

## What is stress?

- **Stress** is a natural part of life. It is normal to feel stress when you take on challenges and pursue goals.
- How you experience stress is unique and personal.
- It is important to look at your level of stress because stress can worsen the symptoms of illness and lead to relapse.
- You can recognize stress in your mood, thinking, behavior, or physical body.
- Being aware of your own signs of stress can be very empowering, because it lets you know when you need to take steps to deal with it.

**Stress**

Feeling pressure or tension when facing challenging situations.

## What are some signs of stress?

Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Problems concentrating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased heart rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anger over minor things	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irritability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change in appetite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty falling asleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling restless	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased need for sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tearfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trembling or shaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forgetfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digestion problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being accident prone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stomach aches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dependence on alcohol or drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## What causes stress?

- Stress can come from **internal or external sources**.
- **Internal stress** is caused by negative thoughts such as placing unreasonable demands on yourself or using judgmental self-talk.
- **External stress** is from the environment around you. It can be caused by daily hassles and positive or negative major life events.
- Knowing what causes your stress helps with coping in advance and coping in the moment.
- From the list of events and hassles below, which categories have you recently dealt with?

Life Events		Daily Hassles	
Moving	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crowded living situation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage or divorce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crowded public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
New baby	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long drives or traffic back-ups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injury, illness, or hospital stay	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling rushed at home or work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job loss or new job	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arguments at home or work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money problems or inheriting money	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise at home or work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injury or illness of a loved one	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of order or cleanliness at home or work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victim of a crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unpleasant chores at home or work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doing business with unpleasant people	<input type="checkbox"/>
New relationship or break-up	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough money to spend on leisure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor household repairs	<input type="checkbox"/>

Problems from drug or alcohol use	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misplacing things	<input type="checkbox"/>
New home or work responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring for pets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stopped smoking or new diet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unexpected company	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### How do I cope with stress?

Just as the experience of stress is unique and individual to everyone, coping with stress is also a personal process. Practicing effective coping strategies can help you decrease your symptoms and achieve your goals. What is your experience with the coping strategies listed below?

Coping Strategy	Already using	Would like to try using
Talking to someone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balancing activity and rest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using relaxation strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using positive self-talk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using my sense of humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting my spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking care of my health by exercising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Talking or writing about my feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating or viewing art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in a hobby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Where can I find support and educational resources?

- American Psychological Association:  
<http://www.apa.org/topics/stress/index.aspx>
- Michigan Medicine Depression Center Toolkit:  
<http://www.depressioncenter.org/health-information/depression-toolkit/>
- *Mindfulness Matters: Living in the Moment Can Improve Your Health*. From the Michigan Medicine Patient-Education Clearinghouse:  
<http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/InternalMedicine/Mindfulness.pdf>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): <http://www.nami.org>
- Self-Compassion. Dr. Kristen Neff: <http://www.self-compassion.org/>

## References

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2010). *Illness Management and Recovery Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) Kit*. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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