

## Is your lifestyle causing you stress?

The way you live your life can have a big impact on your health, well-being, and how well or poorly you handle stress. Below are lifestyle behaviors that affect stress levels. Please check the boxes that apply to you. Doing an honest assessment of how well or poorly you take care of yourself can help you manage your stress in the future.

<b>Lifestyle Behaviors</b>					
When you are under stress, do you:	Yes	No	When you are under stress, do you:	Yes	No
Smoke/use tobacco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage in physical activity at least three times a week for 30 minutes each day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drink a lot of coffee or caffeinated drinks (more than 2-3 cups per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get six to eight hours of sleep every night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drink alcohol (more than recommended levels of 1-2 per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain good eating habits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overuse over-the-counter medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make time to relax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overeat or under eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain a sense of humor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend too much money (e.g., do you have a lot of credit card debt and have trouble making payments?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abuse/overuse tranquilizers or other over-the-counter medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain healthy rituals and routines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch too much television (more than 3-4 hours per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be optimistic. Engage in positive thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have angry outbursts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdraw from people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make plans for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignore or deny stress symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Figure out ways to manage stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage in self-destructive relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reward yourself for your accomplishments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>These are negative self-care behaviors.</b>			<b>These are positive self-care behaviors.</b>		

(Source: Unknown)

## Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me

### Physical Self-Care

- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat healthily
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exercise
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular medical care for prevention
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get medical care when needed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time off when sick
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get massages
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get enough sleep
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wear clothes I like
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other:

### Psychological Self-Care

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take day trips or mini-vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for self-reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have my own personal psychotherapy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write in a journal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read literature that is unrelated to work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be curious

- \_\_\_ Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- \_\_\_ Other:

### **Emotional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_ Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- \_\_\_ Stay in contact with important people in my life
- \_\_\_ Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- \_\_\_ Love myself
- \_\_\_ Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- \_\_\_ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- \_\_\_ Allow myself to cry
- \_\_\_ Find things that make me laugh
- \_\_\_ Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- \_\_\_ Other:

### **Spiritual Self-Care**

- \_\_\_ Make time for reflection
- \_\_\_ Spend time in nature
- \_\_\_ Find a spiritual connection or community
- \_\_\_ Be open to inspiration
- \_\_\_ Cherish my optimism and hope
- \_\_\_ Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- \_\_\_ Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- \_\_\_ Be open to not knowing
- \_\_\_ Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- \_\_\_ Meditate
- \_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_ Sing
- \_\_\_ Have experiences of awe
- \_\_\_ Contribute to causes in which I believe
- \_\_\_ Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
- \_\_\_ Other:

### **Relationship Self-Care**

- \_\_\_ Schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
- \_\_\_ Schedule regular activities with my children
- \_\_\_ Make time to see friends
- \_\_\_ Call, check on, or see my relatives
- \_\_\_ Spend time with my companion animals
- \_\_\_ Stay in contact with faraway friends
- \_\_\_ Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards
- \_\_\_ Allow others to do things for me
- \_\_\_ Enlarge my social circle
- \_\_\_ Ask for help when I need it
- \_\_\_ Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- \_\_\_ Other:

**Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to chat with co-workers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make quiet time to complete tasks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set limits with clients and colleagues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balance my caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular supervision or consultation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a peer support group
- \_\_\_\_\_ (If relevant) Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest

**Overall Balance**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

**Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Retrieved 8/6/2010 from  
[http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self\\_care\\_assess.shtml](http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml) and adapted by Lisa D. Butler, Ph.D.)

# Build Your Life Raft: What Floats Your Boat?

Why is self-care the first thing in the book? It's because we are the environment for our children's emotional growth and behavior so to take care of them, we have to take care of ourselves!

What activities soothe you (doing, seeing, touching, smelling, hearing)?

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What activities give you joy or lift you up (doing, seeing, touching, smelling)?

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What music soothes you?

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What music gives you joy?

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How or what gives you a sense of play?

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Who you gonna call?

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## What Are Strategies To Help Us Regain Hope?

- **Get involved!**
- **Seek out testimonies from others who have attained long term sobriety or who have been successful in acquiring their goals.**
- **Give encouragement to individuals who appear hopeless or low motivation.**
- **Show other people kindness, empathy and support.**
- **Forming new connections with others and strengthening the connections I've already got.**
- **Provide clients with the pieces that can develop the bigger picture as opposed to overwhelming clients with unrealistic goals.**
- **Focus on the incremental progress of individuals in recovery. Remind people that progress is not linear; setbacks happen, but so does positive change and it's about building resiliency to tilt the scale in favor of that positive change.**
- **Get support from friends and family and co-workers.**
- **Actively participate in community events.**
- **Remind myself that I can only do so much, as there are facets of life out of my control.**
- **Spiritual connectedness.**
- **Remain hopeful that through my contributions I am being the change I want to see.**
- **Family time, and friend time, and positive/gratitude lists.**
- **Community outreach through my church.**
- **Listening to podcasts.**
- **Seeking friends and allies who are interested in making a difference.**
- **Morale boosters, highlighting positives, working to pull up negative folks.**
- **Being authentic to people without crossing personal/professional boundaries.**
- **Encouraging self-determination and the permission to be oneself.**
- **Volunteering, participating in local events.**
- **Prayer, meditation, and positive reading.**
- **Taking a break from the long-term solution and realizing that just for today everything is fine.**
- **I practice my faith (Christianity). I surround myself with like-minded people who are working for change. I continue to be a part of the solution. I play with fuzzy animals.**
- **Trust in God, and don't believe the hate and garbage spewed in the media.**
- **Interact with friends who are hopeful.**
- **Spend time in places of progress and observe success. Read hopeful stories.**
- **Running, breathing, laughing, companionship, knowledge.**
- **Meditation, yoga, silence, accountability/support groups.**
- **Prayer, fellowship & service.**
- **Practice self-care, develop actions to counteract hopelessness, participate in projects and organizations that address causes of hopelessness.**
- **Stay reality-based but solution-driven!**
- **I rely on God for one. I also believe that there is good in everything, it just needs to be found. I believe in miracles and if there is breath there is hope, maybe not in my time but in time.**
- **To keep on keeping on. To make lemons out of lemonade. To surround myself with like-minded people.**
- **I personalize it sometimes, so that I don't just categorize people. What if it were me? What if it were my family? My neighbor?**

## Hope, Self-Care and Resiliency Resources

How to Nurture Hope When Life Starts Getting Really Tough (*IQMatrix*)

<http://blog.iqmatrix.com/nurturing-hope>

How to Increase Hope in Six Easy Steps (*Operation Meditation*)

<http://operationmeditation.com/discover/how-to-increase-hope-in-six-easy-steps/>

How to Find Hope When You Are Really Depressed (*Lifhack*)

<http://www.lifhack.org/articles/lifestyle/how-to-find-hope-when-you-are.html>

5 Ways To Build and Sustain Hope (*PsychCentral*)

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2010/01/17/5-ways-to-build-and-sustain-hope-an-interview-with-anthony-scioli/>

The Resiliency Quiz (*Resiliency In Action*)

<https://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/the-resiliency-quiz/>

Self-Care Starter Kit (*University of Buffalo School of Social Work*)

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>

Self-Care Resources (*APA Practice Organization*)

<http://www.apapracticecentral.org/ce/self-care/index.aspx>

12 Resources for Your Self-Care Starter Kit (*CompassPoint Nonprofit Services*)

<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/12-resources-your-self-care-starter-kit>

Self-Care Resources (*Mindful Teachers*)

<http://www.mindfulteachers.org/p/self-care-resources.html>

Self-Care List for Pastors (*Pastoral Care Inc.*)

<http://www.pastoralcareinc.com/pastoral-addictions/self-care-list/>

A Stress Management Prescription for Law Enforcement and Police Officers (*Cops Alive*)

<http://www.copsalive.com/a-stress-management-prescription-for-law-enforcement/>

Stress Resources (*National Criminal Justice Reference Service*)

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/lawenforcementweek/stress.html>

Nursing Self-Care (*Oncology Nursing Society*)

<https://erc.ons.org/topics/nursing-self-care>

Emergency Responders: Tips for Taking Care of Yourself (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*)

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>

First Responder Mental Health: 10 Things You Need To Know To Save Lives (*EMS1*)

<https://www.ems1.com/sponsored-article/articles/194530048-First-responder-mental-health-10-things-you-need-to-know-to-save-lives/>