

Understanding Yourself

Learning To Deal With Stress

(NAPSA)—If you've resolved to get a handle on stress in the new year, psychologists offer this bit of advice: The quickest fixes are rarely the best fixes—in fact, they can sometimes cause more harm than good.

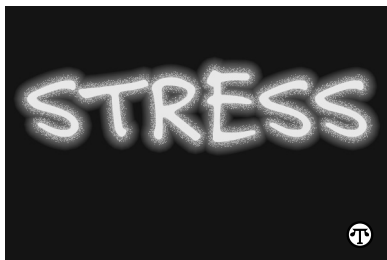
"People tend to reduce stress in ways they have learned over the course of time because they turn to what they know," says Russ Newman, Ph.D., J.D., APA executive director for professional practice. "Ironically, they may take comfort from eating or drinking because it's familiar, even though it's not good for their health. But there are other behaviors people can learn to further relieve stress—behaviors with added effects that may be both better for them and longer lasting." Newman recommends the following tips to help deal with stress and build resilience:

- **Make connections.** Good relationships with family and friends are important. Make an attempt to reconnect with people. Additionally, accepting help and support from those who care about you can help alleviate stress.

- **Set realistic goals.** Take small concrete steps to deal with tasks instead of overwhelming yourself with goals that are too far-reaching for busy times.

- **Keep things in perspective.** Try to consider stressful situations in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing events out of proportion.

- **Take decisive actions.** Instead of letting stressors get the best of you, make a decision to address the underlying cause of a stressful situation.



Family Matters—Connecting with family and friends may help reduce stress.

- **Take care of yourself.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Taking care of yourself helps keep your mind and body primed to deal with stressful situations.

So what causes people the most stress? Money issues was the top vote getter in a recent poll by the American Psychological Association (APA). Americans listed money (63 percent), national security (44 percent) and job security (31 percent) as top concerns for 2005. Survey results also showed that younger Americans were more worried about money (74 percent) and job security (40 percent) compared to people over 35.

One-third of Americans say they either eat (22 percent) or drink alcohol (14 percent) to cope with stress. Others relied on exercise (45 percent) and religious and spiritual activities (44 percent) to relieve stress. Fourteen percent turned to massage and yoga.

For more information on how to build resilience, visit www.APAHelpCenter.org or call 1-800-964-2000 to order a free brochure, "The Road to Resilience."