

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

# MANAGE STRESS

### How is Stress helpful and harmful?

Stress is a normal reaction to dealing with changes and challenges of everyday life. Stress is the result of brain chemicals, called hormones, that trigger your “fight or flight” response - making you sweat, breathe faster, tense your muscles, and prepare to take action. A little bit of stress can be helpful - help you meet deadlines, be productive, and arrive on time. However, experiencing long-term stress is very hard on your mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Some stress is out of our control and this can feel overwhelming.

### What can I do to support myself when experiencing Stress?

Below are a few teachings and techniques to support you when stress is taking over you and your life.



**ISPARC**  
Indigenous Sport,  
Physical Activity & Recreation Council



First Nations Health Authority



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA



There are many parts of our society that affect our health and lives that are beyond an individual's level of control. We want to acknowledge the social, political, economic, and environmental impacts to the health of the lands, waters, and forests, which in turn affects our health. We want you to know we are here to support you with your wellness goals and will meet you wherever you are at in your wellness journey.



## NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT

Make time to do activities that make you feel connected, whether it be to the land, your family, ancestors, or Creator. This could be getting out on the land, waters, drumming, dancing, or spending time with family or friends.



## IDENTIFY STRESS & COPING STRATEGIES

Identify stressors - can you eliminate or minimize it? Some stress is beyond an individual's level of control. It can help to break down potential solutions into small, manageable steps. Be mindful of your coping strategies that may not reduce stress. Alcohol, drugs, and caffeine can reduce your coping skills and affect your sleep.



## CONNECTION

Make connections. Connect with someone who makes you laugh. Connect with an Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn about plants that can support your journey in taking control of stress like lavender, mint, rose, chamomile, sage, and sweetgrass.\*



## MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity reduces the feeling of stress! Find activities that you enjoy and start small - even 10 minutes a day! Go for a short walk at lunch, try chair exercises or a short home exercise video.



## SEEK SUPPORT

Who can you reach out to? A friend, an Elder, a family member, or a wellness health professional - you are never alone!



## ENGAGE IN CEREMONY

Smudging and cedar brushing are used for healing, cleansing, and purifying negative energy. Try and set some time aside to connect with (or to) whatever ceremony means to you.



## MINDFULNESS

Mindset is important - embrace positivity, practice gratitude through prayer or journaling as well as mindfulness exercises. Be mindful of overextending yourself. It is ok to set boundaries and say no!



## PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Try researching "sleep hygiene" and create a nighttime routine that works for you.



## SCHEDULE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Schedule time to relax, time for self-care, and time for activities that you love (taking a bath, art, reading, beading, writing, etc.)

*\*Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

## Where you can find more information and support



If in crisis, call: KUU-US Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717 or 1-833-METISBC for culturally safe help 24 hrs/day.



**Watch on YouTube:** 90:10 The Single Most Important Thing You Can Do For Your Stress and How To Make Stress Your Friend  
**Try practicing mindfulness:** <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>



Call FNHA Benefits: 1-955-550-5454 or your work benefits provider about counselling services.