



Health Services

# University of Oklahoma Student Affairs

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Web: <http://goddard.ou.edu/healthed>

We pledge to treat you with dignity and respect and to provide you with competent and compassionate therapeutic services.

**Charles B. Goddard Health Center**  
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- Loss of confidence
- Dissatisfaction

### What are Some Healthy Ways to Cope With Stress?

Managing stress is important to your health and well-being. Some guidelines to help reduce stress levels and/or cope with stressors in a healthy manner include:

- 1 Exercise** Participation in some type of physical activity on a daily basis is highly recommended. Don't have 30 minutes... try 10 minute bouts throughout the day!
- 2 Relax** The use of relaxation techniques can help alleviate anger, tension, etc. Examples include: deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery.
- 3 Change Negative Thoughts** Replace negative inner thoughts with more positive, logical ones.
- 4 Be a Problem Solver** Look at the problem that often causes the most anger. Make an effort to have a good attitude about the problem; focus on how to manage the problem rather than trying to find a solution.
- 5 Communicate** When angry, slow down and think before responding. Also, listen to the other person and take his/her feelings into consideration.
- 6 Use Humor** Don't dismiss problems, instead humor can be used to face problems in a more beneficial way. Don't take life too seriously!
- 7 Eat Healthy** Eat a healthy and well-balanced diet. Include at least five fruits and vegetables in your daily diet.
- 8 Limit Caffeine Intake** An excessive intake of caffeine can cause feelings of anxiety, nervousness, irritability, and/or tremors.
- 9 Avoid Using Alcohol or Other Drugs** Drink in moderation or not at all.
- 10 Practice Good Time Management** Re-evaluate life. Eliminate unnecessary and unimportant tasks and make a manageable "to do" list. Prioritize!
- 11 Seek Help if Necessary** Sometimes help from a professional is needed...don't delay! Making an appointment is the hardest part.
- 12 Sleep** Be sure to find time to sleep. Practicing good time management skills can increase the opportunity to get needed rest.

### Reference

Girdano, D.A., et al. (1997). *Controlling Stress and Tension, Fifth Edition*. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.

# managing stress

Meeting the health needs of OU students, faculty, staff, and dependents



## Health Services

### What is Stress?

Stress is defined as any physiological or psychological state of disruption caused by the presence of an unanticipated, disruptive, or stimulating event. It is a mind-body arousal that can save lives (“fight” or “flight” response); however if it is not properly managed it can lead to illness and disease.

### What are the Three Types of Stress?

- 1 **Distress** Diminishes quality of life and is commonly associated with illness, disease, and mal-adaptation. Some examples include chronic pain, anxiety, and depression. Distress often requires professional counseling.
- 2 **Eustress** A positive stress that can increase productivity and enhance longevity and life satisfaction. Eustress is sometimes characterized as the burst of adrenaline that helps one finish a final paper, participate in exercise, or conquer other challenges.
- 3 **Astress** A lack of stress that can cause productivity to nose dive and produce a lack of motivation.

### What are Stressors?

Stressors are conditions or events (imagined or real) that are responsible for eliciting generalized physical responses without regard to whether the stress is considered “good” or “bad.” Therefore, it is important to note that your reaction or response to a stressor determines a positive or negative tone.

### Common Stressors

#### Physical

- Hunger
- Lack of sleep
- Headache

#### Mental

- Waiting in long lines
- Running late

#### Social

- Living with a roommate
- Disagreeing with someone
- Changing relationships

#### Emotional

- Death of a loved one

#### Environmental

- Heat/cold
- Noise
- Hypoxia (insufficient oxygen)

### What are Some Signs and Symptoms of Stress?

#### Mental

- Persistent negative thoughts
- Indecisiveness
- Poor memory
- Worrying
- Boredom
- Impaired judgement
- Loss of concentration
- Bad dreams
- Hasty decisions

#### Physical

- Insomnia
- Excessive sweating
- Indigestion
- Rashes
- Nausea
- Increased heart rate
- Teeth grinding/jaw clenching
- Headaches
- Rapid change in weight
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches/pains
- Constipation/diarrhea
- Frequent illnesses

#### Behavioral

- Restlessness
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Changes in sleeping, eating, and exercise habits

#### Emotional

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Crying spells
- Tension
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Cynicism
- Feelings of alienation