

# ***BETter Living ...***

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## **Keys to Embracing Aging – Stress Management**

Throughout the year, stress can come into our lives. Whether it is from mental, emotional, or physical activity. There is both good and bad stress. Good stress can be healthy and useful and bad stress can lead to chronic stress, which can leave you feeling nervous, on-edge, and tense.

### **What is Stress?**

It is the way your body responds to experiences and events. Stressors can be single events or a result of multiple events that pile up. The human body responds to stressors by activating the nervous system and specific hormones. These hormones speed up heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and metabolism. The stress response is critical during emergency situations, such as when a driver has to slam on the brakes to avoid an accident. It can also be activated in a milder form at a time when the pressure's on but there's no actual danger, such as stepping up to take the putt on the final green, getting ready to go to a big dance, or sitting down for a test or exam. A little of this stress can help keep you on your toes, ready to rise to a challenge.

### **Managing Stress**

- Identify the sources of stress in your life
- Learn healthier ways to manage stress – change the situation and change your response

### **Stress Management Strategy #1 – Change the Situation**

- Evaluate your physical environment – modify your environment to reduce your stress.
- Take a look at the people in your life – are there people in your life that you may need to distance yourself from?
- Review your calendar – sometimes you have to say no.

### **Stress Management Strategy #2 – Change your Reaction**

- Laugh, don't cry – some things you just can't change, laugh about them.
- Compromise – you need to be willing to accept a different idea.
- Let it go – ask yourself, “Does it really matter?”

Throughout the lifespan, you face multiple demands such as peer pressure, school and workloads, relationship issues, making ends meet, taking care of a family, or just making it out the door on time. All of these can cause you to stress, but please think of ways to reduce and manage your stress.

Don't sweat the small things and enjoy life to the fullest!

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