### 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.

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

(Source: Unknown)
Self-Care Assessment


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

- 
- 
- 

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)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What music soothes you?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What music gives you joy?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How or what gives you a sense of play?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Who you gonna call?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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?

(Ideas taken from Community Hope Survey, Matt Butler, 07/25/17 to 07/31/17)
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)

How to Find Hope When You Are Really Depressed (Lifehack)
http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/how-to-find-hope-when-you-are.html

5 Ways To Build and Sustain Hope (PsychCentral)

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)

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.)

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

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/

(compiled by Matt Butler, 07/28/17)