

### **Handout 1.3: Tips for Managing Stress—Not Carrying It!**

***Change your perceptions, change your life.***

The biggest stressor comes not from the outside, but from between our ears. There are some things we can't change, but we can change our perceptions! Shift your focus to what can be changed, not to what can't be changed. Our thoughts create our stress. Over 80% of our life is determined not by events, but by our reactions to them. Remember to stick to the facts, not interpretations. Often we can't "get over" something because of stories we tell ourselves.

***Make an effort to think more positively.***

Remind yourself that stress can be positive. If we put a negative spin on it, then it will be negative. It has been estimated that the average person thinks well-over 50,000 thoughts per day. If even 10% are negative thoughts, which is an underestimate for most people, that comes to 5,000 negative thoughts a day! Start the day with the intention to think positively about your stress.

***Don't forget the importance of humor!***

When we feel under stress, a sense of humor is often one of the first things to go. Smiling, laughing, and looking at the light side of life can do wonders for our mental health. Look on the light side of life at every opportunity.

***Take care of yourself mentally and physically.***

Practice self-care techniques and attempt to nurture and nourish your body as well as your mind. Eating well and exercising will help you keep your stress under control and you will feel healthier in mind and body.

***Don't be too hard on yourself—or on others either.***

People who truly like themselves and look for the good in others are far less stressed than people who are judgmental. Accept imperfections, mistakes, and even failures in yourself and others with kindness

## *The Stress Solution*

and compassion. Compassion goes a long way toward soothing the mind and soul.

### ***Focus on what is in your control, not what is beyond it.***

Think of the Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.” Those who focus on what is in their control are more stress-hardy and more likely to grow from stress.

### ***Challenge and commit yourself to do what you love.***

People who are energized by pursuits they love and to which they are committed are generally more stress-hardy. Finding meaning in your daily life, in paid or unpaid work, working toward making the world a better place, and finding a passion that you can contribute to the world all lead to stress hardiness.

### ***Connect with others—don’t isolate!***

Establishing warm and supportive relationships with people, family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors can reduce negative stress immensely. Self-disclosure helps to manage stress rather than let it build up.