How to be a less-stressed LEADER

In today's complex and rapidly changing health care environment, stress management has become a must-have leadership skill. As a leader, you have more control over your stress levels at work than you might think. There are four personal strategies you can use to be a less-stressed leader and model healthy behaviors for your team:

» Respond productively to stress in the moment
» Clarify your priorities

RESPOND PRODUCTIVELY TO STRESS IN THE MOMENT

Stress is contagious...
30%
People who experience “secondhand stress” from others’ stress

…but so is wellness
20%
Increase in well-being when people’s colleagues have healthy stress habits

IDENTIFY how you respond to stress

- What’s your stress tendency?
  - Avoidance
    Tendency to distract yourself from your stressors and procrastinate
  - Complaint
    Tendency to externalize your stress and negative emotions onto others
  - Obsession
    Tendency to focus all of your time and energy on your stressors
  - Self-doubt
    Tendency to internalize your stress and blame yourself

and practice a HEALTHIER STRESS response

- Avoidance → Engage more with your stressors
- Complaint → Get an objective view of your stressors
- Obsession → Take breaks from your stressors
- Self-doubt → Give yourself the benefit of the doubt when stressed

CLARIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

Identify your TOP THREE priorities at work

What counts as a priority?

- Directly supports a strategic initiative or business need
- Is top-of-license for your level and skill set
- Can be significantly advanced in the next month

Narrow your TO-DO LIST

- Defer: Reschedule tasks to a later date on your calendar
- Delegate: Hand off tasks to a colleague or a different team
- Eliminate: Cross off tasks from your to-do list entirely

CONFIRM with a leader

- Pressure test what your priorities are
- Agree on what you can de-prioritize

ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

Ask for HELP

What type of support do you need?

- Material → Staff, money, technology, templates, collaboration
- Informational → Expertise, facts/information, feedback, training, buy-in
- Emotional → Listening, productive venting, humor, perspective, advice

Say NO more often

- Not enough: Overwhelming amount of work
- The sweet spot: Workload shaped by your priorities
- Too much: Missed opportunities to contribute

BUILD SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Create a personal BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Peer leaders in other departments
- People with different expertise than you
- Senior leaders and mentors
- People with similar goals as you

- Create an appropriate forum
  Agree on a specific time and place—with the appropriate people—to get stress off your chest
- Set a time limit
  Restrict the amount of time you and your colleagues vent—and try not to go over time
- Focus on solutions
  Reserve time at the end to brainstorm some potential solutions—end on a positive note

Practice POSITIVE venting

» Leverage different personal strategies
» Advocate for yourself
» Build supportive relationships

Help spread wellness by sharing this infographic with other leaders in your network.

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