

Stress Management Interventions 11-5.02-K

KNOW the various stress management interventions, as presented in the E-PME Study Guide.

Stress Management Interventions More and more people are experiencing increased personal and job-related stress. Stress is defined as the collection of physical and emotional responses to any situation that disrupts a person's equilibrium. The numerous everyday hassles—work and home pressures, traffic, waiting in lines, and self-imposed worry about what we must do—never seem to go away.

Fortunately, stress can be managed. While we cannot completely eliminate stress from our lives, we can learn and apply effective stress management behaviors.

Some stress management strategy techniques are discussed below.

Take Care of Oneself

Taking care of oneself is an effective stress management behavior. Some techniques to be employed are:

- Recognize and heed stress signals
 - Listen to one's body
 - Get 7-8 hours of sleep or the amount needed to awake refreshed
 - Exercise with an elevated heart rate for 30 minutes at least three times a week
 - Refrain from smoking or inhaling the smoke of others
 - Drink only moderate amounts of alcohol
 - Maintain healthy weight
 - Develop and maintain a support system (positive family, friends, even pets)
 - Eat breakfast
 - Avoid high-fat and high-sugar foods
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Train Oneself to Relax

When over-stressed, developing a regular relaxation routine can minimize the effects. Some techniques for relaxing are to:

- Practice deep breathing exercises
 - Practice progressive muscle relaxation exercise (tense and relax muscle groups one by one, until total body relaxation is achieved)
 - Pray, chant, sing
 - Meditate or focus on peaceful imagery or thoughts
 - Practice yoga
 - Cultivate your artistic or creative talents
 - Listen to relaxing music
 - Take classes or instruction in relaxation techniques, such as Zen, self-hypnosis, or biofeedback
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Minimize Stress

There's no need to combat stress if stressors are minimized in the first place. Some approaches for minimizing stress are to:

- Change commuting patterns
 - Listen to music or relaxation tapes in the car
 - Avoid exposures to environmental stressors (traffic noise, cigarette smoke, toxic chemical smells, etc.)
 - Check chairs, desk, and workstation for correct fit
 - Regulate extremes of temperature, lighting, and noise
 - Learn to deal with aggressive personalities in a non-stressful way
 - Reduce unnecessary interruptions
 - Anticipate and prepare for change
 - Take regular breaks (leave the stress-producing situation)
 - Laugh more
 - Take vacations
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***Change Ways to
Think and
Communicate***

Effective communication skills can reduce the onset of conflict. Use the following techniques to change the way you think and communicate:

- Replace negative thoughts and feelings of oneself with positive ones
 - Focus on positive goals and achievements
 - Examine personal performance expectations to be sure they are realistic
 - Praise rather than criticize oneself
 - Clearly communicate wants, needs, and dislikes
 - Practice listening to others without analyzing what they're saying
 - Act assertively: learn to say "No"
 - Control, but don't suppress, anger and conflict
 - Find ways to redirect the energy that goes into conflicts
 - Spend time with friends or loved ones
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