



resiliency Counts!

an 8-week stress management challenge



What is stress?

Stress is sometimes referred to as “pressure” or “tension” you feel when faced with a situation that’s new, unpleasant or threatening.

What is Resiliency?

Resilience can be thought of as our ability to bounce back, or even grow, in the face of pressures and threats.



Stress is a fact of life. It affects everyone. Some stress is actually helpful because it can spur you to meet life’s challenges. Without some stress, life would be boring.

But too much unmanaged stress can cause problems. It can affect your mental and physical health and damage your relationships with friends and family. Over time, unmanaged stress can harm your health.

Stress can be an automatic reaction to a demand or danger. Your muscles tense, and your heart rate and breathing speed up. A rush of adrenaline gives you the strength and energy needed to deal with danger, freeze or run away. This reaction is often called the “fight, freeze or flee” response. Our bodies respond in this way to both positive and negative changes in our lives.

Managing stress well is known as resilience. Building personal resilience is key to thriving in the face of stress.

More active living, healthier eating and improved sleep habits are a few techniques for managing stress and contribute to increased resilience. Think of resiliency as being “more like Teflon - less like Velcro” when it comes to stressful encounters.

The Resiliency Counts! stress management 8-week challenge is designed to help you master techniques for increasing personal resilience - resulting in improved health and well-being. Get ready to feel great!

For more information or to speak with a Stress Management Coach email:thrive@321-health.com

resiliency Counts!

Weeks 1 & 2



MORE RESOURCES

Sleep Problems:

<http://1.usa.gov/1IH6vj3>

Insomnia:

<http://1.usa.gov/RfqlJV>

GOALS

Simply check (✓) your goal for the next 2 weeks:

BEGINNER: Choose *one area*: limiting caffeine or alcohol or sleep-wake scheduling *to work on daily* over the next two weeks.

INTERMEDIATE: Choose *two* of the above areas *to work on daily* over the next two weeks.

ADVANCED: Choose *three* of the above areas *to work on daily* over the next two weeks.

TRACKING

Simply check (✓) each day you meet your goal for the next 2 wks:

Week	M	T	W	H	F	S	S
1							
2							

Logging contributes to success - keep track of your efforts.

Sleep Matters

According to the Centers for Disease Control, sleep problems have become a public health epidemic. People with sleep problems have higher rates of absenteeism and accidents related to sleepiness than workers without a problem, and sleep problems are very stressful to the body.

Quick Survey

If you answered "yes" to one or more of the survey questions there are things you can do to affect your sleep hygiene.

Yes No

Do you drink alcohol within 1 hour (one drink) or 6 hours (more than one) before bedtime?

Do you use caffeine to stay awake throughout the day?

Do you have trouble sticking to a regular sleep-wake schedule ?

Start with limiting caffeine. Drinking a cup of coffee at the beginning of your workday will help promote alertness. But don't consume caffeine later in the day or you may have trouble falling asleep when you get home. Instead stay active - some light exercise before or midway through your day will give you energy to finish your workday, improve your mood and help you sleep better. Do some stretches during your break or go for a brisk walk.

Next stick to a regular sleep-wake schedule. Ask your family to support you by limiting phone calls and visitors during your sleep hours if you work night or early morning shifts, and use blackout blinds or heavy curtains to block sunlight if you sleep during the day.

Lastly limit alcohol consumption prior to going to sleep. One drink within one hour or more drinks (happy hour) consumed up to six hours before bedtime has been shown to disrupt the second half of the sleep cycle - leading to daytime fatigue and sleepiness.

No doubt establishing healthy sleep patterns is challenging - **set a goal on the left for the next two weeks, track your efforts and see how you feel.**



resiliency **Counts!**

Weeks 3 & 4



MORE RESOURCES

Mini Techniques to “relax in a hurry”:

<http://bit.ly/relaxinahurry>

Mini Techniques for relaxing at work:

<http://bit.ly/resilientatwork>

GOALS

Simply check (✓) your goal for the next 2 weeks:

BEGINNER: Practice the breathing technique **3 times each day for 1 minute.**

INTERMEDIATE: Practice the breathing technique **3 times each day for 2 minutes.**

ADVANCED: Practice the breathing technique **3 times each day for 5 minutes.**

TRACKING

Simply check (✓) each day you met your goal for the next 2 weeks:

Week	M	T	W	H	F	S	S
1							
2							

Logging contributes to success - keep track of your efforts.

Relaxation Matters

There are plenty of ways to relieve stress - exercise, sitting quietly watching a beautiful sunset, laughing and more. But believe it or not, something you're doing right now, probably without even thinking about it, is a proven stress reliever: breathing.

As it turns out, deep breathing is not only relaxing, it's been scientifically proven to affect the heart, the brain, digestion, the immune system and more!. Breathing can have a profound impact on our physiology and health. It can influence asthma, blood pressure, lung disease and heart failure . It is estimated that 60% of emer-

gency room visits are related to inefficient breathing! Breathing is both automatic and learned. Our first response to a stressful event causes us to develop inefficient breathing during subsequent stressful situations. Don't despair - studies show that people who practice breathing exercises can positively influence their health.

Better yet, you can do the exercises anytime, anywhere. And to achieve a relaxation response you only need to do them for a minimum of **one minute at a time!** It isn't quite as easy as it sounds - learning to breathe correctly takes dedicated practice and lots of patience!

Yes No

- Do you have trouble falling asleep at bedtime?
- Do you have high blood pressure, asthma, allergies, indigestion, headaches, frequent colds, or muscle pain or tightness?
- Do you lose your temper easily or feel “stressed out” regularly?

One or more “Yeses” indicates that you can benefit from breathing exercises.

The technique:

- * Sit quietly in a comfortable position. Close your eyes if possible.
- * Deeply relax all of your muscles, beginning at your feet, and progressing up to your face. Keep them relaxed.
- * Breathe through your nose - become aware of your breathing.
- * As you breathe out long and slow (6 seconds), say the word, “one”, silently to yourself. Let the breath come back in slowly (4 seconds). For example: breathe out, say "one", then in .. then out, "one", etc. Breathe easily and naturally.
- * Practice for 1 - 20 minutes each day. Try it before bed, at break or during and after exercise.

resiliency Counts!

Weeks 5 & 6

Attitude Matters



Attitude is a combination of thinking, behaviors and beliefs. We carry our attitude around with us, like a pair of glasses that tints our perception of the world. Depending on how we perceive the world, we will interpret and react differently to situations than someone who has a different view. Our tinted glasses (our attitude) will affect how we think, how we behave and even how we feel. This means that we have the ability to change our attitude by changing our perception (tinted glasses). Our perceptions can help or hinder how we respond to stressful situations. Think “glass half full or half empty” ?

Dr. Albert Ellis came up with a behavioral sequence that can help us learn to respond in a more healthful way to stressful events. It is easy to remember: A-B-C. It is based on the idea that every stressful event is really a sequence of events; with a beginning (cause of the stress or stressor), a middle (how we perceive what has happened), and an end (how we respond).

A = the beginning of the sequence or the **A**ctivating event.

B = the middle of the sequence or our **B**elief.

C = the end of the sequence or the **C**onsequence of A+B.

Most of us react so quickly to a stressful event that we go from A to C without realizing that B exists, we often attach a negative label to the event, however we have control over B! So for the next two weeks when you find yourself in a stressful situation take control of B by expanding your interpretation time to put problems in perspective and minimize the negative aspects. Use this acronym:

STOP! - *pause* and perform the deep breathing technique from weeks 3 & 4 to relax your body and clear your mind.

LOOK! - take time to *assess* the situation. Is it really as bad as you think?

LISTEN! - observe what you are *telling* yourself (thinking).

RESPOND! - by taking the time to stop, look and listen you can *reframe* your beliefs/thoughts into a more positive response.



MORE RESOURCES

Tools & Quizzes to develop resilience and optimism:

<http://bit.ly/toolsforoptimism>

More Stress Management Techniques:

www.mindtools.com

GOALS we can all benefit from developing more thoughtful responses to stress.

Simply check () your goal for the next 2 weeks:

BEGINNER: Work on “**STOP!**” by practicing deep breathing before responding to a stressful event.

INTERMEDIATE: Work on both **STOP!** and **LOOK!** in response to stress.

ADVANCED: **STOP!**, **LOOK!** and **LIS-TEN!** in response to stress.

TRACKING Simply check () each day you met your goal for the next 2 weeks:

Week	M	T	W	H	F	S	S
1							
2							

For more benefit: create a 3 column journal. In the first column write the stressful event. In the second write your response. In the third write a more positive response. i.e. Flat Tire - “this *a*lways happens to me!” - “this happens to everyone sooner or later.”

resiliency Counts!

Weeks 7 & 8



MORE RESOURCES

Authentic Happiness:

Tips, quizzes, info and more.
<http://bit.ly/1niaRnp>

Stress Management Tools:

<http://bit.ly/wellperson>

GOALS

Simply check (✓) your goal for the next 2 weeks:

BEGINNER: Pick 2 *strategies* from the lists on the right and practice daily.

INTERMEDIATE: Pick 3 *strategies* from the lists on the right and practice daily.

ADVANCED: Pick 4 *strategies* from the lists on the right and practice daily.

TRACKING

Simply check (✓) each day you met your goal for the next 2 weeks:

Week	M	T	W	H	F	S	S
1							
2							

Too stressed to laugh?

Try exaggerated moaning, groaning and sighing. All three help relax you physically by stimulating deep, regulated breathing, increasing oxygen uptake and exercising the diaphragm - while getting your mind off of your problem.

Humor Helps

Yup, there's nothing like a belly laugh to relieve stress or to diffuse a stressful situation. It is well documented that laughter is good medicine for combatting stress:

Laughter relaxes the whole body. A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.

Laughter boosts the immune system. Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.

Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

Laughter protects the heart. Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

Here's how to get started:

Smile: Smiling is the beginning of laughter. Like laughter, it's contagious. Pioneers in "laugh therapy," find it's possible to laugh without even experiencing a funny event. The

same holds for smiling. When you look at someone or see something even mildly pleasing, practice smiling.

Count your blessings: Literally make a list. The simple act of considering the good things in your life will distance you from negative thoughts that are a barrier to humor and laughter. When you're in a state of sadness, you have further to travel to get to humor and laughter.

Bring humor into conversations: Ask people, "What's the funniest thing that happened to you today? This week? In your life?"

Laugh at yourself. Share your embarrassing moments. The best way to take yourself less seriously is to talk about times when you took yourself too seriously.

Create Opportunities for laughter: watch a funny movie or TV show. Go to a comedy club. Read the funny pages. Seek out funny people. Share a good joke or a funny story. Check out your bookstore's humor section. Host game night with friends. Play with a pet. Goof around with children. Make time for fun activities.

So set your goal on the left and get laughing!





What is stress?

Stress is sometimes referred to as “pressure” or “tension” you feel when faced with a situation that’s new, unpleasant or threatening.

What is Resiliency?

Resilience can be thought of as our ability to bounce back, or even grow, in the face of pressures and threats.



Congratulations you’ve completed the 8-week Resiliency Counts! stress management challenge. You’re on your way towards developing more effective stress coping strategies. Of course achieving resiliency is an on-going practice, so continue to practice what you’ve learned, stay active and eat well for optimal health. When you are healthy and well - you will be more resilient. Learn more:

COPING WITH STRESS: <http://1.usa.gov/1jbLISW>

WELLBEING AT WORK: <http://bit.ly/wellbeingatwork>

TIPS FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY LIFE: <http://1.usa.gov/1mbHE9S>

HEALTH AND SAFETY QUIZZES AND TOOLS: <http://bit.ly/healthandsafetyquiz>

For more information or to speak with a Stress Management Coach email:thrive@321-health.com