

# What to do When Life Gets Tense



## Stress: What to do When Life gets Hard

### What is stress?

Stress is a normal part of life. It is something that every person will experience at different times in their lives. Stress is something that cannot be avoided. However, when stress becomes too intense or lasts too long, it can have a negative effect on your relationships and on your normal day to day life.

### What does stress look like?

Stress can affect every person in different ways. Here are some common ways that stress may appear in your life:

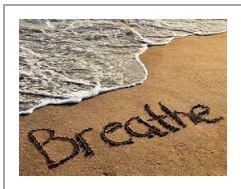
- Feeling irritable or moody
- Worrying too much about different things
- Feeling muscle tension or pain in your neck, chest, stomach, or other parts of your body
- Having a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep

## How to Deal with Stress

Stress is often caused by having to deal with things in our lives that we cannot control. Because of this we can feel like things are out of control. Here are a few ways you can help yourself deal with stress better:



**Take a break.** Remove yourself from the thing that is stressing you if possible. For example, try going for a walk.



**Breathe.** Breathing deeply increases the supply of oxygen to your brain. This helps your body to relax, and can cause your heart rate to decrease and your breathing to slow. This all helps your body to feel less stressed. **Try the 4-7-8 breath technique.** Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds.



**Get Active.** Physical activity increases your brain's production of feel good endorphins causing your mood to improve. Physical activity can calm the mind and fight negative thoughts that make you feel more stressed. The most important thing to remember is to pick an activity that brings you joy. Some examples include walking, jogging, dancing, listening to music, bicycling, yoga, tai chi, or gardening.



**Talk to Someone.** Talking about what is bothering you can help you realize you are not alone. Talking with a close friend or professional counselor can help the strong thoughts you have feel less charged, leaving you feeling a bit better.



**Avoid Drugs and Alcohol.** Drugs and alcohol can seem like they make you feel better in the moment, but this is a temporary feeling. In the long-run, they will tend to make you feel much worse.

# Stress Action Plan

## Create your own Plan

Write down your top 5 ways you will deal with stress.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 people you will speak to when you feel stressed.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Barbers and stylists are trusted members of the Black community who provide a sacred space where their clients often share successes and stresses, including stories related to mental health. **Project HairCare** is focused on expanding these stories in the shops and the community by providing tools and resources to increase awareness, education, and understanding about mental health and wellness.*

*To contact **Project HairCare** and get resources, please call 800-209-3569 or scan the QR code*

