Thinking about Stress

*Adapted from the American Psychological Association Stress Tip Sheet*

**Understand how you stress.** Everyone experiences stress differently. How do you know when you are stressed? How are your thoughts or behaviors different from times when you do not feel stressed?

**Identify your sources of stress.** What events or situations trigger stressful feelings? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships, or something else?

**Learn your own stress signals.** People experience stress in different ways. You may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions; feel angry, irritable, or out of control; or experience headaches, muscle tension, or a lack of energy. Think about your own stress signals.

**Recognize how you deal with stress.** Determine if you are using unhealthy behaviors (such as smoking, drinking alcohol, or over or under eating) to cope. Is this a routine behavior, or is it specific to certain events or situations? Do you make unhealthy choices as a result of feeling rushed and overwhelmed?