

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?