

## Selfcare Top Tips

Handout created by Matt Eldridge, MSW, RSW

Stress arises when individuals **perceive** that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well-being

**Tip 1:** Try to view stress as an opportunity for growth/development; Or try to practice normalizing stress. Recognize that it is a normal part of life, and trying to avoid it does not make it go away.

**Tip 2:** Try to make shifts with your thinking if stress is caused by negative thinking. Ask yourself such things as:

- If my best friend or someone I loved had this thought, what would I tell them?
- If my best friend or someone who loves me knew I was thinking this thought, what would they say to me? What evidence would they point out to me that would suggest that my thoughts were not 100 % true?
- When I am not feeling this way, do I think about this situation any differently? How?

**Tip 3:** Live a values-oriented life. There are no right or wrong answers here. Spend some time thinking about what is important to you at this point in your life, and make sure you are taking steps to live a values-oriented life.

**Tip 4:** Mindfulness. Sometimes stress becomes so normal that we don't even notice we are carrying it with us. It's important to check in with ourselves, and be mindful of where we might be carrying our stress. This can in turn help us to let it go (e.g. if you carry stress in your shoulders, work on stretching and progressive muscle relaxation). Getting a massage could also help

**Tip 5:** Take care of your emotional vulnerabilities. If you're sick, do what you need to do to feel better. Make sure you eat balanced meals, avoid mood altering substances, sleep well, and get physical activity.

Food and drink: Avoid alcohol, drink water, eat at regular intervals, choose food that is low glycemic and high-fibre, make sure to get protein in the morning, and try to avoid too much saturated fat.

**Tip 6:** Self-compassion. Not an easy thing to practice, but well worth it. If it doesn't come naturally, try doing an experiment: Day 1: Kind Day, Day 2: Critical Day, Day 3: Kind Day, Day 4: Critical Day, and so on. See if things are better for you on the kind days. It might help you to keep the trend going.

## Resources

- Mindfulness
  - [Headspace app](#)
  - [Palouse Mindfulness](#)
  
- Mental Health Information
  - [CAMH](#)
  - [CMHA](#)
  
- Insomnia
  - [CBT-I Coach app](#)
  - [Sleepio Website](#)
  
- Depression and Anxiety Workbooks
  - [Centre for Clinical Interventions](#)