

Learn More: Stress Management and Self-Care

Fighting Poverty and Fighting the “VISTA Slump”: Check out these tips, activities, resources for managing stress, preventing burnout, and jumpstarting your energy!



Stress Tests

As defined by the American Medical Association, stress is any interference that disturbs a person’s mental or physical wellbeing.

The Mayo Clinic Stress Assessment: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-management/SR00032>

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS): <http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~scohen/PSS.html>

Burnout Self-Test: <http://www.mindtools.com/stress/Brn/BurnoutSelfTest.htm>

Stress Management

“The best way to escape a problem is to solve it.” – Alan Saporta

Mind Tools, “Stress Management Key”: <http://www.mindtools.com/stress/ps/StressKey.htm>

Forbes.com 2012 Article, “How Gen-Y and Millennials Can Avoid the Pitfalls of Burnout”:
<http://atolemdro.com/2012/04/09/pitfalls-of-burnout/>

Time Management

“Procrastination is the thief of time.” – John Dos Pasos

Do you answer the question, “How was your week?” with an overwhelmed, and less-than-enthusiastic “Busy”? Try some simple time management techniques to calm your mind and lighten your workload.

- 1) Set limits: We all like to help out, but sometimes you need to say “no” to taking another project. There is no need to take the lead on every single thing.
- 2) Delegate: If you are struggling to complete (or successfully complete) all of your tasks, ask your co-workers and/ or supervisor(s) to help you out. Remember, you cannot change the world alone!
- 3) Plan: Spontaneity is the spice of life, but it can also generate stress. Use a calendar, a planner, and/ or make to-do lists. Prioritize and add deadlines to stay on track.
- 4) Sleep: Take the time to relax, read a book, and stare at Netflix. Whatever! You are sacrificing your health and the quality of your work by operating on zero sleep.

Adjust your Attitude

“Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.” – Henry Kaiser

The Mayo Clinic’s “Positive Thinking”: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/positive-thinking/SR00009>

The University of California, Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center: <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

- 1) Learn: If you are unhappy with your current position make the most of the situation. No job is a dead end. There is always an opportunity to learn something. The VISTA year is meant to be a time to pick up new skills or responsibilities so that you will be well equipped and prepared for what comes next!
- 2) Engage: Passivity leads to a lack of personal control. Make sure that you are heard! Ask and answer questions, attend meetings and events, make suggestions, and volunteer for projects.

- 3) Support: Social support works wonders! Good relationships with your peers, staff, and supervisor(s) will help you establish a sense of control and belonging. Support others in their roles and find ways to work together.
- 4) Laugh a lot: Laughter may be one of the healthiest antidotes to stress. Watch a goofy YouTube clip, look at silly articles or pictures, or share a funny story with a friend or co-worker.
- 5) Reframe problems: Thrive on challenge! When faced with challenges, view them as solvable problems. Set short-term goals and prioritize them. Furthermore, distinguish between solvable problems and unresolvable predicament. When faced with situation beyond your control, create new ways to cope with them.

Find an Outlet

"The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter." – Mark Twain

Mind Tools, "Stress Diary": http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_01.htm

Suppressing negative feelings does not alleviate stress. Rather than sucking it up and bottling it up, try these simple techniques to safely voice what's stressing you out.

- 1) Journal: Sometimes it's easier (and equally effective!) to write things down than say them out loud.
- 2) Keep a stress diary: Identify what is causing stress by keeping a record of your emotional status.
- 3) Talk it out: Take advantage of your personal support network! Spend time with family, friends, or your VISTA Leader and/ or Manager and talk things through. The VISTA Team is always here.

Motivational TEDTalks

"How great leaders inspire action," by Simon Sinek

"Got a meeting? Take a walk," Nilofer Merchant

"The puzzle of motivation," Dan Pink

"The power of vulnerability," Brene Brown

"Bring on the learning revolution," Ken Robinson

"Try something new for 30 days," Matt Cutts

"How to make stress your friend," by Kelly McGonigal

"What makes us feel good about our work?," Dan Ariely