you can control your response to most situations, but you are not in control of how others react, or what they do. Control what you can and learn to deal with the things you cannot control

Take Heart

Our response stress may seem automatic and unchangeable, because it typically happens without thinking. But that doesn't mean our less desirable responses to stress cannot be changed and improved for our own benefit. Here is a four step formula for taking action on stress that you can use.



Stop - and realize that you have a choice in how to respond.

Breathe - deeply and release physical tension.

Reflect - on your situation, seeking to understand how your beliefs and attitudes might be aggravating the situation.

Choose - a strategy for dealing with your stress that will lead to relaxation and well-being

Resilience

By Mayo Clinic Staff



Resilience: the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens

:the ability of something to return to its original shape after it has been pulled, stretched, bent, etc.

When something goes wrong, do you tend to bounce back or fall apart? When you have resilience, you harness inner strength that helps you rebound from a setback or challenge, such as a job loss, an illness, a disaster or the death of a loved one. Resilience helps you to not dwell on problems, feel victimized, or become overwhelmed and turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse.

Resilience won't make your problems go away — but resilience can give you the ability to see past them, find enjoyment in life and better handle stress. If you aren't as resilient as you'd like to be, you can develop skills to become more resilient.

Resilience is the ability to roll with the punches. When stress, adversity or trauma strikes, you still experience anger, grief and pain, but you're able to keep functioning — both physically and psychologically. However, resilience isn't about toughing it out, being stoic or going it alone. In fact, being able to reach out to others for support is a key component of being resilient.

IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



Back To School Tips

(excerpts from PBS Parents)

Starting the new school year can be a time of great excitement... and anxiety. Help calm your child's fears (and your own) with these teacher-approved tips.

Meet the new teacher.

Breaking the ice early on is one of the best ways to calm everyone's fears.

Tour the school.

Familiarizing your child with her environment will help her avoid a nervous stomach on the first day.

Connect with friends.

A familiar friend can make all the difference when heading back to school.

Tool up.

Obtain the class supply list and take a special shopping trip with your child.

Ease into the routine.

Avoid first-day-of-school mayhem by practicing your routine a few days in advance. Set the alarm clock, go through your morning rituals, and get in the car or to the bus stop on time

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program are your local lodge EAP peer coordinators. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations. They are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you are experiencing. Your IAM EAP resource is listed below. Please call the representative listed here for help.

