

News Release

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Stress Management Tips

(August, 2014). The American Psychological Association on their website has published the following in order to offer tips on how to manage your stress.

In today's fast-paced and ever-connected world, stress has become a fact of life. Stress can cause people to feel overwhelmed or pushed to the limit. The American Psychological Association's 2007 "Stress in America" poll found that one-third of people in the U.S. report experiencing extreme levels of stress. In addition, nearly one-in-five report that they are experiencing high levels of stress 15 or more days per month. While low to moderate levels of stress can be good for you when managed in healthy ways, extreme stress takes both an emotional and physical toll on the individual.

With the consequences of poorly managed stress ranging from fatigue to heart disease and obesity, it is important to know how to recognize high stress levels and take action to handle it in healthy ways. Being able to control stress is a learned behavior, and stress can be effectively managed by taking small steps toward changing unhealthy behaviors.

The American Psychological Association offers the following tips on how to manage your stress:

- ***First understand how you stress. Everyone experiences stress differently. How do you know when you are stressed? How are your thoughts or behaviors different from times when you do not feel stressed?***

- **Identify your sources of stress. What events or situations trigger stressful feelings? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships or something else?**
- **Learn your own stress signals. People experience stress in different ways. You may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or a lack of energy. Gauge your stress signals.**
- **Recognize how you deal with stress. Determine if you are using unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol and over/under eating) to cope. Is this a routine behavior, or is it specific to certain events or situations? Do you make unhealthy choices as a result of feeling rushed and overwhelmed?**
- **Find healthy ways to manage stress. Consider healthy, stress-reducing activities such as meditation, exercising or talking things out with friends or family. Keep in mind that unhealthy behaviors develop over time and can be difficult to change. Don't take on too much at once. Focus on changing only one behavior at a time.**
- **Take care of yourself. Eat right, get enough sleep, drink plenty of water and engage in regular physical activity. Ensure you have a healthy mind and body through activities like yoga, taking a short walk, going to the gym or playing sports that will enhance both your physical and mental health. Take regular vacations or other breaks from work. No matter how hectic life gets, make time for yourself — even if it's just simple things like reading a good book or listening to your favorite music.**
- **Reach out for support. Accepting help from supportive friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you**

may want to talk to a psychologist, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

While the information contained in this tip sheet should not be used as a substitute for professional health and mental health care or consultation, the individuals who believe they may need or benefit from care should consult a psychologist or other licensed health/mental health professional. Additional information on stress and mind/body health, can be found by visiting the [APA Help Center](#).

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free confidential benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing professional assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you or a dependent may contact the EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don't have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. And if you are concerned about the impact life challenges are having on your well-being, all you need to do is call the EAP. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively deal with stressful life experiences whether personal or professional. Help is a phone call away.

Sometimes dealing with letting go of old patterns can feel overwhelming because we've been responding in the same old way over and over. So if you are struggling with the question of what you need to change or want to change and need some help in accomplishing your goal, help is a phone call away. The EAP can help you find a new path so that change is managed, relationships are healed, support systems are developed, and expectations are kept realistic.

About Wood & Associates

Wood & Associates is an Employee Assistance Program and behavioral health consulting firm that helps employers maintain

productivity, safety and behavioral health in the workplace. Wood & Associates is a pioneer in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) industry and has served employers and employees in the greater Tampa Bay area and nationwide since 1982. The firm's diverse group of clients includes a number of major employers who also contract for its mental health and substance abuse services.

Gary L. Wood, Psy.D., founder of the Wood & Associates consulting practice, is a pioneer in the field of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Since 1979, his practice has centered on providing solutions to employee and organizational problems. Wood is a licensed clinical psychologist, a member of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and a graduate of Rutgers University, West Georgia College and Mercer University.

Patricia N. Alexander earned a Ph.D. in mental health counseling at the University of Florida. Trained in critical incident stress management through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, she is a Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselor and nationally certified counselor. Through her work experience she has addressed all types of critical incident situations, including explosions, multiple homicides, suicides, line-of-duty deaths, serious accidents and robberies. Alexander conducts training on stress management for law enforcement and businesses, and has developed peer support programs for law enforcement and industry. Alexander is an educator and consultant on a wide variety of behavioral health concerns.