

11 STRESS



PURPOSE

New research suggests that having a positive attitude is an effective way to cope with stress. Young workers are at a unique time in their lives, with lots of demands from school, parents, work, and friends, and they may not have developed appropriate coping strategies. Teaching young workers about stress and positive thinking behaviors will help them manage stress, which will help maintain their performance on the job and prevent distractions that could lead to an occupational injury.

ACTIVITY TIME

Approximately 15 minutes

PREPARATION

- Handouts are included in the activity book on 12 and 13. Alternatively, you can print the handouts from the website. The handouts can be found at: **www.promotingusafetyhealth.com** Click on "Start the Conversation Activities," then find the "Stress" activity and click on the "Handout" link. Print one "Attitude Quiz" handout per staff member. Print one "9 Ways To Be More Positive" handout per staff member.
- Print PUSH Cards.

DIRECTIONS

Supervisor reads out loud

Supervisor reads out loud

SUPERVISOR READS QUESTION

- ✘ *Do not read out loud*



PUSH is an Oregon Healthy Workforce Center Project funded through the NIOSH Total Worker Health Center of Excellence Grant U19OH10154.

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BACKGROUND

CAN ANY OF YOU TELL ME WHAT STRESS IS?

✘ *Let staff answer.*

Stress is the mental, physical, and emotional response your body has during a demanding situation. Imagine how you feel immediately after a fire alarm goes off or when you have to slam on your brakes in the car. That is a stress response in your body.

Can any of you tell me what makes you feel stressed?

✘ *Let staff answer.*

These things you just named are called stressors.

Stressors can be good or bad. Good stressors help us achieve our goals and make life interesting.

For example:

- ☉ Running in a race
- ☉ Riding a roller coaster

Bad stressors are things that cause us to feel overwhelmed or depressed.

For example:

- ☉ Money problems
- ☉ Death of a loved one

Bad stress over a long period of time is not good for our bodies and minds and often causes us to feel many emotions, including anxiety, anger, and depression.

These emotions can affect our behavior. For example, if we are stressed about something at work, we may become easily frustrated with co-workers or have difficulty focusing on work tasks.

Stress will always be a factor in our lives, so it is important to learn how to cope with it. What are some healthy ways to cope with stress?

✘ *Let staff answer. Potential answers include (read out loud answers not mentioned by staff):*

- Exercising
- Talking about your feelings with a friend or counselor
- Strategizing ways to remove or reduce the stress
- Getting enough sleep
- Engaging in a hobby
- Meditating
- Journaling

New research shows that having a positive attitude is one way to help cope with stress. In today's activity we'll learn what it means to have a positive attitude.

The 90:10 Principle theorizes that 10% of life is made up of what happens to us (things beyond our control), and 90% of life is decided by how we react to those things. It's important to focus on how we react to stress-inducing situations.

Imagine the following situation: On the way to work, someone cuts you off in traffic. How do you react? With shouting, gestures, and cursing? Ask yourself if this is as big a deal as you are making it. Will it really matter if you arrive at work 30 seconds later? Probably not. You're better off letting it go.

ACTIVITY

Today, we're going to check in to see if we have a positive mindset. First we'll all take a quiz to see if we are positive thinkers. Once you take the quiz, read a short article which we'll discuss in about 5–10 minutes.

- ✘ *Distribute the stress handout or ask employees to turn to page 12 in their activity workbooks. Give staff 5–10 minutes to complete it. When staff seem ready, discuss the points below.*

Talking Points:

1. DOES ANYONE WANT TO SHARE YOUR SCORES AND TELL US WHAT YOU THINK YOU CAN DO TO BE MORE POSITIVE?

2. CAN ANYONE GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU "LOOKED ON THE BRIGHT SIDE" TO HELP YOU COPE WITH STRESS?

3. HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN BE MORE POSITIVE WITH ONE ANOTHER HERE AT WORK?

PUSH FORWARD

- ✘ *Pass out PUSH cards.*

On your card is a link to the Promoting U through Safety and Health page (www.promotingusafetyhealth.com). If you follow this page you can learn about other ways to stay safe at home and at work.

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ATTITUDE QUIZ – EXAMPLE

Instructions: Rate the statements below with a **1 (Mostly)**, **2 (Sometimes)**, or **3 (Almost Never)**. There are no right or wrong answers. This is a tool to learn more about who you are, so be honest. When you are finished, total your responses.

1. I look for the bright side.	
2. I think I have strengths.	
3. I see my mistakes as learning opportunities.	
4. I see my weaknesses as areas for improvement.	
5. I give myself credit for what I can do.	
6. I see the big picture.	
7. I don't feel like I have to be perfect.	
8. I think it's important to try to understand other people's points of view.	
9. I can keep my temper under control when I am frustrated.	
10. I can take a joke.	
11. I can laugh at myself.	
12. I think constructive criticism is helpful.	
13. I make people around me happy.	
14. I say nice things to people around me.	
15. I can forgive people.	
16. I have a good relationship with people around me.	
17. I speak up for what I want.	
TOTAL	

17–24: You have a healthy attitude. **25–42:** Your attitude is okay, but focus on being more positive. **43–51:** Your attitude could be holding you back from dealing with stress and enjoying life.

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9 WAYS TO BE MORE POSITIVE — EXAMPLE



Craig Childs, Lifehack.org

Life is easy with a positive attitude, wouldn't you agree? Well, easier at least. One of my favorite sites, The Ririan Project, has a list of ways to perk up your disposition, if you need to.

I've always been amazed by some people's insistence on being in the negative. You can change that, and it's the first step to stepping in a more successful life.

1. Appreciate as much as you can. This is one of those very simple things you can do to bring more positivity into your life. I have also found appreciation to be a great way to turn an angry, sad and frustrated mood around to a more positive one.
2. Stop comparing yourself to others. If you don't then you'll just create a lot of unnecessary pain in your life. If you surpass one person's success, then you'll just find another person more successful than you. And your brief sense of being a winner will transform once again into anxiety, fear, tummy-aches and possibly heart attacks.
3. Realize that it is possible to choose how you react. You don't have to live your life in reaction. You have a choice. There is always a gap between stimuli and reaction. If you focus on that gap it will widen and although it might seem in the beginning like stimuli and your reaction are tied together that is not the case.
4. Educate yourself. Self-education can be a great help to live a more positive life. Read great books on the areas of your life you want to improve. Maybe it's your financial situation. Or your health. Or your relationships. Ask people you know who have had more success in that area than you what they did to improve.
5. Act as if you feel good. Your emotions work backwards too. So even if you don't feel positive, confident, calm or decisive you can act like it. And after you have done that for a few minutes, guess what happens? You will actually start to feel positive, confident, calm or decisive.
6. Live in the now. Don't let your thoughts drift into the past or future more than necessary; this is often a sure-fire way to start negative loops of thoughts in your mind.
7. Do some mental rehearsal. This is great way to improve your performance and decrease anxiety in any upcoming situation. Maybe you're heading into a meeting soon. Visualize now how great the events will unfold—see and hear it—and also how great will you feel at this meeting.
8. Redefine failure. Michael Jordan once said: "I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."
9. Focus on what you want, not on what you don't want. One common problem is to focus your thoughts on what you don't want rather than what you want. If you do that then it will be hard to get what you want in life. If you want to improve your finances then focus on having a great financial situation rather than your lack of money and your debts.

Childs, C. (n.d.). 9 Ways To Be More Positive. Retrieved April 04, 2016, from <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/9-ways-to-be-more-positive.html>