



JANUARY: STRESS

– What Caregivers Need to Know –

The Basics

Stress is the physical and/or mental response to an external cause. Stress can be time-limited, like the worry that can come before an upcoming appointment or event. Some stressors may persist over extended periods, such as coping with life changes due to COVID-19 or financial stress. Sometimes small doses of stress can help us find the motivation we need to meet a deadline or complete a task. However, when stress reaches a point that causes us to avoid tasks, impacts our mood regularly, and does not seem to go away, it may be time to take a closer look.

Is it stress or anxiety?

Stress and anxiety can look remarkably similar, but tuning in with yourself about how it is impacting your life can help you decide the best course of action to take. So, what is the difference between stress and anxiety? Look at the information below to help you decide.

| Stress | Both Stress and Anxiety | Anxiety |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Goes away once the situation is resolved.</p> <p>Can be positive or negative.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive worry • Uneasiness • Tension • Headaches or body pain • High blood pressure • Loss of sleep • Irritability | <p>Persistent feelings of tension or dread that do not go away and interfere with how you live your life that are constant, even if there is no immediate external cause.</p> |

How to manage stress

Recognizing how you are feeling and what is causing it is a great first step. Sometimes we cannot control the things that cause our stress, but we can control our response to it. Making changes to our day-to-day life can help us manage stress and role model stress management to our families.

- Limit caffeine intake
- Incorporate movement, exercise, or outside time into your day
- Try to maintain a regular sleep schedule
- Reach out to friends or family for support
- If the symptoms of your stress or anxiety are overwhelming or will not go away, it may be time to talk to your doctor or contact a mental health professional