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Coping inventory for stressful situations ciss manual

Sometimes a stressful situation just lasts a moment — like getting through a school play audition or making the foul shot that could win the game. But life also can bring situations that might keep us stressed for a few days, weeks, or months. Even if we're not always thinking about this stress, it can be like a background soundtrack playing in our lives. If you're like most people, you've faced these kinds of lasting stressful situations. Feeling unprepared or unhappy about the situation increases the stress. Stressful situations can wear us down over time. Finding ways to deal with them can help us grow strong. Build Good Coping Skills How well — or how poorly — we get through a stressful situation depends a lot on us. How we deal with stressful situations makes all the difference. Here are some steps you can take to cope with a stressful situation. 1. Understand the Situation Take some time to think about the situation you're facing. Try to describe your situation in a sentence or two. What's stressful about this situation for you right now? It can help to write down your thoughts. For example: My family just moved, so I switched to a new school in the middle of the year. The stressful parts are not knowing anyone, missing my old friends, and dealing with all new schoolwork. Notice and name the feelings you have about the situation. Accept your feelings — it's understandable to feel the way you feel, given your situation. It can help to write down your feelings, too. For example: I feel lonely and sad because of missing old friends and my old school. I'm mad that we had to move, especially now. I'm worried about keeping up in math and social studies. I feel left out because I'm the new kid. I guess anyone would feel this way if they were in my situation. Learn more. Learn all you can about the situation you're dealing with. This might include reading about it, talking to others, or finding out what others in your situation have done and what to expect. Learning helps you feel more confident and prepared — plus it reminds you that you're not the only one who has gone through this. 2. Commit to a Positive Attitude A positive attitude helps stop you from being dragged down by unhappy feelings. A positive attitude also boosts the problem solving that a stressful situation requires. A positive attitude helps us see the possibilities within a situation, while negative thinking narrows our view. Don't dwell on the negative. Don't get stuck dwelling on negative feelings — or focusing on the bad aspects of your situation for too long. Your power lies in how you react to — and cope with — the situation you're facing. Be aware of any negative thoughts (like "I can't do this"), and replace them with more encouraging words. This is the time to believe in yourself. For example: Others have switched schools before and come through it. I know I can manage this. Notice and appreciate life's good stuff. Be sure to notice some positive things in your life, too. Yes, even now. Each day, think of three things you're grateful for. Gratitude helps fuel a positive attitude and keeps problems — even the big ones — in perspective. 3. Take Action Decide what you can do. Pinpoint which parts of the situation you have the power to change or influence for the better. Think of actions you can take to improve any part of your stressful situation. For example: I can talk to the guy who sits next to me in social studies class. I'll ask if he'll share notes and study with me. That could help me make a new friend — plus catch up in social studies. Get support. Find someone to talk to about your situation. Ask for help or advice. Be with people who believe in you, make you laugh, and help you feel good about yourself. Sometimes just a listening ear helps a lot. It helps you know that someone understands and cares about what you're going through. Care for yourself. Take especially good care of yourself when stress in your life is high. Be sure to eat nutritious foods and minimize junk food. Get daily exercise and sleep. Do something every day that helps you relax — whether it's yoga, a soothing bath, cooking, playing with your pet, taking a walk, listening to music, or playing your guitar. Stressful situations can test our strength, for sure. Whatever you're facing, it can help to think through the situation, accept the emotions you feel, and keep a positive attitude. Focus your efforts on what you can influence, get support, and care for yourself. All these things can help you cope with your situation, lessen the stress, and help you come through feeling strong and confident. Reviewed by: KidsHealth Medical Experts Sometimes a stressful situation just lasts a moment — like getting through a school play audition or making the foul shot that could win the game. But life also can bring situations that might keep us stressed for a few days, weeks, or months. Even if we're not always thinking about this stress, it can be like a background soundtrack playing in our lives. If you're like most people, you've faced these kinds of lasting stressful situations. Feeling unprepared or unhappy about the situation increases the stress. Stressful situations can wear us down over time. Finding ways to deal with them can help us grow strong. Build Good Coping Skills How well — or how poorly — we get through a stressful situation depends a lot on us. How we deal with stressful situations makes all the difference. Here are some steps you can take to cope with a stressful situation. 1. Understand the Situation Take some time to think about the situation you're facing. 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It helps you know that someone understands and cares about what you're going through. Care for yourself. Take especially good care of yourself when stress in your life is high. Be sure to eat nutritious foods and minimize junk food. Get daily exercise and sleep. Do something every day that helps you relax — whether it's yoga, a soothing bath, cooking, playing with your pet, taking a walk, listening to music, or playing your guitar. Stressful situations can test our strength, for sure. Whatever you're facing, it can help to think through the situation, accept the emotions you feel, and keep a positive attitude. Focus your efforts on what you can influence, get support, and care for yourself. All these things can help you cope with your situation, lessen the stress, and help you come through feeling strong and confident. Reviewed by: KidsHealth Medical Experts Everyone experiences stress at some point in their lives. But what's stressful to you may not be the same as what's stressful to others. You might also have your own way of managing that stress. Share on PinterestOscar Wong/Getty ImagesThe intensity and duration of your stress response will depend on many factors that range from your personality to your support system.And although it may often feel unpleasant, stress is an evolutionary necessity. More importantly, it can be managed. When it isn't, though, it may develop into an acute or chronic stress disorder.Stress is the body's natural response to a stressor. A stressor is a trigger that may cause you to experience physical, emotional, or mental distress and pressure.In other words, stress is a physical sensation and a feeling of being overwhelmed and not able to deal with the pressures caused by a stressor.Your mental and physical reactions to a stressor serve a purpose. For example, in a hazardous situation, stress puts your body in "fight or flight" mode. In this heightened state of alert, your body and brain are doing everything possible to increase your chances of surviving that perceived or real threat. You may also have a stress reaction to events that might not be life-threatening, like job deadlines or school assignments. In these scenarios, when managed well, stress could help you focus and accomplish your goals at an optimal level. When stress has this potential for a positive outcome, it's usually referred to as eustress. When, on the other hand, stress leads you to feel overwhelmed and unable to cope, we refer to it as distress.In the short and long run, distress may impact your mental health and sense of well-being.Mental health professionals usually consider three main types of negative stress responses. They each have their own signs and symptoms and may vary in duration too.Acute stress disorder (ASD)/to reach a diagnosis of acute stress disorder, symptoms must last between 3 days and 1 month. A trigger is usually a traumatic event that causes an intense reaction.Symptoms of acute stress disorder include:For example, after experiencing a jarring car accident, you might start:avoiding vehicles altogetherfeeling muscle tension when riding in a carhaving nightmares about the car accidentexperiencing panic attacks with or without an evident causeif symptoms last for more than a month, a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is possible.Episodic acute stress disorderFolks with episodic acute stress disorder experience intense and heightened distress from everyday challenges. In other words, if you live with this condition, you periodically experience intense and extreme stress reactions to relatively simple stressors.Contrary to acute stress disorder, which is caused by one traumatic experience, episodic acute stress is a response to several stressors that might not be considered such by people without the condition.For example, if you have episodic acute stress disorder, you might have an intense stress response from deciding what to do for lunch today, and again later on from thinking about an important report you need to submit tomorrow.Some people with type A personality develop this condition.Symptoms of episodic acute stress disorder may include:irritability and poor anger managementheart palpitations and shortness of breath muscular stiffness and painpanic attacks and other signs of anxietychronic illnessesChronic stressLeft unchecked, stress responses can become a chronic condition such as generalized anxiety disorder. Ongoing stress keeps your nervous system in overdrive. Your cortisol and adrenaline levels are constantly coursing at higher levels, and your body and mind don't get the opportunity to wind down.While acute and episodic stress symptoms will eventually ease, chronic stress holds the sympathetic nervous system hostage in a heightened state for an extended and undefined amount of time. Triggers for chronic stress can vary from person to person, and they may include chronic illness, abuse, racism, and lack of rest and sleep. Some signs and symptoms of chronic stress include:difficulty sleepingfrequent headachesirritabilitybrain foganxietydepressionphysical conditions like acid reflux, cardiovascular disease, and cognitive disordersMaybe you're late to an appointment because of traffic, or you're a new parent who hasn't gotten enough sleep for a while. Life is full of potential stressors, and your threshold for managing these triggers depends on many factors.What may cause you stress is not necessarily what stresses someone else. We are all unique in our responses and in how we interpret events. While some people get excited by speaking in public, others may experience a panic attack in the same situation.There are also a few important life events that tend to be more stressful for everyone. A well-known tool used by health professionals to measure the amount of stress someone's experiencing is the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory. According to this scale, the most stressful life events are:death of a spousedivorcemarital separationincarcerationdeath of a close family membermajor injury or illnessmarriagebeing fired from a jobmarital reconciliationretirementdrastic change in the health of a family memberpregnancyExtreme life changes, such as a pandemic, for example, may also trigger intense stress reactions in many people.Contributing factorsAny stimulus you experience throughout the day has the potential to activate a stress response. Different stimuli may cause different biological stress reactions, resulting in physical, psychological, or psychosocial stress. Sometimes, the same stimulus might cause more than one type of stress reaction.Hypothetically, if you procrastinate on your work presentation and found yourself standing in front of your bosses unprepared, you may feel all three types of stress simultaneously: the physical stress reaction of a stomach ache from nerves; the psychological stress of worrying that this will end your chances at promotion; and the psychosocial stress of fearing ostracization for failing to perform to an expected standard.What else can cause specific stress responses?Physical stressacute or chronic diseasemajor injury poor nutritionlack of quality sleepPsychological stress worryguiltmental health conditionsattachment stylegriefPsychosocial stressrelationshipsemploymentisolationracismNot everyone reacts the same way to these potential stressors. Your body may adapt better to fewer hours of sleep, or you may not find isolation as unpleasant as other people. If this is the case, your reaction to these stressors would not be as intense.Your personality also plays an important role in the emotional narrative you craft around stress stimuli. Your genetic makeup, past experiences, negative thinking patterns and cognitive distortions, and tendency to catastrophize can contribute to how intensely you react to a given situation. At the same time, stressors don't exist in a vacuum. They can become exacerbated or subdued due to other circumstances in your life. In general, factors like a strong support network may positively impact overall mental wellness and your ability to manage stress. You might also overcome a stressful obstacle when the stressor only happens occasionally. When faced with the same stressor every day, though, you're likely to handle it better on day 1 than on day 82, for example. In other words, the longer you're exposed to an stressor, the greater the impact it will have on you.Examples of long-term stressors include: a toxic workplacea chronic illnesspovertyracism and discriminationrelationship conflict When you're exposed to a stressor, your brain and hormones immediately signal your body to be alert. You can thank the hormone epinephrine, more famously known as adrenaline, for symptoms such as: rapid heart rate focused vision and alertnessstensed musclesincreased lung capacityIf the stressful event is ongoing, your body will release adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which causes the adrenal glands to release cortisol. Cortisol keeps your body in this high-performance state until the peril has passed. Sometimes, the body gets so hyped up on cortisol that it can't switch off its high state of alert, even after the threat is gone. Chronic stress effectsA body that won't wind down from ACTH and adrenaline can be impacted psychologically, physically, and emotionally. Left in high-stress mode, your body may respond by developing more symptoms. These symptoms may be physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Physiological effects Emotional and psychological effects Low energy and motivationanxietyirritability and angerlow self-esteemchanges in moodCognitive effectscognitive distortionsmemory challengeslearning difficultiespoor concentrationbrain fogintrusive thoughtsSocial and behavioral effectssocial withdrawalchanges in routinesubstance abusearelationship conflictsStress is inevitable throughout your life, but it can be managed to reduce the chance it affects you in the long term.Consider these tips to better manage your stress reaction:1. Take a walk in natureYou don't have to drive to a mountain resort to feel the stress-relieving benefits of nature. To start coping with stress, find any green space, like a parka bench under a treea friend's backyardA study published in Frontiers in Psychology found that spending just 20 minutes outdoors is associated with the biggest drop in cortisol levels when compared with other stress-reducing initiatives. Presuming you have to walk to your nature destination, getting outside also has the stress-reducing bonus of some light exercise to help stabilize your sympathetic nervous system. 2. Learn new breathing techniquesPerhaps the most accessible stress reliever is built right into your body. Deep breathing and breathing techniques like belly breathing signal to your brain that it's time to chill out. Focusing on your breath is a long-held tenet of meditation for stress. Learning to control your breathing can keep you anchored in the present moment. Sometimes, reminding yourself of what's real and happening right now calms your nerves about the future and frustrations about the past. 3. Develop routines that work for youChange is part of life. But a large part of life is also under your control. Developing a solid routine that promotes your mental wellness is a healthy way to minimize the potential stressful impact of change. For example, sticking to a routine might help you maintain better sleep or eating habits. When you know that certain parts of your day are guaranteed to happen, it prevents last-minute decisions that can result in stress.Particularly during the pandemic, when the days may seem long and unformed, introducing some structure can help our brains and bodies adjust and reduce stress levels.4. Power down blue screens Are you using your phone as a tool, or are you addicted to scrolling? Some studies have found an association between cell phone overuse and increased levels of stress, as well as symptoms of depression and anxiety. To curb your phone use, consider setting limits on the time you spend with it, particularly before bedtime. Shutting the phone down 30 minutes before bedtime has been shown to have the potential to improve quality of sleep, working memory, and positive emotions during the day. 5. Organize your stress triggersYou know what may push your buttons. It may be overdue bills or setting up a doctor's appointment.Ignoring unpleasant tasks may feel easier than confronting them in the moment. But out of sight doesn't always mean out of mind, and not resolving things as they arise could clutter your mind with stress.Consider tackling the junk drawer, making the appointment today, and revamping your important document filing system. Developing a systematic approach to areas of your life that cause routine stress may leave you feeling lighter and more competent.Even if you know how to manage stress, there are times when stressors have a greater impact and your responses may be more intense. It's natural to need extra help once in a while.If you feel stress is impacting your day-to-day life, it may be time to reach out for professional help. It is especially important to seek this support if you're experiencing symptoms of acute stress disorder.Getting the necessary help can help manage stress before it impacts other aspects of your life.

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