

*Maryland State Bar Association Lawyer Assistance Program  
Wellness Tip Sheet*

**Stress Management**

**What is Stress?**

Stress is the non-specific response of the body to a change or demand (stressor) that results in a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Stress acts as an internal alarm system that prepares your body for action. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another.

**About Stress**

Stress is a normal part of life, but everyone experiences stress differently. In small quantities, stress is often good and can provide you with extra energy needed to motivate you to be more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress, is harmful. Too much stress can cause physical problems like heart disease, infection, fatigue and high blood pressure. Unrelenting stress often leads to psychological problems like depression, and anxiety.

**What Causes Stress?**

Surveys and studies indicate that occupational pressures, financial concerns and fears are the leading sources of stress for American adults and, that these pressures have steadily increased over the past few decades. Major life events, such as marriage, divorce, births, deaths and job changes often cause high levels of stress.

**Recognizing Stress**

How do you know when you are under stress? Everyone has different stress triggers and different responses. Do you find that certain situations, places, or people cause stress? Your response might be that you find it hard to sleep, or you sleep too much, feel overwhelmed, frustrated, anxious, or depressed. Your relationships might be suffering. Have your behaviors changed? Are you drinking more, smoking, avoiding family and friends?

***Become an Active Stress Manager***

If you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to take care of anyone else. Make an active decision to manage your stress. Managing your stress is a learned behavior and by choosing to make small changes in your life you can reduce your stress. Here are some suggestions:

- **Put energy into what you have control over and can change**
- **Make time for yourself**
- **Positive thoughts**
- **Deep Breathing**
- **Write it down**
- **Take a break**
- **Get rid of clutter**
- **Eat right**
- **Try something new**
- **Regular exercise**

*Call the Lawyer Assistance Program for free, confidential assistance at 410-685 7878 x 3041*