

Healthy Coping

Healthy Ways to Manage Stress

Everyone experiences stress from time to time. Stress is how our body and mind react to help us survive when we're faced with a demanding or dangerous situation.



Constant, prolonged stress can affect your emotional and physical health. Emotionally, long-term stress can overwhelm you with feelings such as fear, anger, loneliness, or depression. Physically, long-term stress may contribute to conditions such as heart disease and high blood pressure. If you have diabetes, stress can cause blood sugar to increase. That's why it's important to manage or cope with stress.

Unhealthy ways of coping include avoiding loved ones and friends, overeating, drinking alcohol, or smoking. Healthy ways of coping include having a strong support system.

Family, friends, and loved ones can help you get through tough times. Talking with other people in support groups who have similar challenges and understand what you're going through can help you feel less lonely and overwhelmed.

Here are some tips to help you manage stress.

Ohana-style stress management

- Have family gatherings in person or virtually.
- Call a friend or family member to ask for help or support.
- Set aside one day a week to spend time with family and friends.
- Help those who have helped you; helping others can help you feel better.
- Go to the beach or park to play and exercise together.



Do it yourself

- Engage in physical activity, such as exercising, doing chores around the house, cleaning the yard, walking your dog, or fishing.
- Control the things you can and don't dwell on the things you can't.
- Take deep breaths to relax while sitting in traffic, before meetings, or when waiting in line.
- Watch a comedy movie or show.
- Decrease or quit drinking and smoking.
- Get six to eight hours of sleep every night.
- Make a to-do list of goals. Focus on one big task at a time or a group of small tasks that can be done together.
- Participate in fundraisers or do volunteer work.
- Try not to worry too much or overthink things. Relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery and activities that Hawaii has to offer — enjoy a sunrise or sunset, watch the ocean, or meditate under a tree to help clear your mind.



- Think positive and focus on your strengths.
- Tell yourself, "I can do this," "It's OK to make mistakes," or "I need to take care of myself and my needs today."
- Listen to soothing music, such as Hawaiian, classical, or instrumental music.
- Write in a journal regularly.
- Write three things you're grateful for daily or discuss positives of the day or week.
- Engage in your favorite hobby or start a new one.
- Spend time with your pet. If you don't have a pet, volunteer to work with animals or go to a dog park.
- Stroll through the grass or walk in the sand.
- Express yourself in a creative outlet such as drawing, painting, woodwork, sewing, gardening, singing, or dancing.



There may be times when no matter what you do, you still feel overwhelmed or sad. It is important to talk to your provider if you:

- Aren't interested in activities that you previously enjoyed.
- Sleep most of the day or have trouble sleeping.
- Don't see the benefits of taking care of yourself.
- Feel like it's too difficult to manage your health.
- Feel like you can't take care of yourself.



We're here to help support you. Please visit hmsa.com/well-being/health-coaching/ for information on how to connect with one of our HMSA Health and Well-being Support nurses or health coaches.



ACTIVITIES



Healthy Coping

Name three emotions you feel when you think about your health.			
Who can you talk to when you feel this way?			
What brings you joy?			
Name three healthy activities that will help you work through this emotion to feel better.			

What might prevent you from doing these activities?

How can you overcome these obstacles?
