

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

COPING WITH STRESS

Learning to manage stress is important to staying healthy.

Fear, uncertainty about the future, and life changes can cause stress levels that affect our health, productivity, and relationships. Responses to stress can be physical, such as getting headaches or stomachaches. The changes in your body, such as increased heart rate, higher blood pressure, and muscle tension can take a toll and lead to mental and physical fatigue and illness. On an emotional level, too much stress can cause sadness, anxiety, and irritability.

Learning to manage stress is important to stay healthy. If you feel overwhelmed with too many responsibilities, delegating tasks to others can provide immediate relief.

Other tips to manage stress include the following:

- **Take care of your physical health.** Exercise on a regular basis, eat nutritious foods, and get enough sleep. This is a preventative measure as well as a coping strategy. Avoid using alcohol, caffeine, or other drugs to deal with stress.
- **Take a daily time out.** Breathe deeply. Take a walk to clear your mind, read, meditate, listen to music, call a friend, or do something you enjoy. Taking care of your own physical, emotional, and spiritual needs is essential to a balanced life.
- **Stay connected with positive, emotionally healthy people.** You'll feel happier and more energetic when you're around people with positive attitudes.
- **Stay flexible and maintain your perspective and sense of humor.** You can't always control the things that happen in life, but you can control how you react.

If emotional distress is prolonged and impacting your quality of life, it's time to seek professional help. Call EAP for free, confidential help. Therapy with a trained professional can help people recover and develop effective coping skills.

