

# Actions you can take

## 1. Focus on What You Can Do

Resist the urge to give up or run away from stressful problems – these types of coping choices often make stress worse in the long run.

## 2. Manage Your Emotions

Feelings of sadness, anger, fear and other forms of distress are common when coping with stress. It is more difficult to feel happiness, contentment or joy when coping with stress. Try not to bottle your emotions up – instead try expressing your feelings by talking or writing them down. Try not to lash out at other people. Many of the coping strategies listed below are also useful ways of managing our emotions.

## 3. Seek Out Support

Seeking social support from other people is helpful – especially when we feel we can't cope on our own. Family, friends, co-workers and health professionals can all be important sources of support. Ask someone for their opinion or advice on how to handle the situation. Get more information to help make decisions. Accept help with daily tasks and responsibilities and emotional support.

## 4. Focus on the Positives

This is one of the hardest things to do when coping with stress and at times can seem impossible. Dwelling on the negatives often adds to our stress and takes away our motivation to make things better.

## 5. Make a Plan of Action

Problem-solving the controllable aspects of a stressful situation are one of the most effective ways to lower our stress. Try breaking a stressful problem into manageable chunks. A good plan of action can involve putting other tasks on hold to concentrate on the main problem or waiting for the right time and place to act.

- Identify and define the problem
- Select your goal
- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Consider the pros and cons
- Choose the best solution – the perfect solution rarely exists

- Put your plan into action
- Evaluate your efforts and choose another strategy if need be.

## 6. Self-Care

None of us will cope well if we do not take care of the basics. Taking good care of ourselves can be difficult during stressful times. If we don't balance work with play, most of us will experience burn out. Eat healthy foods and drink lots of water throughout the day to maintain your energy. Try to exercise or do something active on a regular basis. Try to avoid using alcohol or drugs as a way of coping. Practice meditation, yoga or other relaxation techniques. Take regular breaks from work to maintain stamina. Plan fun activities and hobbies so you can look forward to them Get a good night's sleep.



# Actions you can take

## 7. Take care of relationships

Family, friends and co-workers can be affected by our stress but they can also be part of the problem! Keep the feelings and needs of others in mind when coping with stress, but balance them with your own feelings and needs.

## 8. Acceptance

Accepting those things we cannot change can be the most challenging aspect of coping with stress. Sometimes all we can do is manage our distress or grief. Denying the problem exists will only prolong our suffering and interferes with our ability to take action. Acceptance is a process that takes time, so be patient. Death, illness, major losses or major life changes can be particularly difficult to accept. Try not to get caught up in wishful thinking or dwelling on what could have been.

## 9. Distraction

Distraction can be helpful when coping with short-term stress we can't control (e.g. reading a magazine while getting dental work done). Distraction can be harmful if it interferes with us taking action over things under our control. Distraction by using drugs, alcohol or over-eating usually leads to more stress and problems in the long-term. Distraction by overworking can easily lead to burnout or other problems (e.g. family resentment).

## 10. Seek Professional Help

There are a number of professional services and men's groups that are available to provide confidential help, support and information. A good starting place is to call Mensline Australia or checkout their website to find out more about options to help.



**1300 78 99 78**  
www.menslineaus.org.au

Talk it over  
**Mens  
Line**  
AUSTRALIA

  
crisis support services

Mensline Australia  
is managed by Crisis Support Services

This tip sheet was adapted from the work of Lilia Szarski BAMED (psych) Monash Reg Psych Vic./McIntosh J. Because it's for the kids – building a secure base after separation, Bambra Press, Melb./Family Court resources, www.familycourt.gov.au

The only service of its kind, Mensline Australia provides confidential telephone counselling, information and referral to specifically enable men to enhance their relationships and manage the challenges associated with disruptions to their family life or primary relationships.

Managed through Crisis Support Services Inc, Mensline Australia is a national service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the cost of a local call.

Mensline Australia was established in September 2001 as part of the Commonwealth Government's Men and Family Relationships initiative. Since then, the service has been overwhelmed by calls from men around the country wanting to talk about their relationships.