



Unit: Stress Management
Skill 13: Managing your Emotions
Activity A: Calm in the Storm
Worksheet

Calm In The Storm

- **Take a stand against over scheduling.** If you're feeling stretched, consider cutting out an activity or two, opting for just the ones that are most important to you.
- **Be realistic.** Don't try to be perfect - no one is. And expecting others to be perfect can add to your stress level, too (not to mention put a lot of pressure on them!). If you need help on something, ask for it.
- **Get a good night's sleep.** Getting enough sleep helps keep your body and mind in top shape, making you better equipped to deal with any negative stressors
- **Learn to relax and take a break when you need it.** The body's natural antidote to stress is called the **relaxation response**. It's your body's opposite of stress, and it creates a sense of well-being and calm. The chemical benefits of the relaxation response can be activated simply by relaxing. You can help trigger the relaxation response by learning simple breathing exercises and then using them when you're caught up in stressful situations. The old adage to take deep breaths as you count to 10 really works! Ensure you stay relaxed by building time into your schedule for activities that are calming and pleasurable: reading a good book or making time for a hobby, spending time with your pet, or just taking a relaxing bath.
- **Treat your body well.** Experts agree that getting regular exercise helps people manage stress, as well as eating well to help your body get the right fuel to function at its best. It's easy when you're stressed out to eat on the run or eat junk food or fast food. But under stressful conditions, the body needs its vitamins and minerals more than ever. Some people may turn to substance abuse as a way to ease tension. Although alcohol or drugs may seem to lift the stress temporarily, relying on them to cope with stress actually promotes more stress because it wears down the body's ability to bounce back.
- **Watch what you're thinking.** Your outlook, attitude, and thoughts influence the way you see things. Is your cup half full or half empty? A healthy dose of optimism can help you make the best of stressful circumstances. Even if you're out of practice, or tend to be a bit of a pessimist, everyone can learn to think more optimistically and reap the benefits.
- **Solve the little problems.** Learning to solve everyday problems can give you a sense of control. But avoiding them can leave you feeling like you have little control and that just adds to stress. Develop skills to calmly look at a problem, figure out options, and take some action toward a solution. Feeling capable of solving little problems builds the inner confidence to move on to life's bigger ones - and it can serve you well in times of stress.

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- **Build your resilience**

Ever notice that certain people seem to adapt quickly to stressful circumstances and take things in stride? They're cool under pressure and able to handle problems as they come up. Researchers have identified the qualities that make some people seem naturally resilient even when faced with high levels of stress. If you want to build your resilience, work on developing these attitudes and behaviors:

- Think of change as a challenging and normal part of life.
- See setbacks and problems as temporary and solvable.
- Believe that you will succeed if you keep working toward your goals.
- Take action to solve problems that crop up.
- Build strong relationships and keep commitments to family and friends.
- Have a support system and ask for help.

Participate regularly in these activities for relaxation and fun.