

# Your EAP|Here4TN!

*for you and your family*

**PARTNERS  
FOR HEALTH**  
EMPLOYEE  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

## Have a Plan for Managing Stress

Sure, it would be nice to take a month off at the beach to relax. But for most of us that's impossible. Stress is a part of everyday modern life. So what do we do when the pressures of work, family life and finances begin to add up?



First, it's important to learn how to identify the signs of stress. When in a stressful situation, you may show physical symptoms. These can include headaches, rapid heartbeat or muscle tension. You may also notice emotional effects like irritability, restlessness or depression. Over time these can seriously affect your health.

Once you recognize a potentially harmful level of stress, you can start using specific techniques to manage it. In this issue, we take a look at stress and what you can do about it. We examine:

- The impact of stress on families, and how to engage your children in shaping a healthier home environment.
- Ways in which stress can harm your relationship, and how you and your partner can team up to manage it.
- Tips for taking care of yourself so you can better handle life's challenges.

**Join us for our April webinar about stress!** We will focus on these issues and more. The webinar is on April 9 from 1 to 2 p.m. Central time. [Click here](#) to register for the webinar or go to [www.Here4TN.com](http://www.Here4TN.com).

Call 1.855.Here4TN (1.855.437.3486) 24/7, day or night, to speak with a counseling professional and develop your stress reduction plan.

April is national stress awareness month. Many people struggle with stress within their daily lives. Most of this stress is manageable; however there are times when balancing daily tasks at work and home can be overwhelming.

There are many easy tips that you can incorporate into your daily life to help manage stress. It is estimated that 48% of American's say they manage their stress with exercising or walking. Other ways to balance stress is to make sure you get enough sleep. Rest is an important part of managing stress and can impact you physically and emotionally.

Your ParTNers EAP offers information and resources that can help with stress issues. Call toll-free 1-855-Here4TN (1-855-437-3486) 24 hours a day, seven days a week for no-cost, confidential help from a counseling professional. You can also find extensive information on the [www.Here4TN.com](http://www.Here4TN.com) website.



# Handling Stress in a Relationship

No relationship is immune from the effects of stress. Job strain, money concerns and busy schedules can all take their toll. However, couples can learn to work together to respond to stress in healthier ways.

## When Stress Sneaks In

Stress is a common part of life and sometimes we don't recognize its effects on us. Perhaps you observe mood changes in your partner, or you see your partner turning to food, alcohol or drugs to deal with current pressures. Regardless of its origin, stress can cause people to have misdirected anger, resulting in arguments or becoming withdrawn from one another. Unchecked, stress can harm every aspect of our health and well-being.

## Communication is Key

One of the best antidotes to stress is communication. Take time to ask questions and truly listen to your partner. Good communication shows each partner that they are understood and cared for. Allowing your partner to share the burdens he or she may be carrying can help defuse tension. Your fresh perspective on things may help your partner find solutions. If your partner can trust you as a source of comfort and problem solving, you'll be ready to jointly handle challenging situations when they arise.

## Encourage Each Other

When times are tough one of the best things you can do is to express confidence in your partner. This can help uplift and enable him or her to feel strong enough to face the current challenges. A positive word and attitude can be contagious!

## Seek Help if Needed

If the symptoms of stress are interfering with your relationships, it is important to seek diagnosis and treatment through ParTNers EAP. We offer resources to help you deal with life's challenges. Call us at 1.855.Here4TN (1.855.437.3486) for stress and relationship assistance.

# Tips for Good Stress Management

**Keep your diet healthy and well-balanced.** Try not to fall back on "comfort" eating with junk food (high in fat, sugar and salt) to ease your stress.

**Make sure to get enough sleep.** Make a plan to get in bed earlier if fatigue is adding to your stress.

**Work out of the grip of stress.** Follow a regular exercise routine that you can enjoy and sustain. Don't lean on substances. Find ways to deal with stress other than using alcohol, nicotine or recreational drugs.

**Learn an easy relaxation technique.** This could be deep breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, tai chi, or meditation.

**Pursue an interesting hobby.** Direct some of your free time to an active hobby such as playing music, gardening, dancing or crafting.

# Cut Stress as a Family

About three-fourths of parents say that family responsibilities are a major source of their stress. At the same time, only a small percentage of youth say their parents' stress does not bother them. Children often learn the behaviors they see in their parents. So, it helps to respond to stress in a healthy way.

- **Keep the dialogue open.** Take time each day to ask your children what's going on in their lives. Show your understanding, and help solve problems.
- **Cool off after work.** Instead of unloading on your family when you get home, take a few minutes alone to unwind and release the stress of the workday.
- **Have family meals together whenever possible.** It's a great time to catch up on each other's experiences.
- **Treat everyone with respect.** Take a few minutes to step back and calm down if there's a crisis. Be patient—not unnecessarily critical—and offer support to each family member.
- **Preserve small moments of togetherness.** Simple moments together—cooking, chores, outdoor activities, shopping or bedtime story reading—can help your family stay connected and resilient.

# Work-Life Focus: Planning Ahead for Summer

*Avoid the stress- get an early start on camps and activities*

Summer isn't quite here yet, but now is a good time to begin preparing for the season's family activities. Planning ahead of time for kids' camp experiences and other fun activities can help ensure a smooth start to summer and can help minimize stress levels.

- **Plan the big picture.** Use a hard copy calendar or print out calendar pages for the summer months. Plotting your plans on paper can help you stay organized.
- **Start with your existing commitments.** Pencil in the activities that your family already has planned such as vacation trips, family weddings and visits from relatives.
- **Look and learn locally.** Check out your city or community website for upcoming summer activities. City parks and recreation departments often list their available summer activities categorized by type of activity (e.g., soccer instruction) and target age group (e.g., kids 4-6 years old). They also list costs and registration deadlines. Local schools and churches also list summer activities.
- **Consider camps.** Today there are summer camps tailored to virtually every type of interest, budget, schedule and specific child need. You can search online by type of camp or camp location. Two primary types of camps are resident (overnight) and day camps. Some camps have a very specialized focus such as horseback riding, music or science. Some camps focus on meeting children's special needs, such as those who have a specific disability.
- **To have happier campers, involve them!** It's very important to brainstorm about camp plans with your kids. Matching their current interests with the available camp options you've identified will help their camping experience be positive. They need to be interested in it in order to enjoy it!
- **Narrow your list of options.** Prepare a realistic list of camp options, then pencil in the potential activities on your summer calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- **Peruse the particulars.** Once you've confirmed your child's interest and age suitability, start to closely review each camp's details. Important points to consider include the camp's program emphasis (e.g., tightly structured versus freeform), accreditation, director and staff qualifications, camper-to-counselor ratios, special need accommodations, discipline policy, and references.
- **Discover discounts.** The price of a camp stay is also important, of course. Note that some camps offer discounts for early registration or for multiple sibling attendance. ParTNers EAP can help you find the camps that meet your needs.
- **Reassess your summer schedule.** As your summer calendar begins to fill up, look for opportunities to fit in other family time and activities that are healthy, educational and fun!

## We Can Help!

Call today to be matched with a summer camp that meets your family's needs, and get access to specific information to help you understand your options and make an educated decision.

Access tips, checklists, and in-depth information about:

- Find and evaluate summer camps
- How to prepare your child for camp
- Camp options for teens
- Summer camp health and safety tips
- Summer fun with the family

**Your ParTNers EAP can help you find the right summer camp for your child.**

Call toll-free 1.855.Here4TN (1.855.437.3486) 24 hours a day, seven days a week for no-cost, confidential help from a professional.

Visit us online at [www.HERE4TN.com](http://www.HERE4TN.com).

