Learn to Stress Less: Understanding and Managing Stress Effectively

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Welcome!

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WorkWell NYC seeks to create workplaces that help our employees live healthy, active lifestyles, and to provide health and well-being services, programs, and resources at the worksite and beyond.
Upcoming Webinars

April 17th, 12:30pm
Decluttering for Your Best Life: The Link Between Clutter and Mental Health

May 8th, 12:00pm
Staying Calm Under Pressure: Dealing with Difficult Situations

June 12th, 12:00pm
Resilience for a Healthy Life: Mental, Physical, and Emotional Wellbeing
Mindfulness Moment

What are you experiencing right now?

• Noticing body sensations, thoughts, and emotions
• Returning our attention to the present moment, again & again
• Noticing and not judging
Physical Signs of Stress

- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Sour stomach
- Rapid heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Sleep disturbances
- Fatigue
Emotional Signs of Stress

- Moodiness, hypersensitivity
- Depression, anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anger, resentment
Intellectual Signs of Stress

- Tunnel vision
- Perseverating (repeated thoughts)
- Memory problems
- Difficulty making decisions
- Negative outlook
- Difficulty concentrating
Behavioral Signs of Stress

• Isolating yourself
• Nervous habits
• Increased use of drugs and/or alcohol
• Overdoing certain activities
What is stress?

Stress is the **psychological** and **physiological** response to events that upset our personal balance in some way.

- It’s individualized.
- Some stress can help performance.
- Too much stress can be detrimental.
Effects of Stress on the Body

**Brain and Nerves:** Headaches, feelings of despair, lack of energy, sadness, nervousness, anger, irritability, trouble concentrating, memory problems, difficulty sleeping, mental health disorders (anxiety, panic attacks, depression, etc.)

**Heart:** Faster heartbeat or palpitations, rise in blood pressure, increased risk of high cholesterol and heart attack

**Stomach:** Nausea, stomach ache, heartburn, weight gain, increased or decreased appetite

**Pancreas:** Increased risk of diabetes

**Intestines:** Diarrhea, constipation and other digestive problems

**Reproductive Organs:** For women: irregular or painful periods, reduced sexual desire. For men: impotence, low sperm production, reduced sexual desire

**Other:** Acne and other skin problems, muscle aches and tension, increased risk for low bone density and weakened immune system (making it harder to fight off or recover from illnesses)
Let’s practice: Breathing to regroup

Extended exhales:

- Breathe in through your nose.
- Breathe out your mouth.
- Repeat, with exhales longer than inhales.
Identifying workplace stress

At the EAP we hear from employees that top workplace stressors include:

- Increased work demands
- Conflict with coworker/supervisor
- Limited resources to do job duties
- Time and leave concerns (such as childcare and commute concerns)
- Working with community members who are at-risk/in crisis
How do you usually respond to stress?

Response Strategies

**short term workability**
- Ignore it!
- Judge yourself for it
- Fight it

**long term workability**
- Talking with friends/therapist
- Listening to music
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating well
- Movement
- Art
- Prayer
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Volunteering
- Reading
Let’s practice: Single-pointed focus

• Pick an item to focus on.
• Focus on the item.
• Notice when your mind wanders.
• Practice nonjudgment.
• Invite your attention back to focus item.
• Repeat.
Things to keep in mind

• Stress can’t be eliminated, but stress *can* be managed.

• Stress management can give us a sense of calm and control in our lives.

• There is “no one size fits all” stress management technique.
Lifestyle changes

• Get enough sleep
• Eat well
• Reduce caffeine and sugar intake
• Exercise regularly
• Connect with others
Meeting challenges

- Manage your time
- Prioritize tasks
- Delegate tasks and break up big projects
- Schedule time for both work and fun
Shift your mindset

- Have realistic expectations
- Reframe the problem
- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up
- Do not try to control people or events
- Maintain your sense of humor
Small tweaks that may have a big impact

- Working with our breath
- Refocusing our thinking
- Spending time in nature
- Moving our bodies
- Knowing and living our values
- Practicing compassion
Knowing your values
Practice compassion along the way
Is self-compassion selfish?

Studies show that those who ruminate with self-criticism have:

- More anxiety, depression, and substance abuse
- Decreased motivation and productivity!
Other ways to practice compassion

• Bathing/showering
• Applying lotion
• Wearing comfortable clothes
• Loving touch
• Listening to soothing sounds
• Eating healthy and pleasing foods
Need more support?

- Sometimes, we practice all of these tools and try our best and... still are overwhelmed with stress.

- Time to call the NYC Employee Assistance Program!

EAP
you talk, we listen.
NYC Employee Assistance Program

- Free and confidential support for all NYC employees and their families
- Help with job stress, substance abuse, mental health issues, financial problems, domestic violence, family problems, and more
- EAP services include:
  - Supportive counseling
  - Referrals for appropriate care
  - Consultation and advocacy
  - Worksite support, programs, and workshops

Contact the EAP:
- 250 Broadway, 28th floor
- 212-306-7660
- eap@olr.nyc.gov
- nyc.gov/eap
What to expect when you contact EAP

Your first call:

• EAP receptionist collects your information and connects you to a counselor
• The counselor does a brief phone assessment to understand your needs
• You can schedule an in-person or phone appointment at a time that works for you

Your appointment:

• Discuss your emotional, social, and physical wellbeing
• Make a plan with your counselor with next steps to address your needs
• Referral to community providers
• Follow-up
Privacy:
- All communication and documentation is confidential
- EAP contacts others on your behalf only if you sign a release
  - Note: Confidentiality is broken for safety concerns

Documentation:
- Attendance memo, if desired*
- Extended leave from work
- Return to work documentation

* Some NYC Agency policies vary.
Mindfulness Moment

What are you experiencing right now?

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Highlights?

• What stress management strategies resonated with you?

• How would you like to apply these... at work? at home?

What do you think?
Questions? Use the chat box on the right side of your screen.

We want to hear from you! Please fill out a brief survey to share your feedback on today’s webinar: bit.ly/BeWellWebinar4

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