
TIPS for Coping in Difficult Economic Times

All of us experience some stress on a daily basis. However, there are times in our lives when circumstances may lead to heightened or long-term stress that can affect our health and well-being and that of our family members. Unemployment may cause stress in many areas of our lives. The following information may help you understand what you are going through and how to deal with your situation.



Possible Reactions to Stress

Physical--muscle tension and pain, headaches, stomach upset, or rapid heartbeat, fatigue, eating too little or too much, inability to sleep or sleeping too much

Emotional--anxiety, feeling nervous, becoming short-tempered and angry, crying, frustration, fear, discouragement

Cognitive--forgetful, trouble making decisions, concentrating, and focusing

Behavioral--loss of interest in activities, isolating yourself, using alcohol or drugs or other risky methods to cope, hyperactivity, embarrassment

Spiritual--stronger spiritual life or angry at God, question beliefs, uninvolved with your place of worship

Suggestions for Reducing Stress

- Recognize the early signs of stress so that you can act.
- Recall past, positive ways you have coped with similar problems and build on them.
- Manage your emotions such as anger, depression and guilt by only allowing yourself time-limited periods to dwell on them.
- Attend to your health by getting enough sleep, eat healthy foods, exercise, drink plenty of water.
- Don't use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs to lessen your stress.
- Spend time with your family doing fun, cost-free activities.
- Talk with your children and teens about your financial situation and what it might mean to your family's lifestyle. Show them you appreciate their ideas and help in getting through this time.
- Practice methods that bring you relaxation: music, playing with pets, deep breathing, stretching, meditation, spiritual resources, etc.
- Set priorities: Make a list of things that need to be done. Do the most important things first to help reduce stress. Don't be discouraged if you can't complete all your goals immediately.
- Journal your thoughts and emotions.
- Share your concerns with family, friends and individuals in similar circumstances. Communicating ideas and concerns is a positive way to reduce stress.

Stress can present itself in many different ways. Be aware that your family members, including children, may take on your worries and show signs of stress during this time. It's a good idea to have an age-appropriate talk with them about your situation. Let them express their concerns. Help them understand that their emotions and fears are normal and healthy.

Keeping a regular family routine as much as possible is important for you and your children. It is also important to stay connected with family, friends, and co-workers. Remind yourself to pay attention to your thoughts. When you notice thoughts that make you angry or nervous, you may interrupt them by consciously changing the thought or changing your activity. Teach your family how to do this as well.

Most importantly, don't give up. Problem solve on a daily basis. Stay connected and stay focused on available resources and potential solutions.

Finally, if you do feel hopeless or suicidal, you do not have to go through this alone. Reach out to your family and let them know. Contact your Employee Assistance Program and/or call the:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-TALK (8255)

(en Español, 888-628-9454)

Resource Information

Tips in a Time of Economic Crisis: Talking Dollars and Sense with Your Children

http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/pdf/SAMHSA_TipSheet_Money%20Children.pdf

Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for Community Organizations and Leaders

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/coping_for_community_orgs.pdf

Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for Parents

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/coping_for_parents_final.pdf

Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for School Staff

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/copingschoolpersonnel_final.pdf

Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for Youth

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/Coping_in_Hard_Times_For_Youth.pdf

Managing Stress in Later Life Tip Sheet

http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/pdf/SAMHSA_TipSheet_Later%20Life.pdf

Managing Your Stress Tip Sheet

<http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/pdf/>

Talking Dollars and Sense With Your Children Tip Sheet

http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/pdf/SAMHSA_TipSheet_Money%20Children.pdf