



Module 9: Manage Stress

Participant Guide



Session Focus



Managing stress can help you prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

In this session, we will talk about:

- Some causes of stress
- The link between stress and type 2 diabetes
- Some ways to reduce stress
- Some healthy ways to manage stress

You will also make a new action plan!

Tips:

- ✓ Identify the kinds of situations that make you feel stressed and plan how to manage them.
- ✓ Practice saying “no” to things you don’t really want or need to do.

Causes of Stress

Barbara's Story—Part 1

Barbara is a single mom who often feels overwhelmed and stressed. She works full time, her children are in school, and her father is in poor health.

Barbara's doctor tells her she's at risk for type 2 diabetes. She urges her to lose weight by eating healthy food and being more active.

List two things that cause you stress.

1. _____

2. _____



Stress and Type 2 Diabetes

There is a link between stress and type 2 diabetes. Stress can **cause changes in your blood sugar levels, which increases your risk of getting type 2 diabetes.** Stress can **cause you to act in unhealthy ways.**

Barbara's Story—Part 2

After a stressful day at work, Barbara sits down to help her children with their homework. It's not easy, and it requires a lot of patience and attention. Plus, Barbara still needs to cook dinner. When dinner is cleaned up and the kids are in bed, Barbara sits on the couch and snacks to unwind.



Stress and Type 2 Diabetes

When you feel stressed, you may feel:

- Angry
- Annoyed
- Anxious
- Confused
- Hungry
- Impatient
- Sad
- Worried
- Tired

You may also have:

- An aching head, back, or neck
- A racing heartbeat
- Tight muscles
- An upset stomach

When you feel stressed, you may:

- Drink too much alcohol
- Forget things
- Put off doing the things you need to do
- Rush around without getting much done
- Sleep too little, too much, or both
- Use non-ceremonial tobacco products
- Take too much medicine
- Work too much

You may also:

- Make unhealthy choices about eating or drinking
- Not feel like being physically active
- Spend too much time watching TV or videos or using the computer

Ways To Reduce Stress



There's no guaranteed way to prevent stress. But there are ways to make your life less stressful.

Try these tips.

- **Ask for help.** Your friends and family care about you and want the best for you. Feel free to ask for their help. And you can help them another time.
- **Take a break.** Imagine a peaceful place where you feel happy.
- **Get enough sleep.** Try to be in bed for 8 hours every night.
- **Have fun!** Make time to do things you enjoy and make you feel happy.
- **Set boundaries.** Practice saying “no” to things you don’t want or need to do.
- **Know yourself.** Identify the kinds of situations that make you feel stressed. Plan how to manage them.
- **Make a list.** Put the most important things at the top of your to-do list.
- **Remind yourself.** Use notes, calendars, timers—whatever works for you.
- **Take small steps.** Start new supportive routines that help you avoid or reduce stress.
- **Solve problems.** When you have a problem, try to solve it quickly, so it’s less likely to become a source of stress in your life.
- **Take care of your body and mind.** That way, you’ll be more prepared to handle stressful situations.



Healthy Ways To Manage Stress



Feeling stressed? Try these healthy ways to manage stress.

- **Count to 20 in your head.** This can give your brain a needed break.
- **Practice self-care.** Have a cup of herbal tea or put on some calming music.
- **Give yourself a pep talk.** Say something encouraging, like: “There’s no rush. I can take my time.”
- **Try some ways to relax.** See the “Ways To Relax” section for some ideas.
- **Stretch.** Do yoga or other stretching exercises.
- **Take a breather.** If you can, take a break from whatever is making you feel stressed.
- **Talk about it.** Tell a friend or trusted person how you feel.
- **Cut back on caffeine.** Caffeine can make you feel jumpy and anxious.
- **Get moving!** Do something active—even if it’s just a walk.
- **Do something fun.** Dance, hike, be social. Do whatever you enjoy—as long as it’s healthy.
- **Look at the situation in a different way.** Reflect on your progress, strengths, and positive experiences.



Healthy Ways To Manage Stress

Ways To Relax:

- **Make relaxation routine.** Try to practice for at least 10 minutes a day. It may take time to see results, so be patient. Listen to calming music if you wish. At first, it may be easier to relax if you lie down in a dark, quiet room. But in time, you'll be able to relax anytime, anywhere.
- **Meditate.** Focus on something simple that you find calming. It could be an image or a sound. Don't worry if other thoughts get in the way. Just go back to your image or sound.
- **Imagine.** Imagine a scene that makes you feel peaceful. Try to picture yourself there.
- **Breathe deeply.** Relax your stomach muscles. Place one hand just below your ribs. Take a slow, deep breath through your nose. Feel your hand go up. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. Make sure to breathe out all the way. Feel your hand go down.
- **Connect with tradition and ceremony.** Take time to focus on beadwork, drawing, painting, crafting, or other cultural activities.



Look again at the two things that cause you stress, identified on page 2. What strategies do you want to try to help manage those stresses?
