

Identification of Stressors

Situations occur daily that are stressful. Use this exercise to examine how a situation can trigger stress, what about that situation adds to the general stress, and what symptoms you feel at the time. Look at how you presently handle stressors. Commit to learning more tools to detour from distress.

Step 1 – List the general situations that you feel are stressful.

Example: Making a presentation to a group

Your Examples:

1. _____
2. _____

Step 2 – List the stress producers in that situation.

Examples: 1. Agreeing to the presentation
2. Reviewing the material the night before
3. Sight of the clock prior to presentation

Your Examples:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 3 – List the physical and mental symptoms that show you are feeling stress.

Examples: 1. Dry mouth
2. Pacing
3. Negative self-statements, anxious feelings

Your Examples:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 4 – List how you presently handle stress.

- Examples:**
1. Deep breathing
 2. Rehearse positive mental image
 3. Confident self-statements

Your Examples:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 5 – Seek out more skills to add to your stress management strategy and list here (suggestions follow in this book.)

Strategy 1. _____

Strategy 2. _____

Strategy 3. _____

When selecting techniques for handling stress, here are two definitions that can help you to make a healthy choice:

Inappropriate Stress Management Techniques = Responses or techniques that add wear and tear on the body. Examples might include: food binging, not eating, alcohol and drug use, not deciding, avoiding responsibilities, too much diversion for too long, “video valium,” channel surfing. They end up placing an increased demand upon the body instead of helping to repair and recover from stress.

Appropriate Stress Management Techniques = Techniques that help the body to repair and recover from the stress response. They can assist by providing a simple diversion, helping the body to reverse the symptoms of distress. They could range from using a relaxation technique to telling a joke. Any appropriate technique can become an inappropriate one if used all the time or for too long.