



# Stamp Out Stress and Anxiety

**A Guide for Working Caregivers**  
**With Expert Advice from Dr. Eboni Green**

*Are You Stressed and Anxious as a Caregiver?*

*You're Not Alone.*

*Take This Course...And Learn To Stamp out Stress and Anxiety*

Life can be overwhelming. Stress and anxiety can take over our lives and leave you feeling hopeless and burned out. It's easy to get caught up with work, family, and caring for a loved one or client.

Most caregivers live with anxiety disorders that are aggravated or brought on by excessive stress. This illness has debilitated them and made it impossible to cope. That is, until they figure out how to manage stress and anxiety.

The first step is learning how to cope with stressful situations that could bring on anxiety, or panic attacks. You can visit doctors and other practitioners and spend thousands of dollars, but there's an easier, less expensive way.

If you're suffering from anxiety and excessive stress, you can get all the information you need – right here in this amazing course, "Stamp out Stress and Anxiety."

There's absolutely no reason why you have to suffer in distress.

*You Will Learn Ways To Relax And Live a More Fulfilling Life...*

Stress is all around us and will always be a part of our lives. If you're more resilient and pro-active with your stress you'll be a calmer, happier caregiver.

## About Caregiver Support Services

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We are Caregiver Support Services, a company that focuses on family and frontline caregivers. Our mission is to help people become great caregivers for the people and patients around them. It takes a team of people to help others and find solutions for the betterment of the community. We know that health can sometimes be stressful, but with the right support system and focused knowledge, offering care to those in need can be a rewarding experience.

Through our in-person Nursing Assistant and Medication Aide Program, we have trained over 2,000 caregivers. As we work to improve and enhance our company to help caregivers from all over the world, our trainings are now available online. We wish to see people learn and grow as caregivers, reaching new levels of quality care for all patients in need.

With [Caregiver Support Services](#), no caregiver is ever alone in their journey to assist. We work with organizations to create the best solutions for everyone. Taking care of people in their time of need is a calling of the highest honor. Caregivers are blessings to our health system, and they deserve the right learning aids to nurture confidence in their caregiving situation. With our resources, caregivers can find the answers they seek to help loved ones and patients throughout their caregiving journey.

I hope you enjoy this training.

Take care,



Dr. Eboni Green

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# 01

## CHAPTER

# Introduction

Caring for a loved one or client while working and balancing the needs of your family can be overwhelming. It is easy to feel as though you must be everything to everyone. In fact, some caregivers find they are so busy doing that they do not take for themselves, and if they do, they feel guilty. This cycle is a losing one and is a contributing factor driving stress and anxiety levels among caregivers to an all-time high.

## What is Stress?

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Stress is the body's response to an external stressor, whereas anxiety is the body's reaction to stress. Situations prompting stress and anxiety can be real or perceived. During a stressful situation, your body activates a fight or flight response to prepare you for possible danger. Your body also responds with a tightening of the muscles and an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing rate. If stress is short-term, then the body returns to normal. However,

if you stay in a stressful state for a long period, it can result in serious physical and mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, personality disorders, heart diseases, sexual dysfunction, and gastrointestinal disorders (Rasheed 2016).

## Global Implications of Stress

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Stress also has global implications. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic increased distress globally. Along with the health and financial crisis, it also took a toll on people's mental health (Sher 2020). The pandemic disrupted education, work, economy, health, and relationships. According to John Hopkins University, approximately 215,000 people died during the COVID-19 pandemic (2021). This number is greater than the number of Americans who died during World War I. Due to this devastating rise in casualties, an immense wave of stress and anxiety flowed throughout the world, especially in families who lost their loved ones or who were themselves infected with COVID-19.

## Life Disrupted

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During the pandemic, many people lost their jobs, experienced financial distress, and were afraid of survival. According to the American Psychological Association (2020), 8 in 10 (78%) adults said that the pandemic was a substantial source of stress in their lives, with 2 in 3 adults (67%) stating that their stress increased throughout the pandemic. The World Health Organization (2022) suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a 25% increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide. Social isolation was an underlying cause of this unprecedented stress. Loneliness, fear of infection, grief, death, and the financial crisis also worked as major stressors among caregivers during the pandemic.



## Stress and Anxiety: Constant Companions

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Stress and anxiety are constant companions. In fact, one of the major symptoms of stress is anxiety. You might also consider that stress accounts for 80 percent of all illnesses, with 90 percent of visits to a primary care physician being attributed to stress-related disorders. Stress is more dangerous than originally thought, as stress often prompts people to respond in unhealthy ways such as smoking, drinking alcohol, eating poorly, or becoming physically inactive. This damages the body in addition to the wear and tear of the stress itself.

*Read More and Learn to Reduce the Effects of Stress  
and Anxiety in your Life*

You can't eliminate stress; it's part of life. You can, however, manage it. It's how we react to it that makes the difference. I have suffered from anxiety disorders caused by stress for years and learned ways to cope. This book is a combination of my own experiences and advice from experts. It will provide you with tools that you can use when you're in a stressful situation, including coping techniques so that you can maintain your health and well-being.

*Let's reduce the effects of stress and anxiety in your life!*



# 02

## CHAPTER

# Blocking Behaviors Keeping Your Stress Alive

There are three obsessive behaviors that you are likely to be engaging in that can impede your healing and prevent you from enjoying life. Identifying these barriers is the first step you can take to block behaviors that likely result in distress.

## Three Obsessive Behaviors

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### Are you obsessively negative?

When you are obsessively negative, it means that you have a tendency to look at all the things you don't like about people, places, situations, and things in your life.

Is your internal voice telling you things like, “You can’t do this!” or “No one understands!” or “Nothing ever works.” If the answer is yes, then you are sending yourself negative signals. You may be doing this unconsciously, so it is important that you tune into this voice. It could be holding you back from knowing what it’s like to view life from a positive lens and enjoy the beauty in yourself and people around you! There’s a whole world out there for you...with happiness and positive thinking.

### Do you engage in obsessive perfectionism?

When you engage in obsessive perfectionism, you are centered on trying to do everything “just so” to the point of driving yourself into an anxious state of being. You may discover that you are making statements such as, “I have to do this right, or I’ll be a failure!” or “If I am not precise, people will be mad at me or won’t like me!” Again, this behavior may be under the threshold of your awareness, but it interferes greatly with your ability to enjoy things without feeling “uptight” and “distressed.”

### Are you obsessed about analyzing situations?

When you are obsessed about analyzing things, you might find yourself wanting to rehash a task or an issue repeatedly. For instance, you might make statements like, “I need to look this over, study it, and know it inside and out...or else I can’t relax!” or “If I relax and let things go without looking them over repeatedly, things tend to go wrong!”

## Letting go of Stress and Getting Control Over your Anxiety

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Although analytical thinking can be an excellent skill, if it’s done in excess, you will be too busy analyzing everything and everyone to enjoy life. Gaining insight into how you process information is one of the most important factors in letting go of stress and gaining power over your anxiety.

## Blocking Behaviors: Two Tips

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### TIP 01



If you find yourself engaging in any of the above “Blocking Behaviors,” there are two things you can do to help yourself. First, ask the people you know, love, and trust, “Am I negative about things?” “Do I complain a lot?” and “Am I difficult to be around?” This may be hard for you to listen to, as the truth sometimes hurts; however, the insight you will gain from the assessment of others is invaluable. You’ll know precisely how others see you. Accept their comments as helpful information, and you’ll gain insight about yourself.

### TIP 02



Keep a journal to write down and establish patterns of when you are using “blocking behaviors.” Even if you are not thrilled with the idea of writing, you can make simple entries into a notebook or journal each day. By doing this, you’ll begin to see patterns in your behavior that reveal exactly what you’re doing to prevent yourself from decreasing your anxiety.

Stress and anxiety affect many factors in our body, not only in our mental state. Cancer and other deadly diseases are related to stress and anxiety as their effects change the chemical composition of the body. It’s scary to think that living with stress and anxiety will impact your mortality, but it’s true. You can lead a productive, successful, and fulfilling life and career without endangering your health. Yet the first step to developing a plan to address your stress and anxiety is to know the difference between the two. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss each of these conditions more closely.





# 03

## CHAPTER

# Stress and Anxiety: An Overview

My life is no longer my own. My son takes priority. I have a full-time demanding job as a supervisor. Paul's supply and equipment orders, medication, appointments, nursing issues, and insurance issues are also more than a full-time job. Paul has 24-hour nursing (LVN); however, the home care business pays very little with no overtime, sick time, holiday time, and has very expensive health benefits. Nurses only stay until they can find better work. His nursing schedule has never been fully staffed. We have been dropped by two nursing agencies because His case had too many demands for coverage.

*A Family Caregiver*

Many people think that stress and anxiety are the same thing. This couldn't be further from the truth! There is a difference between stress and anxiety. The following outlines the differences between the two:

## The Difference Between Stress and Anxiety



Stress	Anxiety
Stress arises when work, family, caregiving, and other tasks place undue pressure on your mind, body, and spirit.	Anxiety occurs when fear overcomes all emotions and is accompanied by worry, apprehension, and isolation. Other symptoms of anxiety include chest pains, dizziness, shortness of breath, and panic attacks.
Stress is caused by something occurring in your life now.	Anxiety is stress that continues after that stressor is gone.
Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or even anxious.	Anxiety is a feeling of apprehension or fear and is almost always accompanied by feelings of impending doom. The source of this uneasiness is not always known, which can add to the distress you feel.
During stressful events, your adrenal glands release adrenaline, a hormone, which activates our body's defense mechanisms, causing our hearts to pound, blood pressure to rise, muscles to tense, and the pupils of our eyes to dilate.	



## Stress and Distress

Stress is the way our bodies and minds react to something which upsets our normal balance in life. Constant stress can lead to distress. Aches and pains, palpitations, anxiety, chronic fatigue, crying, over or under-eating, frequent infections, and a decrease in your sexual desire are signs that indicate that you might be experiencing distress.

Of course, every time we are under stress, we do not react to such an extreme, and we are not always under such great duress or fear every time we are confronted with a stressful situation.

Some people are more susceptible than others to stress. For some, even ordinary daily decisions seem insurmountable. Deciding what to have for dinner or what to buy at the store is a seemingly, monumental dilemma. On the other hand, there are those people who seem to thrive under stress by becoming highly productive while being driven by the force of pressure.

## Stress among Working Caregivers

Research suggests working family caregivers experience higher levels of stress-related hormones than non-caregivers. Does this mean non-caregivers don't experience stress? Absolutely not! It means that non-caregivers may not experience distress as often or to the same degree that working caregivers do. This means, for working caregivers, it's particularly important to schedule time for yourself; so you will be in a better frame of mind to assist your loved one or client once your stress level is reduced.

## Anxiety

Anxiety, on the other hand, is a feeling of unease. Everyone experiences it when faced with a stressful situation, for example, before an exam or an interview, or during a worrying time such as when your loved one has an illness. It is normal to feel anxious when facing something difficult or dangerous, and mild anxiety can be a positive and useful experience. However,

for many people, anxiety interferes with normal life. Excessive anxiety is often associated with other psychiatric conditions, such as depression. Anxiety is considered abnormal when it is very prolonged or severe, it happens in the absence of a stressful event, or it is interfering with everyday activities such as going to work.

## The Physical Symptoms of Anxiety

The physical symptoms of anxiety result when the brain sends messages to parts of the body to prepare for the “fight or flight” response. The heart, lungs, and other parts of the body work faster. The brain also releases stress hormones, including adrenaline. Common indicators of excessive anxiety include:

- ➔ Diarrhea
- ➔ Dry mouth
- ➔ Rapid heartbeat or palpitations
- ➔ Insomnia
- ➔ Irritability or anger
- ➔ Inability to concentrate
- ➔ Fear of being “crazy”
- ➔ Feeling unreal and not in control of your actions which is called depersonalization

## Anxiety can Arise from Several Factors

Anxiety can arise from several factors. Obviously, the presence of stress in your life can make you have anxious thoughts. Many people who suffer from anxiety disorders occupy their minds with excessive worry. You can be worried about anything from health matters to job problems.

## Recreational and Medicinal Drugs

Certain drugs, both recreational and medicinal, can also lead to symptoms of anxiety due to either side effects or withdrawal from the drug. Such drugs include caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, cold remedies, decongestants, bronchodilators for asthma, tricyclic antidepressants, cocaine, amphetamines, diet pills, ADHD medications, and thyroid medications.

## Other Factors that Contribute to Stress or Anxiety

A poor diet can also contribute to stress or anxiety -- for example, low levels of vitamin B12. Performance anxiety is related to specific situations, like taking a test or making a presentation in public. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a stress disorder that develops after a traumatic event like war, physical or sexual assault, or a natural disaster.

In very rare cases, a tumor of the adrenal gland (pheochromocytoma) may be the cause of anxiety. This happens because of an overproduction of hormones responsible for the feelings and symptoms of anxiety.

While anxiety may seem a bit scary, what's even scarier is that excessive anxiety and stress can lead to depression. Suffering from depression can be a lifelong struggle, but the good news is that all of this is manageable!

So, let's take a few quizzes to see if you are suffering from too much stress, excessive anxiety, or depression.

## QUIZ TIME!

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Before you begin here, although this information has come from reliable sources, it isn't meant to be a diagnostic tool. These quizzes are simply guidelines to help you recognize any problems you might have and be able to effectively deal with those problems.

### Depression

Because depression can be the most serious of our topics, let's start by seeing if you may be depressed. Keep in mind that everyone has his or her "blue" days. The thing that separates clinical depression from simple melancholy is that the symptoms occur over time. These feelings do not come and go; rather, they stay with you and adversely impact your life.

Ask yourself the following questions. Answer yes if you've been feeling this way consistently over a period of two weeks.

1. Do you find yourself constantly sad?
2. Are you un-motivated to do simple things like shower, clean up the house, or make dinner?
3. Do people tell you you're overly irritable?
4. Do you have trouble concentrating?
5. Are you feeling isolated from family and friends even when they are around you?
6. Have you lost interest in your favorite activities?
7. Do you feel hopeless, worthless, or guilty for no reason at all?
8. Are you always tired and have trouble sleeping?
9. Has your weight fluctuated significantly?

If you can answer “Yes” to five or more of these questions, you could be suffering from clinical depression. It is important for you to seek out the help of a medical professional, whether a doctor or a therapist. There are many medications out there that can help with depression.

I always tried to deny my own depression, but once I began taking an anti-depressant, I couldn't believe what a difference that one pill a day made! It gave me freedom from the “sandpit” I had fallen into and helped me enjoy life again. If you think you are depressed, ACT NOW! You deserve to be happy!

## Is Stress and Anxiety Taking Over your Life?

Let's see if stress and anxiety are taking over your life. Ask yourself the following:

1. Do you worry constantly and talk to yourself negatively?
2. Do you have difficulty concentrating?
3. Do you get mad and react easily?
4. Do you have recurring neck or headaches?
5. Do you grind your teeth?
6. Do you frequently feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed?
7. Do you feed your stress with unhealthy habits such as eating or drinking excessively, smoking, arguing, or avoiding yourself and life in other ways?
8. Do small pleasures fail to satisfy you?
9. Do you experience flashes of anger over a minor problem?

If you can answer “Yes” to most of these questions, then you do have excessive stress in your life. The good news is that you are taking this training and you will learn many valuable techniques to cope with that stress. But we'll get to that soon!

## Anxiety

Let's move on to anxiety.

1. Do you experience shortness of breath, heart palpitation, or shaking while at rest?
2. Do you have a fear of losing control or going crazy?
3. Do you avoid social situations because of fear?
4. Do you have fears of specific objects?
5. Do you fear that you will be in a place or situation from which you cannot escape?
6. Do you feel afraid of leaving your home?
7. Do you have recurrent thoughts or images that refuse to go away?
8. Do you feel compelled to perform certain activities repeatedly?
9. Do you persistently relive an upsetting event from the past?

Answering "Yes" to more than four of these questions can indicate an anxiety disorder.

Suffering from depression, too much stress or excessive anxiety can endanger your overall health. Moreover, stress and anxiety can lead to panic attacks, which can be a serious situation. It is time to take steps to overcome this – RIGHT NOW! Let's explore the subject of panic attacks.





# 04

## CHAPTER

# Understanding Panic Attacks

One of the unfortunate outcomes of suffering from distress and anxiety is a physical reaction of your body to the situation. During a panic attack, it is like your body is telling you that you need to rest for a moment in the most alarming way possible.

I had my first panic attack during a family event. There were about 30 family members at our home when I began to feel a bit “off.” I was having trouble breathing, my body felt disconnected, and my heart was beating at what seemed like 90 miles an hour. I hoped to “walk it off,” but that didn’t work. No matter what I tried, I couldn’t catch my breath. I felt like I was dying. I remember saying repeatedly, “Please not now. I’m not ready.” It was horrifying.

The good news: I wasn’t dying. But that night was the beginning of a terrible journey for me. Stress had taken over my life and was now affecting my entire body. Since then, I have had many panic attacks, and I’ve learned how to recognize that one is coming and how to control it.

## Signs of an Impending Panic Attack

Let's explore the signs of an impending panic attack:

- Palpitations
- A pounding heart or an accelerated heart rate
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Shortness of breath
- A choking sensation
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or stomach cramps
- De-realization (a feeling of unreality)
- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Fear of dying
- Numbness or a tingling sensation in your face and limbs
- Chills or hot flashes

You would be surprised at how many people go to the hospital emergency room completely sure that they're having a heart attack only to find out that it's a panic attack. They're that intense!

## What It's Like to Have a Panic Attack

It's very difficult for your loved ones to imagine or even understand what you are going through when you have a panic attack. In fact, they may lose patience with you, tell you to "get over it," or think you're faking. It may help if you share the following scenario with them:

*You are standing in line at the grocery store. It's been a long wait, but there's only one customer to go before you make it to the cashier. Wait, what was that? An unpleasant feeling forms in your throat, your chest feels tighter, now a sudden shortness of breath, and what do you know—your heart skips a beat. "Please, God, not here." You make a quick scan of the territory—is it threatening? There are four unfriendly faces behind you, and one person is in front. Pins and needles seem to prick you through your left arm, you feel slightly dizzy, and then the explosion of fear as you dread the worst. You are about to have a panic attack.*

*There is no doubt in your mind that this is going to be a big one. Okay, time for you to focus. You know how to deal with this – at least you hope you do! Start breathing deeply – in through the nose, out through the mouth. Think relaxing thoughts, and again, while breathing in, think "Relax," and then breathe out. But it doesn't seem to be having any positive effect; in fact, just concentrating on breathing is making you feel self-conscious and more uptight.*

*Maybe if you just try to relax your muscles. Tense both shoulders, hold for 10 seconds, then release. Try it again. Nope, still no difference. The anxiety is getting worse, and the very fact that you are out of coping techniques worsens your panic. If only you were with a family member or close friend, then you could feel more confident in dealing with this situation.*

*The adrenaline is pumping through your system; your body is tingling with uncomfortable sensations. You feel like you are losing complete control of your emotions. No one around you has any idea of the sheer terror you are experiencing. For them, it's just a regular day and another frustratingly slow line at the grocery store.*

*You realize you are out of options. It's time to run. You excuse yourself from the line looking embarrassed as it is now that it is your turn to pay. The cashier looks bewildered when you leave your shopping behind and stroll towards the door. There is no time for excuses—you need to be alone. You leave the supermarket and get into your car to ride it out alone. You wonder whether this one was the big one. The one you fear will push you over the edge mentally and physically. Ten minutes later, the panic subsides. It's only 11:00 in the morning; how in the world can you make it through the rest of your day?*

If you suffer from panic or anxiety attacks, the above scenario probably sounds very familiar. It may have even induced feelings of anxiety and panic just reading it. In fact, it was difficult for me just to write it.

## What Triggers Panic Attacks?

The situations that trigger your panic and anxiety may differ. Maybe the bodily sensations are a little different. What's important to realize is that panic attacks are very real to the people who are having them, and they should never be pushed off to the side.

I remember one evening at a comedy show with my husband and close friends. I was laughing and enjoying the show. There was no obvious trigger, and I felt completely relaxed. Out of nowhere, I began having symptoms of a panic attack. The four walls were closing in around me. I couldn't breathe and felt like I was dying.

I sat still for a moment and began deep breathing exercises. The symptoms eventually went away, but it left me wondering why exactly I had that attack. There was no obvious reason, no stressful situation, and no indicator that a panic attack might be impending.

That's the strange thing about panic. Sometimes your mind can play tricks on you. Even when you think you're in no danger of having a panic attack, your brain might be feeling differently. That's the scary part. The good news is that there are ways you can combat panic attacks so you can cope when you find yourself in that situation.





# 05

## CHAPTER

# Working Through Panic Attacks

If you have panic attacks, it may help to comfort you that you are not alone! You're not even one in a million. In America, it is estimated that almost 5% of the population suffers from an anxiety disorder.

For some, panic attacks may be infrequent, only cropping up during situations—like when having to speak in front of large crowds. For others, panic attacks can be so frequent and recurring that it inhibits them from leaving their home. Frequent panic attacks often develop into what medical physicians refer to as an “anxiety disorder.”

## Coping with Anxiety Disorder

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There are many ways of coping with an anxiety disorder. Every suggestion may not work for you. However, you may find knowing some of the most common coping techniques for dealing with panic attacks helpful in determining what works best for you.

### Recognizing when a Panic Attack is about to Begin

Your first step is to recognize when a panic attack is about to begin. When you have enough of them, you start to really pay attention to the tingling sensation, the shortness of breath, and the disconnection from the real life around you. Many people I talk to wonder what that disconnection is like. They have a hard time understanding it. Those of us who have panic attacks are all too familiar with it. It's like you can look at a solid object and see that it is there. You know it's there, but a part of your mind doubts that it really IS there. You may find yourself reaching out to touch that object just to be sure. You feel like you're not a part of the world around you. It's as if you are just a spectator in your own life with no control over anything around you. This is a horrible feeling.

### How do you Start Trying to Combat Panic Attacks?

How do you start trying to combat your panic attacks? What if I told you the trick to ending panic and anxiety attacks is to WANT to have one? That sounds strange, even contradictory, doesn't it? But the want really does help push it away. Does this mean that you should be able to bring on a panic attack at this very moment? Absolutely not! What it means is that when you are afraid of something – in this case, a panic attack – it will more than likely appear and wreak havoc. When you stand up to the attack, your chances of fending it off are much greater.

If you resist a situation out of fear, the fear around that issue will persist. How do you stop resisting—you move directly into it, into the path of the anxiety, and by doing so, it cannot persist.



In essence, what this means is that if you daily voluntarily seek to have a panic attack, you cannot have one. Try in this very moment to have a panic attack, and I will guarantee you cannot. You may not realize it, but you have always decided to panic. You make the choice by saying this is beyond my control, whether it is consciously or subconsciously.

Another way to appreciate this is to imagine having a panic attack as like standing on a cliff's edge. The anxiety seemingly pushes you closer to falling over the edge. To be rid of the fear, you must metaphorically jump. You must jump off the cliff edge and into the anxiety and fear and all the things that you fear most.

## How Do you Jump?

How do you jump? You jump by wanting to have a panic attack. Your real safety is the fact that a panic attack will never harm you. That is a medical fact. Anxiety causes an imbalance in your life whereby all the mental worry creates a top-heavy sensation. All your focus is moved from the center of your body to the head. Schools of meditation often like to demonstrate an example of this top-heavy imbalance by showing how easily the body can lose its sense of center.

## Relax

The key to overcoming panic attacks is to relax. That's easy to say but difficult to do. A good strategy to accomplish this is to concentrate on your breathing, making sure it is slow and steady. One of the first signs of a panic attack is difficulty breathing, and you may find yourself panting to catch a breath. When you focus on making those breaths even, your heart rate will slow down, and the panic will subside.

## Focus on your Breathing

Breathing more slowly and deeply has a calming effect. A good way to breathe easier is to let all the air out of your lungs. This forces your lungs to reach for a deeper breath next time. Continue to focus on your out-breath, letting all the air out of your lungs, and soon you'll find

your breathing is deeper, and you feel calmer. Ideally, you want to take the focus off the fact that you are having a panic attack. Try to press your feet, one at a time, into the ground. Feel how connected and rooted they are to the ground.

## Lie Down with Your Bottom Near a Wall

An even better way is to lie down with your bottom near a wall. Place your feet against the wall (your knees are bent) and press your feet one at a time into the wall. If you can breathe in as you press your foot against the wall and breathe out as you release it, it will be more effective. You should alternate between your feet. Do this for 10–15 minutes or until the panic subsides.

## Remain Present

Use all your senses to take full notice of what you see, hear, feel, and smell in your environment. This will help you to remain present. Panic is generally associated with remembering upsetting events from the past or anticipating something upsetting in the future. Anything that helps keep you focused on the present will be calming. Try holding a pet; looking around your room and noticing the colors, textures, and shapes; listening closely to the sounds you hear; call a friend; or smell the smells that are near you.

## Use Aromatherapy

Many people strongly advocate aromatherapy to deal with panic and anxiety. Lavender can have an especially calming and soothing effect when you smell it. You can find essential oil of lavender at many stores. Keep it handy and take a sniff when you start feeling anxious. Try putting a few drops of lavender essential oil into some oil (olive or grape seed oil will do) and rub it on your body. Keep a prepared mixture in a dark glass bottle for when you need it. You can even prepare several bottles, with a small one to carry with you. Other essential oils known to help panic and panic attacks are frankincense and marjoram. Smell each of them, and use what smells best to you or a combination of your favorite oils mixed in olive or grape seed oil.

## Make a List of the Things You're Afraid Will Happen

You may want to prepare yourself BEFORE a panic attack happens. When you're not in a panicked state, make a list of the things that you're afraid will happen. Then write out calming things that tell you the opposite of your fears. Then you can repeat these things to yourself when the panic starts to come.

Prepare a list of things to do in case of panicked feelings, and it will be ready for you when you need it. Fill it with lots of soothing messages and ideas of calming things to do. I find this to be a very helpful tool. I am never without my small notebook that has these positive affirmations in it.

Panic can be a very scary thing to go through, especially if you're alone. Preparing for when the panic comes can really help reduce the panic and even sometimes help to prevent it.



# 06

## CHAPTER

# Managing Stress

We know that stress is a part of life, and there's no getting away from it. In fact, some stress is good stress. It can motivate you to do things you would not do in a relaxed state. Stress can make you brave enough to go forward when normally you would hesitate.

You must be resilient to effectively cope with stress and help it enhance your life instead of control it. How do you get strong and resilient? By learning how to take control of your stress and make it work FOR you instead of AGAINST you.

Recognizing stress symptoms can be a positive influence in that we're compelled to act – and the sooner the better. It's not always easy to discern why you have the stress in each situation, but some of the more common events that trigger those emotions are the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, a job promotion, or a new relationship. We experience stress when we readjust our lives. Your body is asking for your help when you feel these stress symptoms.



There are three major approaches to managing stress. The first is the action-oriented approach. In this method, the problems that cause stress are identified, and necessary changes are made to alleviate them.

The next approach is emotional-oriented. Here, you overcome stress by giving a different color to the experience that caused stress. The situation, which causes stress, is seen humorously or from a different angle. Sometimes you can't avoid the stressor, but you can learn to see the humor instead of the doom.

The third way is acceptance-oriented approach. This approach focuses on surviving the stress caused due to some problems in the past.

The first stress management tip is to understand the root cause of your stress. No one understands your problem better than you do. A few minutes spend to recognize your true feelings can completely change the situation.

During this process, identify what triggered the stress. Share this with a loved one if you can. If you are overstressed and feel you are going to collapse, take a deep breath and count to ten. This pumps extra oxygen into your system and rejuvenates the entire body.

When under severe stress, meditate for a moment and pull out of the current situation for a little while. Stand up from your current position and walk. Stretch yourself. Soon you will find that the stress has lessened.

This is because you have relaxed. Relaxation is the best medicine for stress. Smiling is another form of stress management. If you are at the workplace, just stand up and smile at your colleague in the far corner. You will see a change in your mood.

You can also invent your own stress management tips. The basic idea is to identify the cause of stress and pull out from it for a moment, and then deal with it. Taking a short walk and looking at nature can be another stress reliever. Drinking a glass of water or playing small games are simple stress management techniques. The whole idea is changing the focus of attention. Then when you return to the problem, it does not look as monstrous.

## De-Stressing in your Personal Life

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The following are steps you can take toward relieving distress in your personal life:

### Exercise can be a great stress buster.

*According to many psychologists, motion creates emotion. When you are idle, it's easier to become depressed. Your heart rate slows down, and less oxygen travels to your brain. You might try standing up and walking around at a fast tempo and even jumping up and down a little bit. It may sound silly, but the results speak for themselves. Try it for a few minutes. It works like magic.*

### Take time to smell the roses.

*Visit an old friend. Paint a picture. Just do something for yourself. It'll jolt your imagination and spur your creativity and help you detach from your daily routine.*

### Meditate or pray.

*If there were one sustainable remedy I could offer you when the going gets tough, it would be prayer. Many people, depending on their faith, might call it meditation. It doesn't matter what you call it if you have a place to run to.*

### Avoid using artificial means to deal with your stress.

*That means don't automatically pour a glass of wine when you think you're getting stressed out, and don't light up a cigarette. Alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and drugs can make the problem worse. A better idea is to practice the relaxation techniques you've learned here. Then, once you're relaxed, you can have that glass of wine if you want.*



## Spend time outside.

*A little sunshine can have amazing effects on your stress level and will enhance your entire outlook on life. Your improved attitude will have a positive effect on everyone in your family and your circle of friends. Not only will you be less stressed, but you will also be healthier, happier, and more energetic; ready to face whatever obstacles come your way.*

## Take time for yourself.

*Your number one priority; once your own needs are met, you will discover you have more time for others. And you may find more pleasure in helping others when you don't feel that you must always put others' needs before your own.*

## Sing.

*Music is extremely beneficial in alleviating stress. Think how much better you can feel when you belt out "Copacabana" at the top of your lungs! Who cares if you can't carry a tune? You're doing this for you!*

## Start a garden.

*Tending plants, fruits, vegetables, and flowers and watching them grow, bloom, or yield food is rewarding. Avid gardeners say working a garden is the best way to control stress and worry. An added benefit is the creation of a more beautiful, restful environment.*

## Look at the stars and the moon.

*It can be a very humbling experience to lay on a blanket with your hands behind your head and gaze up into the night sky. It's more than humbling; it's downright beautiful and relaxing!*

## Swing.

*Remember the feeling of sitting inside that little piece of leather on the playground as you sway back and forth and feel the wind whipping through your hair? Do that! If you don't have a swing in your yard, go to a playground and remember to pump your legs back and forth to see how high you can go.*

## Take a candlelit bubble bath.

*You can benefit from a warm bath. Lay your head back, feel the bubbles and the warm water, and let your stress go right down the drain.*

## Be carefree and creative.

*Allow yourself the freedom to express yourself, and don't worry that you're not keeping with the image of who you are 'supposed' to be. Just relax and enjoy yourself. We all have an inner child; let it free.*

Now you have twelve ways to relax and de-stress! You can come up with your own ways as well! The key, really, is to find something that makes you feel better when you are overwhelmed and practice that method faithfully. You'll be a healthier person overall.



# 07

## CHAPTER

## Calming Yourself with a Visualization

The purpose of visualization is to enable you to quickly clear mental stress, tension, and anxious thinking. The visualization can be used when feeling stressed and is particularly useful when your mind is racing with fearful, anxious thinking.

This visualization process, when practiced frequently, is very effective for eliminating deep-seated mental anxieties or intrusive thoughts. To gain maximum benefit, the exercise must be carried out for longer than 10 minutes at a time, as anything shorter will not bring noticeable results.

There is no right or wrong way to carry out the visualization. Be intuitive with it, and do not feel you are unable to carry it out if you feel you are not very good at seeing mental imagery. If your attention is on the exercise, you will gain benefit.

It is best to do this exercise in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, and then when you are more practiced, you will be able to get the same positive results in a busier environment such as the workplace. You should notice a calming effect on your state of mind along with a sensation of mental release and relaxation.

## Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

Either sitting or standing, close your eyes and move your attention to your breath. To become aware of your breathing, place one hand on your upper chest and one on your stomach. Take a breath and let your stomach swell forward as you breathe in and fall back gently as you breathe out. Take the same depth of breath each time and try to get a steady rhythm going. Your hand on your chest should have little or no movement. Again, try to take the same depth of breath each time you breathe in. This is called Diaphragmatic Breathing.

When you feel comfortable with this technique, try to slow your breathing rate down by instituting a short pause after you have breathed out and before you breathe in again. Initially, it may feel as though you are not getting enough air in, but with regular practice, this slower rate will soon start to feel comfortable.

It is often helpful to develop a cycle where you count to three when you breathe in, pause, and then count to three when you breathe out (or 2, or 4—whatever is comfortable for you). This will also help you focus on your breathing without any other thoughts coming into your mind.

If you are aware of other thoughts entering your mind, just let them go and bring your attention back to counting and breathing. Continue doing this for a few minutes. If you practice this, you will begin to strengthen the Diaphragmatic Muscle, and it will start to work normally, leaving you with a nice, relaxed feeling all the time.



## Guided Visualization: Finding your Happy Place

Now move your attention to your feet. Try to really feel your feet. See if you can feel each toe. Picture the base of your feet and visualize roots growing slowly out through your soles and down into the earth. The roots are growing at a quickening pace and are reaching deep into the soil of the earth. You are now rooted firmly to the earth and feel stable like a large oak or redwood tree.

Stay with this feeling of grounded safety and security for a few moments. Once you have created a strong feeling or impression of being grounded like a tree, visualize a cloud of bright light forming way above you. A bolt of lightning from the luminous cloud hits the crown of your head, and that ignites a band of bright white light descending slowly from your head all the way down your body, over your legs, and out past your toes.

As the band of light passes over you, feel it clearing your mental state. It is illuminating your mind and clearing any disturbing or stressful thoughts that you may have been thinking about. Repeat this image four or five times until you feel a sense of clearing and release from any anxious thinking.

In finishing, see yourself standing under a large, luminescent waterfall. The water is radiant and bubbling with vitality and life. As you stand under the waterfall, you can feel the water run over every inch of your body, soothing you and instilling within you a sense of deep calm.

Try to taste the water. Open your mouth and let it run into your mouth, refreshing you. Hear it as it bounces off the ground around you. The water is life itself, and it is washing away stress and worry from your mind and body. After a moment, open your eyes.

Try to use all your senses when carrying out the visualization. To make the pictures in your mind as real as possible, use your senses of touch, taste, and hearing. Feel the water trickle down your body; hear the sound it makes as it splashes over you.

The more realistic the imagined scenarios, the more benefit you will gain. Many people report very beneficial and soothing results from using these simple visualizations frequently.



The mind is much like a muscle in that, to relax, it needs to regularly release what it is holding onto.

You can use any situation or location that will help calm you. We liken this to “finding your happy place.” Maybe you feel relaxed in a swimming pool or on the beach. Imagine yourself there. Just make sure wherever you go in your mind is a place where you can be calm and rested.

By visualizing the different situations, you are allowing your mind to release. It is like sending a message to your brain that when you close your eyes and begin this process, it is time for letting go of anything that it has been mentally holding onto, including anxious thinking.

## Training your Mind How to Let go of Stress

To train your mind on how to let go of the stress, it is important to practice this daily. With practice, you can learn to release all stress within minutes of starting the exercise. Your daily practice should take place before going to bed, as that will enable you to sleep more soundly.

Many people do not do these visualizations in the bedroom but in some other room before going to bed. That way, when they enter the bedroom and close the door, they are leaving the mental stress and anxious thinking behind them. Just be sure you can totally concentrate on your mental images.

Visualization as a tool for dealing with stress is very effective. If such visualization is carried out properly, you can reach a deep feeling of inner calm. This technique probably will not work in helping to end an anxiety attack, but it can help that attack from beginning. It is a very powerful support tool for ridding yourself of general anxiety sensations.

With practice, you discover you go days without having anxious thinking interrupt your life, and importantly, this significantly reduces the level of general anxiety you feel.

Visualization is a tool you can use to overcome anxious thoughts and feelings. Let's look at various ways that you can combat excessive stress – beginning with music.



# 08

## CHAPTER

# Music is a Mood-Changer

Music is a mood-changer and stress reliever. In fact, the human energetic system is influenced by sounds, with the physical body and focus centers (termed chakras) responding to certain tones and frequencies. Experts suggest that it is the rhythm of music or the beat that has the calming effect, although you may not be conscious that it is occurring. When you are in your mother's womb, you are influenced by your mother's heartbeat. At later stages in life, music has a similar effect, perhaps because you are associating it with the safe, relaxing, protective environment provided by your mother. Among the first stress-fighting changes that take place when we hear a tune is an increase in deep breathing. The body's production of serotonin also accelerates.

### Different Tastes in Music

In doing extensive research on what any given piece of music produces in the physiological response system, many unexpected things were found. Many of the so-called meditation and relaxation recordings produced adverse EEG patterns equal to the impact of Hard

Rock and Heavy Metal music. The surprising thing was that many selections of Celtic, Native American, and music containing loud drums or flutes were extremely soothing. The most profound finding was any music performed live and even at moderately loud volumes, even if it was somewhat discordant, had a very beneficial response. Therefore, it is important to select music that puts you in a positive frame of mind. Listening to music that doesn't speak to you may result in stress rather than relaxation.

## Guidelines: Using Music to De-stress

Here are some general guidelines to follow when using music to de-stress:

- To wash away stress, try taking a 20-minute "sound bath." Put some relaxing music on, then lie in a comfortable position on a couch or on the floor near the speakers. For a deeper experience, you can wear headphones to focus your attention and avoid distraction.
- Playing music in the background while you are working has been found to reduce the stress of the workplace. Music was found to reduce heart rates and promote higher body temperature - an indication of the onset of relaxation. Combining music with relaxation therapy was more effective than doing relaxation therapy alone.
- It's not a good idea to play ballads or songs that remind you of a sad time in your life when you're trying to de-stress. You're trying to relax and wash away the anxious thoughts. The last thing that you need is a sad song to bring back unhappy memories.
- Choose music with a slow rhythm - slower than the natural heartbeat, which is about 72 beats per minute. Music that has a repeating or cyclical pattern is found to be effective in most people.
- As the music plays, allow it to wash over you, rinsing off the stress from the day. Focus on your breathing, letting it deepen, slow, and become regular. Concentrate on the silence between the notes in the music; this keeps you from analyzing the music and makes relaxation more complete.

- ➔ If you need stimulation after a day of work, go for a faster music rather than slow, calming music. Turn up the volume and DANCE! It doesn't matter if you can dance. Just move along with the music and do what feels good. You'll be shocked at the release you can feel!
- ➔ When going gets tough, go for a music you are familiar with – such as a childhood favorite or favorite oldies. Familiarity often breeds calmness.
- ➔ Take walks with your favorite music playing on your iPod or MP3 Player. Inhale and exhale in tune with the music. Let the music take you. Combining exercise, imagery and music is a fantastic stress reliever.
- ➔ Listening to the sounds of nature, such as ocean waves or the calm of a deep forest, can reduce stress. Try taking a 15-to-20-minute walk if you're near the seashore or a quiet patch of woods. If not, you can buy tapes of these sounds in many music stores

No single music is a good fit for everyone. People have different tastes. It is important that you like the music being played. I recently picked up a rest and relaxation CD that has done wonders for me. It has the sounds of the ocean in the background while beautiful piano music plays. I find this very soothing.





# 09

## CHAPTER

# Learn to Say No!

A major problem among overly stressed caregivers is saying “no.” For example, your mother wants you to take Grandma to the store, but you’re in the middle of a big work project, or perhaps your best friend asks if you wouldn’t mind babysitting her kids when you’ve already made plans to do something for yourself. There’s no reason why you have to say “yes.” In fact, I would bet there are many times when you should simply say no. If you find yourself agreeing to do things when you really don’t want to, you aren’t doing yourself any favors. It may seem nice to say yes but agreeing to do things you don’t want to do or can’t do is a huge stressor. For the purposes of this discussion, we will term this behavior people pleasing.

### Are you People Pleasing?

People pleasers think of the needs of others before their own. If you are a people pleaser, you are likely then to worry about what other people want, think, or need and spend a lot of time doing things for others. You may rarely do things for yourself and feel guilty when you do. It’s hard work being a people pleaser because you back away from saying what you really



think. You might not ask for the things you would like if you thought someone would be upset with you for it. When you reflect on the individuals around you, it is not uncommon to find that you are spending time with people who don't consider your needs at all. In fact, people pleasers often feel driven to make insensitive or unhappy people feel better – even to the detriment of themselves.

Constantly trying to please other people is draining, and many people pleasers feel anxious, worried, unhappy, and tired a lot of the time. You may not understand why no one does anything for you when you do so much for others, and yet you don't ask for what you need.

If you tend to try to please people, you might operate under the belief that if you ask someone for help and that person agrees, that person would be giving out of obligation, not because they really wanted to. The thinking goes – if they really wanted to help, they would have offered without my asking. This line of thinking happens because you feel obliged to help and do not always do things by choice. Sadly, you may have been taught that your worth depends on doing things for others.

When you take a moment for yourself, you may feel selfish, indulgent, and guilty, which is why you are often on the go, rushing to get things done. As a people pleaser, you likely accomplish so much and are easy to get along with, you are often the first to be asked to do things – you are vulnerable to being taken advantage of.

If you are like me, perhaps you were raised where your needs and feelings were not valued, respected, or considered important. You might have been conditioned as a child to respond to or take care of other people's needs. For others, perhaps you have been silenced, neglected, or otherwise abused and learned that your feelings and needs were not important. In fact, in some cultures, girls are raised – to think of others' needs first and neglect their own. Most women have at least some degree of people pleasing in them. As a result, you might focus mostly on others and away from yourself. You may feel empty, or don't know how you feel, what you think, or what you want for yourself. It's possible to change this pattern, starting now.

## Practice Saying No!

First, practice saying NO. This is a very important word! Say it as often as you can, just to hear the word come out of your mouth. Say it out loud when you are alone. Practice phrases with NO in them, such as, “No, I can’t do that” or “No, I don’t want to go there.” Try it for simple things first, and then build your way up to more difficult situations.

## Stop Saying Yes!

Stop saying YES all the time. Try to pause or take a breath before responding to someone’s request. You may want to answer requests with “I need to think about it first, I’ll get back to you” or “Let me check my schedule and call you back.” Use any phrase that you feel comfortable with that gives you time before you automatically respond with YES. You will feel guilty when you start this, but it won’t always be so. Remember that your mental health is well worth the aggravation you may have to take from others. What’s important is you.

## Figure out What Gives you Pleasure

Figure out what gives you pleasure. For example, you may like reading magazines, watching videos, going to a park, or listening to music. Give yourself permission to do those things and then enjoy them.

## Ask Someone to Help you with Something

Ask someone to help you with something. I know this is a hard one, but you can do it! After all, everyone else is asking YOU for favors. Be tolerant if they turn you down. Just because you have always told them “Yes” doesn’t mean they always have to tell you “Yes.”

Many people pleasers believe that nobody will like them if they stop doing things for other people. If this happens, then it’s better that they aren’t in your life anyway. People enjoy your company for who you are and not for what you do. You deserve to take time to yourself, to say NO, and to take care of yourself without feeling guilty. It’s within your reach to change – one small step at a time!



## Guided Meditation: Letting go of Anxiety, Stress, and Worries

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You can practice meditation on your own. Find a quiet place where you can fully relax and listen to your inner voice. Don't try to make something happen; just let your mind listen and relax.

Set up a schedule of practice, allowing yourself between 10 and 30 minutes of uninterrupted time. If possible, practice during the best part of your day, at a time when you are least likely to be disturbed by others.

### Introduction

Welcome to this session to ease and let go of anxiety, stress, and worries. Most people find it best to practice lying down, in a comfortable position, with as few distractions as possible. To

begin, turn off any devices that may interrupt you and make yourself comfortable in a quiet space... make sure that you are warm and the general temperature of the room is pleasant.

## Get Comfortable

For this session, you can lie down on your back or sit on a chair with your back against the back rest...

Now that you are comfortable, close your eyes and check your mental state... is your mind very active?

Just become aware of it... if it is restless, let it be restless for now... and if it is calm, that's ok too... take a moment to simply acknowledge your present mental state as it is... Now pay attention to your body... how does it feel right now? Do you notice any tension or pain?

## Take Deep Breaths

Let's take a few deep breaths... inhaling and exhaling through your nose. If you feel any tension use your exhalation to let go... if there are any worries, stress, or anxiety in your mind, use your exhalation, too, as an opportunity to let go...

Breathe in... and breathe out, relaxing and letting go, let any anxiety dissolve as you breathe out... and again breathe in, bringing clarity and peace to your mind... and breathe out feeling all your tensions, mental and physical melting away...

Let's practice in this way for a few moments...

## Let's go to the Mountains

Good... and as you start to settle down, bring to your mind the image of a mountain... It could be a mountain that you have seen or any imaginary mountain. Picture it clearly in your mind, in all its majesty... strong and tall... can you see its shape? Its colors? Now imagine rain falling



over the mountain... the wind blowing, the sound of the rain and the wind... and notice how the mountain remains unmoved, balanced, and open...

Being deeply grounded and strong, the mountain stays undisturbed, accepting, and whole... See if you can bring up in yourself all these qualities... imagine how it would feel like to be a mountain... strong... grounded... whole... open... undisturbed... at peace... You can find all these qualities within yourself, you HAVE all these qualities, and no matter what kind of storm comes your way, you can always tap into this mountain-like calm and harmony...

Keep the image of the mountain in your mind and stay there feeling grounded, strong, and at ease for a few moments...

## Bringing Our Awareness Back to the Body

Now let's bring our awareness back to the body, feeling its weight... and shifting your attention to the palms of your hands... do you feel any sensations there? Maybe tingling? Maybe some vibration? Just become aware of any sensation around your hands and stay present with them for a moment... And whenever you feel ready, let's take a few deep breaths again... and slowly begin to move your fingers, your wrists... and your shoulders...

## Meditation can Work Wonders

To terminate the session, think to yourself that you are going to be fully awake and alert after you count to three. "One, I'm beginning to come out of it, moving toward a waking state. Two, I'm becoming more alert, getting ready to wake up. Three, I'm completely awake." Meditation can work wonders when it is practiced on a regular basis. You'd be amazingly surprised at the level of relaxation you can get to.





# 10

## CHAPTER

## Why are Working Caregivers So Stressed Out?

If you are working and caregiving, you will inevitably experience stress and anxiety. Although you will likely feel stressed or anxious from time to time, the causes may differ. For example, a lack of finances may trigger anxiety for some, and for others, balancing work and family may be an emotional trigger. Some measure of stress while managing tasks is fine as it improves our mental alertness, memory, and helps us to meet upcoming deadlines (Rudland, Golding, and Wilkinson 2020). However, continuous stress can wear you down and result in caregiver distress. Caregiver distress occurs when there is not a clear-cut solution for your problem. Basically- you may not know where to begin to address your caregiving situation. Long-term distress can make you sick. Stress and anxiety go hand in hand. The following are three reasons why caregivers are so stressed:

## Caregivers are Outnumbered

One rather concerning trend is that the number of families and professional caregivers is slowly being outpaced by the number of individuals needing care. In fact, professional caregivers' interest in caregiving as a career choice has rapidly diminished in recent years. This shortage is placing added pressure on both family and frontline caregivers alike.

## Caregivers Perform Complex Tasks

In the past, caregivers were primarily responsible for the personal care needs of a loved one or client, leaving more complex medical tasks to licensed professionals. These days, family and frontline caregivers are required to help with medication reminders, catheter cleaning and drainage, and a myriad of other skills with little or no training. A lack of access to training for complex tasks is something that many caregivers find distressing.

## Many Employees are also Caregivers

Many large companies are noticing a trend in the number of their employees that are caring for an elder or a child with special needs in addition to working full time. Juggling caregiving responsibilities can negatively impact an employee's performance. As a result, some working caregivers may miss advancement opportunities. There are multiple ways [employers can support working caregivers](#); however, it generally involves the kindness of the company to understand the conditions of their employees. With a better understanding, companies can provide services to help employees with their caregiving roles and offer peace of mind by ensuring that their employees won't miss out on benefits and advancement opportunities because of taking care of a loved one.

Indeed, there are several global and societal factors that influence the stress and anxiety experienced among caregivers. Let's explore the barriers we put up that are preventing us from becoming healthy and ridding ourselves of anxiety and stress.





## Working through Caregiver Stress

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Why do we not allow ourselves the time to take a 'time out'? Perhaps we feel like we don't deserve it or that there's just too much to be done. There are many genuine reasons for needing to complete jobs and tasks; however, we may also, on occasion, have 'hidden agendas' as to why we cannot stop for a break. Why?

Ego - some people enjoy boasting about 'how late they had to work to complete a project' or 'how much effort they invested in completing the job so quickly.' This type of person is often looking to impress others with their efforts, thereby increasing their ego in the process.

Or perhaps you think that you can't take the time off. "I can't stop; I just have to get this finished." Does this sound familiar? "I can't stop because the job has to be finished, WHY? So, I can move straight on to the next thing, and the next, and the next, etc..." This person will find that there is always something that must be done, which will constantly prevent him/her from taking a break.

You feel like you need to be needed. A mother managing the household, kids, and other chores may feel as if her household will collapse if she were to put her feet up or take a weekend off! By not taking a break, she can keep convincing herself that her role is crucial, and the family would collapse without her. This may be true, but it won't happen because she's taken a time out for herself.

Get rid of that thinking! You can get some amazing benefits just by taking a little time for yourself! Allowing your mind and/or body to rest can help re-focus your attention, sharpen your wits, and increase motivation. In addition, taking time out helps to relieve stress, can aid the recovery of tired muscles, and promotes the discovery that there is more to life than just work.

## So, What Can You do to Reduce Your Stress and Anxiety as a Caregiver?

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### Access Respite Care

Every caregiver deserves a break, including you! Time away from caring for your loved one is vital to your well-being. Yet far too often, you may find that you are not taking time for the self-care that you need and deserve. Perhaps you feel guilty or feel selfish for taking a break as the needs of your loved one take precedence in your life right now. Or you may feel uncomfortable because you do not have access to qualified caregivers or financial resources to pay for a respite provider.

### Learn to Delegate

The [art of delegation](#) can be tricky. Yet it is worth mastering. Map out a list of all the daily activities you must undertake, both in your role as a career and in other aspects of your life. Who could help by taking on some of those tasks? Or are there mechanisms that could make life easier – for example, food shopping online or ordering repeat prescriptions for delivery? Sometimes you look so capable that others do not realize how much help you really need.

Explaining how much you must do and seeing what others could do to help is important and sensible. Asking your partner to cook dinner a few nights a week or older children to handle tasks at home like laundry can free up a little bit of bandwidth and decrease the chances that you will feel overwhelmed.

## Take Time for Yourself

So often, we know that we need a break. That break might be a full-fledged vacation or a weekend getaway. Either way, getting out of the daily grind can be amazingly liberating and a huge way to get rid of stress and anxiety.

Unfortunately, many people think they can't take the time to get away. This is toxic thinking. Get out and get away!

Taking time for yourself sounds easier said than done, but it really is crucial to [retaining a sense of balance](#). Make sure you put aside time to connect with your friends, leave the house, enjoy time outdoors or pursue activities that you find enjoyable. Remember that this is not 'selfish' – it is vital for personal balance in a very demanding role. When you take this rest, you absolutely cannot feel guilty about it. You need this time off, so enjoy it. You'll be a better mother, father, wife, or husband for it.

If you're feeling tired, unmotivated, or just in need of a rest, don't be a martyr or look negatively at this. You may find that allowing yourself a break will help you ultimately become more efficient and effective in every part of your life. Plus, you'll get the badly needed recharging of your "batteries" that you need and sorely deserve!

## Accept Help

Caregivers are used to taking care of others, making it difficult for them to seek out help for themselves. Every caregiver who is looking to manage their stress needs to know where to go for help, and they need to make sure that they receive that help. There are many online and in-person support networks, community resources, and local groups that are designed with caregivers in mind.





# 11

## CHAPTER

# Alleviating Stress at Work

How many times have you continued working, knowing that you are not giving 100% to the task at hand? How many times have you read or written the same sentence repeatedly, as your mind keeps wandering and thinking about other things? Work can probably be one of the most stressful places to be. You might think that none of these techniques can help you when you're around your co-workers. You couldn't be more wrong.

Having more women in the workplace adds to the stress. Many women feel the need to be everything to everyone, and that includes a paycheck earner, housekeeper, mother, wife, daughter, and sibling. Trying to cram everything in and do it well is a huge stress factor. Women are so busy doing that they don't make for themselves, and if they do, they feel guilt. This cycle is a losing one, and it's driving stress levels to an all-time high.

## Tips for Alleviating Stress at Work

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### Let go and laugh a little.

You've heard that laughter is a good internal medicine. It relieves tension and loosens the muscles. It causes blood to flow to the heart and brain. More importantly, laughter releases a chemical that rids the body of pains.

Every day, researchers discover new benefits of laughter. Let me ask you this question: "Can you use a good dose of belly-shaking laughter every now and then?" Of course, you can. What are you waiting for? Go to a comedy club or rent some funny movies.

### Make stress your friend.

Acknowledge that stress is good and make stress your friend! Based on the body's natural "fight or flight" response, that burst of energy will enhance your performance at the right moment. Top sportsmen are not relaxed before a big competition. Use stress wisely to push yourself that little bit harder when it counts most.

### Remember, stress is contagious.

What we mean by this is that negative people can be a huge stressor. Negativity breeds stress, and some people do nothing but complain. Don't get caught up in their downing behavior. Recognize that these kinds of people have their own stress and then limit your contact with them. You can try to play stress doctor and teach them how to better manage their stress but be aware that this may contribute more to your own stress, so tread lightly.

## Model good stress managers.

When people around you are losing their heads, watch for who keeps calm. What are they doing differently? What is their attitude? What language do they use? Are they trained and experienced?

Figure it out from afar or sit them down for a chat. Learn from the best stress managers and copy what they do.

## Practice deep breathing.

You can trick your body into relaxing by using heavy breathing. Breathe in slowly for a count of 7, then breathe out for a count of 11. Repeat the 7-11 breathing until your heart rate slows down, your sweaty palms dry off, and things start to feel more normal.

## Stop stress thought trains.

It is possible to tangle yourself up in a stress knot all by yourself. If you're constantly expecting the worst to happen and say negative things to yourself. For example, "If this happens, then that might happen, and then we're all up the creek!" Most bad things never happen, so don't waste all that energy worrying needlessly. Give stress thought-trains the red light and stop them in their tracks.

## Know your stress hot spots and triggers.

Presentations, interviews, meetings, giving difficult feedback, and tight deadlines. These are all things that can get your heart racing.

Make your own list of stress trigger points or hot spots. Be specific. Is it only presentations to a certain audience that get you worked up? Does one project cause more stress than another? Did you drink too much coffee? Knowing what causes your stress is powerful information, as you can take action to make it less stressful.



## Don't set unrealistic goals for yourself.

Many people set themselves up for defeat simply by setting unrealistic goals. Whatever your goal is, allow sufficient time to reach it and realize that setbacks will probably happen.

Try incorporating a few of the aforementioned strategies as they can greatly assist you in managing your stress at work.



## Programs to Support Working Caregivers

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There are programs designed to assist working caregivers, so they can continue to provide care for a loved one and manage their career. The following are a few programs you may find useful:

## Learn as much as possible about the Family and Medical Leave Act

Over 40 million Americans serve as unpaid caregivers, mostly for parents and grandparents. While unpaid caregiving is nothing new, the need spans generations. Nearly one quarter of today's caregivers are from the Millennial generation (early 20s to mid-30s), and they are struggling with the costs of balancing care for aging loved ones with care for newborns or young children.

The FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave.

## Reach out to your local Area Agency on Aging

An [Area Agency on Aging \(AAA\)](#) is a public or private non-profit agency, designated by the state to address the needs and concerns of all older persons at the regional and local levels. "Area Agency on Aging" is a generic term—specific names of local AAAs may vary. AAAs are primarily responsible for a geographic area, also known as a PSA, that is either a city, a single county, or a multi-county district. AAAs may be categorized as: county, city, regional planning council or council of governments, private, or non-profit.

## Access the Caregiver Support Tool

How are you doing? Do you want to better understand your wellbeing? The "Ask Emma" [Caregiver Support Tool](#) is a strength's-based self-help tool, designed to empower you to achieve optimum wellness. Check out the features and benefits of using this valuable wellness tool designed just for you.



## Guided Imagery Exercise for Working Caregivers

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Many athletes will tell you that an important part of their training routine is rest. Muscles need time to repair after a workout. Remember that your brain is a muscle too. It needs time to rest and recuperate to perform at its best. By giving your brain time off, you'll be able to better concentrate. Tasks that you once struggled with will be easier. A break can be anything from a 10-minute meditation session to a trip around the world and anything in-between. A break needs to take your mind off the everyday tedium of life.

## Welcome

Hello and welcome to this guided session.

Challenges, stress, and uncertainty are a part not only of business but of life itself. Sooner or later, we will need to face a difficult situation or decision, and the outcome will depend on our ability to respond wisely from a place of understanding and perspective.

In this session, we will use mindfulness to tune and train our capacity to be calm and balanced in any given situation, so we can take good decisions and reframe these challenges into opportunities.

Please make yourself comfortable in your seat, relax your face muscles, soften your neck and your shoulders, and at the same time, see if you can find some length in your spine.





## Close your Eyes

Gently close your eyes and feel into the connection between your body and your seat for a moment. Bring your awareness to any sounds that you might notice around you... and simply let them come and go; there's nothing that you need to do other than to stay aware... Let any sound register as they are; don't think about these sounds, but simply experience them... Let them be heard as if you were observing from a distance, without judging them, without thinking of them as pleasant or unpleasant. Let sound simply be sound. Notice how you can observe from this place of pure awareness without getting involved in whatever is arising and stay present for a moment as this vast awareness from where everything else can come and go. Notice how sounds may change and transform... but this awareness stays open and broad as the container for all that you experience.

## Facing Challenging Situations

When the time comes to face a challenging situation in business or in life, know that you can always come back to this place of pure awareness, allowing you to detach from the emotional pull of the situation and giving you a higher ground of perspective to act in appropriate ways.

Uncertainty and change are parts of life, but they can be met from this place of all-encompassing awareness instead of getting entangled in the stories and narratives that we build on our minds about them. So let's stay with this broad and clear awareness for a few moments... Allow any feelings to arise, any bodily sensations... everything that you can be aware of arises within this broad space of consciousness... any judgments, emotions, or thoughts can also be observed in this way when you tune into this place of awareness as an observer... notice that when you identify with that which observes, it automatically takes away some of the emotional pull of that which is observed.

The more you practice in this way, the easier it will be to access this open awareness perspective. To finish this session, you may take a few deep breaths if you feel like... And whenever you are ready, gently open your eyes.

Thank you for practicing with me today.

## When to Perform this Exercise

Perform this exercise whenever you need to relax, whether it's on a plane or in a car, or anyplace else you may be sitting. Because this exercise may be very relaxing, it should not be performed while driving. Over time, if performed regularly, this exercise will help you recognize tension in your body. You will be able to relax muscles at any time rather than performing the entire exercise. Perform at least twice a day for long-term results.

You may develop your own longer relaxation exercise by adding more muscle groups. Pinpoint your own areas of tension, then tense and relax these areas in the same way.

## Maximize the Benefits of Relaxation

Maximize the relaxation benefits of this exercise by visualizing a peaceful scene at the end of the exercise. Visualize a scene - a place where you feel relaxed - in detail for at least 5 minutes. Remember the happy place? Go there and enjoy it!





# 12

## CHAPTER

# Conclusion

There is no way to eliminate stress from your life. What you can do is to learn how to make that stress work FOR you.

Stress management isn't as difficult as it might seem. However, if you think you have too much stress in your life, it may be helpful to talk with your doctor, spiritual advisor, or local mental health association. Reactions to stress can be a factor in depression, anxiety, and other disorders. They might suggest that you visit a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or other qualified counselors.

This book should be used as a tool that will help you cope with stress. Stress management tips are simple, cost-effective methods to effectively check stress. They can be practiced almost anywhere and at anytime.

Stress is a normal part of life, and in small quantities, it's good. It can motivate you and help you be more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress, is harmful.

It can set you up for general poor health as well as specific physical or psychological illnesses like infection, heart disease, or depression. Persistent and unrelenting stress often leads to anxiety and unhealthy behaviors like overeating and abuse of alcohol or drugs.

Just like causes of stress differ from person to person, what relieves stress is not the same for everyone. In general, however, making certain lifestyle changes as well as finding healthy, enjoyable ways to cope with stress helps most people.

Above all, remember that you are in no way alone in this battle. There are hundreds of thousands of people out there who feel overwhelmed too. Hopefully, you will find peace within yourself and enjoy life to its fullest. When you feel stressed out or beset with a panic attack, relax, breathe through it, and know that there are many, many people who feel the same way.

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