**Stress Management**

Stress is non-discriminating, an integral part of everyone's life. Hoe do you cope with it? Coping with stress comes naturally for all of us. We successfully deal with 98% of our stressful experiences. It's the small percentage we can't manage that usually causes 98% of out stress.

A problem many of us face in dealing with stress is that we use the same coping skills over and over. To manage stress, it's important to add to and recombine our coping skills. Because stress affects the whole person, stress management skills need to make use of our mind, body and spirit. The following coping skills can get you started in changing and adding to your list of stress-management skills.

**Physical Skills**

The coping skills help build up your stamina.

* Relaxation: Let go of your mental and physical tensions
* Nourishment: Eat for your health
* Self-care: treat yourself kindly. Don't push beyond your limits
* Exercise: Strengthen and fine-tune your body regularly
* Biofeedback: Listen to your body and its needs.
* Stretching: take short stretch breaks throughout your day

**Mental Skills**

Use your mind to cope with stress more effectively.

* Time management: Set aside time to match your goals, values and priorities
* Problem solving: Address issues by yourself or with help from others
* Life planning: Clarify your long and short range goals, then move toward them
* Organising: Seek order. Don't let things pile up
* Re-labelling: Change your perspective. See the promise in every problem. Be gracious
* Imagination: Paint a different picture of your situation. See the humour in life's ironies. Be creative

**Spiritual Skills**

Trusting and believing in yourself can relieve your stress.

* Commitment: Say "yes". Invest yourself meaningfully
* Seek meaning and purpose in life
* Surrender: let go of your problems
* Valuing: identify what's really important

**Family Skills**

Our closest network of people can be used to strengthen our coping skills.

* Balancing: Strike a balance between work and home commitments
* Togetherness: Spend quality time together
* Networking: Use family and friends for support
* Esteem-building: Help each other grow. Build on good feeling about your family
* Conflict resolution: Look for solutions where all sides win
* Flexibility: Stay open to change. Try creativity approaches

**Interpersonal Skills**

It's important to build relationships in dealing with stress in your life.

* Affirmation: Believe in yourself. Trust others
* Contact: Invest in others. Form satisfying relationships
* Expression: Share and show feelings
* Linking: Share your burdens with your family, friends and neighbours
* Assertiveness: be direct about your wants, needs and feeling
* Limits: Set personal boundaries. Accept the boundaries of others

**Diversion Skills**

Discover creative means of escape is a great way to reduce your tension level. Escapes can be found in:

* Learning: Take a class. Appreciate the arts
* Music: Play an instrument.
* Work: Volunteer for something worthwhile
* Getaways: Daydream. Spend some time alone
* Play: Go out with a friend

The easiest way to build your repertoire of coping techniques is develop one new habit at a time. Remember, you have the power choose how you'll deal with stressful situations and the ability cope with stress creatively.