



Calming the Storm

Preventing Distress Self-Care Checklist

Taking steps to stay in good physical and mental health is something you should do for yourself. Managing multiple problems in a short time span can lead to mental and emotional distress. When you are experiencing a major change or several small changes in your life that can lead to stress, you are more vulnerable to physical illness and injury.

The following checklist includes healthy habits that can help minimize stress.

- Check** the square for those that you ***do*** on a regular basis.
- Check** the circle for the habits that you ***would like to do*** on a regular basis.

Are you practicing healthy eating habits?

Do you...

- Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day?
- Avoid eating foods high in fat?
- Eat slowly and savor your favorite foods?
- Watch your serving size?
- Limit alcohol?
- Limit "comfort foods," particularly in times of stress?
- Avoid "yo-yo" dieting?

Are you resting well? Do you...

- Get plenty of sleep (seven hours is good, eight hours is better.)?
- Take rest breaks during the day?
- Avoid the television for at least one hour prior to going to bed?
- Establish a consistent bedtime?
- Allow yourself time to reflect on the positive things about the day?
- Give yourself some time for relaxing and reflection?

Are you setting goals? Do you...

- Write a plan that includes goals and activities to reach the goals?
- Establish priorities and focus on them?
- List the values upon which your goals are based?
- Adapt your plan to address new information and circumstances?
- Celebrate achievement of small steps in your plan?

Are you getting enough physical activity?

Do you...

- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week?
- Walk short distances rather than drive?

- Involve yourself in some physical activity that you enjoy---basketball, softball, dancing, swimming, walking, biking, etc.?
- Build some physical activity into your everyday routine---sweeping the floor, tending the garden, scrubbing the bathroom, walking to the mailbox?

Are you getting the most out of your job?

Do you...

- Assess how your job interacts with your life goals?
- Concentrate on the parts of your job that you enjoy the most?
- Limit complaining about your job?
- Take action on the aspects of your job that you think need to change?
- Set work priorities?
- Work in increments to achieve your job goals?
- Assess the costs and benefits of moving up the career ladder?
- Appreciate the work of others in your workplace?
- Give positive feedback to people with whom you work?
- Enhance your work space?
- Assert your needs in ways that others can respect?
- Shed the urge to be superman/superwoman?
- Postpone new commitments if you are already overextended?
- Take a break for blaming yourself and others? (Address problems directly, and move on.)
- Accept that some situations or people are not going to change? (Focus on the healthiest way for you to respond to the situation.)

Are you managing your finances effectively? Do you...

- Write a detailed financial plan for you and your family?
- Make sure that your financial plan matches your life goals?
- Plan finances so you do not get into major debt?
- Discuss financial goals and plans with your spouse and other family members?
- Make a written copy of the plan available to all family members?
- Modify the plan when confronted with emergencies or crises?
- Allow room for negotiating changes to meet family and individual needs?

Are you nurturing relationships with your family and friends? Do you...

- Verbally and non-verbally express love?
- Give and receive emotional support?
- Tell your spouse how much you appreciate him or her?
- Say positive things to your children?
- Encourage open and honest communication?
- Forgive quickly and move on?
- Give positive feedback, praise and complements?
- Say things that invite others around you feel good about themselves?
- Stay in touch with friends and family?
- Allow other people to be supportive?
- Talk with folks about the blessings in your life?
- Talk about your worries and concerns with other people?
- Use opportunities to establish and maintain social support? (Go to social events---county fairs, church socials, group dinners, arts and crafts fairs, sports events, etc.)

Are you laughing enough? Do you...

- Allow yourself opportunities for fun and entertainment?
- Read fun and entertaining books, magazines, and articles?
- Watch one or two silly television shows that make you laugh?
- Tell funny stories—particularly about yourself and your family?

SOURCES:

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- Take time to really listen to young children around you?
- Laugh out loud---from your belly?
- Laugh at yourself?

Are you doing anything for other people? Do you...

- Share with a neighbor when you have an abundance of something?
- Serve on boards or committees of a local organization?
- Visit someone that is ill or having a tough time?
- Give support to friends or neighbors when you know they are stressed?
- Try to change a practice or policy in your community that would help other people?
- Do small jobs for people who are going through a difficult time? (Mow the lawn, make trips to the grocery or pharmacy, take a meal to them, etc.)

Are you maintaining a spiritual connection? Do you...

- Really see the good things around you?
- Have some time for solitude and to reflect on your good fortune?
- Talk positively to yourself about yourself?
- Take a walk in the woods or some other place of beauty?
- Concentrate on the ways that everything and everyone is, in some way, connected?
- Forgive yourself and other people?
- Let go of old grudges, disappointments, and hard feelings?
- Give other people credit when it is deserved and take credit when you deserve it?

For more information on health issues in Kentucky, please visit:
www.uky.edu/HEEL

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