

What is Stress?

Stress is anxiety, strain, or tension caused by a new burden or outside force, resulting in an internal struggle that often causes apprehension or uneasiness. Believe it or not, some stress is good!

GOOD stress is that energizing feeling we get when excited about an event in our lives. Anticipation helps us get ready for a task, mentally and physically.

ATTITUDE

**It's not the stress that matters.
It's your reaction to it.**

BAD stress is called distress. Distress occurs when there are increased levels of stress for a long period of time. Stress can occur with no warning, building quickly, with one thing after another going wrong over weeks and months. Distress threatens our mental and physical health. The key to dealing with stress can lie in our acceptance skills that allow us to see the stressor as controllable or uncontrollable. **See other side for tools to control your acceptance of stress.**

If you or someone you know needs help with stress management or would like to talk to someone confidentially, Nebraska has some great resources.



Rural Response Hotline offers no-cost vouchers for confidential mental health services, also offering information about farm mediation clinics: **800-464-0258**

Farm Mediation is a way to resolve disputes involving farm loans, etc.: **402-471-4876**

Nebraska Legal Aid: **legalaidofnebraska.org**

Nebraska Resource and Referral System (NRRS) lists toll-free numbers, websites, and email contacts to help you connect faster to the services you are seeking. Visit **nrrs.ne.gov**.

(See other side for helpful tools)

Tools to control our acceptance:

Keep things in perspective. Ask yourself:

- ”Has this happened before?”
- “What did I learn last time this happened?”
- “Are my fears realistic?”
- “Next year, how important will this be?”
- “What else can I do?”

Use helpful self-talk to let go of blame.

- “I did the best I could in that situation.”
- “Things are hard, so I will focus more.”
- “Someday we will laugh about this.”
- “This is a learning experience.”
- “Focus on controlling what is controllable.”

Keep a positive attitude to make it easier to live and work with others and find solutions.

Be aware of the automatic assumptions you make in certain situations. Don't always assume the worst of situations or people.

Develop a stress-resistant personality:

- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- Prioritize time for leisure activities.
- Look at problems as challenges.
- Look for possibilities and get creative.
- Connect with a positive friend that is supportive.
- Share responsibilities and ask for help.
- Talk to someone you trust to help clear your head and focus on eliminating or reducing stress and anxiety.
- Consider seeking out a professional counselor or a confidential phone line program if you feel completely alone, overwhelmed and hopeless.

Recognizing Symptoms of Stress:

EMOTIONAL

Moodiness, frustration, anger, impatience, neglecting health conditions, difficulty relaxing, loneliness, hopelessness, low self esteem, anxiety or depression, thoughts of taking your own life

PHYSICAL

Fatigue or lack of energy, headaches, stomach problems like diarrhea or constipation, chest pain, change in sexual interest, procrastination, frequently sick, impulse buying or gambling, nervousness, grinding teeth, forgetfulness or lacking focus, constant worrying, poor judgement

BEHAVIORAL

Sleeping too much or too little, eating too much or too little, increased use of alcohol / drugs / cigarettes, sarcastic arguments, fewer enjoyed activities, withdrawn from others, nervous behaviors

To Decrease Stress:

- Exercise Regularly
- Take time for yourself
- Eat healthy, real food
- Manage time and prepare
- Start a new hobby or pick up with a previous one
- Get enough sleep with consistent waking time
- Find something positive in each day
- Politely stand up for yourself
- Spend time with people you love
- Avoid negative people
- Use effective coping strategies
- Connect with sources of support
- Set realistic goals and expectations
- Shift from worrying to problem solving
- Take breaks during monotonous work
- Take 3 deep breaths
- Think of setbacks as challenges to conquer
- Look for humor in everything you do
- Balance your work and play
- Talk with a friend or counselor
- Do not be afraid to ask for help
- Unwind before bedtime with low lights

**There is no shame in reaching out!
Do it for YOU.**

