

STRESS MANAGEMENT



Dealing with Stress

Being an officer in a student organization can cause a considerable amount of stress. When combined with academic requirements, family expectations, relationships, job searches, and other activities, stress can seem overwhelming. Everyone experiences stress, but how you deal with it will help to determine your level of success. Though everyone reacts to stress individually, and different techniques will work with different people, the following tips may help you to deal with stress.

1. Take Responsibility

The most important step in dealing with stress is to **take responsibility** for it. If you assign blame or responsibility for your stress on other people or situations, you will not be able to control and decrease your stress level.

2. Prioritize

- a) Begin each day by ordering priorities.
- b) Structure your time.
- c) Develop a plan for the most efficient way of completing a project.
- d) Delegate, when possible.
- e) Concentrate on one project at a time.
- f) Finish one project before you begin the next.
- g) Make a chart and check off projects as you complete them.

3. Plan Ahead

- a) Schedule more time than you think you will need.
- b) Begin projects early.

- c) Establish a routine.
- d) Anticipate setbacks.
- e) Make backup copies.

4. Organize

- a) Use file folders.
- b) Reduce piles.
- c) Group similar items together.
- d) Eliminate duplicates.
- e) Don't be afraid to throw things away.

5. Establish Work Zones

- a) Have one place to work.
- b) Make your bedroom a work-free zone.
- c) Find locations where you will have few disruptions.

6. Elimination Interruptions

- a) Take the phone off the hook.
- b) Don't answer the door.
- c) Ask visitors to keep their visits brief.
- d) Put away beepers and cellular phones.
- e) Use a fan or other device to drown out environmental noise.

7. Eat Right

- a) Eat three meals a day.
- b) Establish regular eating patterns.
- c) Increase your intake of whole grains, vegetables, and fruit.
- d) Take vitamin supplements, if necessary. Vitamin depletion lowers your ability to cope with stress.
- f) Decrease fats, cholesterol, caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.

8. Exercise Regularly

- a) Participate in exercise that is continuous, rhythmical, and vigorous (walking, running, swimming, bicycling, or aerobics).
- b) Exercise at least three times a week for thirty minutes each session.
- c) Choose an activity you enjoy with no competition.

9. Get Proper Sleep

- a) Don't work out just before going to bed.

- b) Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.
- c) Keep your room dark and cool.
- d) Make sure you have a good mattress.
- e) Establish regular sleeping patterns and get at least six hours of sleep each night.
- f) Avoid afternoon naps: they can make you groggy during the day and unable to sleep at night.

10. Be Financially Sound

- a) Avoid spur-of-the-moment purchases.
- b) Cut down to one credit card and use it for emergencies only.
- c) Consolidate debt and work to limit or eliminate it.

11. Create Time For Yourself Every Day

- a) Schedule one hour to do something for yourself that you enjoy, and make it a habit.
- b) Spend time by yourself.
- c) Reward yourself when you complete a project.
- d) Take deep breaths and clear your thoughts when stress gets overwhelming.
- e) Use down time while you are waiting in line or riding the bus to relax.
- f) Get fresh air regularly.
- g) Talk to close friends or family for additional support.
- h) Use humor, music, prayer, positive thinking, long baths, and hot showers to relax.

This tipsheet is based on tipsheet made by East Carolina University.