

COPING TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE STRESS

IF CONSUMED WITH THOUGHTS AND UNABLE TO FOCUS

Before walking into a patient's room or heading into a meeting

Take a step back and ask yourself:

- What are 5 things I can see? *Try to look outside of your window or what's on your desk.*
- What are 4 things I can touch? *Try to reach out and touch these things.*
- What are 3 things I can hear? *Someone laughing, typing, a clock or a door closing.*
- What are 2 things I can smell? *Coffee, food you eat or items near you.*
If a scent is not easily available, you may need to change your surroundings.
- What is 1 thing I can taste? *Chocolate always hits the spot!*

IF YOU'RE FEELING ANXIOUS AND NEED TO CALM YOURSELF DOWN

Here is a technique that can be useful: think about a square in your head and with each breath, imagine moving along the sides of the square.

Sitting or standing in a comfortable position, you will focus on your breathing from the abdomen instead of higher up in the chest.

- Put one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest.
This helps you to be aware of how you're breathing.
- Breathe in for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Breathe out for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Repeat, until you feel relaxed.

GUIDED IMAGERY

If you're anxious about an upcoming event, think of a pleasant image while utilizing your senses to be in that moment. Use the senses that come naturally to you in that moment, don't try to force it. Think of a beach scene, mountaintop, cabin, or favorite vacation spot. You may also want to carry a picture around that you can look at, to remember everything going on in that moment.

DAILY POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Set up your day. Start with a daily mantra to recite for the day. E-mails and thinking about your hectic schedule can wait. This takes less than 5 minutes of your time to find a quote that you believe in and repeat it throughout the day to yourself when you feel overwhelmed with all that is going on.

TAKE A TIME-OUT

This doesn't apply to a sports game or something you tell your child going through the terrible twos, this is a moment for you. Take some time for yourself during the workday: take a short walk, go outside for a few minutes, and in that moment, stay present and focus on one step at a time.

PRACTICE DAILY SELF-CARE

Ask yourself, "What's one thing you can do today to improve how you feel?" Make a promise that you will carry out this task once you leave work.

SMELL A RELAXING SCENT

Scents can improve how you feel and think in certain moments, scents such as: pine, vanilla, peppermint or lavender.

ASK YOURSELF DAILY, "WHAT AM I GRATEFUL FOR?"

Record this in a journal or put on a sticky note.

MAKE DAILY LIST OF TASKS FOR THE DAY

Crossing tasks off your list, gives you that sense of accomplishment that is needed from time to time.

IF YOU CAN'T CONTROL A SITUATION, PROBLEM SOLVE

Break it down if unable to control a situation, focus on ways to manage how it makes you feel because you can't fix it.