

AAAbc's OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

Alter it / Avoid it / Accept it / build our resistance / change our perceptions

ALTER IT by changing something. Problem-solving, direct communication, organizing, planning, and time management are common techniques for altering stress.

AVOID IT by removing yourself from the stressful situation or figuring out how not to get there in the first place!! To conserve stress energy, people sometimes need to walk away, let go, say "no", delegate, withdraw, and know their limits so they can "live to fight another day".

ACCEPT IT means to equip yourself physically and mentally for stress. The b and c of the AAAbc model represent this physical and mental preparation.

b stands for building resistance. People can increase their capacity to tolerate stress **PHYSICALLY** through proper diet, regular exercise, and systematic relaxation techniques. Relaxation and exercise provide the double bonus of releasing stored up tension as well!! **MENTAL** resistance is bolstered through positive affirmations, taking time for mental health, getting clear about goals / values / priorities. **SOCIAL** resistance is strengthened by building and maintaining support systems, investing in relationships, clear communication, and intimacy. **SPIRITUAL** resistance is especially important in times of high stress. Meditation, prayer, worship, faith and commitment strengthen people.

c stands for change. One way to Accept stress is to change the way you perceive the situation or yourself. Changing unrealistic expectations and irrational beliefs such as "I should succeed at everything I do", or "It would be awful if my spouse or children or boss or workers were angry with me", is a good start. Building self-esteem and cultivating a positive attitude help as well. Redefining the situation is a less stress-provoking way is always an option -- when people play "ain't it funny" or "ain't it grand" instead of "ain't it awful", they are actively increasing their stress resistance.

Reproduced, with permission, from Structured Exercises in Stress Management Vol 1
Nancy Loving Tubesing and Donald Tubesing, Editors,
Whole Person Press, P. O. Box 3151, Duluth Minnesota, 55803



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**