

# Stress Management Plan

**Health problems**, such as pain and fatigue, can have a major impact on emotions, causing feelings such as worry, frustration, and sadness. So, it is important to learn to manage your emotions by managing stress and encouraging positive emotions in your daily life.

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## Steps to developing a Stress Management Plan

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### Step 1

#### Identify your triggers

Think about what situations, thoughts, actions, or symptoms are common triggers for your stress. In other words, what causes you to feel stressed?

#### Examples of common triggers include:

- Increased physical symptoms, such as pain or fatigue
- Social challenges, such as conflicts with others
- An unmet need, such as too little sleep or hunger
- Unhelpful thoughts, such as unrealistic expectations for yourself (see Working with Thoughts for ideas)

### Step 2

#### Evaluate your response

Now that you have identified some of your triggers, think about how you typically respond to stress. Answering the following questions can help you figure out what you would like to change in your response to stress.

- Are there certain things you do when you feel stressed?
- Are there certain things you stop doing when you feel stressed?
- Are your responses helpful or not helpful?
- Do your responses make your situation worse or better?

### Step 3

#### Develop a plan

With the information from steps 1 and 2, develop a plan for how to handle triggers when they come up to prevent or reduce the intensity of your stress.

#### You can try:

- Make sure you start with the basics: be sure to take care of your body's basic needs, including food, sleep, water, medications. Using page 6 of the worksheet, monitor your sleep habits while you try the new tip. It can help you see how well the tip is working for you.
- Next, consider what has worked for you in the past. Are there things you have done in the past that have calmed you down, or helped you get through difficult moments or challenges? Who has helped? Include these in your plan.
- Consider additional strategies, which might include one that will help you calm down or get focused, such as a relaxation exercise or talking with someone supportive.

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STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
Identify your triggers	Evaluate your response	Develop a plan