Helpful Strategies to Manage Stress

 Reward Yourself
- Celebrate successes and accomplishments. Don’t think too big, completing an exam regardless of the grade can be rewarding. Checking something off your task list can also be rewarding.
- Take breaks as needed.
- Do activities that you enjoy such as; reading, listening to music, and enjoying nature. Basically, anything that is “you time.”

 Exercise
- Aerobic action spends stress hormones, strengthens organs targeted by stress, improves sleep, and increases energy (just to name a few benefits).
- When you exercise, beta endorphins, the body’s natural relaxants, are released. These counteract the stress hormones raging through your body.

 Belly breathing
- Practice deep breathing from your diaphragm rather than your chest. Inhale air, notice your stomach rise.
- Inhale through your nose for 3 seconds, hold your breath for 3 seconds, and exhale through your mouth for 3 seconds.
- Try combining a positive phrase or word when you exhale or pairing your breath with the flow of an ocean wave.

 Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- Practice tensing and relaxing your muscles from head to toe.

 Imagery and meditation
- Visualize a place you feel safe and/or calm. Enhance the image with sights, sounds, smells, and sensations. This can also be combined with the belly breathing.

 Sleep
- Get yourself on a schedule. Pulling all nighters or staying out all night decreases your ability to function.
- Get more sleep. Sleep difficulty is a hallmark of overstress. The less sleep you get, the more likely stress will weaken your immune system.

 Eat
- Give your mind and body the nutrients needed. Be careful not to not rely on caffeine, alcohol, or other substances

Stress cannot be avoided just as change cannot. How stressful a situation is, may merely depend on how you are looking at it. There is meaning behind the “glass is half full” concept-if you look hard enough at a situation, there is often a silver lining. Make the choice to view situations differently and make the choice to live a life with less stress.

For more information or assistance, please contact:
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