



Stress Busting Strategies

LUEMO
WORKPLACE WELLBEING

While stress is normal and the rush of stress hormone can be motivational; sustained and high levels of stress have a negative physiological effect on our body. We are not designed to be in a state of 'high alert' for extended periods of time and this is why stress can lead to chronic health conditions like mental distress, burnout, high blood pressure, heart attack and even death.

Analyse your stress cycle:

1. Write down the things that cause you stress. Be as specific as you can.
2. Think about how you feel (angry, humiliated, powerless) and the physiological effect (racing thoughts, pounding heart, tight chest).
3. Be honest about your negative response behaviours. Do you get angry, withdraw, or drink alcohol?

Sometimes our responding behaviours are the most obvious element of our stress cycle. It is not until we stop and really think about what is behind our behavior that we can start to understand our stress.

Work out what you can manage, remove, or accept:

Take a good hard look at the cause of your stress and make some courageous calls. Are you over committed? Do you need to reset an expectation? Can you accept/surrender to a situation? Can you cut off the problem? Some things (like kids!) are permanent fixtures in life so you may need to confront the issue and take courageous action. Other things can be

removed from your life and hard decisions may need to be made to make a change. For all other things, having the courage and compassion to accept and view the stressor in an alternative way may be the only option.

Choose future actions/behaviours:

Focus on making behaviour choices that help manage stress and do not fuel stress. For example, focus on your basics like eating healthy food, exercising, and sleeping. Connect with your back up team and people that can help you – don't go it alone. Calm your mind, challenge negative thinking, reframe your thoughts, look at problems in new creative ways.

Refocus on the big picture by reminding yourself of you core purpose, values, and goals. Engage in doing things that bring you enjoyment – don't spend all your time in the negative zone. Disconnect from unhelpful behaviours like drinking too much alcohol, spending too much money or with people who only focus on the negative.

➔ [Luemo members can read more about Staying Well on the exclusive member portal here](#)

Eat

your way to better mental health

Nutritional neuroscience is an emerging field that is focused on the relationships between nutrition and cognition, emotions, and behaviours. The relationship between nutrition and depression, for example, is evident. Diet patterns associated with the onset of depression include poor appetite, skipping meals, and a desire for sweet foods. Deficits in essential nutrients are associated with mental illnesses, such as depression, bipolar and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Daily supplements of nutrients such as essential vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to reduce symptoms. For normal adults, the best way to maintain optimum mental health



nutrition is simply through a balanced diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables. If you struggle with nutrition or mental health reach out for professional help.

Giving and gratitude

Making time to mindfully give is a way of developing gratitude which is an important element of wellbeing. Giving supports gratitude and empathy, which build workplaces that are open and supportive.

Gratitude bring us many things - it dissolves negative feelings; anger and jealousy float away; fear and defensiveness shrink. When we make room for gratitude, happiness can flourish. Like other life perspectives, gratitude can be cultivated.

We can develop gratitude by focusing on what we already have and diverting thoughts away from thinking about what we do not have.

A workplace that incorporates a giving program will help cultivate gratitude and a culture of wellbeing support. Try a program that is not based on giving money, but is based on mindful and involved giving. For example, think about giving time, your services, or work experience.

fun fact*:

A good belly laugh can send 20% more blood flowing through your entire body. One study found that when people watched a funny movie, their blood flow increased. That's why laughter might just be the perfect antidote to stress.

* Richard Krasuski, MD, director of Adult Congenital Heart Disease Services, Cleveland Clinic Heart Health

