



# Managing Stress

Managing stress can make you feel better and help you control psychosis. It's useful to know several ways to manage stress. If one method doesn't work, then another may.

The *Challenge Unrealistic Thinking* technique (page 78) may be a useful way to reduce your feelings of stress.

*Solving Problems* (page 31) is another way to reduce stress.

Here are two other techniques for managing stress.

1. Relaxation: learning how to relax your mind and body.
2. Preparation: anticipating possible stressful situations and getting ready to deal with them.

You can start with either one of these techniques.

Don't be disappointed if one method doesn't work. That strategy may not be the best one for that situation. Stick with it for a while, though, to give it a chance. If it still doesn't work, try another.

**With time and effort the chances are good that you will find a way of managing stress that works well for you.**

## 1. Relaxation

*Relaxation* can help you calm your body and mind. Some benefits to feeling relaxed and calm are that you:

- Experience less stress
- Get more enjoyment from various activities
- Think more clearly
- Make better decisions

Plus, you may be less bothered by the symptoms of psychosis.



### Understanding

There are lots of different ways to relax. Some examples of calming activities that you may enjoy include:

- Reading a good book
- Taking a warm bath
- Practicing yoga or gentle stretching exercises
- Going for a stroll in the park

Some methods for **deep relaxation** include:

- Imagine that you are in a different place that is relaxing (such as sunbathing on a beach)
- Tense and then relax different muscles in your body
- Focus on your breathing
- An 18-minute audio on relaxation techniques can easily be found on the internet

**Relaxation should feel good. If you start to feel uncomfortable, then stop.**

Your health professional or Support Person can help you learn these methods of deep relaxation. There are also CDs of relaxation methods that you can borrow from the library or purchase at bookstores.

**Practice relaxation techniques regularly. At first it may be difficult to relax when you are stressed. Relaxing gets easier with practice.**



Your Turn!

## Your Turn!

List three things you can do to relax.

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Understanding

## 2. Preparation

You don't have to wait until you feel stress to use stress-management skills. *Preparation* involves anticipating stress and getting ready for it. Knowing you have these skills will make it easier to deal with stress in the future. In fact, simply preparing for a stressful situation can lower your perception of how much stress you encounter.

There may be upcoming situations that you know will cause you stress. Certain times of the year (such as Christmas or a birthday) or certain events (such as a family get-together or a job interview) create stress for many people. You may be able to change or even avoid some situations that you know act as triggers. For example, being alone at a hockey game may be a problem, but being with someone at a hockey game is fine. You can avoid the trigger by always going to a game with a friend. On the other hand, if every hockey game—whether you go alone or with someone, or whether the stadium is empty or crowded—is a problem, then you may want to avoid hockey games for a while.



Understanding

While you can't avoid all the situations that cause stress, you can prepare yourself for these stressful events so you are able to manage the pressure more effectively. Strategies such as problem solving can help you deal with any current stress, as well as prepare you for upcoming stressful situations.

*Rehearsal* is a useful strategy to lower your anxiety about upcoming stressful events. Examples of possible stressful events might be a job interview or a social situation where you don't know anybody. Go over the event in your mind, practice what you will say, and how you will act. You can also try rehearsing situations with your Support Person. For example, if you have an upcoming job interview you can ask your Support Person to pretend to be the interviewer. Think about what types of questions you might be asked during the interview and practice answering them.

## Your Turn!

**Think of what is happening over the next couple of months.** Is there anything coming up that makes you feel worried or anxious? Write down anything that comes to mind. Consider using problem-solving techniques or rehearsal with your Support Person to help you prepare.



Your Turn!

Stressful situation coming soon...	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Write Down

Things I can do to prepare for this...	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>