

# CAP Personal Stress Resiliency Plan

## 1 Step 1: Identify/Observe Signs of Stress

When I have stress, I realize that my body and mind are affected. My signs of stress include:

- Muscle tension in my back / neck
- Headaches / neck pain / body pain
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Feeling anxious, depressed, or sad
- Becoming short-tempered
- Becoming emotionally cold or negative
- Eating junk food or eating too much food
- Having trouble focusing
- Becoming rigid / too focused on an idea
- I will actively work to observe the signs of stress in my body and mind; when I realize I am stressed, I will activate this stress resiliency plan**

## 2 Step 2: Stress Trigger First-Aid Steps

When stressed, I will activate the “PLACE” stress trigger first aid steps:

- P**erspective: think about the MOST LIKELY outcome of the stressor, NOT the worst case scenario
- L**et go of problems that you can’t control and focus only on problems you can control
- A**ction Plan Creation – attack the stressor “head on” with a realistic plan
- C**onfidence – have the unwavering belief that you can handle the stress and use the action plan to overcome and succeed
- E**xpress emotions to a trusted loved one or friend so they don’t become “bottled up”

## 3 Step 3: The Power of Physical Exercises.

I know that strong bodies help people better handle stress. I will do something that makes me work hard for at least 20 minutes a day.

- I will commit to \_\_\_\_\_minutes of exercise a day
- If I have trouble focusing, I will try exercising before I need to be attentive to help me concentrate better

I know that a physical workout will help me calm down when I am feeling most worried, stressed, or fearful. The physical exercise I commit to are:

- Aerobic exercise (running/walking/dancing)
- Resistance (plyometric, weights, body weights)
- Stretching (yoga, tai chi, flexibility training)
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 4 Step 4: The Power of Mental Exercises.

I will relax and exercise my mind by using:

- Good posture when sitting / walking
- Deep breathing exercises
- Positive self-talk “I can do this”
- Use constructive thinking to consider alternative solutions
- Be a realistic optimist and believe in hope
- Actively search for the “silver lining”
- Taking a warm shower or wash your face with warm water to relax
- Imagine you are someplace peaceful and relaxing. The place I could imagine myself being is \_\_\_\_\_

## 5 Step 5: Eating well.

I know that good nutrition makes a difference in my health and how well I deal with stress. The changes I am ready to make include:

- Eating a healthy breakfast daily
- Skipping fewer meals
- Drinking fewer sodas / sugary drinks
- Limiting caffeinated beverages
- Drinking more water
- Eating smaller portions of food
- Eating less greasy meals / snacks
- Eating more high quality proteins, fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods
- Stop using tobacco/alcohol or start a plan to stop tobacco/alcohol products
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 6 Step 6: Sleeping well.

I know that people who get a good night’s sleep do a better job of dealing with stress. For me to get the sleep I need, I will try to go to bed at \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ and get \_\_\_\_ hours of total sleep.

When too close to bed time, some things can impact the quality of my sleep. I will consider the following plan to help me get the best sleep possible:

- Avoid caffeine at least 6 hours before bed
- Exercise 5-6 hours before bed
- Take some time to relax after work
- Shower or bathe 1 hour before bed
- Dim the lights 60 minutes before bed
- Let go of emotional tension before bed

Keep this Personal Stress Resiliency Plan and activate it when you are becoming stressed.

# CAP Personal Stress Resiliency Plan

## Sleeping Continued:

I will use my bed only for sleeping. I will use another place to do some of the things I do in bed now. I will:

- Not use a tablet / computer / smartphone 1-2 hours before bed
- Stop reading in bed prior to sleeping.
- Stop doing work in bed.
- Stop watching television in bed.
- Stop talking to my friends or texting / messaging in bed.
- Stop worrying in bed.
- Dock my smartphone in a charger that is not in my bedroom.
- Get out of bed and read if I am unable to fall asleep.

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## Step 7: Take instant vacations.

Everyone needs to be able to mentally escape problems for a while by taking an *instant vacation*. I will:

- Read a relaxing and familiar book.
- Mentally take a mini vacation to a favorite place or favorite past event
- Imagine I am someplace peaceful and relaxing. The place I could imagine myself being is \_\_\_\_\_
- Watch television/movies
- Listen to calming and familiar music.
- Play video games that are not violent or stressful.
- \_\_\_\_\_

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## Step 8: Release emotional tension.

I will try to let my worries go, rather than letting them build up inside.

- I will talk to a wisely chosen friend because I know they will give good advice.
- I will talk to \_\_\_\_\_
- I will pray to gain strength
- I will speak with a religious/spiritual leader
- I will meditate
- I will write out my thoughts in a diary, journal, or blog
- I will allow myself to laugh more
- I will allow myself to cry more
- I will make lists to get organized
- I will express myself through art
- I will express myself through music
- I will express myself through creative writing
- I will express myself through poetry
- I will write my experience down to share
- \_\_\_\_\_

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## Step 9: Positive Interactions

I know that people who have healthy positive interactions cope better with stress. I plan to:

### -Communicate with my Team / Co-Workers

- I agree that I will be respectful to my team.
- I agree that when I am stressed and cannot guarantee that I will be respectful, I will limit my interactions with my team / co-workers

### -Communicate with my Loved Ones

- Speak with my trusted loved ones **at least daily** (when possible) and explain to them why I am under stress and how I feel. I will lean on my loved ones and understand someday they will lean on me
- I will speak with my loved ones after exercise (when possible) because I will be at my calmest, clearest and most focused after exercise
- I agree that I will not make any significant changes in my life until I speak with them
- I agree that if I feel like I want to hurt myself, I will call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or speak to a loved one.



## Further Help

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: confidential help 800-273-8266 / text 838255**
- I will consider speaking with a CAP CISM member \_\_\_\_\_
- If I need a CISM peer supporter and don't know who their contact information, I will email [CISM@CAPNHQ.GOV](mailto:CISM@CAPNHQ.GOV) or call 1-888-211-1812 ext. 300 for help.
- I will consider speaking with a religious or spiritual leader \_\_\_\_\_
- I will consider speaking with a CAP Chaplain or CDI \_\_\_\_\_
- If I need a CAP Chaplain and don't know their contact information, I will call 1-877-227-9142 ext. 418 for help.

Based on the work of Ginsburg KR, Jablow MM.

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