

Coping With Stress Special Tips for Helping Professionals

1. Remind yourself that this career is a choice – if it gets too bad, you have the choice to quit.
2. Plan for trauma – expect stress in this field.
3. Be clear on beliefs and values – these change over the years and it's important to stay in touch with yourself.
4. Create meaning in your life – make sure your life is congruent with your personal beliefs and values.
5. Cultivate a well chosen support system – educate them to your needs in times of stress. Choose some givers instead of takers.
6. Manage your time – learn time management techniques, keep things organized.
7. Diversify activities; cultivate routines – a large number of diverse activities can help you relax. Maintaining routines and rituals is important.
8. Choose your battles – conserve your energy for those situations that require it. Don't use your energy fighting battles you have no chance of winning.
9. Gather information – the more information you have, the better you can cope with stress.
10. Individual mastery – do things at which you can be successful.
11. Integrate the stressor – how does it fit in your life, what does it mean in your life.
12. Talk about the meaning of life – engaging in deep philosophical discussion helps us stay in touch with the inner self.
13. Talk about the meaning of death – staying in touch with what you believe about death helps you integrate death into life.
14. Nurture your spirituality – whatever your beliefs, sometimes all you have to draw on is your inner reserves.

Ways to Reduce Stress

1. Physical exercise – develop an exercise routine that is aerobic and fun. Stick to it more religiously when under high stress. This does more to reduce acute stress than anything else you can do.
2. Eat regular, nutritional meals – foods low in fat, sodium and simple sugar and high in carbohydrates are the best. Eat as though you are in training. Mealtime should be as stress-free as possible.
3. Supplement your diet with vitamins and minerals – your body uses up its B vitamins, C vitamins and calcium during stress. If your diet does not provide sufficient amounts of these, take supplements.
4. Post notes to yourself – the memory is affected by stress so write reminders to yourself. When making appointments, write where they are and directions to them in your appointment book.
5. Prepare for morning the night before – put things you need to take with you by the door. Decide what you're going to wear and be sure it's ready.
6. Get up 15 minutes early – this gives you time for unforeseen things.
7. Anticipate your needs – stop for gas before you really need it. Keep cash and coins on hand.
8. Allow extra time to get where you need to go – this way, if there are traffic delays you will not increase your stress.
9. Walk everywhere you can – it's good exercise and it gives you the opportunity to smell the flowers.
10. Schedule quiet times – especially helpful is quiet just before bed and first thing in the morning. In addition, some quiet time during the day may be helpful.
11. Keep your sense of humor – seeing the humor in a situation will help keep your stress low.
12. Relax your standards – you don't have to do anything perfectly.
13. Find a serene place of your own – even if it's just a comfortable chair in a corner.
14. Change your perspective – ask yourself what this all matters in the march of the universe
15. Take advantage of your body rhythms – schedule your most difficult tasks for your peak hours and less difficult tasks for other times.
16. Have fun – we can't be serious all of the time.
17. Say “no” more often – you need to pick the activities on which you want to spend your life energy.
18. Reward yourself after stressful activities – relax with a book, listen to music, have a special lunch, or take a long, leisurely bath.
19. Spend time with others – preferably with others not involved in your work.
20. Keep a journal – writing down inner thoughts is a way of release, as well as providing a journal for later contemplation.
21. Get plenty of rest – schedule extra sleep time during times of stress. When you can't sleep, get up and do something non-simulating.
22. Don't make big life changes – stressful times are not the time to change everything.
23. Keep schedules as normal as possible – the semblance of routine helps.
24. Don't give yourself negative labels – you are not “losing it,” you are reacting to stress in a normal way.