

Navigating Stress and Cultivating Wellness

IN A PERFECT WORLD, YOU FEEL IN BALANCE, EXPERIENCING EXACTLY THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF ACTIVITY AND STIMULATION IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE WITHOUT FEELING LIKE IT'S TOO MUCH. BUT IN REALITY, THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT CAN MAKE YOU FEEL OUT OF BALANCE. THIS IS WHEN STRESS CAN DEVELOP. WHILE STRESS IS A NATURAL RESPONSE OF YOUR BODY, IT MAY THROW ONE OR MORE OF THE 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS OUT OF BALANCE.

THE 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS¹



Physical



Intellectual



Emotional



Social



Spiritual



Occupational



Financial



Environmental



In short bursts, stress can have positive impacts, such as providing extra energy to help you overcome immediate challenges. Yet prolonged stress can have negative effects on various areas of life. And for people living with a rare disease and their loved ones, stress can feel even more overwhelming.

Let's take a look at some ways you can identify stress and then manage it.

Recognizing stress: what to look for

Stress can take many forms, including increasing your feelings of anger and frustration. It can also impact your physical health, leading to tension, headaches, and an upset stomach.²

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- What types of situations trigger stress responses—physical or emotional—for you?
- How do you feel in those situations?

Reducing the impact of stress: what you can do

While some things that cause stress are beyond your control, you can manage the impact of stress on your life. Begin by being aware of the situations that trigger your stress—and then work to reduce their impact.

Remember, only focus on the situations within your control. Do not allow challenges outside of your control to take over your sense of balance and well-being. Take on challenges *one* at a time. Don't try to solve everything at once.

IMPROVING YOUR ROUTINE

It is also important to add practices into your daily life that can lower your stress. For instance, consider including these practices into your routine:

 Meditation with a focus on gratitude

 Breathing exercises

 Physical exercise as appropriate for your body

 Creative activities like coloring or journaling

PRACTICING SELF-CARE

Self-care for patients and caregivers is another effective practice in managing stress. This can take several forms, including:

 Finding time for yourself

 Going for walks in the fresh air

 Reading

 Taking breaks before you feel overwhelmed

 Listening to music

 Spending time on a hobby you love

BEING INTENTIONAL

Don't forget that quality time and human connection are key to navigating the stress of a rare disease. Be intentional about spending time with those you care about, whether for a prolonged period or even just a few minutes on the phone or a video chat. These connections can combat stress and ensure you don't feel alone in your experience.

Also, it is absolutely okay to ask for help and support when you need it. Reach out to loved ones, join a support group, or seek other resources to help reduce stress.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

A local Alexion Patient Education Manager (PEM) may be available to help you and your loved ones learn more about living with a rare disease. To connect with an Alexion PEM, visit www.alexiononesource.com/pem-finder.



References

1. Swarbrick M. A wellness approach to mental health recovery. In: Rudnick A, ed. *Recovery of People With Mental Illness: Philosophical and Related Perspectives*. Oxford University Press; 2012:30-38.
2. Chu B, Marwaha K, Sanvictores T, Ayers D. Physiology, stress reaction. In: *StatPearls*. StatPearls Publishing; 2022. Accessed May 1, 2024. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK541120/>