
Responding Better to Stress

Which of your stressors can you change? For instance, you may often get stuck in traffic when commuting. Ask yourself how you can change the situation. Can you start work later to avoid heavy traffic? Can you take public transportation? Would listening to music or an audiobook help you relax when driving? Think of a few ways to change these stressful situations. You can then decide what will best help reduce your stress.



Let go of what you can't control

Which of your stressors are beyond your control? For instance, you may have to deal routinely with a difficult person. Know that if you can't change a stressor, your best choice may be to let it go. These tips may be helpful:

- Humor may help you take your mind off stress. Try seeing a funny movie when you are stressed.
- Decide whether the stressor is important enough to deal with.
- Ask yourself, "Is letting this stressor bother me worth the harm it may cause me?"

Put a positive spin on stress

Seeing things in a positive way can help you deal with stress better. Think of your stressors as challenges you can handle. If you have negative thoughts, start learning to change them to positive ones.

Use positive self-talk

Instead of saying: "If I don't get this report done on time, I'll be fired."

Say: "I'll ask for the extra time. I need to do a good job on the report."

Instead of saying: "My spouse hasn't called me about our sick child. Maybe they went to the hospital."

Say: "My spouse must be busy caring for our child. I'll call to find out how they're doing."

Getting support

Build a support network of people who will talk with you or help you manage stress. A support network may help you deal with your stressors in new ways. To form your network:

- Talk with a friend, family member, or mentor.
- Look for stress management apps that are available online or on your mobile device. Talk with your healthcare provider for suggestions.
- Join a support group of people who are dealing with challenges like yours.
- Meet with your clergy person or spiritual guide.
- Check with your campus, school, or company's human resources department to find out about stress management programs. Many workplaces offer an employee assistance program (EAP).