Managing Your Stress:

**Know the Signs of Stress**

**Your Behavior:**
- An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels.
- An increase in your alcohol or tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs.
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing.
- Difficulty with relaxing or sleeping
- Frequent crying
- Placing of blame on other people for everything
- Difficulty with communicating or listening
- Difficulty with giving or accepting help

**Your Body:**
- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled

**Your Emotions:**
- Being anxious or fearful
- Experiencing an inability to feel pleasure or have fun
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

**Your Thinking:**
- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Worrying excessively
- Having difficulty making decisions

Stressful events can leave you feeling anxious and sad with a fear of the future.

You are not alone – We can help!

**What You Should Know**

When you are exposed to stressful events, such as a pandemic or unemployment, be aware of how these events can affect you personally. Most people show signs of stress after the event. These signs are normal. Over time, as your life gets back to normal, they should decrease. After a stressful event, monitor your own physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones. Know how to relieve stress. And know when to get help.

**2-1-1**

Get Connected. Get Help.™
211 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.

Call 211

Text Zip Code to 898211

www.211tampabay.org
Managing Your Stress:

Know how to Relieve Stress

**Keep Yourself Healthy:**
- Eat healthy foods, and drink water.
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.
- Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Get physical exercise.

**Use Practical Ways to Relax:**
- Relax your body often by doing the things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, engage in pleasurable hobbies, or even do something as simple as washing your face and hands.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do a fun thing after a hard task.
- Use time off to relax—eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family.
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends often.

**Pay Attention to Your Body, Feelings, and Spirit:**
- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress.
- Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of handling this event, and think of how you handled past events. Focus on the ways you handled them well.
- Know that feeling stressed, depressed, guilty, or angry is common after a stressful event.
- Connect with others who have experienced similar difficulties.
- Take time to renew your spirit through meditation, prayer, or helping others in need.

**Have a Plan to Manage Your Tasks:**
Do the important things first. If necessary, find a safe place to stay. Tell family where you are and how they can contact you. Get water and food. If needed, get papers for your property, insurance, bank, and medical records, and job qualifications from agencies for future reference. It may take time to feel like you've regained control over your life. Be patient with yourself and others.

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You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

Talk to a loved one, friend, or therapist. For immediate help, call 211 - open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All 211 services are free.
Helping Children Cope with Stress

STRESS can affect anyone—even a child—who feels overwhelmed. Stress comes from the demands placed on a person and his or her ability (or perceived ability) to meet them. Childhood stress comes from outside sources (family, friends, school, illness, death of loved ones, divorce, and disasters) and from within (pressures children place on themselves).

What are the signs my child is feeling stress?
- Mood swings
- Acting out
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Bedwetting
- Stomachaches
- Headaches
- Nightmares
- Separation anxiety
- Overreactions to problems
- Drastic changes in academic performance
- Refusal to participate in activities
- Trouble concentrating
- Problems completing schoolwork
- Withdrawal
- Regression (common in younger children; may include thumb sucking, hair twirling)
- Lying, bullying, and defiance of authority (common in older children)

You may not be able to keep your child from feeling frustrated, sad, or angry, but you can help him or her cope with these emotions. Seek help when problems appear to be serious and/or interfere with daily living. Talk to your child’s doctor or a counselor.

How can I help my child?
- Make time for your child each day.
- Give your child lots of hugs and kisses.
- Notice your child’s feelings out loud.
- Listen to your child—allow him or her to talk about things that may be causing stress.
- Help your child by discussing potentially stressful situations and helping him or her prepare for them.
- Just be there. Respect your child and tell him or her you’ll be there when he or she is ready to talk.
- Be patient. Resist the urge to fix every problem. Help your child grow into a good problem solver.
- Avoid talking about your troubles around your child.
- Ensure that your child gets proper rest.
- Ensure that your child gets proper nutrition—balanced meals and regular eating times.
- Ensure that your child gets enough exercise.
- Avoid overscheduling. Help your child manage his or her time and responsibilities.
- Ensure that your child has play time and quiet time.
- Monitor exposure to news about trauma.