

# Stress Management

## *"Under Pressure"*

Stress is the "wear and tear" on our bodies as we adjust to change. As a positive influence, it can compel us to action and result in new awareness. As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger, and depression. There is also a direct impact on our health. It can also reduce your ability to reach your academic and career goals. Our goal is not to eliminate stress, but to learn to manage. If you are experiencing stress symptoms, you have already gone past your optimal. Just as there are many sources of stress, there are also many techniques to manage our stress levels as listed below:

- Keep a stress diary. Identify short-term and frequent sources of stress. Don't ignore or gloss over problems.
- Plan ahead. Prepare in advance for scheduled events. Use good time management. Cramming and doing things at the last minute increases our stress.
- Try to get 8 hours of sleep every night.
- Eat well-balanced nutritional meals.
- Avoid dependency on caffeine and other stimulants. They intensify physical stress symptoms.
- Develop mutually supportive friendships/relationships.
- Expect some frustrations, failures, and sorrows.
- Be a friend to yourself.
- Engage in moderate exercise at least 3 times per week.
- Use slow, deep breathing which will bring heart rate and respiration back to normal.
- Ask yourself: Am I overreacting? Am I trying to please everyone?
- View stress as something that you can cope with rather than something that overpowers you.
- Give yourself a break even if it is just a few moments a day.
- Set realistic goals for yourself. You can't do everything!
- Give yourself messages as to how well you can cope rather than how horrible everything is going to be.
- Take a "mental vacation." Imagine yourself on the beach or in the mountains, any place which makes you feel relaxed.
- Just say "no." Avoid overwhelming yourself with obligations.