



**ARBOR**  
Associates

The Source for People Who Care

# CARING FOR THOSE *Who Care for Others*



## GOOD STRESS MANAGEMENT

# Can Keep Your People Happy and Productive

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It's hard to find people with the skills, temperament and resilience to succeed in caring professions.

From odd hours and long shifts to unpredictable clients, stress can be relentless. Some days can be outright traumatic!

Chronic stress can be exhausting and overwhelming, but there are measures that can be taken to mitigate the impact.

In this booklet you'll find some tips that you can share with your team to help you and them manage stress and stay mentally, physically, and emotionally healthy in challenging career environments.

*Our goal is to help you and your team be a little bit happier and less stressed!*



## A HIGH LEVEL OF STRESS

# Is Common Among Healthcare and Education Professionals

Burnout is an unfortunate reality for many caring professionals, so it's important to address stress before it gets out of hand.

Caring professionals can experience secondary stress or compassion fatigue while working daily with clients who have experienced high levels of trauma. It can make them less effective in their jobs and they can get so wrapped up in the needs of others that they neglect their own needs.

### SOME HIGH-STRESS WARNING SIGNS INCLUDE:

- ▲ Disturbed sleep
- ▲ Appetite changes
- ▲ Trouble concentrating
- ▲ Withdrawal from friends and family
- ▲ Being bored, disinterested, or easily irritated by clients
- ▲ Feeling emotionally exhausted or drained
- ▲ Self-medicating or ignoring personal needs
- ▲ Feeling depressed, anxious, or agitated frequently
- ▲ Headaches and other physical complaints

*Self-care is vital for people who work in these positions if they want to be effective on the job and maintain their emotional health.*



# WHEN YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, You're Better Able to Care for Others

Journaling can be an effective way of finding equilibrium. Writing down your thoughts can get the events of the day out of your head and onto paper.

You could also try gratitude journaling, which can help you focus on the positive even when it's tough to do.

## Don't Be Afraid to Reach Out

Friendships and other relationships can have a huge impact on your mental health and well-being. Unfortunately, when you're in the thick of things, feeling stressed and overwhelmed, it can feel like making time for friends is the last thing you want to do, but it's very often worth making the effort.

## DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE:

- ▲ Start in a comfortable position with shoulders relaxed
- ▲ Inhale slowly through your nose
- ▲ Exhale slowly through your pursed lips
- ▲ Repeat for a few moments or until you feel calmer

## Take a Deep Breath

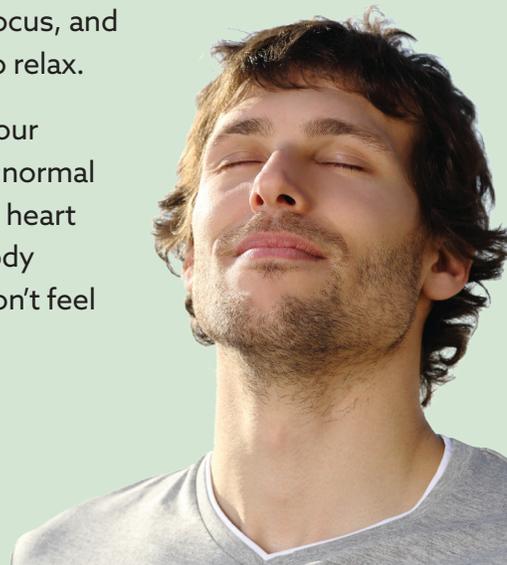
When people are stressed or anxious, they tend to take short, shallow breaths which don't bring in enough oxygen and can trigger a fight or flight response.

Deep breathing can lower stress levels, because it forces you to slow down and focus, and sends a message to your brain to relax.

A deep breath or two can slow your heart rate and blood pressure to normal levels, increasing oxygen to your heart and lungs. This will force your body into a calmer state where you won't feel as agitated.

## MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIPS BY:

- ▲ Scheduling regular check-ins
- ▲ Adding video to your phone calls
- ▲ Making friendship a priority
- ▲ Not being afraid to open up



## TO REDUCE STRESS

# Spend Time in Nature

*Getting outdoors can help relieve anxiety, boost your mood and increase feelings of well-being.*

There's a reason many people's first reaction to a stressful day is to go for a walk. Not only does physical activity help to burn off some of the adrenaline that stress can produce, but it also gets you away from the source of stress.

Other physical activities such as tackling a challenging hiking trail, rock climbing, or mountain biking engage your mind as well, making you less likely to think about work in your downtime.

### OTHER OUTSIDE ADVANTAGES INCLUDE:

- ▲ Time outdoors can both calm and energize your mind and body
- ▲ Nature gives you something to focus on other than job stress
- ▲ Fresh air can improve your health, clear your head and provide a burst of energy
- ▲ If you leave your devices behind or in your pocket, you'll get a nice technology break
- ▲ Inviting friends or family along could further enhance the experience

*If you focus on the negative or the task right in front of you, it's easy to become overwhelmed. Time in nature reminds you of the larger world around you.*

### MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF SUNLIGHT:

- ▲ A bit of time in the sun can be a real mood booster, as long as you remember to protect your skin with an appropriate SPF.
- ▲ Sunlight provides vitamin D and triggers the release of serotonin, a hormone associated with boosting mood and helping a person feel calm and focused.
- ▲ If you live in an area with little sun, especially in the winter months, consider getting a lamp that imitates sunlight, or ask your doctor if you need to boost your vitamin D intake.

## SLEEP AND

# Peak Performance

The importance of sleep as it relates to physical and mental health has been increasingly emphasized in recent years, and with good reason.

Sleep gives your body a chance to restore, renew, and reset itself. In a time when people are overscheduled and “go go go,” it can be tempting to give less attention to sleep, but sleep deprivation can negatively affect blood pressure, heart rate, stress levels, your immune system, and more.

Healthy sleep patterns are indicated by the ability to fall asleep within 15-20 minutes and stay asleep, getting 7-9 hours of sleep nightly and feeling well-rested both when you awaken and throughout the day.

## Good Sleep Habits

The right sleep hygiene can go a long way to ensuring a good night's sleep.

- ▲ Eliminate distractions such as bright lights, smartphones, and other electronics
- ▲ Wind down at the end of the evening with reading, meditation, relaxing yoga, or a warm bath
- ▲ Reduce stressors by making sure your bedroom is a comfortable temperature and clutter-free
- ▲ Plan for a stress-free morning by doing as much as possible in the evening, such as setting out your clothing, making your lunch, and creating your to-do list



## EAT WELL FOR

# Mental Health

Most people are likely to reach for comfort foods when feeling stressed. This is more likely to be chips and cookies or fast food than it is to be salad or fresh fruit.

The right food can go a long way toward managing stress and improving mental health.

Stock up on healthy foods so that you'll reach for them first. Meal prepping is a good way to ensure that healthy dishes are easy to choose. Purchase pre-cut fruit and vegetables, even if it costs a little more, to increase your chances of making a healthy choice.

### FOCUS YOUR DIET ON FRESH, UNPROCESSED FOODS:

- ▲ Fruits and vegetables
- ▲ Dark leafy greens
- ▲ Nuts, seeds, and legumes
- ▲ Lean proteins
- ▲ Whole grains and complex carbohydrates
- ▲ Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish, meat, eggs, nuts, and flaxseeds

## Mindful Eating

If you tend to overeat when stressed (which is very common), take the time to use some of the stress tools we have already discussed, such as deep breathing, exercise, and meditation.

When you're ready to sit down for a meal, eliminate distractions such as books, television or mobile devices so that you can focus on your meal. If, on the other hand, you tend to lose your appetite when stressed, try planning your meals or eating smaller meals throughout the day.



## IN THESE FIELDS

# Difficult Clients Are a Reality

While it's important to take client needs into account, you must also preserve your own mental health.

Clients who are angry, disengaged, or violent can be difficult to deal with; however, it's important to stay calm and maintain professionalism.

### ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- ▲ Have I assessed risk factors before meeting with any clients?
- ▲ Have I encouraged and guided the client to calm themselves?
- ▲ Do I have adequate training and an effective safety plan in place?
- ▲ Am I listening to the client and paying attention to what is said?
- ▲ Have I previously discussed boundaries and expectations with the client?
- ▲ Does the client feel that I care?
- ▲ Have I shown empathy to the client?

*Balancing client needs with your own can ensure the best outcomes for both parties.*

## Why Arbor Associates?

Working with Arbor Associates means less stress for you! By supporting our caregivers, they are better able to care for the clients they serve.

As experts in behavioral healthcare, medical, and education staffing services, we bring nearly 40 years of experience to the challenges that owners, managers, and staff in congregate settings face. We use these tips ourselves, and we hope they work for you as well.

From long-term solutions to last-minute needs, Arbor Associates is here for you, **24/7/365**.



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**YOU CARE FOR THEM.  
WE CARE FOR YOU.**

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