

## 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)

## My Maintenance Self-Care Plan Worksheet

Consider what you do now for self-care and list those activities within each dimension of self-care on this worksheet (or you can add new dimensions at the end that represent other aspects of your life). Identify new strategies that you will begin to incorporate as part of your ongoing maintenance self-care plan — pay particular attention to domains that you have not been addressing in the past. On the last page identify barriers that might interfere with ongoing self-care, how you will address them, and any negative coping strategies you would like to target for change.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>MIND</u></b></p> <p>Current practice</p>   <p>New practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>BODY</u></b></p> <p>Current practice</p>   <p>New practice</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>EMOTIONS</u></b></p> <p>Current practice</p>   <p>New practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>SPIRIT</u></b></p> <p>Current practice</p>   <p>New practice</p>

# My Maintenance Self-Care Plan Worksheet

<u>WORK</u>	<u>RELATIONSHIPS</u>
<p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>	<p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>
<p><u>OTHER: _____.</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>	<p><u>OTHER: _____.</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>

## My Maintenance Self-Care Plan Worksheet

<p><b>Barriers to maintaining my self-care strategies</b></p>	<p><b>How I will address these barriers and remind myself to practice self-care</b></p>
<p><b>Negative coping strategies I would like to use less or not at all</b></p>	<p><b>What I will do instead</b></p>

(Adapted by Shirley Reiser, LCSW and Lisa D. Butler, PhD from materials provided by Sandra A. Lopez, LCSW, ACSW, University of Houston, Graduate School of Social Work.)

# Emergency Self-Care Worksheet

*Why do I need to do this?* It is very hard to think of what to do for yourself when things get tough. It is best to **have a plan ready** for when you need it.

*What should be in it?* You need to consider 3 general areas: what to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

## 1. Make a list of what you can do when you are upset that will be good for you.

a. What will help me relax?

For example,

- Breathing, Muscle relaxation, Music
- Reading for fun, watching a movie
- Exercising, Taking a walk

b. What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood? \_\_\_\_\_

- List all the things you like to do so you remember what they are when you need to think of something to do.

c. What can I do that will help me throughout the day? \_\_\_\_\_

For example,

- Avoid too much caffeine if feeling anxious
- Remember to breathe
- Watch my thoughts
- Stay in the moment

d. Other: What else do YOU need to do that is specific to YOU? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.

For example, your best friend, other friends, sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.

a. Divide the list of people into categories by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who can I call if I am feeling depressed or anxious?
- Who can I call if I am lonely?
- Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
- Who will listen?
- Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
- Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?
- Other:

## 3. Next, make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time.

Example of negative self-talk:

- “I got a B- on the paper; that proves that I shouldn’t be in graduate school.”  
CHANGE to: “That is a good grade. I will work on getting a better one.”
- “I do not understand research methods, I am so dumb.” CHANGE to: “A lot of students are having a problem with this course. Maybe we should start a study group to help each other.”
- “I can’t get all this work done. I should just drop out.” CHANGE to: “I will develop a schedule so that I can get this all done.” “I can check with other students for ideas.” “I can get some feedback from the professors that might help me do the assignments.”

You get it. Try to think about what you would say to a client with the same struggling and apply it to yourself.

4. **Next, make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time.**

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Example of people to avoid:

- My boy(girl)friend broke up with me. I will not call my sister as she always hated him. She’ll be happy he’s gone.
- I didn’t get my assignment in on time and I’m worried about my grade. I will not call my dad. He is a stickler for doing things in advance so that they are never late. He’ll just give me a hard time.
- I am discouraged about my grades. I won’t call my best friend because she’ll just tell me not to worry about it and to quit school if it’s such a hassle.

You get this too. Not everyone can be supportive or helpful with every situation. Go to the ones who can be supportive about the specific issues you are dealing with.

Examples of things to avoid:

- I should not stay in the house all day.
- I should not stay in bed all day.
- I should open the shades and let the light in.
- I should not listen to sad music.
- I should not drink too much alcohol.
- Other:

Again, you get it.

5. **Write this plan on a 3x5” card. Keep it in your purse/wallet (and on your phone if you can). Look at it often. Add any good ideas to it whenever you can. USE IT!**