

What is **STRESS**?

Everybody experiences stress. It's the body's natural reaction to tension, pressure and change. A certain amount of stress makes life challenging and less boring. Too much can be bad for you, both physically and mentally. Prolonged stress can lead to accidental injury or serious health problems. For the sake of your health, safety and happiness, it's important to recognize and manage stress before it does you harm.

Alexandria Community Services Board

- 24-hour emergency crisis intervention services
- 24-hour detoxification services
- Evaluation and assessment
- Individual, family and group counseling
- Day support and vocational services
- Residential services
- Inpatient services
- Prevention and early intervention services
- Service fees are based on ability to pay or without charge
- Multi-language availability

The Alexandria Community Services Board is a group of 16 citizen volunteers appointed by Alexandria's City Council. The CSB oversees the city's publicly funded services for mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse.

It is a CSB policy not to discriminate in the admission to its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, handicap, religion or national or ethnic origins. Programs and activities are accessible to people with physically handicapping conditions. If you require accommodations please call (703) 838-4455 or TDD (703) 838-5054.

B-MEN-0155



Stress Management



Department of Mental Health,
Mental Retardation and
Substance Abuse



(703) 838-6400
24 hours a day
TDD: (703) 838-5054

www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa

Recognize the Signs of Stress

- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Feeling uptight
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Diarrhea
- Lack of energy
- Loss of hope
- Poor concentration
- Overeating
- Skipping meals
- Frequent colds
- Clumsiness
- Anger
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Forgetfulness
- Indigestion
- Stomach knots
- Constant errors
- Difficulty making decisions
- Sadness
- Lack of interest
- Difficulty sleeping
- Oversleeping or sleepiness
- New or increased use of tobacco products, alcohol or other drugs

While these symptoms often result from poorly managed stress, many of them can also be caused by medical conditions. It is recommended to consult with your physician.

Ways to Manage Stress

- Think positively and surround yourself with others who do so.
- Don't demand too much of yourself.
- Ask for help.
- Accept that you can't control everything and be flexible.
- Make a list of things to do each day and set reasonable priorities.
- Divide big tasks into smaller ones.
- Eat healthy and avoid sugar.
- Get plenty of sleep each night.
- Exercise some each day to boost energy and improve your mood. Don't sit too long. Use stairs instead of elevators.
- Make time to relax. Listen to music, meditate, read or do something you like.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
- Use mistakes to learn.
- If possible, say "no" to tasks that you know will be stressful for you.
- Talk about things with a friend so that frustrations don't build up.
- Laugh and have fun.
- Let yourself cry.
- Practice deep breathing. Take a slow deep breath through your nose to the count of five. Hold your breath for another 5-count then exhale through your mouth for a 5-count.
- Try not to judge yourself and others.
- Think & say "yes, and" instead of "yes, but."

Anti-stress Stretches



Finger Fan: Extend your arms straight out in front of you with palms up. Spread your fingers as far apart as possible and hold for 5 seconds.



Upper-back Stretch: Sit up straight with your fingers interlaced behind your head. Keep your shoulders down, lift your chest and bring your elbows back as far as you can. Hold for 10 seconds.



Ear to Shoulder: Lower your right ear to your right shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on other side.



Overhead Reach: Raise your arms over your head and interlace your fingers with your palms facing up. Keep your shoulders down and stretch upwards. Hold for 20 seconds.



Knee Pull: While seated, pull one knee up to your chest as high as possible. Hold with both hands for 10 seconds then repeat the other knee.



Waist Bend: Reach arms overhead with finger interlaced. Keep shoulders down and bend to one side at the waist. Hold for 20 seconds then repeat on the other side.