

Managing Stress

It is impossible to live a life without stress, but we can learn to manage our stress. Some stressors we have no control over and will have no control over and will have to change the way in which we deal with them.

- **When we learn how to keep our stressors as much under control as possible, we are helping to prevent stress from occurring.**
- **Some typical controllable stressors are our attitude, diet, exercise, relationships, time management and our human networks.**

Successful stress management has two parts- the prevention of continuing stress overload by reducing stressors as much as possible and by releasing the stress we collect each day. When we learn how to keep our stressors as much under control as possible, we are helping to prevent stress from occurring.

There are many stressors that we do have control over. The first step is to identify what they are and then to replace them with harmony inducing alternatives. Some typical controllable stressors are our attitude, diet, exercise, relationships, time management and our human networks.



Some important sources of stress in our attitudes are:

Self rejection: Negative thoughts such as I'm not good enough. I'm a failure.

Unrealistic expectations: Expecting too much from ourselves and others.

Being an internal slave driver: Constantly pushing oneself to do more than one can comfortably or realistically.

Please contact the DEMENTIA SA Office

Support | Awareness | Education | Counseling | Training | Resource centre | Advocacy
info@dementiasa.org or support@dementiasa.org www.dementiasa.org

National Helpline 0860 MEMORY / 0860 636 679



Ref. farm4.static.flickr.com

By becoming more assertive, following a better diet, taking time out for hobbies and friends, managing our time effectively and a daily relaxation routine will make a tremendous difference.

Unresolved loss and grief other stressors

A diet that is high in salt and caffeine and a lack of regular exercise contributes to stress. A lack of assertiveness which may lead to a person being either passive or person being either passive or aggressive is an important stressor in a relationship.

The task and responsibilities of caring for someone with dementia may mean that you will have many new personal relationships – hospital/medical staff, social workers, caregivers etc.

Self isolation and subsequent failure to maintain a normal social life or withdrawal from support networks. Mis-management of your time by not making time for your own needs e.g. keeping a doctor's appointment, having a hair cut.

All of these stressors are self-inflicted so we can also self correct them.

The tendency to induce stress in ourselves is deeply embedded in our attitudes and living habits. Successful stress management means making changes to our daily lifestyles that allows time to take care of our own needs.

By becoming more assertive, following a better diet, taking time out for hobbies and friends, managing our time effectively and a daily relaxation routine will make a tremendous difference. We sometimes need outside help to change our self-destructive attitudes and habits into positive ones.

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DEVELOPING A DAILY RELAXATION ROUTINE

The stressors that can be generated by caring for a person with dementia are likely to be excessive no matter how skilled we become at managing them.

Developing a specific relaxation routine designed to release mental, emotional and physical stress can be extremely beneficial and, in particular, can often improve the quality of sleep.

If at any time you find that you are not able to cope with your stress, seek help immediately. Caregiver stress is one of the highest risk factors for elder abuse.

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