

# Safety Circular

May 2025

## Managing Stress & Building Resilience

Being prepared for periods of stress can make it easier to get through them. Knowing how to manage your wellbeing can help you recover after a stressful event. Some of us may refer to our ability to manage stress as our resilience. There are things you can try to build your resilience against stress. But there are also factors that might make it harder to be resilient, such as experiencing discrimination or racism.

The terms 'resilience' and 'managing stress' can mean different things to different people. We might understand them differently because our experiences shape how we feel stress and how easily we respond to it.

Examples of experiences that can make it more difficult include:

- Having a long-term physical health condition
- Having a mental health problem
- Experiencing discrimination and hate
- Living far away from family or friends
- Experiencing poverty and money worries
- Experiencing loneliness
- Living in an area with poor access to human services
- Being a single parent
- Lacking safety and protection

### Identify Your Triggers

Working out what may trigger stress can help you prepare for it. Knowing what you can and cannot change could help you work out the best way to deal with stress.

- Situations that come up often
- One-off events that are on your mind a lot
- Ongoing stressful events
- Something that you are worried about happening again

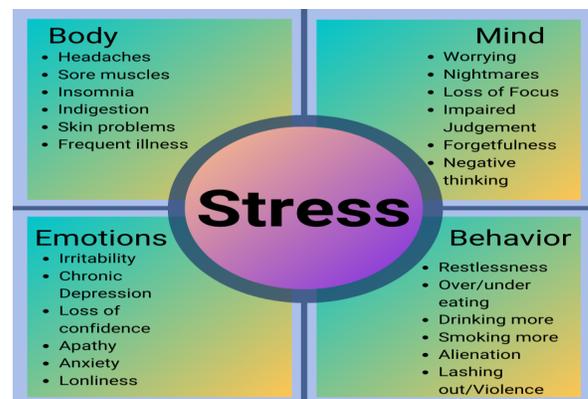
### 12 Types of Stress-induced Illness

Feeling stressed time to time is actually normal and healthy but when stress is severe or there's ongoing stress it comes with a cost and can lead to stress-related illnesses.

Example of Stress-Induced Sickness:

- Takotsubo Syndrome
- Ischemia to the heart
- High Blood Pressure
- Hyperglycemia
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hyperalgesia
- Inflammation
- Nausea and Diarrhea
- Infections
- Irregular or painful periods

Stress can also have a domino effect on other aspects of your health. It can increase the likelihood of risky behaviors like smoking, drinking, too much alcohol, substance use, and addiction. Indirectly stress can also increase your risk of stroke.



## How to Reduce Stress

Learning to reduce stress can help prevent chronic stress and treat the symptoms of stress-related diseases.

Preventative examples to practice on the daily:

- Practice deep breathing and mindfulness
- Exercise everyday
- Get outside spend time with nature
- Spend time with animals
- Eat healthy and nourishing and avoid processed foods and alcohol
- Build and nurture a network of friends and family

If you find it difficult to manage your stress be sure to reach out to your healthcare provider about other ways for help, such as therapy or medications.

## Look after your Wellbeing

Below are some tips you could try to help manage stress and build your resilience . Trying these ideas won't make all the stress in your life disappear, but they could make it easier to get through stressful situations.

- Be kind to yourself – Take breaks in your day for things you enjoy and make you feel happy.
- Find time to relax – Ease you mind and pause.
- Develop your interest and hobbies– Distract yourself from stressful situations.
- Spend time with nature - Take a walk outside.

## 5 HEALTH BENEFITS OF REDUCING STRESS

Stress affects more than your mind. Here are five ways a stress management routine could help your body.



1 BETTER SLEEP

2 LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

3 IMPROVED DIGESTION

4 REDUCED MUSCLE TENSION

5 BOOSTED IMMUNE SYSTEM

## Building your Network

Seek support from people you trust this can make stressful situations easier to manage. Sometimes telling the people close to you how you are feeling can make a big difference. They might be able to help with some of the things causing you stress.

- Friends and family
- Support at work
- Peer Support

## The Bottom Line

Everyone feels stress from time to time. If your stress levels are increasing or becoming more chronic, they can take a toll on your physical and mental health. No matter how much stress you feel, there are so many ways you can improve in how you feel and reduce the physical impact stress has on your body. In many cases, the first step of making positive change is simply noticing and recognizing the effect that stress is having on your health.



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The Safety Circular, a publication of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Risk Management Department, is published monthly in an effort to promote and enhance risk management awareness on issues relating to TDCJ employees. Comments, suggestions and safety related items are welcome.

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References: ♦ GoodRx Health ♦ publications@mind.org