

## **April is Stress Awareness Month** <sup>[1]</sup>

March 26, 2024 by [Employee Services](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

### **We all experience stress – yet we may experience it in very different ways.**

Because of this, there is no single definition for stress, but the most common explanation is a physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension.

Stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels anxious or threatened. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

#### **Common reactions to stress can include:**

- Disbelief, shock and numbness.
- Feeling sad, frustrated and helpless.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems.
- Disruptions to sleep and appetite.

Long-term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can come because of stress.

When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations but having this “rush” for extended periods of time can be dangerous and make you susceptible to the issues mentioned previously.

#### **Healthy ways for coping with your stress**

- **Take care of yourself** - eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, give yourself a break if you feel stressed. Take advantage of some of the Be Colorado free wellness programs such as [Sleepio](#) <sup>[3]</sup> or [Move.](#) <sup>[4]</sup> for motivation.
- **Talk it out** - Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a family member, friend, doctor, pastor or counselor. [CSEAP](#) <sup>[5]</sup> offers eight free counseling sessions for CU employees and their families.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol** - These can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
- **See your stress** - Recognize when you don't have control, and let it go.

- **Take control** - Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control. Use apps such as Headspace or Calm for guided meditations.

SSC <sup>[6]</sup>, health & wellness <sup>[7]</sup>, Stress Management <sup>[8]</sup>, Stress <sup>[9]</sup>

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