

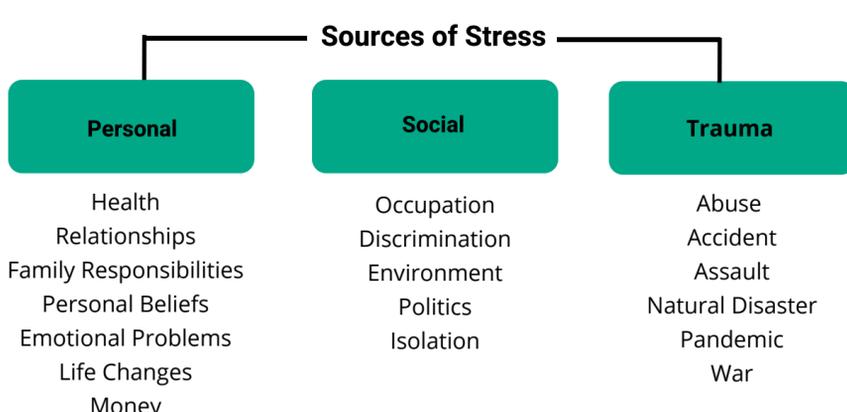
# COPING — WITH — STRESS

In the last year, the world has experienced a surge of health, environmental, and social stressors. Experiencing stress is normal, but sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Remember to pause and take care of yourself. If you are struggling with your wellbeing, know you are not alone and support is available.

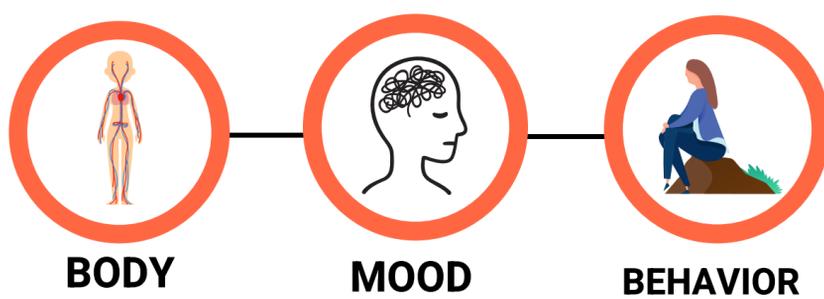
## 1. Recognizing possible sources of stress

Stress is a natural biological response. But despite stress being common, it is important to understand that stress impacts individuals very differently.

What causes your stress might not cause your neighbor's stress. Your response to stress might also be very different than someone else's. Being aware of your own triggers is extremely helpful in navigating your own mental, emotional, and physical response. Likewise, understanding the variety of stress sources can also help you support family and friends during their own difficult times.



## 2. Effects of Stress on the Mind & Body



Stress can impact your body, mood, and behaviors in a variety of ways:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

## 3. Healthy Options for Coping with Stress

### Practice Self Care and Make Yourself a Priority

Sometimes we are so busy taking care of others, that we forget to take care of ourselves. Prioritizing our own need for self-care offers a variety of emotional and physical benefits, which often leads to an increased ability to support our loved ones.



### Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.

It's good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic and/or other current events can be distressing.

### Engage in meditation, mindfulness, relaxation breathing, or yoga.

Relaxation exercises can improve your state of mind and outlook on life.



### Establish and maintain a routine.

Try to eat meals at regular times and put yourself on a sleep schedule to ensure an adequate amount of rest. Include a positive or fun activity in your schedule that you can look forward to each day or week.

### Consider seeking help from a licensed mental health professional, peer recovery coach, or other community support if needed.

Seeking help is a sign of strength, and can play an integral role in helping to improve your physical and mental health.



### Connect with others.

Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Helping others cope with stress through phone calls or video chats can help you and your loved ones feel less lonely or isolated.

### Practice Gratitude.

Gratitude is a strong strategy to help minimize and cope with stress in our lives.



**COACH (COVID-19 Assistance for Community Health)** provides FREE community support and outreach services in Connecticut in response to the unprecedented public health crisis, COVID-19.

## 4. Substance Use & Stress

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of June 2020, 13% of Americans reported starting or increasing substance use as a way of coping with stress or emotions related to COVID-19.

If you are struggling to reduce or stop your substance use, consider seeking help from a licensed mental health professional, peer recovery coach, or other community support. Seeking help is a sign of strength, and can play an integral role in helping to improve your physical and mental health.

Many individuals use alcohol or other drugs to help cope with anxiety, depression, or other mental health struggles. If you are struggling to reduce or stop your use of alcohol and/or drugs, know that you are not alone and there is support available to you.

### CT State Resources



**CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**



**CT Community for Addiction Recovery**



**CT 24/7 Treatment Access Line:**

1-800-563-4086



**211 CT**



**Women's REACH Program**



**DMHAS Addiction Services**

**Bed Availability**



**LiveLOUD**

## 5. What if I am in a crisis situation?

If you are struggling to cope, there are many ways to get help. Call your healthcare provider if stress impacts your day to day life and activities.

**If you are in a life threatening situation dial 9-1-1 immediately**

**If you are in crisis in CT dial 2-1-1**

**If you need suicide prevention support dial the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255**

**For LGBTQ support dial the LGBT National Hotline at 888-843-4564**

**For Trans support dial the Trans Lifeline at 877-565-8860**