

INTRODUCTION TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress: an emotional and physical response to demanding situations, including symptoms that may include worry, a feeling of being overwhelmed, increased heart rate, headaches, sleep difficulties, procrastination, and more.

Describe your largest source of stress, in detail.

Briefly list two other stressors you are experiencing.

1
2

Circle any symptoms you have experienced in response to stress.

Anger / Frustration	Anxiety	Decreased Sex Drive	Drug or Alcohol Use
Fatigue	Headaches	Indigestion	Muscle Tension
Nail Biting	Over or Under Eating	Procrastination	Sleep Difficulties
Social Withdrawal	Teeth Grinding	Worry	Other

Contrary to popular belief, not all stress is bad. The stress response is a powerful tool used by your body to increase the odds of overcoming obstacles. It's when stress becomes too intense, or lasts for too long, that it becomes problematic.

The negative effects of stress can be reduced with the use of social support, emotional management skills, maintaining a healthy life balance, and attending to basic needs. In the following pages, we'll explore each of these strategies.

Social Support _____

Even when your social support cannot solve a problem, just talking can sometimes be enough. When we talk about our problems, hormones are released inside our brains that ease the undesirable symptoms of stress.

List three people who you can turn to for support.

Name:	How they can help:

How can you use social support to ease one of your current stressors?

Emotional Management _____

Stress can trigger many emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt, and anger. When these feelings are ignored, they can exacerbate the original stressor. Remember, emotional management isn't about eliminating emotions—it's about dealing with them in a healthy way.

When faced with unpleasant emotions, do you have any habits or tendencies that *worsen* the situation?

List two ways that you have successfully handled unpleasant emotions in the past.

1
2

Life Balance

Stress can be especially destructive if your life is heavily focused on one area. For example, a person who is only focused on a relationship will struggle if their relationship becomes rocky.

Rate each of the following life areas from 1 to 5. A “1” means that you devote little attention to this part of your life, while a “5” means that you devote a high amount of attention to this area.

Career	Family	Fun / Recreation	Spirituality
Socializing	Intimate Relationship	Education	Other

Based upon your ratings, are there any areas where you would like to devote more attention?

Basic Needs

During periods of high stress, many people take shortcuts when it comes to their basic needs. Examples include sleep, a healthy diet, exercise, and other forms of self-care. When basic needs are neglected, health and mental well-being deteriorate, which contributes to additional stress.

Circle any basic needs that you tend to neglect during periods of high stress.

Sleep	Healthy Diet	Exercise	Medical Adherence (medications, appointments, etc.)
Personal Hygiene	Social / Love Needs	Managing Addictions	Other

Describe the steps you can take to protect your basic needs during periods of high stress.
