Defining Stress Management & Why is it Important?

Stress management is a wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person’s level of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of and for the motive of improving everyday functioning - Wikipedia. Stress management is as equally important for children as it is for adults! Children’s ability to manage stress is a skill that will reap benefits for a their entire life. This social skill allows children to engage & perform academically, and to be socially adept. Managing stress prepares children for work-life scenarios and impacts their overall social-emotional health. We also know from research that anxiety and stress are “contagious” due to our mirror neurons and how our behavior impacts others. So, as adults we carry an even larger responsibility to “set the temperature” for the children around us. If we manage stress & anxiety well we can provide a healthy environment to model these skills to children.

Physical Symptoms of Stress

- Aches and pains.
- Chest pain or a feeling like your heart is racing.
- Exhaustion or trouble sleeping.
- Headaches, dizziness or shaking.
- High blood pressure.
- Muscle tension or jaw clenching.
- Stomach or digestive problems.
- Weak immune system.

Stress can lead to: Anxiety, Depression and Panic Attacks among other mental health concerns.

Boundary Setting: A Critical Skill

The Benefits of Setting Boundaries

- Reduces your stress and mental load.
- Helps teach your children (if you have them) to set boundaries themselves.
- Helps define your work life versus your home life.
- Establishes relationships that are emotionally healthy on all sides.

Signs That: Your Boundaries Aren’t Respected

- You hear, “I know you said not to do X, but I just…” a lot.
- You’re having to re-explain yourself multiple times.
- People are saying they don’t remember you setting the boundary in the first place.

If this is happening, then it is not your job to relax the boundary you set to make it easier for other people, it might be time to cut off contact entirely.

Say This, Not That: Setting Boundaries Edition

- Instead of “I asked you to not follow me into the bathroom,” say, “I love you so much! I’m so glad you want to spend time with me. But bathroom time is private time. You can wait right outside the door.”
- Instead of “Please stop sending me emails repeatedly,” say, “Thanks for getting in touch with me. I noticed you sent me several emails in a row. Due to the volume of email I receive, please don’t do this in the future. I promise to get to your email within 48 hours!”

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SELF-CARE IS NOT A LUXURY
IT IS A NECESSITY

Emotional Self-Care

The way you think and the things that you’re filling your mind with greatly influence your psychological well-being. Practicing self-compassion and acceptance helps you maintain a healthier inner dialogue. Here are a few questions to consider when you think about your mental self-care:

- Are you making enough time for activities that mentally stimulate you?
- Are you doing proactive things to help you stay mentally healthy?

Mental Self-Care

Mental self-care may include activities that help you acknowledge and express your feelings on a regular basis.

- Do you have healthy ways to process your emotions?
- Do you incorporate activities into your life that help you feel recharged?

Physical Self-Care

When it comes to physical self-care, ask yourself the following questions to assess whether there might be some areas you need to improve:

- Are you getting adequate sleep?
- Is your diet fueling your body well?
- Are you taking charge of your health?
- Are you getting enough exercise?

Spiritual Self-Care

Activities that nurtures your spirit and allows you to think bigger than yourself. Spiritual self care does not have to be religious, although for some it is.

- Am I connected to Nature around me?
- During difficult times, how do you cope and where do you turn for comfort?
- Where and how do you find meaning and purpose in your life?

Social Self-Care

It’s hard to make time for friends and it’s easy to neglect your relationships when life gets busy. Close connections are important to your well-being. To assess your social self-care, consider:

- Are you getting enough face-to-face time with your friends?
- What are you doing to nurture your relationships with friends and family?

Resources

HEGISD Crisis Team Website

Self-care often gets a negative rap as people imagine spa days and other expensive luxuries. In reality, self-care encompasses various aspects of our life that we tend to in order to promote and maintain our well-being, personal health and promote human development. **Self-care is more about prevention than intervention...**

Self-care is not selfish. Self-care is not about adding more to your to-do list. We often have to re-examine our essential needs and prioritize to allow for self-care. Self-care is not an emergency plan that does into place when stress is becoming too overwhelming.

Self-care can be as simple as drinking enough water, taking 5 minute breaks at the end of each hour or saying "no" to another commitment.