



Employee
Assistance
Program

Solutions for Managing Stress During a Crisis

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How to measure stress

Rate your stress on a 10-point scale.

“0” is feeling no stress and “10” is feeling extreme stress.

Make a list of stressors that are affecting your life today.

10	Highest level of stress
9	
8	Really feel intense stress
7	
6	I feel a moderate amount of stress
5	
4	
3	I feel only a little stress
2	
1	No stress

Stress Reactions or Coping Strategies

Unhealthy habits or coping strategies are used to reduce stress. These habits can become a destructive way of life, and in the long run can create their own stress.

Examples:

- Food
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Nicotine
- Caffeine
- Sugar



Cabin Fever

- Feeling of isolation
- Mood swings
- Resentment of people around you
- Prone to irrational outbursts for no reason



Self-Care:

Reduce stress by taking care of yourself



Give yourself a number on the stress scale, then practice solutions to drop your stress to a lower number.

Pay attention to your physical and emotional health.

Many things can increase your energy, lift your mood, and put you in a better frame of mind.

- Find ways to exercise
- Get out in nature
- Make healthy food choices
- Get enough sleep
- Stay connected with friends and family

Solution #1:

Stress Relaxing Activities

- Stress-reducing activities are healthy, natural ways to relax.
- What do you enjoy doing?
- Make a list based on what is happening now.
 - Plan garden
 - Read books
 - Home improvement projects
 - Enjoy funny movie



Solution #2:

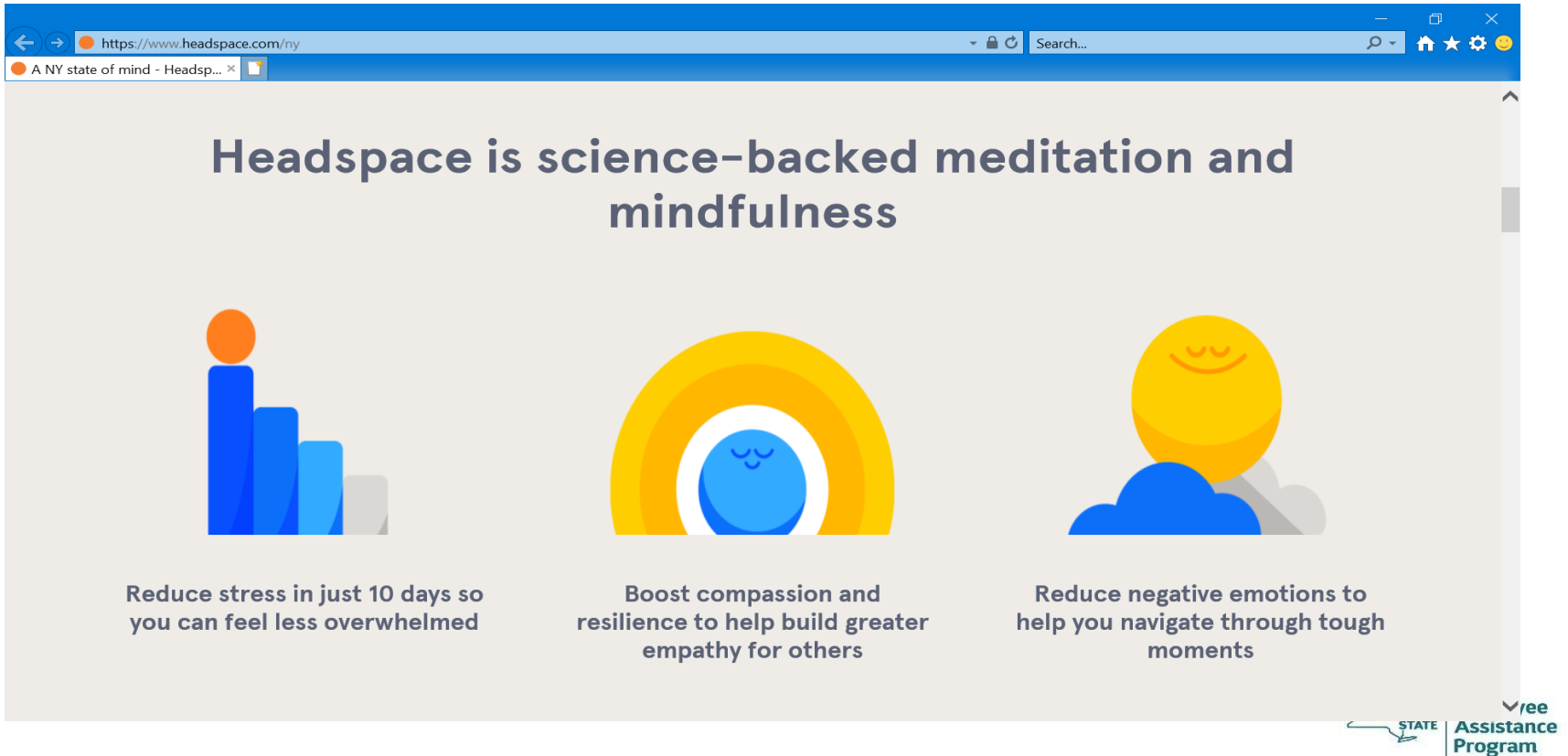
Physical Activity while working from home

- Increase energy and endorphins
- Create an at-home workout circuit; deck of cards
- Get outside for a walk/jog/run
- Set new fitness goals
 - Example: one pushup at 1:00PM, walk around block in set time
- Workout while working
 - Example: stand while on phone, squat 5 times before you sit down

Solution #3


Breathing/Meditation

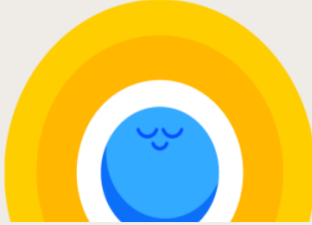
- <https://www.headspace.com/ny>.

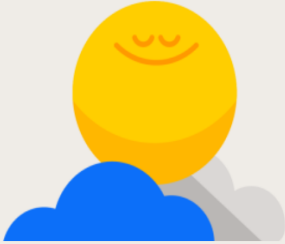


The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.headspace.com/ny>. The page content includes the following text and graphics:

Headspace is science-backed meditation and mindfulness

- 

Reduce stress in just 10 days so you can feel less overwhelmed
- 

Boost compassion and resilience to help build greater empathy for others
- 

Reduce negative emotions to help you navigate through tough moments

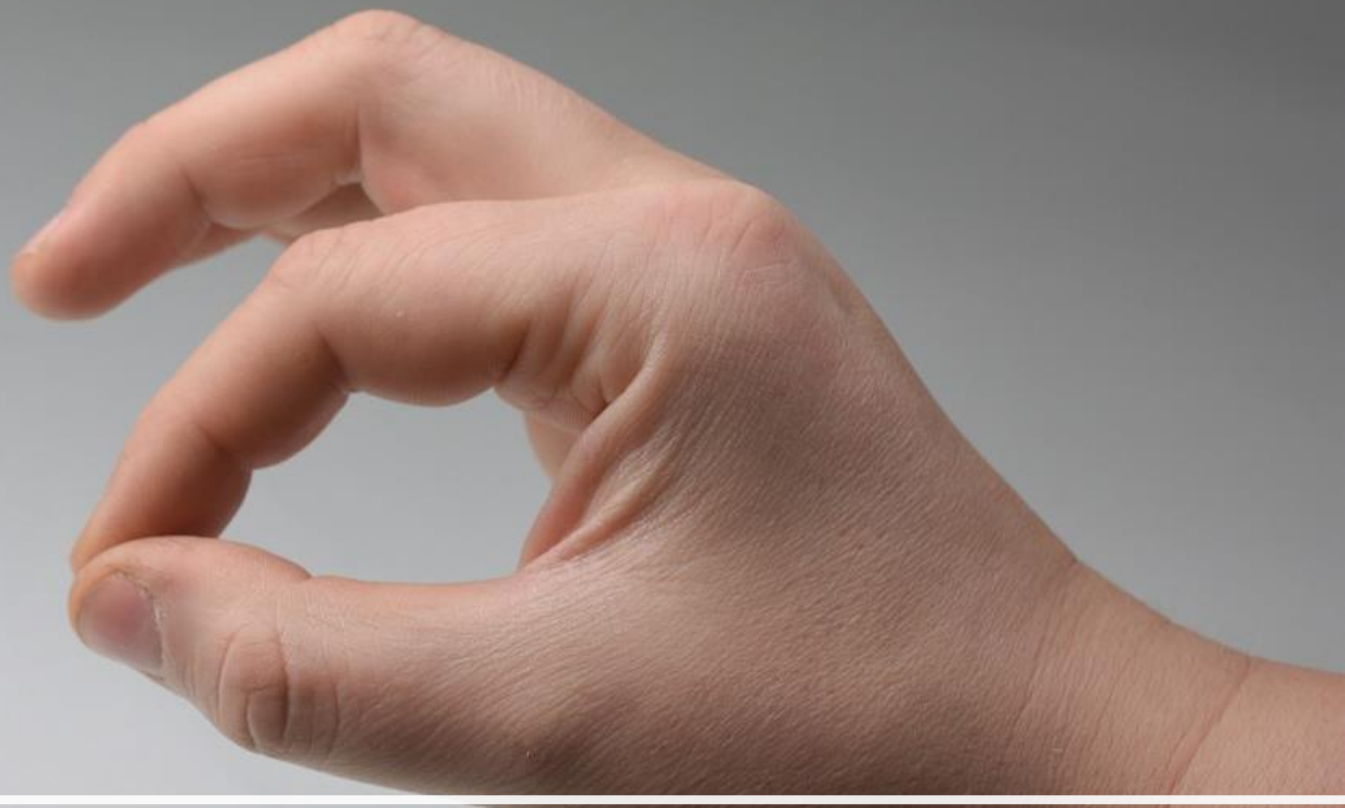
In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for the "Free STATE Assistance Program" with a downward arrow pointing to the word "Free".

Solution #3

Headspace Meditations

Stress less, move more, and sleep soundly

- Three videos
 - A NY State of Mind, Remember the blue sky, Reframing anxiety home workout
- Meditations
 - Stressed, Focus, Guided, Taking a Break, Restore,
- Sleep
 - Winter Park, Sleeping, Pigeon Radio, Doze, Cabin Downpour
- Meditations for Kids
 - Goodnight, Rest and Relax, Calm



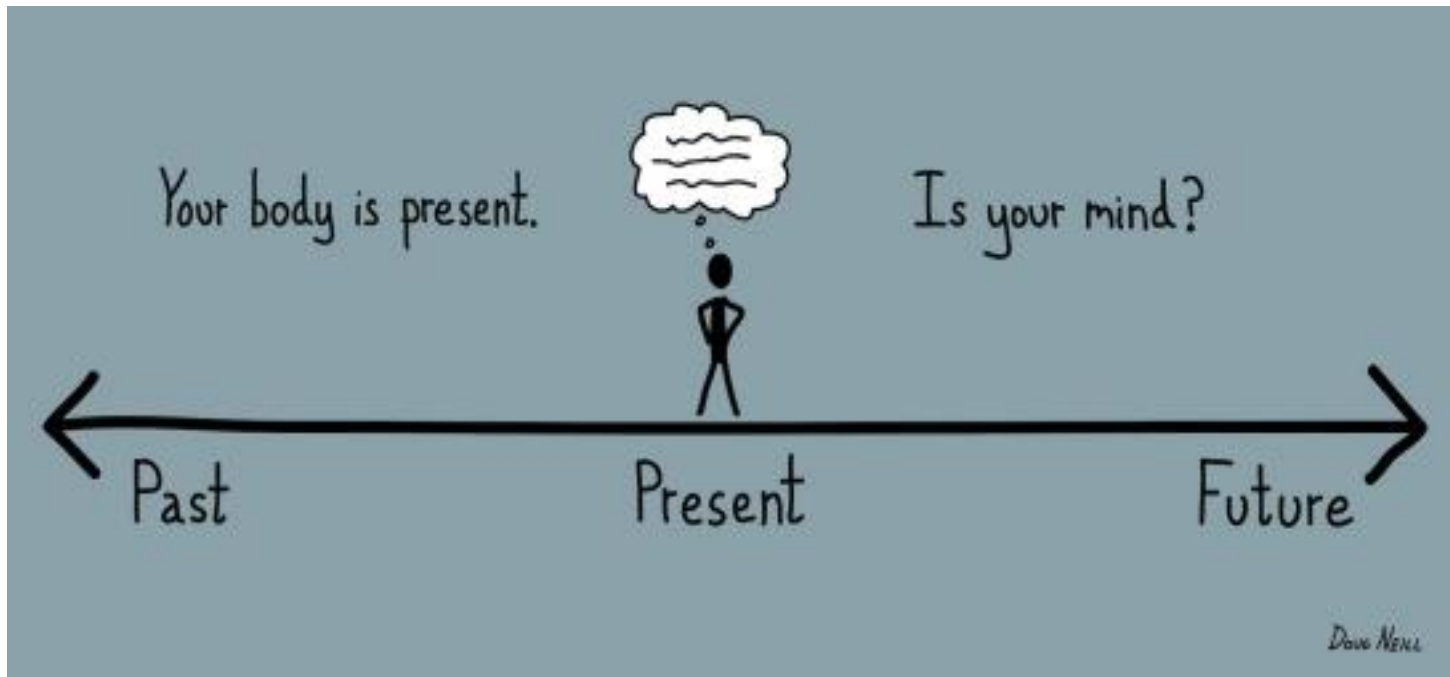
Let's just breathe

Solution #4

Practice Mindfulness

- Paying attention deliberately, in the present moment, this very moment now, which is ultimately the only moment you have.
- To pay attention to your experience from moment to moment the best you can, with kindness, curiosity, and acknowledgement.
- Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., University of Massachusetts; created Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program.
- Resource: www.Mindful.org

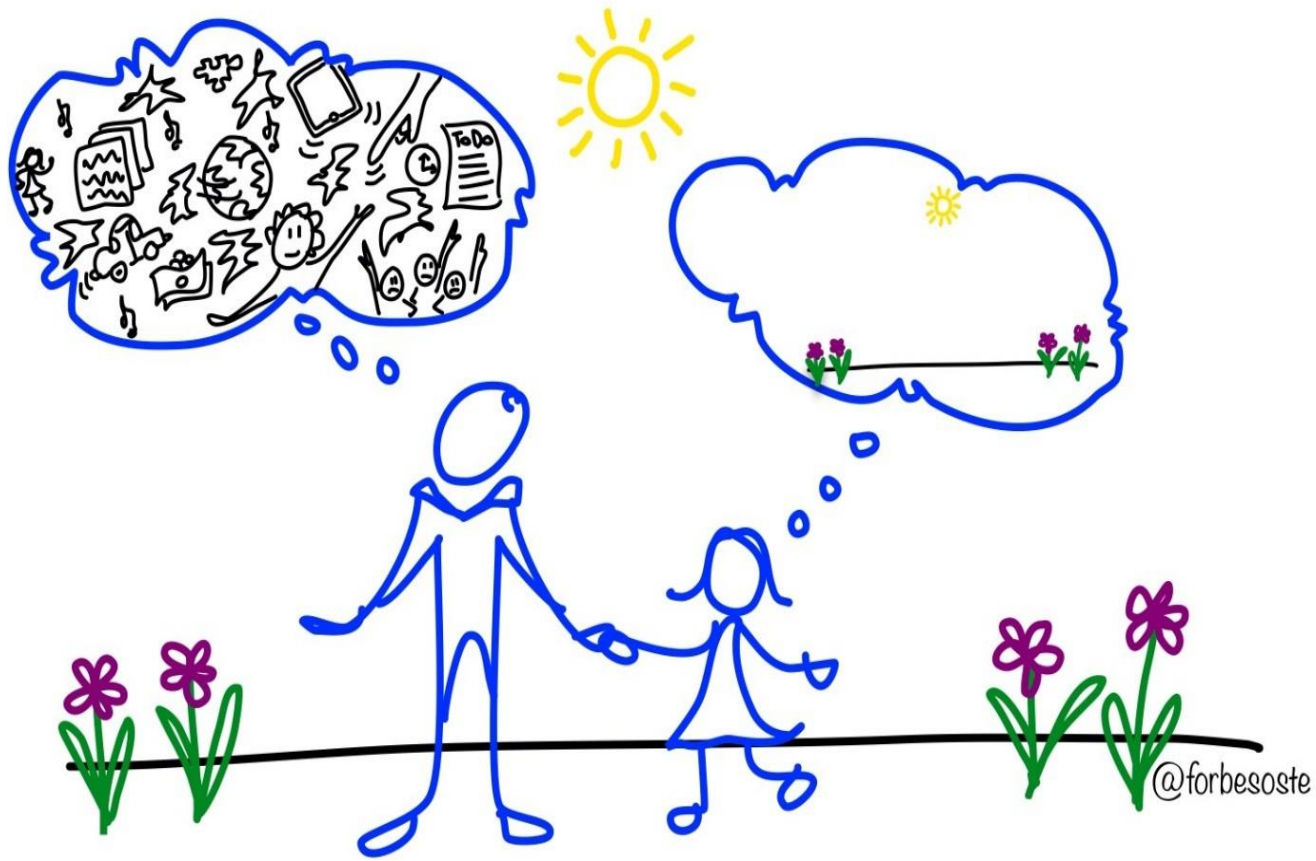
Benefits of Being Mindful



Ways to practice mindfulness:

- Washing your hands
- Doing the dishes

Mind Full, or Mindful?



@forbesoste

Solution #5

Positive Thinking can help manage stress

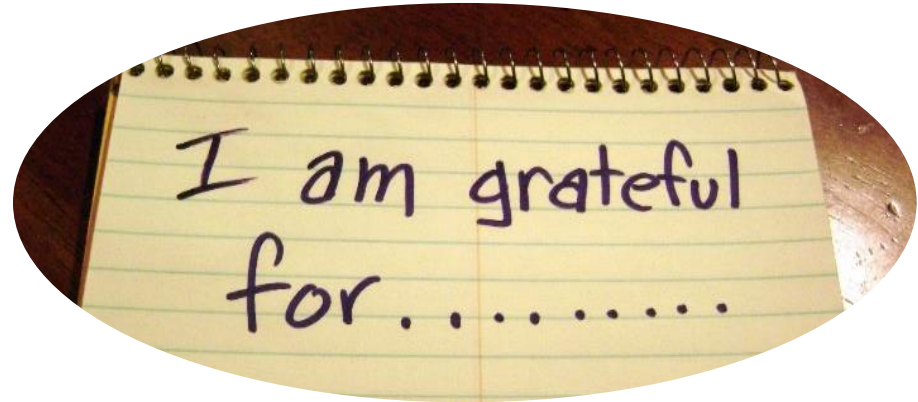
- Having a positive mindset can be a key part to managing stress



- Having hope
- Finding the positive in all of this
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950?p=1>

Solution #6

Gratitude



Name three:

A person, a thing, and an experience you are thankful for.

Gratitude journaling:

Use a journal or notebook to record new things you are thankful for, or even challenges that have been overcome during this time.

(Example: A challenge could be working from home with 2 school age children, also journal what positive experiences has come out from this.)

Solution #7

Be open to humor

Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times.

Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.





If you feel overwhelmed, try these strategies

- Eat lunch somewhere pleasant
- Relax with a body scan
- **Limit your time with news**
- Go outside and welcome spring
- Listen, really listen to a piece of music
- Take this time to discover something you've always wanted time for.



WellNYS Daily To-Do for April is Practice Managing Stress.



WellNYS
Everyday

April WellNYS Daily To-Do

Once you've completed the To-Do, check the box!

- 1 The April Monthly Challenge is to practice managing stress. Register for the Monthly Challenge at wellnys.goer.ny.gov.
- 2 According to the National Institute of Mental Health, here are five things you should know about stress: 1) stress affects everyone, 2) not all stress is bad, 3) long-term stress can harm your health, 4) there are ways to manage stress, and 5) if you're overwhelmed, ask for help from a health professional such as your EAP. For more information go to: nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/index.shtml.
- 3 On a scale of 1-10, with one being the lowest level of stress and 10 being the highest level of stress, what is your stress level today? What is causing you stress today? Can you give it a number between 1-10? Being aware of your stress level is the first step in changing it.
- 4 If you are experiencing a high level of stress, there is a course offered online and at many colleges and universities titled, "Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction" (MBSR), that teaches powerful techniques
- 11 A very pleasant way to reduce stress is to listen to your favorite music. Try to listen to the songs in a different way. Listen to the lyrics, or focus on the sound of the lead guitar, the bass guitar, or the drums, or any of the other instruments.
- 12 Minimize multi-tasking. To reduce your stress, try doing just one thing at a time.
- 13 Today, take a breathing break. Stretch out your hands. Take your pointer finger and touch your thumb and take a deep breath. Then take your middle finger and touch your thumb and take a breath. Continue with the other two fingers, and then open your hands and take a deep breath. Exhale slowly in between breaths.
- 14 Practice positive self-talk to reduce stress. Instead of saying, "I'm stressed," or, "I'm burnt out," shift your language to "I'm doing the best I can today."

GO BEYOND THE CHALLENGE

- 20 Your body was born to move, and exercising is such a great way to reduce stress. Take note of your stress level 1-10, and then do some moderate exercise. After 20 minutes, review your stress level again. Has it changed?
- 21 A habit is something that is performed without thinking about it. What stress-reducing activity can you make into a habit by practicing it every day? Physical activity, meditation, relaxing activities, or gratitude?
- 22 Take an inventory of your stress management tools. Do you consciously take a breath when your stress level rises suddenly? Do you have a physical activity to do when stressed? Do you practice mindfulness?
- 23 Small things can increase your energy, lift your mood, and put you in a better frame of mind. Here are five ideas to reduce stress:
1) exercise, 2) choose healthier foods, 3) avoid nicotine, 4) get enough sleep, & 5) get support from your accountability partner.

WellNYS Everyday

<https://wellnys.goer.ny.gov/>

EAP and NYS Emotional Support Line

If you are experiencing anxiety or other emotional distress during this crisis, or just want to talk, please contact EAP. EAP services are confidential, voluntary, and free. EAP can be contacted by calling **1-800-822-0244** or visiting <https://goer.ny.gov/find-eap-coordinator>.

New York State Emotional Support Helpline at **1-844-863-9314**. The Emotional Support Line provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency.

Solutions for Managing Stress

Toolbox

- Relaxing Activities (Hobbies you enjoy)
- Physical Activity
- Breathing
- Meditation (Headspace)
- Being more mindful (Be Here Now)
- Positive Thinking
- Expressing Gratitude
- Humor



Thank you!

Please share something that you learned today with someone.

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