

FOUR 'A'S OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

1. Avert

You don't have to deal with all the stressors all at once. Avert and divert your attention to activities that relax you.

If you already have a lot to do, it is alright to say no.

If you feel tired and need time to rest, it is alright to let your family / friends know you will join them for the next outing.

2. Alter

Change the way you see your situation.

You want to get all your work done, and go for a 30 minute walk this evening.

You can choose not to tidy the kitchen today and do so the next day instead.

You want a good relationship with your family members.

When they remind you not to eat 2 bowls of rice at every meal, you feel irritated.

Tell yourself that they are your family, that they care about you and your health.



Swift, C.S., & Clark, N.G. (2015) Overcoming Type 2 Diabetes. New York, Penguin Random House LLC.

FOUR 'A'S OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

3. Accept

Accept, acknowledge and deal with stressors.

You feel frustrated and stressed when you think about living with diabetes the rest of your life. You know you choose how you feel and there is always a choice.

You can choose to use helpful or unhelpful ways to deal with your frustrations. You know you cannot change the situation causing you stress. Decide what you want or don't want, and focus on what you can do about it.

4. Adapt

Adjust how you think and adapt to stressful situations.

When you notice a negative or unhelpful thought, turn it around, think positive, for example, 'I'm open to giving this a try', 'I can do it one step at a time', 'I can be kind to myself', 'I know it's okay to be imperfect'

When you are feeling down, make a list of all the things you are grateful for. Read through this list whenever you find yourself stressed.



Overcoming Stressors in Diabetes Management: Manage Emotional Eating

Manage emotional eating

- Identify the negative emotions that drive you to eat mindlessly and find alternative methods for addressing and overcoming the difficult emotions.
- Minimise temptations to eat mindlessly e.g., don't buy / put snacks in the cupboard. Plan and engage in meaningful activities in the evening.
- Minimise over-restriction and schedule a regular (morning / afternoon / evening) snack time.
- Plan for your snack and take intentional steps to select a satisfying and enjoyable one, based on healthy portions recommended.
- Engage in conversation or activity with close friends or find a meaningful hobby.



Overcoming Stressors in Diabetes Management: Enhancing Moods with Exercise

(cont'd)

Engage in physical activity

- Identify activities that are fun, enjoyable and rewarding.
- Adjust to your environment; arrange an activity and exercise at a time and location you find convenient.
- Make a concrete plan for regular exercise you want to do, think you can do and are willing to do.
- Find company for the activity or exercise you want to do.
- Identify and address self-defeating thoughts by asking yourself what evidence you have or how true it is, e.g., that you are too old or too overweight to exercise.



Problem Solving: 4 steps for better diabetes management

- Problem solving helps people to cope with stressful or overwhelming situations, and when no solution seems workable or it is difficult to get started.
- Helps you feel more motivated when the task is broken down into easier steps.
- First, select steps even if there is no ideal solution.
- Second, take a difficult task and break it into manageable steps.
- Let's look at how we can use this technique in 4 steps.



Problem Solving: 4 steps for better diabetes management

Step 1

Describe the problem in as few words as possible.

Example – I do not exercise enough but would like to as I know it will help my health.

Step 2

List all **possible solutions**.

Come up with as many solutions as possible even if you are not sure they will give you the ideal outcome. List them even if you think you are not sure if you will do them.

Examples of possible solutions:

- Get off the bus two stops early and walk to work.
- Use the staircase instead of the lift.
- Join a gym.



Problem Solving: 4 steps for better diabetes management

Step 3

List the **pros and cons** of each solution.
Think about the pros and cons for each possible solution.

Example of Pros & cons of solution
For possible solutions: Walk to work instead of drive.

Pro: More relaxed walking than driving; better for health with fresh air.

Con: With heat from weather, I'll get sweaty and uncomfortable; needing more time to walk than drive means I need to get up earlier, even when I don't get enough sleep.



Problem Solving: 4 steps for better diabetes management

Step 4

Is this a solution you think you would likely choose?

If so, let's break the solution down into doable steps.

Carry out the best option.
Do it one step at a time.



IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS WHO CARE ABOUT ME

Positive relationships with your **doctor, nurse and any healthcare professional** who support you in diabetes management give you more confidence to better manage diabetes.

Connecting and seeking support from people in your life, like **family, friends, co-workers** help you to feel better understood, valued and boost your motivation to make positive changes.



IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS WHO CARE ABOUT ME

Family members you relate well with make helpful allies who stand by you and support you when you feel angry, frustrated, disappointment, down or depressed.

NOTE:

Overly concerned family may also offer support in unwanted ways. This could contribute to strong negative emotions, with no constructive or helpful outcomes for both.

You could share with them what enables you to feel more supported.



IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS WHO CARE ABOUT ME

COMMUNICATE

What you think, How you feel, and What can help

- Describe: When you _____
- Explain: I feel _____
- Specify: If you would do _____ instead
- Consequence: I will feel _____

Here is an example

- Describe: When you tell me I cannot eat kueh
- Explain: It makes me feel like I don't know my limits and I feel like eating more kueh
- Specify: If you would ask me how much kueh might be healthy or when might be a better time to eat it
- Consequence: I would feel that you care and are supporting me

