

# MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY

## MIND

- Accept that you can't control everything. Separate what is in your control from what is not and focus on things you can do.
- Do your best. Ease up on yourself and those around you. Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.
- Challenge yourself to stay in the present. Perhaps you're stressed because you are not only thinking about what is happening now, but also projecting into the future. Examine your worries, focus on the present, and accept the things you can't change.
- Learn what triggers your stress/anxiety. Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.



## BODY

- Limit alcohol and caffeine. These can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Avoid skipping meals. Keep healthy, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
- Get enough sleep. When stressed, your body needs additional sleep & rest. Try to get 8 hours of sleep each night!
- Stay active physically. Exercising can help you feel good and maintain your health. Consider working out from home if you are physically capable of doing so. There are plenty of free, at-home workout apps and videos available online.



## ACTION

- Take deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly throughout the day when you're feeling stressed.
- Take a time out. Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, or learn relaxation techniques. Stepping back from stressors helps clear your head.
- Do what helps you feel a sense of safety. This will be different for everyone, and it's important not to compare yourself to others.
- Stay connected. Talk to trusted friends or family about what you're feeling, and let them know how they can help you.
- Get help if you need more support. If you feel you have no one to turn to, know that there are people who are trained to listen and help, such as a mental health provider. You don't need to manage difficult times alone.

# CREATING A SELF-CARE PLAN

It is extremely important to take care of yourself during stressful times. Creating a self-care plan involves more than just choosing activities that we enjoy doing. It requires intentional planning and commitment to carry it out.

Self-care is not “one-size-fits-all.” We all have different needs, personalities, strengths, and limitations. You need to create a plan that is right for you.



1

## EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT COPING SKILLS

How do you deal with life's demands? Are you able to identify when you need a break? Do you engage in any positive or unhealthy coping strategies? Keep what is working, and remove the unhelpful.

2

## ASSESS YOUR OWN NEEDS

No two people have the same self-care needs! Consider the areas of Emotional, Physical, Spiritual, Professional, Social, and Psychological well-being. What activities do you already have in place for each one? What you would like to add?



3

## IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO MAINTAINING SELF-CARE

Are there things you can prioritize or cut out that might be getting in the way of self-care? Addressing barriers before they become a problem can be helpful in being proactive with self-care.



4

## CREATE YOUR PLAN

Once you have gone through these steps, write your plan down. Keep this plan at home, in your planner, or on your phone for easy access.



Whatever it is you choose to do, taking a small time out of your busy schedule is vital to handling all of your responsibilities and feeling more balanced. Consider these tips below when developing your own self-care plan:

- Taking care of basic needs. Although it may seem obvious, making sure you are getting enough sleep, nutrition, and exercise are forms of self-care, as they are often the first to be sacrificed when feeling stressed.
- Setting healthy boundaries. It is okay to set limits with others in your life or distance yourself from unhealthy relationships if it means taking care of your own needs.
- Deep breathing. This is the act of using your diaphragm (under your rib cage) to draw slow, deep breaths into the lungs and release them slowly.
- Muscle relaxation. Progressive muscle relaxation techniques involve systematically tensing and relaxing each major muscle group. These techniques work best when you have about 20 minutes and can find a quiet place without being disturbed.
- Calming thoughts. Our thought patterns can often contribute to stress that we are feeling. The next time you are feeling overwhelmed, take a moment to tune into your thoughts and feelings. Replace these thoughts with more positive ones.