

# SELF-CARE

WRS Level 2

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will

- identify elements of stress
- practice techniques of mindfulness stress management
- identify the importance of establishing personal boundaries in a career
- determine work expectations, based on career choice
- establish personal health and wellness goals
- define emergency planning and protocols.



# ICEBREAKER



Discussion: *What are three things you do to relieve stress (that are good for you)?*

**OR**

***Use the Pre-Activity Process Questions to start a discussion or make a quiz***

**EXPLAIN**

**Causes and Consequences of Stress**

## CAUSES & EFFECTS

- Stress is caused by anything perceived to be a threat or danger (or more broadly: a situation or conflict in which we might lose something, such as status, employment, or stability).
- Stress can impact our bodies (e.g., headache, fatigue, sleep problems), our moods (e.g., lack of motivation or focus, irritability, depression), and our behaviors (e.g., over or under-eating, angry outbursts, drug or alcohol misuse)

**It's important to know the signs and symptoms, try to find the root issue causing stress, and take steps to manage it.**

## TECHNIQUES FOR COPING & STRESS MANAGEMENT

- **Take care of yourself.** Eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and give yourself a break if you feel stressed out. Practice mindfulness.
- **Talk to others.** Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a parent, friend, counselor, doctor, or pastor. Empathy can be restorative.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** These may seem to reduce stress, but they can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling, like pouring fuel on the fire.
- **Take a break, if you can.** If news events are causing your stress, take a break from listening or watching the news. If workplace conflicts and pressure are causing you stress, try to avoid them for a day, if possible.
- **Recognize when you need more help.** If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

# THE CAREER-AND-LIFE BALANCE

Married to your work? Consider the cost. If you're spending most of your time working, your work and your home life might be negatively affected. Consider the consequences of poor work-life balance:

- **Fatigue.** When you're tired, your ability to work productively and think clearly might suffer — which could take a toll on your professional reputation or lead to dangerous or costly mistakes.
- **Poor health.** Stress can worsen symptoms related to many medical conditions and put you at risk of substance misuse.
- **Lost time with friends and loved ones.**

## TAKE POSITIVE ACTION

Strike a better work-life balance

- Setting Personal Boundaries
- Caring for yourself (self-care)
- Choose the career with the stress level you can handle.
- Develop a personal plan for dealing with stress.

Typically careers that are more stressful or have a higher amount of responsibilities tend to be on the higher end of the pay scale, but lower paying jobs can be really stressful as well. O\*Net Online ranks stressful jobs under a category called “Work Styles.” Here is a link to that

list: <https://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/result/I.C.4.b?r=1&a=1>.



# SETTING PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

- **Manage your time.** Give yourself enough time to get things done. Don't over-schedule yourself.
- **Learn to say "no."** Evaluate your priorities at work and at home and try to shorten your to-do list. Cut or delegate activities you don't enjoy or can't handle — or share your concerns and possible solutions with your employer or others. When you quit accepting tasks out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll have more time for activities that are meaningful to you.
- **Detach from work.** Working from home or frequently using technology to connect to work when you're at home can cause you to feel like you're always on the job. This can lead to chronic stress. Seek guidance from your manager about expectations for when you can disconnect. If you work from home, dress for work and have a quiet dedicated workspace, if possible. When you're done working each day, detach and transition to home life by changing your outfit, taking a drive or walk, or doing an activity with your kids.
- **Consider your options.** Ask your employer about flex hours, a compressed workweek, job sharing or other scheduling flexibility. The more control you have over your hours, the less stressed you're likely to be.

# SELF-CARE

A healthy lifestyle is essential to coping with stress and to achieving work-life balance. Eat well, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep. But it isn't just about taking care of your body and soul. Part of it is finding the things that bring you joy and peace and contentment. These are the things that give your life meaning, bring you pleasure, connect you to life, and make you feel like your best self, the one that matters. In addition, aim to:

- **Relax.** Regularly set aside time for activities that you enjoy, such as practicing yoga, gardening or reading. Hobbies can help you relax, take your mind off of work and recharge. Better yet, discover activities you can do with your partner, family or friends — such as hiking, dancing or taking cooking classes.
- **Volunteer.** Research shows that volunteering to help others can improve your connections with others, as well as lead to better life satisfaction and lower psychological distress.
- **Develop a support system.** At work, join forces with co-workers who can cover for you — and vice versa — when family conflicts arise. At home, enlist trusted friends and loved ones to pitch in with child care or household responsibilities when you need to work late.

10 minutes

**ACTIVITY EXAMPLE**

Provide scenario

## SCENARIO

School and life are going along normally. Suddenly a new strain of virus breaks out causing another pandemic. You (students) are getting messages around the clock from friends, family, and media about how the outbreak is growing, and folks are now getting sick and dying at higher rates. Your school is still open but you are having trouble concentrating on your work, and to make matters worse, you feel you might be falling behind due to your stress. Tell us about your stress. What can you do to better manage your stress?

**Discussion:** Cite examples from history or current news of stressful global events. How did people and governments react? Thinking about these things will help you complete the PSA assignment.

# ASSIGNMENT

Create a PSA

# PSA INSTRUCTIONS

Work in teams to create a public service announcement (PSA) for coping with stress and emphasizing self-care, especially during a time of national duress (e.g., the pandemic, natural disasters, political unrest, difficult news cycle, etc.).

- Identify the general cause of stress (to many people), including fictional scenarios. This is the subject or reason for your PSA.
- Identify some of the negative effects of stress.
- Include techniques for managing stress.
- Include a quick exercise for relieving stress.
- Emphasize self-care.
- Make it a positive message.

# EVALUATE

See Post-Activity Process Questions provided as part of this activity to help you create a quiz or discussion.

HAVE STUDENTS COMPLETE  
VOCABULARY EXERCISES

On [Quizlet](#)