

# INVESTING IN STAFF WELLNESS



## OVERCOMING STRESS THROUGH WELLNESS

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain.

**70-95 percent of doctor visits for adults are stress related.**

Stressors in life are inevitable. Look at the below lists and try to identify common stress responses you encounter physically, emotionally and behaviorally.



**POSITIVE**  
Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels

**TOLERABLE**  
Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

**TOXIC**  
Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

## INDICATORS OF STRESS

- | Physical:  | Emotional   | Behaviors  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperawareness/hypervigilance</li> <li>• exhaustion</li> <li>• Brain Fog</li> <li>• Muscle tension/headaches</li> <li>• GI Problems</li> <li>• Tightness in Chest</li> <li>• Teeth Grinding</li> <li>• Eye twitching</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hopelessness</li> <li>• Loss of meaning</li> <li>• loss of enjoyment</li> <li>• Guilt/Shame</li> <li>• Avoidance</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Anger/Cynicism</li> <li>• Fearful</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Sadness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Ailments</li> <li>• Sleep problems</li> <li>• Relationship problems</li> <li>• Racing thoughts</li> <li>• Poor coping-Substance use</li> <li>• Negative thoughts</li> <li>• Preoccupation</li> <li>• Eating-weight loss or gain</li> <li>• Nightmares</li> <li>• Missing work</li> </ul> |

### Antidote to Toxic Stress

Sleep  
Exercise  
Nutrition  
Mindfulness  
Mental Health  
Healthy Relationships

When stress comes, we want to take notice of how we experience it in our body. The goal is to halt our bodies stress response so that we can access the critical thinking part of our brain. Ask yourself, is this **distressing or is it dangerous?** Most of our daily stress is caused by things that are distressing not dangerous. So how do we get our bodies to respond accordingly. We need to activate our parasympathetic nervous system. The parasympathetic nervous system helps to calm our body down. It promotes the rest and digest response after "danger" has passed. Here are a few ways we can counter our physical stress responses: **Breathe, hum or sing, receive a hug or physical touch, MOVE your body, get outdoors, massage the tension in your neck, use grounding techniques, aromatherapy, express your feelings to a safe person, practice gratitude.**



Click [HERE](#) to view a short video on how to massage your own neck.

If you are looking for a way to promote physical activity among your staff, see the directions for implementing a staff step challenge.



**Staff Step Challenge**

