

**S**tress is a natural response to the challenges, changes and pressures of life. When not handled properly, stress can seriously affect your concentration, energy level, health, mood and productivity.

There are two types of stress: **positive stress**—which helps make life interesting and helps us do a good job; and **negative stress**—which can be ultimately destructive to your body. Fortunately, there are things you can do to help you manage your stress and at the same time make your life more enjoyable!

*Just like your bank account, your body and emotions need regular deposits to prevent a “bankrupt” or depleted system! Do something enjoyable for yourself each day.  
You’re worth it!*

### Tips:

- ★ Turn stress into motivation to change
- ★ Believe in yourself, you have the power to solve your problems
- ★ Breathe deeply
- ★ Take time for hobbies and creative activities
- ★ Exercise, exercise, exercise
- ★ Laugh out loud
- ★ Share your thoughts & feelings with someone you trust
- ★ Plan for a mini-vacation or reward
- ★ Appreciate nature
- ★ Ask for help when you need it

## 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-0157



## Workplace Stress



Department of  
Community & Human Services



**703.746.4900**

[alexandriava.gov/dchs](http://alexandriava.gov/dchs)

## Investigate

If you are feeling stressed, the first step to solving your problems requires detective work. Look for sources of worry or frustration in your relationships and environment. Know yourself and how well you are sleeping, eating and balancing/ managing your work and home relationships. Discovering these connections will help you analyze what is *really* bothering you.

### Internal Personal Stressors

- Confidence and self-acceptance levels
- Trust issues

### External Personal Stressors

- Job stability or change
- Economy / finances
- Change of location
- Threat of war or terrorism
- Family and personal relationships
- Divorce or separations
- Death of family or friends
- Shifts in responsibilities
- Health issues

### Workplace Stressors

- Role ambiguity and conflict
- No opportunity for promotion
- Restrictive, untrusting culture
- Downward communication
- Little performance feedback
- Centralized decision-making
- Punitive appraisal systems
- Lack of support
- Lack of cohesiveness
- Work-group conflict

## Resolving Crises at Work

- Model the attitudes and behaviors you want your coworkers/employees to emulate
- Identify the source of conflict; is it structural or interpersonal
- Focus on the task, not personalities
- Address conflict in a timely way
- Learn from conflict

When you have a conflict with a coworker or family member, verbal attacks or avoidance reactions are NOT helpful. The following is a more productive approach:

- Allow time to cool off
- Assess the situation
- State the issue to the other person
- Remain calm
- Negotiate solutions
- Don't slip into an avoidance mode

These practices help promote “win-win” situations.



## Sleep Tips

Stress can affect your ability to get a good night's sleep. To make matters worse, when we are tired we are more likely to get stressed out. Here are some things you can do to stop this cycle and get a good night's sleep:

- Establish a bedtime ritual that will tell your body it is time to sleep: read, do yoga or stretch, take a warm bath, drink warm milk or chamomile tea.
- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Write down your worries and any anxious thoughts. Put your dreams in writing too, describing them vividly.
- Exercise regularly during the day and avoid taking naps.
- Practice the following relaxation techniques while lying comfortably in bed:

### Sleep Relaxation Techniques

- Focus on your exhalations as you breath and relax. Feel your entire body being supported by the bed and continue to focus on exhaling and relaxing. Mentally move through each part of your body identifying sensations you feel (warmth, coolness, tension, heaviness). As you wander through the body in search of sensations, the mind will focus inward and sleep will result.
- Tighten each of the muscles in your body one at a time. Start by gently flexing your feet & calves for 5 seconds. Then flex your thighs... squeeze your fists... your biceps. Work your way through all your muscles—including your face, holding each one for 5 seconds then releasing.