

## Special Topic: Stress Management Techniques

### Stress Management Techniques

There are many options and techniques available for reducing and managing stress. You have most likely faced a stressful or difficult situation sometime in your life. Under such circumstances, you almost certainly used some form or combination of stress management techniques.

The best approach to prepare for and manage disaster stress is to practice a variety of stress management techniques regularly during periods of lower stress. Familiarizing yourself with personally effective techniques will enable you to lower your level of stress more quickly during periods of high stress and uncertainty. In addition to practicing stress management skills, you should not forget the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle entails getting adequate sleep, staying well-hydrated, maintaining a healthy diet, and exercising regularly. By taking care of yourself on a regular basis, you are lowering the impact stressful situations may have on you, including the impact of disasters.

The stress management techniques listed below are effective methods for managing stress in a disaster setting.

- Engage in physical exercise and/or sports
- Practice relaxation breathing
- Practice Yoga or stretching exercises
- Pray or meditate
- Practice personal faith or seek spiritual support
- Maintain daily routines
- Spend time with others
- Seek support from others
- Use healthy humor
- Relax by playing with children and/or pets
- Take personal time
- Take brief naps
- Engage in light reading
- Listen to relaxing music
- Keep a journal
- Engage in favorite hobbies (for example- arts and crafts)
- Problem-solve with peers
- Break large projects into smaller tasks
- Take brief breaks
- Maintain open communication with team and leader
- Practice personal faith or seek spiritual support
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Drink plenty of water
- Maintain a regular exercise program
- Engage in sports with peers
- Take personal time
- Take time for stress reducing activities (for example- reading, journaling)
- Practice relaxation breathing
- Use healthy humor
- Have comfort items available

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**Additional Resources**

WebMD: How Breathing Can Aid Relaxation (video)

<http://www.webmd.com/video/farrell-relaxation-breathing>

Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute (written instructions for relaxation techniques)

[http://www.traumacenter.org/resources/pdf\\_files/Relaxation\\_Exercises.pdf](http://www.traumacenter.org/resources/pdf_files/Relaxation_Exercises.pdf)

College at Oneonta Counseling Center (guided audio/video relaxation exercises)

<http://www.oneonta.edu/development/counseling/pages/relaxation.asp>