



**FLORIDA
APCO**
Leaders in Public Safety
Communications

Mindful Moment

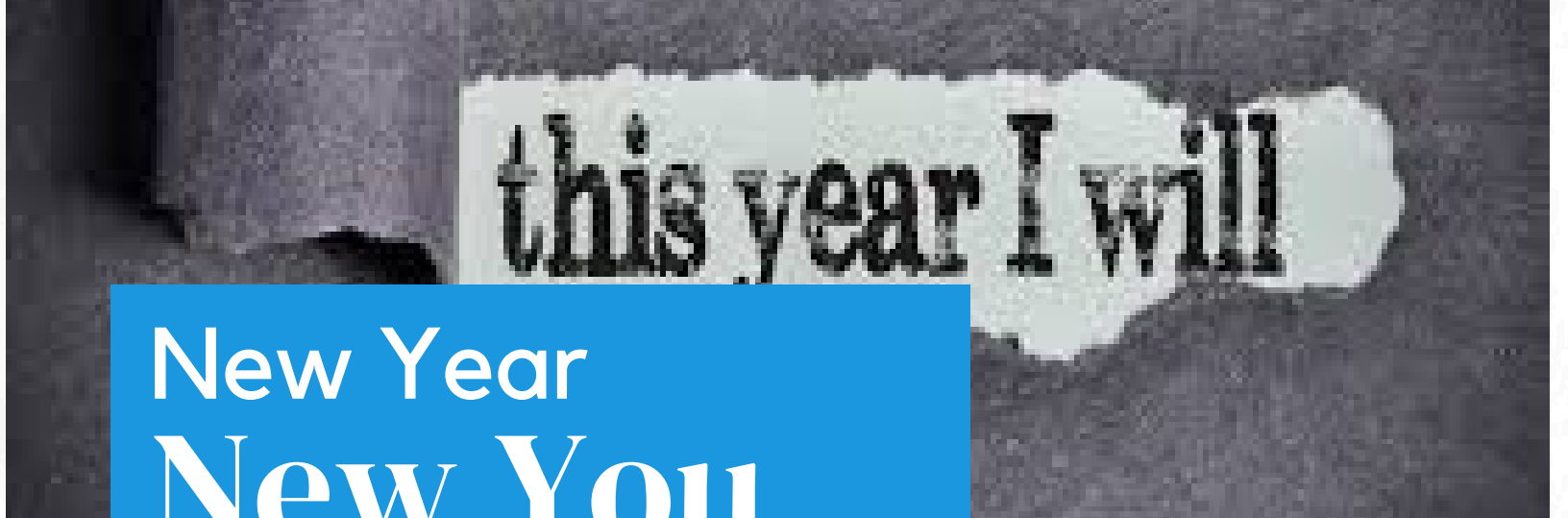
Newsletter

Cheers to a new year filled with fresh starts, positive energy, and the courage to prioritize your well-being because the best version of you is yet to come!

2025



[Floridaapco.org](https://floridaapco.org)

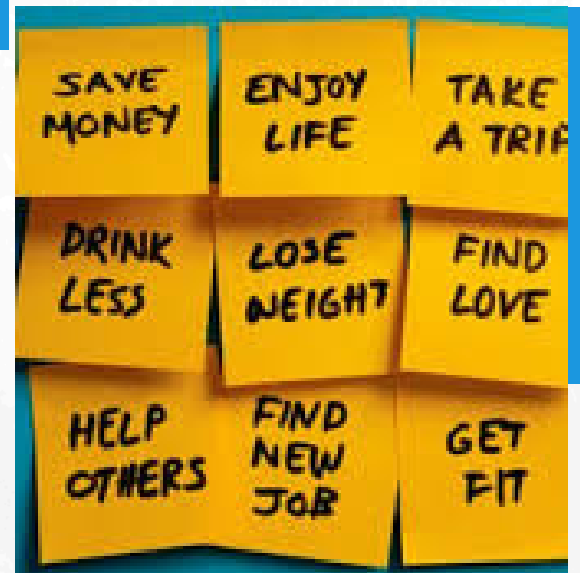


this year I will

New Year New You

Setting Goals You Can Reach

In the new year, we may make a list of goals that we want to achieve from exercising more, eating better, saving up a certain amount of money, decluttering, or anything that we want to push forward to. We have to remember that these goals need to be attainable and this can start by having smaller goals that lead to reaching our ultimate achievement.



Bringing the Extra Stress

With these new goals, new stressors can come up. We can experience fear of failure or self-criticism, social criticism, and external pressure. We have limitations and obstacles come up that we must face, and by learning to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress such as feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or even physically ill, we can step back, bring ourselves back down, and focus on what we are setting out to accomplish.



Signs of Stress

Stress can come in the form of a physical symptom or a behavioral change. These stressors are there to let us know that we need to take a step back and process what we are doing and how can we do it a different way that is less intimidating.



Physical Signs of Stress

- Difficulty Breathing
- Panic Attacks
- Blurred eyesight
- Sleep problems
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches and headaches
- Chest pain and high blood pressure
- Indigestion or heart burn
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Feeling sick, dizzy, or fainting
- Sudden weight gain or weight loss
- Rashes or itchy skin
- Sweating
- Changes to period or menstrual cycle

Behavioral Signs of Stress

- Finding it hard to make decisions
- Unable to concentrate
- Unable to remember things
- Constantly worrying or having feelings of dread
- Snapping at people
- Biting your nails
- Picking at your skin
- Grinding your teeth
- Eat too much or too little
- Restlessness
- Crying or being tearful
- Exercising to little or too much
- Withdrawing from people around you



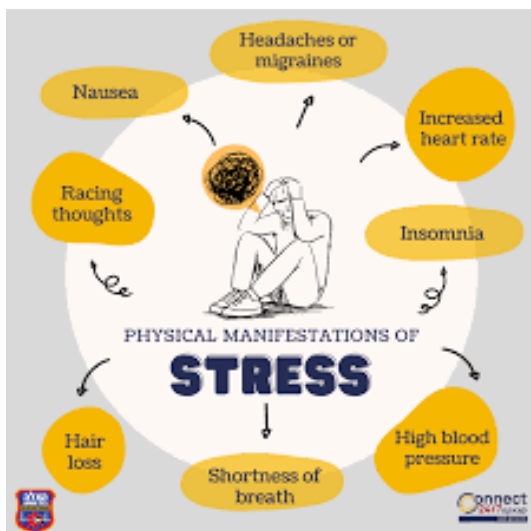
Benefits of Stress

Piedmont Health

While stress is something that none of us want to have and are striving to maintain, there are still benefits to having some stressors. Piedmont Health lists them as

1. Stress can help you face challenges.
2. Stress shows you what matters most
3. Stress can make you more resilient
4. Stress can help you foster interpersonal connections

Through different techniques such as daily meditation we are over time able to shift our thinking of what stress is to us.



"Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is relax."
-Mark Black



Once we have been able to recognize the signs and symptoms of our stress, it is time that we learn to cope with them and change our thought path. We can learn to make the stress manageable so that we can move forward with achieving our goal. Using a tool such as the Coping Wheel, we can firstly identify the main feeling that we are experiencing. From there we can narrow it down to a more specific feeling, and then seeing different ways that we can cope with that specific feeling.



Going through the process of learning how to cope with stress can bring five key benefits that help us move forward.

1. Enhanced Mental Wellbeing – we can create a more positive space, resilience, and stronger sense of self, realizing what we are capable of handling.
2. Healthier Heart, Longer Life – regular exercise, sleeping enough each night, and healthy eating habits keep our stress levels down and play a vital role in our body's wellbeing.
3. Sharpened Focus and Productivity – When we take the step back and look at the bigger picture, we can break things down into smaller goals allowing for us to be more effective in reaching our end goal
4. Improved Relationships – When we are less stressed, the physical and behavioral symptoms are at bay opening us up to be more interactive with others, less irritated or withdrawn, and build relationships with those that are around us.
5. Contentment – Once we have been able to see the benefits of stress management, we are able to recognize that we are capable. We have the ability to bring out the best in ourselves and use our drive and emotion to reach our goals.



"If you feel like you're losing everything, remember that trees lose their leaves every year and they stand tall and wait for better days to come"

-Author Unknown



Decompression Rooms - Creating a Stress Free Environment on a Budget

How does your workplace today offer dispatchers useful ways to positively deal with stress? Do you have walking treadmills, Gyms? therapy dogs? Or areas for guided meditations?

Does your agency offer a decompression room? That has relaxing lighting, aromatherapy, yoga cushions, a yoga chair, and a reclining massage chair? Does this space allow your dispatchers to use their phones to access meditation programs, soothing music, or YouTube videos during their lunch hours or on breaks?

These spaces don't have to be expensive and with the following plan, these rooms can easily be brought to attention with the initiative to create this safe space.

Every year, about 240 million calls are made to 911 nationwide. When someone calls the emergency number, they trust the person on the other end of the line to guide them through some of the most traumatic moments of their life. Dispatchers must stay clear minded and calm as they talk to people during home invasions, domestic violence situations, burning homes, automobile accidents and fatalities, and even murders. The job requires multitasking, on-the-spot problem-solving, and remaining composed in the face of scary, dangerous, and heart-breaking situations



1. Assess the Space and Budget

- Identify Available Space: Look for an unused or underutilized room that can be repurposed.
- Determine the Budget: Set a realistic budget and prioritize high-impact, low-cost items.

2. Focus on Essential Elements

Lighting

- Use soft, adjustable lighting to create a calming atmosphere.
- Budget Option: Purchase string lights, Himalayan salt lamps, or dimmable LED bulbs.
- Pro Tip: Avoid harsh fluorescents and use blackout curtains for natural light control.

Aromatherapy

- Scents like lavender, eucalyptus, and chamomile can promote relaxation.
- Budget Option: Use plug-in diffusers or inexpensive essential oil sprays.

Comfortable Seating

- Provide options for reclining or sitting in a relaxed posture.
- Budget Option: Secondhand stores or online marketplaces (e.g., Facebook Marketplace) often have affordable chairs or yoga cushions. Bean bags are also a cozy, low-cost option.

Sensory Relaxation

- Include items that appeal to different senses for stress relief.
- Budget Option:
- Textured throw blankets or pillows for tactile comfort.
- Noise-canceling headphones or affordable speakers for soothing sounds.
- Mini fountains or tabletop water features for visual and auditory calm.

Technology Access

- Allow dispatchers to use their smartphones or a shared tablet for meditation apps, music, or relaxing videos.
- Budget Option: Provide a charging station for personal devices

3. Enhance the Environment

- Visual Aesthetics
- Paint the walls in soothing colors like pale blue, soft green, or warm beige.
- Budget Option: Use peel-and-stick wallpaper or posters with nature scenes.
- Relaxation Tools
- Add items like stress balls, fidget toys, or puzzles.
- Budget Option: Purchase these in bulk or through discount stores.
- Quiet Zone Rules
- Ensure the room is a quiet, phone-free space (except for using relaxation apps).
- Pro Tip: Post clear guidelines for use to maintain its purpose.

4. Engage the Team

- Involve Dispatchers: Ask for input on what they'd like to see in the space.
- Seek Donations: Approach local businesses, nonprofits, or community groups for donations of items or funds.
- DIY Efforts: Host a "build day" where the team can paint, decorate, or assemble furniture together.

5. Maintain the Space

- Keep the area clean and organized. Rotate items or themes periodically to keep the room fresh.
- Assign a wellness committee or volunteers to oversee the room's upkeep.





Getting movement into our everyday lives is a great way to relieve some of our stress. This can be hard to do when we are in the communications center working our 8, 10, 12 hour shifts or longer if we are there on overtime!

We might think that getting to the gym is an impossible task when we have to get out of work and then get home and take care of our other responsibilities but there are ways that we can stay moving in the communications center. It is recommended that we get up and move at least once per hour. If you have a smart watch or health monitoring watch, many of them have the option to remind you to get up and move!



<https://www.itscheatdayeveryday.com>

LOW CARB TERIYAKI TURKEY BOWLS

Ingredients

For the Teriyaki Turkey:

- 16oz 90% lean ground turkey
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tbs Hoisin sauce
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tbs honey
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¾ cup water
- 1 ½ tbs cornstarch + ¼ cup cold water

For the cauliflower rice:

- 1 medium head cauliflower
- 1 tbs soy sauce
- salt (to taste)

Method

- ✓ In a medium nonstick skillet, cook the ground turkey fully until it is brown. Set aside. Combine all of the ingredients except for the cornstarch and ¼ cup cold water in a medium saucepan and place over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the mixture begins to bubble slightly. Mix the cornstarch with the cold water to make a slurry and add to the saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring occasionally. Once the sauce has reached a boil, remove from heat and add the pan of cooked ground turkey. Using a spoon, gently toss the turkey in the sauce to coat evenly.
- ✓ Add the washed cauliflower florets to the bowl of a food processor and pulse until the cauliflower had a crumbly "rice-like" consistency. Spray a nonstick skillet and fry the cauliflower with the soy sauce until slightly tender, approx 5-7 minutes. Garnish with scallions and sesame seeds (optional).
- ✓ *Feel free to omit the red pepper flakes if you wish, or adjust to your taste!
- ✓ You may also substitute the cauliflower rice for jasmine rice or even brown rice for added protein.

Eating healthy can also be a struggle that we face when we are on shift work. Having to plan out what we are going to bring for each meal, snacks, drinks. This can lead to us just wanting to order out which doesn't always have the healthiest of options. When we meal prep, there are different benefits that we gain. Meal prepping saves us time as we can just grab and go, it allows us to portion control so that we are not over-eating or too hungry that we do go and order extra food. It can give us a variety of food to eat. A big part of meal prepping is that it reduces stress as it takes away having to think about what we are going to back right before each shift. Meal prepping also helps us to save money and make sure that we are aware of what ingredients we are putting into our bodies.



Meal Prepping Made Easy

1. Get Meal prepping containers. These help with portion control and making sure you are getting the appropriate amounts of food.
2. Download a meal prepping app. Apps like Anylist, Mealime, and Yummly can help you with a grocery list and meal planning
3. Pick a day to do your meal prepping. Pick a time when you are not in a rush, this is not to be an added stress.
4. Get a cookbook! There are many different types for all eating habits and even for batch cooking. Others are out there for meals that take a short amount of time to cook or that can be done in a crockpot.

THE BEST FOODS FOR MEAL PREPPING


FROZEN
VEGETABLES
STARCHY
VEGETABLES
STIFF FRESH
VEGETABLES
WHOLE
GRAINS
PULSES
LEAN
PROTEIN
WHOLE
FRUITS
NUTS
+ SEEDS



Be sure to check out the website for the APCO 2025 9-1-1 Wellness Summit being held in Portland Oregon
March 2-3, 2025

Health is a state of
mind. Wellness is a
state of being.

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Wellness Committee

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