



Financial Resource Center

Tips for handling stress when times get tough

During difficult times, stress and panic can overcome us. Here are some steps you can take to retain your sanity:

- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible, but don't overdo it; cut out unnecessary "busyness" and don't take on new projects.
- Allow time for activities that make you happy.
- Acknowledge that you may be operating below your normal level for a while.
- Structure your time even more carefully than usual – it's normal to forget things when you're under stress.
- Keep lists and double-check any important work.
- Maintain control where you can – make small decisions even if you feel like the issue is unimportant, or you don't care (it is important to maintain control in some areas of your life).
- Spend time with others, even though it may be difficult at first – it's easy to withdraw when you're hurt, but now you need the company of others.
- Establish support systems: family, friends, places of worship, school, coworkers, etc.
- Be aware that children are often unable to express their thoughts or feelings verbally; often they will act them out.
- Let your children know that you are there to listen if they want to talk – be honest with them about your own thoughts and feelings.
- Avoid self-prescribed medication and addictive substances like drugs, alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine – controlled substances may reduce the perception of stress, but they do not minimize anxiety.
- Find help; if you feel as though you are alone and no one can help, don't let your feelings of panic, anger, and loneliness build.
- Recognize and deal with your stress – counseling or a support group can help.
- Give yourself time – you may feel better for a while, then have a "relapse." This is normal; allow plenty of time to adjust to the new realities you must face.

Content provided by the FEI Behavioral Health Employee Assistance and Crisis Management Programs' "The Critical Incident Response".