

**Gwinnett County Public School  
Advisement Program Lesson Plan**

## **Tips for Stress Management**

There are many ways to manage unhealthy stress in your life. As you begin to understand more about how stress affects you as an individual, you will develop your own ideas to help relieve tension.

Remember, some of these stress management strategies will be new skills and require practice to be effective. Think about learning to ride a bicycle. There was a time when this was a new skill and felt very unnatural and awkward. You probably needed help at first. With some coaching and practice, stress management, like bicycling or any other skill, becomes easier.

### **1. Take a Deep Breath!**

Stress often causes us to breathe shallowly, and this in turn almost always causes more stress! Mentally scan your body for physical tension. Does your chest feel tight? You may be holding your breath without even knowing it! Shallow breathing puts less oxygen in the blood stream, producing an increase in muscle tension. You may experience headaches; you may feel more anxious and uptight. The next time you feel "uptight," try taking a minute to slow down and breathe deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count as you exhale - slowly!

### **2. Manage Time**

One of the greatest sources of stress is overcommitment or poor time management. Plan ahead. Make a reasonable schedule for yourself and include time for stress reduction as a regular part of your schedule. Try making a list of the task you need to get done for the day or the week, in order from the most important to the least. When you get done with an item on the list check it off. Most importantly, do not overwork yourself. Resist the temptation to schedule things back-to-back. Schedule time for both work and recreation. Too much studying is actually inefficient and can lead to burnout. Recognize when you are most stressed and allow yourself some reasonable breaks. When things feel especially difficult, take a walk or otherwise change your scenery.

### **3. Connect with Others**

Being by yourself is fine, but being lonely is different. A good way to combat sadness, boredom and loneliness is to seek out activities involving others. Try an after school activity that is interesting to you. Or you may choose to offer your services to neighborhood or volunteer organizations. Help yourself by helping other people.

### **4. Talk It Out**

When you feel something, try to express it (appropriately, of course!). "Bottled up" emotions increase frustration and stress. Share your feelings. Perhaps a friend, family member, teacher, clergy person or counselor can help you see your problem in a different light. Talking with someone else can help clear your mind of confusion so that you can focus on problem solving. Even if it is slightly embarrassing, asking for help soon after a problem occurs may avoid much more serious problems later.

### **5. Monitor Your Physical Comfort**

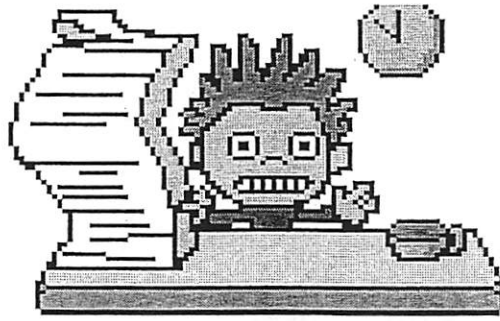
Be as physically comfortable as the situation will allow. Wear comfortable clothing. If it's too hot, go somewhere where it's not. If your chair is uncomfortable, change it. If your computer screen causes eye-strain or backaches, change that, too. Don't wait until your discomfort turns

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**The List**

- Taking deep breaths accompanied by thoughts of being in control ("I can handle this.")
- Progressive muscle relaxation, repeatedly tensing and relaxing the large muscle groups of the body
- Setting small goals and breaking tasks into smaller manageable chunks
- Exercising, eating regular meals, and avoiding excessive caffeine
- Focusing on things you can control and letting go of things you cannot control
- Rehearsing and practicing feared situations (e.g., practicing public speaking or asking someone out on a date)
- Talking about problems with others, including parents, older adults and friends
- Lowering unrealistic expectations
- Scheduling breaks and enjoyable activities such as music, art, sports, and socializing
- Accepting you as you are and identifying unique strengths and building on them but realizing no one is perfect

**Source:** This article was originally published in *Rhode Island Family Guide*.



## *Tips for Stress Management*

- *Eat properly*
- *Get enough sleep*
- *Spend time with friends*
- *Learn relaxation techniques (deep breathing, meditation)*
- *Develop assertiveness skills (knowing when to say “no”)*
- *Decrease negative self-talk (example: I’ll never be able to do it)*

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- analyze stress and its effects on all aspects of health and wellness (QCC) (HL09\_G2002-14)

**Tips to Managing Stress**

1. The first step is to recognize that you are stressed.
2. Take a small 5 to 10 minute break to close your eyes. Think of a place that calms you, such as a beach scene.
3. Go take a short walk. Exercise can get rid of unwanted tension.
4. Write all that is stressing you out on a piece of paper. Organization is key to eliminating stress.
5. Tell someone you trust what is stressing you out. A fresh look can help put things into perspective.
6. Be prepared for those unexpected events in life. They always come.
7. Staying positive can help you to have a fresh look at all of life's issues.

