

Stress Management Tools

Action-Oriented Skills:

Taking action to change a stressful situation, such as creating to-do lists or taking a break

- Reduce the noise: put your phone/technology away. Make a quiet work environment.
- Manage your time: Plan ahead. Make a list and prioritize your tasks by using a calendar, planner, bulletin board, etc. Make sure you include time for enjoyable activities. It can be rewarding to check off items on your to-do list or to cross things off in your planner! Set short term, specific goals called SMART goals.
 - Specific: Goals should be simple and specific
 - Measurable: You should have factual evidence you accomplished your goal.
 - Achievable: Goals should be achievable so you feel slightly challenged, but capable of achieving your goal.
 - Results-focused: Goals should measure outcomes, not processes or steps.
 - Time-bound: Set a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency. This will help you avoid procrastination!
- Creating boundaries: set healthy boundaries in regards to how much you do of one activity (moderation is key!). For example, studying for an hour each night for a week is less stressful than cramming for six hours the night before the test.
- Distraction- take a break!
 - Take a short walk
 - Engage in a pleasant activity
 - Engage in an activity that will help you feel productive
 - Listen to music
- Ask for help from peers, teachers, parents, friends: Don't be afraid to ask for help. It can help you achieve your goals quicker and enhance your learning/studying.

Emotion-Oriented Skills:

Changing the way we perceive a stressful situation

- Talk to someone about how you feel- do not hold your emotions in...you will eventually have a meltdown and cause yourself more stress. By sharing your worries with someone close to you, you are able to reduce your burden. If you do not feel like sharing, writing or drawing your feelings down can be a helpful release of emotions as well.
- Change your thought process to concentrate on small, achievable goals
- Challenge negative beliefs/thoughts (It's best to practice this by writing your thoughts down and completing the process below on a piece of paper.
- Identify your thoughts and choose the thought driving your emotion ("hot thought")
 - Write/think of evidence that supports your hot thought
 - Write/think of evidence that does not support your thought
 - Consider evidence from both sides and change the negative thought to be more realistic

Acceptance-Oriented Skills:

Used for dealing with stressful situations one cannot control

- Self-care: Eating healthy; Getting enough sleep; Drinking plenty of water, reduce caffeine intake; Exercising
- Acknowledge your stress (mindfulness), remain positive, and shift your focus if needed.
- Relaxation techniques
 - Diaphragmatic breathing
 - Visual Imagery
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation