

Managing Everyday Stress

Supports: Building Block 16 — Stress Management & Self-Care

Why It Matters

Stress is a normal part of being human. A little of it can sharpen your focus and help you rise to a challenge. The trouble starts when stress runs in the background all day, every day — because your body was built to handle short bursts of pressure, not a steady drip of it. Over time that constant hum can wear on your sleep, your mood, your energy, and the food choices you make when you are running on empty. The good news is that stress is manageable. You cannot remove every source of pressure from your life, but you can build a handful of habits that help your body settle back down, and you can practice them until they feel natural.

What to Know

What stress does in the body

When your brain senses a demand, it releases hormones that speed up your heart, tighten your muscles, and pump quick energy into your bloodstream. That response is helpful when you need to act fast. But if it never fully switches off, you may notice tension headaches, a short fuse, trouble winding down at night, or a pull toward comfort eating. Recognizing these signals early is the first step — they are your body asking for a reset.

Simple resets you can use anywhere

- Breathe slowly. Inhale gently for a count of four, hold for a moment, and let the breath out for a count of six. A few rounds tell your nervous system it is safe to relax.
- Move your body. A short walk, a few stretches, or a couple minutes of tidying gives stress hormones somewhere to go.
- Step outside. Daylight and fresh air are quiet mood boosters, even for five minutes.
- Name it. Saying to yourself, 'I feel stressed because...' turns a vague pressure into something you can actually work with.
- Reach out. A short message or call to someone you trust reminds you that you are not carrying it alone.

A note on food and stress. Reaching for a snack when you are wound up is a very common, very human response — not a failure. Notice it with curiosity rather than judgment. Sometimes a glass of water, a short walk, or ten slow breaths is what your body was actually asking for.

Build a little recovery into every day

You do not need an hour of quiet to unwind. Small pockets of calm, repeated often, add up. Protect your sleep, take real breaks during the day, and keep one or two activities in your week that genuinely refill your tank — whether that is music, time in nature, prayer, laughter, or a hobby that has nothing to do with being productive.

Try This

Pick one small practice to try this week. The goal is not to eliminate stress — it is to give your body regular chances to reset. Jot your thoughts below and bring them to your next coaching session.

- ? Where do you feel stress most in your body, and what is usually happening when it shows up?
- ? Which one reset from this handout will you try first, and when in your day could it fit?
- ? Who is one person you could reach out to when a day feels like too much?