

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama provides the Stress Management Tool Kit to help your employees learn to recognize and cope with stress.

Stress Management Tool Kit: EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Coping with Stress

When experienced over a long period of time, stress can damage your health. Chronic stress has been linked to many health conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease and asthma. It can also impact your eating habits, mood and overall quality of life. While the events and situations that trigger stress may be unavoidable, you do not have to let stress control you. By learning ways to manage stress-causing situations effectively, you can not only improve your health, but your life.

Use these tips to help manage stress:

- Exercise, take a brisk walk or try yoga.
- Take progressive relaxation.
- Eat foods brimming with the phytochemicals, which in some cases called "feel good" foods.
- Make a list of stress and anxiety-causing items on paper can release anxiety you may feel about the number of tasks on your to-do list.
- Practice healthy eating habits.
- Try breathing, counting or reciting to a quiet area.
- Get a massage.
- Take positive self-talk.
- Take time to learn and/or develop a hobby.
- Foster friendships and a social support network - it is important to have someone to talk to.
- Slow down and simplify your life.
- Try counseling regularly, especially those that focus on changing your way of thinking.

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Coping with Stress: FYH-238

Measure Your Stress

The following quiz, developed by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe, is a self-administered measure designed to help you investigate the relationship between your management, stress and susceptibility to illness. **Please do the exercise listed below and place a check for any that have happened to you within the last 12 months.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a spouse	100	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in domestic responsibility/role	25
<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce	73	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage or loss for major purchase	21
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital separation	65	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction of mortgage or loan	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a close family member	63	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in responsibility at work	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Menopause	50	<input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter leaving home	18
<input type="checkbox"/> Change personal hours or stress	53	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with in-laws or relatives	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage	50	<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding personal achievement	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Start of work	47	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious long-term work outside home	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital reconciliation	46	<input type="checkbox"/> Revisit of personal habits	14
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in health of family member	46	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with boss	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Discharge	45	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in work hours or conditions	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a new family member	39	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in residence	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	38	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in financial status	37	<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of close friend	36	<input type="checkbox"/> Major violation of the law	11

TOTAL POINTS FROM BOTH COLUMNS

0 - 149: no significant problem
 150 - 199: mild stress;
 200 - 249: moderate stress;
 250 - 299: severe stress;
 300 and up: major stress;
 400: chronic or fatal stress

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Measure Your Stress: FYH-239

Stress & Your Body

Did you know that almost every system in your body can be damaged by stress? Here are some examples:

Immune System
Chronic stress causes the body to release cortisol, a hormone which suppresses the immune system. This can lead to increased susceptibility to viral and bacterial infections, cancer and autoimmune diseases.

Diabetes
People with diabetes, stress can cause high blood sugar.

Appetite Changes
Stress can cause eating behaviors - either overeating or loss of appetite.

Hypertension
Stress has been shown to lead to high blood pressure and an increase in cardiovascular disease.

Headaches
Headaches are common for persons with acute or chronic stress.

Ulcers
Ulcers have also been linked to chronic stress.

Exercise
People under stress tend to exercise less due to a lack of energy.

Anxiety & Depression
High levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, can cause anxiety and depression.

Cholesterol
Elevated cholesterol has been linked to stress.

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Stress & Your Body: FYH-240

Stress and YOUR BODY

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In people with diabetes, stress can cause high blood sugar.

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Poster FYH-251

Poster FYH-250

Here are a few suggestions to help you use these materials in your workplace.

Every workplace is different, so find out what works best for you.

- Present and discuss the materials in an educational workshop.
- Another very simple option is to display the posters in your breakroom and distribute the handouts to your employees.

Ordering additional materials is easy!

1. Go to AlabamaBlue.com/employers.
2. Select "Forms and Materials."
3. Enter the stock number to download or order.

Title	Stock No.
<i>Coping with Stress</i> - handout.....	FYH-238
<i>Measure Your Stress</i> - handout.....	FYH-239
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - handout	FYH-240
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - 11x17 poster.....	FYH-241
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - 11x17 poster.....	FYH-250
<i>Stress and Your Body</i> - 11x17 poster.....	FYH-251