

Is your lifestyle causing you stress?

The way you live your life can have a big impact on your health, well-being, and how well or poorly you handle stress. Below are lifestyle behaviors that affect stress levels. Please check the boxes that apply to you. Doing an honest assessment of how well or poorly you take care of yourself can help you manage your stress in the future.

Lifestyle Behaviors					
When you are under stress, do you:	Yes	No	When you are under stress, do you:	Yes	No
Smoke/use tobacco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage in physical activity at least three times a week for 30 minutes each day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drink a lot of coffee or caffeinated drinks (more than 2-3 cups per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get six to eight hours of sleep every night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drink alcohol (more than recommended levels of 1-2 per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain good eating habits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overuse over-the-counter medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make time to relax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overeat or under eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain a sense of humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend too much money (e.g., do you have a lot of credit card debt and have trouble making payments?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abuse/overuse tranquilizers or other over-the-counter medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain healthy rituals and routines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch too much television (more than 3-4 hours per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be optimistic. Engage in positive thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have angry outbursts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdraw from people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make plans for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignore or deny stress symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Figure out ways to manage stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage in self-destructive relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reward yourself for your accomplishments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
These are negative self-care behaviors.			These are positive self-care behaviors.		

(Source: Unknown)

Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

- _____ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- _____ Eat healthily
- _____ Exercise
- _____ Get regular medical care for prevention
- _____ Get medical care when needed
- _____ Take time off when sick
- _____ Get massages
- _____ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- _____ Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- _____ Get enough sleep
- _____ Wear clothes I like
- _____ Take vacations
- _____ Other:

Psychological Self-Care

- _____ Take day trips or mini-vacations
- _____ Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- _____ Make time for self-reflection
- _____ Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- _____ Have my own personal psychotherapy
- _____ Write in a journal
- _____ Read literature that is unrelated to work
- _____ Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- _____ Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- _____ Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- _____ Be curious

- _____ Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- _____ Other:

Emotional Self-Care

- _____ Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- _____ Stay in contact with important people in my life
- _____ Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- _____ Love myself
- _____ Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- _____ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- _____ Allow myself to cry
- _____ Find things that make me laugh
- _____ Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- _____ Other:

Spiritual Self-Care

- _____ Make time for reflection
- _____ Spend time in nature
- _____ Find a spiritual connection or community
- _____ Be open to inspiration
- _____ Cherish my optimism and hope
- _____ Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- _____ Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- _____ Be open to not knowing
- _____ Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- _____ Meditate
- _____ Pray
- _____ Sing
- _____ Have experiences of awe
- _____ Contribute to causes in which I believe
- _____ Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
- _____ Other:

Relationship Self-Care

- _____ Schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
- _____ Schedule regular activities with my children
- _____ Make time to see friends
- _____ Call, check on, or see my relatives
- _____ Spend time with my companion animals
- _____ Stay in contact with faraway friends
- _____ Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards
- _____ Allow others to do things for me
- _____ Enlarge my social circle
- _____ Ask for help when I need it
- _____ Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- _____ Other:

Workplace or Professional Self-Care

- Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set limits with clients and colleagues
- Balance my caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
- Have a peer support group
- (If relevant) Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest

Overall Balance

- Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You

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http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml and adapted by Lisa D.
Butler, Ph.D.)