

# LET YOUR SAFETY NET CATCH THE WORST OF IT

## HEALTHY WAYS TO HANDLE STRESS BY KNOWING YOUR SAFETY NET

### NO ONE WANTS TO ADMIT THEY'RE STRESSED, BUT WE SHOULD

Mental well-being is an incredibly important aspect of our health that we can't ignore. How we handle stress and cope with stressors makes a huge impact in our lives.

One of the best ways that we can learn to handle stress in a healthy and conducive manner is by practicing open

communication with those that are in our support network. Individuals within the VTC program

such as your mentor are a great resource to regularly practicing honest communication of your mental health.

Isolation is an incredibly difficult feeling to cope with, especially when coupled with the stressors of everyday life. Connecting with individuals, family members, and your community can lessen this isolation. The CDC defines

"connectedness" as "the degree to which a person or group is socially close, interrelated, or shares resources with other persons or groups." (CIT) Because you, the participant, are sharing your

time and experience with those in the VTC, you are sharing the most important resource that you have: yourself.



### WHAT IF YOU'RE ALONE AND IT'S TOO MUCH?

Sometimes normal coping techniques aren't helping in a situation and you feel like you've done all you can. The stress builds up and you can't get in contact with anyone. Your support network feels weak, but don't give up yet.

### Text

### "HOPELINE"

### to 741741

Struggling?  
Having a bad day?  
Need someone to listen?  
Need resources?  
Contact this number, it's as easy as texting to get a person to listen.

**When was the last time you talked to  
Your mentor about your stressors?**

## HOW DO WE LEARN TO SPEND TIME BY OURSELVES

### Coping on your own terms in your own time

There will be times when you'll want to be on your own. But being with your own thoughts can be intimidating. Below are some ways that you can process the influence of stressors and manage the stress in a positive manner in an independent manner.

- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine (these substances can distort your perception of the initial stressors and make it more difficult to process);
- Engage in some brisk, physical activity (when stressed, our bodies release a lot of natural chemicals that trigger a fight or flight response; a quick walk, run, or session of weights can help clear your mind);
- Rest up and get your sleep (sleeping on a problem isn't a bad in thing, and sometimes it's the only thing you can do to wake with a new mindset on how to handle those stressors);
- Try different forms of relaxation (it may feel weird at first to practice deep breathing or meditate, but giving yourself time to have a moment of calm and quiet is a reasonable thing to do, especially when it feels like everything else is out of your control);
- Assess what you can and can't control (yes, it leaves us disappointed that we can't always control every aspect, but often times the sooner we realize the things we can't control the sooner we can work on letting them go);
- Prioritize your tasks (an overwhelming to-do list can easily cause unwanted stress, so by keeping record of what needs to be done, what can be done, and what needs to be done by others you can have a better understanding of how to use the time you're given in a day, a week, or even a month.)

**All of these practices listed above are excellent and *healthy* ways to cope with stress on your own. Remember: stress is something everyone deals with, but how we cope with it is what impacts us the most.**

[http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/Suicide\\_Strategic\\_Direction\\_Full\\_Version-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/Suicide_Strategic_Direction_Full_Version-a.pdf)

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/stress-tips.html>

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to talk with me before or after Court! - Ann Keidatz RN BSN; Jordin Ann Gegare BA