

# Stress Reduction Worksheet

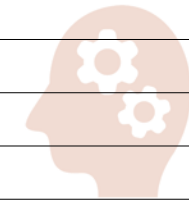
## Identify Your Stressors



Name the Problem: \_\_\_\_\_

List all possible solutions to the problem. Include whatever comes to mind. Try to brainstorm without perfection.

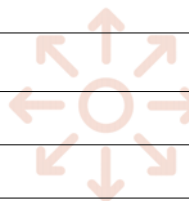
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Focus on the solutions above that you can change or work on and put a check next to each one that feels achievable.

Plan of Action: (Tackle one solution at a time.)

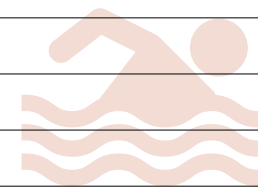
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## Identify Factors that Protect You Against Stress

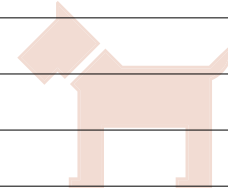
**Healthy Coping Strategies**  
Positive actions that help to reduce or manage stress and other uncomfortable emotions.  
(Examples: exercise, talking with a friend or family member, self-care, journaling, relaxation techniques.)

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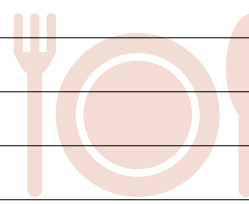
**Protective Factors**  
Individual characteristics or life-circumstances that protect you from stress.  
(Examples: Supportive family or friends, pets, secure housing, etc.)

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- \_\_\_\_\_



**Daily Uplifts**  
List positive experiences that make you happy (Examples: eating a good meal, spending time in nature)

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



Portion provided by Therapistaid.com 2020

## Prolonged Stress Can Sometimes Cause the Following

- Worsening of a current mental health condition.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support you rely on.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html)

## Help Calm Your Stress, Anxiety, or Depression

- ✓ Understanding your anxiety and the signs of depression
- ✓ Stay informed—but don't obsessively check the news
- ✓ Focus on the things you can control and plan for what you can
- ✓ Stay connected—even when physically isolated
- ✓ Reach out for help – Tele-therapy

## Community Resources

- ✓ Contact your HTC social worker for information and mental health resources
- ✓ Check with your insurance company for in-network therapists
- ✓ Contact your local hemophilia foundation or your HTC for financial assistance if needed

## Explore These Free, Stress Reducing Apps & Resources

- Insight Timer [InsightTimer.com](http://InsightTimer.com)
- Mind Yeti [MindYeti.com](http://MindYeti.com) (Spanish content available)
- More for Kids [CommonSenseMedia.org/lists/meditation-apps-for-kids](http://CommonSenseMedia.org/lists/meditation-apps-for-kids)
- UCLA Mindful App [UCLAHealth.org/marc/audio](http://UCLAHealth.org/marc/audio) (Spanish content available)
- Mindful USC [Mindful.usc.edu/mindful-usc-mobile-app/](http://Mindful.usc.edu/mindful-usc-mobile-app/)

Note: 1 through 3 have guided meditation options for youth



## The Cascade Staff Staying Healthy in Order to Keep You Healthy!

Notice: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-800-996-2575.  
ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-996-2575.  
يلاقتالدا لاصتالدا ماجرا. أنأجم اال ذرفوتم ذيوغلالا ذذعاصملاو ذمذرتالدا تامذخ نأف، ذيوبرعلا ذلكت ذتذك اذ: ذظذالم (1-800-996-2575)



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(Available for after hours emergencies)



Colleen Joiner, LMSW  
Clinical Care Manager

Dear Readers,

2020 was an unusual year to say the least, and in "these troubling times" as they say in the news, we look forward to the day when things get back to some form of normalcy. Many of us have been affected by the strain of working from home, homeschooling kids, or simply being in isolation. Some of you are front-line or essential workers caring for those who are sick with the COVID-19 virus. Unfortunately, some in our community have lost their jobs, or worse, lost loved ones to this horrible pandemic. Please know our hearts go out to you.

According to a Kaiser Foundation poll taken last April, 56% of American adults say worry or stress has led to "at least one negative effect on their mental health and well-being, such as problems with sleeping or eating, increased alcohol use or worsening chronic conditions." One research study from Brown University noted that depression and anxiety increased three-fold after the pandemic hit. This level of self-reported mental health issues is higher than documented after Hurricane Katrina or even 911. Given the prolonged nature and wide-spread effects of the pandemic, it's easy to see how those numbers may be even higher today.

The bleeding disorder community has always been a resilient one. As a person with a bleeding disorder, or a family member of someone who has a bleeding disorder, you embody that resiliency. And with the arrival of new vaccinations, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime, there are many things you can do to identify if you or a family member is experiencing excessive anxiety, depression, or increased worry about the future. There are things you can do to alleviate every-day stress at home and ways to get professional help if you need it.

In this issue, we will be talking with Annie Phillips, LMSW and Laura McGinity, LMSW. Annie previously worked for Children's Hospital of Michigan HTC and the Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan Camp programs and now has her own therapy practice at Healing Home Therapy Group. Laura has worked at Michigan Medicine's HTC in Ann Arbor for over 30 years with both children and adults.

As always, please remember to take good care of yourself both physically and mentally. And never hesitate to call us if you need anything.

*Colleen*

[www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/health/mental.health.pandemic.wellness/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/health/mental.health.pandemic.wellness/index.html)  
Depression rates tripled during the pandemic: Study - ABC News (go.com)

## Cascade Hemophilia Consortium Mission

The Purpose for Which the Corporation is Organized

To enhance the system of care for people with bleeding disorders and related complications, by assuring the lowest possible price for the full range of treatments, HIV and hepatitis related therapies and other medications available to treat their disease; to provide access to these medications for those without insurance or inadequate insurance coverage; to support the comprehensive hemophilia treatment centers in treating and educating consumers and their families so they may become knowledgeable and proactive in managing their own care; to fund research.

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# Let's Talk About Stress: Staying Ahead of the Game!



Annie Phillips, LMSW  
Healing Home Therapy Group



Laura McGinity, LMSW  
Michigan Medicine HTC

**Colleen:** *Thank you both for talking with our readers today about stress. We know that we all could use a little help with that from time to time. Everyone is exposed to daily stress, but we all respond differently to stressful situations. What signs of unhealthy stress should someone watch for in themselves or in a family member?*

**Annie:** Stress is a very normal part of life. Every human experiences some type of stress on a weekly basis, in a certain capacity. The problem is when these stressors begin to affect you in a noticeably negative way. Some of the signs of unhealthy stress are physical and emotional. The most common physical symptoms of stress are headache, stomachache, nausea, feeling overly tired, not sleeping well and chest pains. Some of the most common emotional signs of stress are irritability, racing thoughts and feeling overwhelmed and unmotivated. If you or a family member are experiencing some of these symptoms it might be beneficial to speak with family members about why you are so stressed and what can help ease the burden you are feeling. If these feelings continue to be overwhelming with no relief, it is always best to seek professional help. I always recommend speaking with the social worker at your HTC and requesting some resources or advice.

**Colleen:** *What stressors are most problematic for the people you've worked with in our community during this last year? Are you seeing additional stressors for the bleeding disorder community?*

**Laura:** I think the biggest issue that I've seen for some of our bleeding disorder patients is a loss of income and the financial difficulties that follow. It can be very stressful when a family is very suddenly unable to meet their expenses. Many families don't qualify for financial help because one spouse is still working or perhaps an individual who is surviving on two jobs and loses one of them. The loss of insurance and medical coverage adds to the stress and fear. Fortunately, we have resources specifically in the bleeding disorder community to help in these situations.

**Annie:** Lets be honest. What hasn't been stressful this last year? Across the board, there have been so many challenges for various groups of people. What has been great to see is how resilient humans are, and how they have come together during this exceedingly difficult time to help mediate these stressors. The bleeding disorder community has had to deal with its own unique set of challenges. Whenever I think of the bleeding disorder community, the word COMMUNITY always stands out to me. The bleeding disorder community is a strong one, and all the events and programs that are scheduled throughout the year are so important to everyone. Having those events cancelled, especially camp, has been hard, but it has been amazing to see how the community has come together and remain connected through virtual events and programming.



**Colleen:** *For the past year, some of the things people do to "de-stress" such as meeting with friends or going to the gym, aren't realistic for some people. What are some healthy activities people can do to help alleviate their own stress or anxiety? If they see their kids suffering, what are some things parents can do to take the pressure off?*

**Laura:** We all know that the best thing people can do to make a positive difference is to continue to practice social distancing. But social distancing comes with its own risks. Humans are social animals. We're hard-wired for connection.

Isolation and loneliness can exacerbate anxiety and depression, and even impact our physical health. That's why it's important to stay connected as best we can and reach out for support when we need it.

Make it a priority to stay in touch with friends and family. Think about scheduling regular phone or video chat dates to counteract negativity. Arrange to go for walks or maybe an outdoor picnic. Face-to-face contact is like a "vitamin" for your mental health, reducing your risk of depression and helping ease stress and anxiety. All of us need reassurance, advice, or a sympathetic ear.



**Annie:** I like to remind parents to not be so hard on themselves. Children and teenagers are very resilient and have found the most unique ways to communicate with their peers and cope with this situation. But it is important to check in on their emotional well-being often by having productive communication time. Don't be afraid to ask them "how they are feeling" and acknowledge how difficult this situation is on them. If you feel that your child is feeling depressed or disconnected, make sure they feel safe talking about it and exploring options on how to get additional help outside the home.

**Laura:** I think it's also important to be discerning about what you read and watch, whether it's politics, or the pandemic. Limit how often you check for updates. Constant monitoring of news and social media feeds can quickly turn compulsive and counterproductive—fueling anxiety rather than easing it. The limit is different for everyone, so pay attention to how you're feeling and adjust accordingly. Step away from media if you start feeling overwhelmed. And, consider limiting your media consumption to thirty minutes each day.

**Annie:** Social media is great in many ways because it has helped us feel connected to friends and family but it has definitely been a year of information overload. When it comes to health, COVID19 news and vaccine information it is always best to read reliable news sources. If you feel confused about something that you have read, your HTC or your primary care physician are always a great resource for correct medical information.

**Laura:** Some people find it helpful to write down specific worries they have about how things may disrupt their life. If you start feeling overwhelmed, take a break. I find this exercise to be helpful:

- 1 Write down the problem.
- 2 Make a list of all the possible solutions to your problem you can think of. Try not to get too hung up on "perfect" options. Include whatever comes to mind.
- 3 Focus on concrete things you can problem solve or change, rather than circumstances beyond your control.
- 4 After you've evaluated your options, draw up a plan of action. Tackle one solution at a time.
- 5 When you're done, try one of the solutions then set it aside. Resist the urge to keep re-hashing the problem.
- 6 Refer back to your plan of action option list if you start to feel anxious or worried.

Throughout this exercise, try to be mindful of your self-talk. Try to speak to yourself with kindness and compassion in the same way you would treat a friend or loved one. Examples of positive self-talk may be: "I can do this" or "I can't control other people or situations. I can only control my reactions to them."

## "Focus on the Things You Can Control and Make a Plan"

**Colleen:** *We have all experienced stress at some point in our lives and it can be easy to spiral into the "what ifs" trap. How do you stop that from happening?*

**Laura:** On a daily basis, do simple things like engaging in enjoyable activities—go for a walk outside, read a book, watch your favorite movie, cook a nice meal, pamper yourself and have a regular sleep schedule—all help to keep negative thoughts at bay.

During this pandemic, I think it's important, especially for kids, to stick to routine. Make sure you are taking care of the basics just like you would during a spring break or summer vacation. Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.

**Annie:** I always remind people that relaxation is a skill that you need to practice consistently to master. Allow yourself 20 minutes of quiet time a day to practice these skills. Make sure you are in a quiet spot, where you will not be disturbed. There are many relaxation techniques to practice but here are some that I find most helpful:

- Deep Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Guided imagery

Another skill you can practice is identifying your thoughts, label the distortions in your thinking and then replacing your anxious thought with a more accurate and realistic way of thinking. This is called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). There are many online resources where you can practice exercises at home on your own. If you think you need further guidance on CBT, it is always best to reach out for professional help.

**Colleen:** *When does a person know it's time to reach out for assistance if they're seeing the symptoms of stress affecting their own or a family member's life?*

**Laura:** If you find that you're experiencing sleep disturbances, change in your appetite, unusual irritability, excessive anxiety or frequent headaches lasting more than two weeks, you may want to reach out for assistance. Although most people aren't able to see a therapist face-to-face right now, many insurance companies are recognizing the importance of mental health care and are paying for tele-counseling sessions with therapists. Family and friends can be a good listening ear. Getting professional counseling can help if you have prolonged symptoms that just don't seem to be going away.

**Annie:** When it comes to children and stress concerns with the pandemic, or if they are even noticing that you're stressed as a parent, it is always best to tell the truth but ensure that it is developmentally appropriate. For younger children listen to their questions and only volunteer information that is necessary. Make sure they know that having feelings is part of being a human being, and not all our feelings are going to be good feelings. With older children and teenagers, they always have access to information through their phone. Make sure you are having more in-depth conversations about what is going on and make sure your teenager has access to appropriate resources. Always remind them that they have a safe place to talk and encourage them to ask for help if they are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or confused.

