

What is **STRESS**?

Everybody experiences stress. It's the body's natural reaction to tension, pressure and change. A certain amount of stress makes life challenging and less boring, but too much can be bad for you— both physically and mentally.

Prolonged stress can lead to accidental injury or serious health problems. For the sake of your health, safety and happiness, it's important to recognize and manage stress before it does you harm.

Alexandria Community Services Board

- 24-hour emergency crisis intervention services
- 24-hour detoxification services
- Evaluation and assessment
- Individual, family and group counseling
- Day support and vocational services
- Residential services
- Inpatient services
- Prevention and early intervention services
- Service fees are based on ability to pay or without charge
- Multi-language availability

The Alexandria Community Services Board is a group of 16 citizen volunteers appointed by Alexandria's City Council. The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for mental health, intellectual disabilities and substance abuse.

It is a CSB policy not to discriminate in the admission to its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, handicap, religion or national or ethnic origins. Programs and activities are accessible to people with physically handicapping conditions. If you require accommodations please call 703.746.3400.

B-MEN-0156



Stress Management for Parents & Caregivers



Department of
Community & Human Services



703.746.4900

alexandriava.gov/mhidsa

Stress Awareness

If you are a Parent or Caregiver, take a few minutes to recall the time you spend, moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, taking care of the needs of others throughout the week.

By the third day in the week, you probably look or feel something like this:



WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED OUT YOUR ACTIONS CAN BURN EVERYONE AROUND YOU, AND VICE-VERSA!!!

No matter the age or stage, your needs must come *FIRST*. You cannot effectively take care of another unless you first take care of yourself.

Recognizing the Signs of Stress:

- headaches
- upset stomach
- anxiety
- irritability
- extreme worry
- lack of energy
- poor concentration
- appetite change
- anger
- feeling powerless
- forgetfulness
- sadness
- difficulty sleeping
- new or increased use of tobacco, alcohol or other drug
- crying a lot
- exhaustion
- difficulty making decisions
- hyperactivity
- anger

Ways to Manage Stress:

- Think positively and surround yourself with others who do so.
- Don't demand too much of yourself. Ask for help.
- Accept that you can't control everything and be flexible.
- Make a list of things to do each day and set reasonable priorities. (Get Organized)
- Divide big tasks into smaller ones.
- Eat healthy and avoid sugar.
- Get plenty of sleep each night.
- Exercise some each day to boost energy and improve your mood. Don't sit too long. Use stairs instead of elevators.
- Make time to relax. Listen to music, meditate, read or do something you like.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs which act as a pacifier to stress.
- Use mistakes to learn.
- If possible, say "no" to tasks that you know will be stressful for you.
- Talk about things with a friend so that frustrations don't build up.
- Let yourself cry.
- Appreciate nature.
- Laugh and have fun.

Quick Stress Relievers:

Deep Breathing - While in a comfortable position, take a long deep breath to the count of 5. As you exhale to the count of 5, imagine breathing out tension and breathing in relaxation. With each breath, think "relax".

Stretches - Stretches can be done either sitting or standing.



Finger Fan



Knee Pulls



Upper-back Stretch



Waist Bends



Overhead Reach



Ear to Shoulder

Create a Home Spa - Soft soothing music, candles and a warm bubble bath are relaxing.

Visualization - Close your eyes and picture a peaceful place for 5 minutes (a beach or forest for example). Imagine you are there. Concentrate on the details of what you see, hear and feel as you take deep, even breathes.