

# Managing Stress

1. Caffeine– Decrease it!
2. Nutrition– Balance it!
3. Exercise– Do it!
4. Sleep– Increase it!
5. Time outs– 20 minutes NOW!
6. Leisure– Enjoy it!
7. Expectations– Be realistic!
8. Perceptions– Reframe it!
9. Expression– Talk about it!
10. Humor– Laugh about it!

Managing stress is an art form. You must actively implement and practice those activities that help YOU!



## Resources and Bibliography:

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Colorado Department of  
Human Services

# Colorado Mental Health Disaster Response System

Division of Mental Health



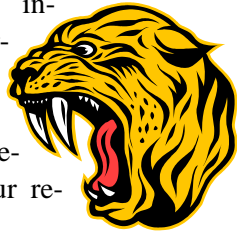
# Stress Management

# Stress Reactions: Prevention and Mediation

Stress IS:

- ✓ Bodily response to physical, emotional or intellectual demands
- ✓ Normal
- ✓ Necessary

**Stress Origins:** Stress triggers the “Fight/Flight/Freeze/Faint” reaction. As mammals evolved, it increased our ability to survive. But we are no longer meeting up with the sabretooth tiger; therefore we must change our response.



## Good Stress vs. Bad Stress

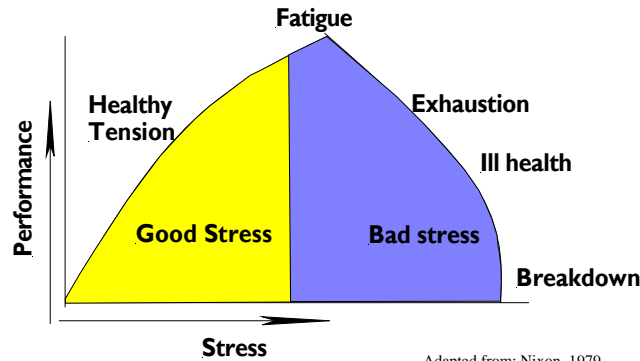
**Good Stress:** Any stress event that increases performance and the ability to respond.

**Bad Stress:** Any stress event that overwhelms and decreases your ability to respond, leads to emotional upset or physical illness.

## Causes: External vs. Internal

**External**– Physical environment, social, organizational, major life events, daily hassles.

**Internal**– Lifestyle choices, negative self-talk, mind traps, personality.



Adapted from: Nixon, 1979.

## Symptoms

The signs that stress is a problem can take all forms and frequently are different for different people. The following sections provide cues to look for and the back panel of this brochure provides guidance on how to best deal with your stress.

### PHYSICAL

Our bodies are a good indicator of the stress that we are experiencing. When under stress over time, our bodies begin to react. These reactions vary from stomach problems to a variety of aches and pains, headaches, difficulty sleeping, and changes in our appetite.

Remember two things about physical reactions to stress. First, be alert to whether these symptoms have changed noticeably from the way we felt before. Second, be sure to see a doctor about any significant changes as many stress reactions mimic major physical disorders and diseases.

### THINKING

Stress affects our ability to think clearly. Since stress is our body’s reaction to danger, instinct is better than thought.

This mechanism can make it harder for us to think clearly, pay attention, solve problems or remember. It does not mean that you are “crazy” or “losing your mind.” These are normal reactions in times of high stress. They are signals to you to take action and care for yourself.

### EMOTIONAL

Often our emotional reactions to stress are the most confusing. We may laugh unexpectedly or yell in anger. We may feel irritable and grumpy. We also may feel intense fear or have unexplained sadness and crying. ALL EMOTIONS ARE NORMAL.

### BEHAVIORAL

During times of high stress, our behavioral reactions are the signals to others that we are under tension. Unlike our physical reactions, emotions and thinking abilities, our behavioral reactions are more directly under our control. We can burn “anxious energy” by pacing, fidgeting and other nervous habits.

But some behaviors that are triggered by stressful events need to be stopped as they tend to make the situation worse. These things include increased smoking and drinking, blaming others, yelling, swearing, hitting and throwing things. Unfortunately, it is often the people that we love the most that are the targets of these behaviors. If others are in danger due to your stress reactions, please seek professional help.

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