

## **My Goal:**

### **I will better manage my stress**

The amount of stress you are under can have a big impact on your blood pressure. You won't always be able to get rid of stress, but you can take steps to manage it. Understanding what is causing your stress can help you find ways to better manage it.

### **Studies have shown these impacts on BP for patients where stress is a factor:**

- ↓ 9.7/7.2 mmHg with multicomponent relaxation techniques
- ↓ 15.2/9.2 mmHg with individualized cognitive stress management



## Step 1 – What is Causing Your Stress?

One way to find the source of stress is to take time to stop and think about it. For the next few days, every so often ask yourself “on a scale from 1 to 5, how stressed do I feel?” Write down the answer, as well as what you were doing, and the time of day.

Looking back at this stress log can help you see how often and how much you are stressed. This can help you understand what triggers your stress (e.g. situations, activities, people). Sharing your stress log and your plan with your healthcare provider can support your goal of reducing stress.

Date/Time	What you were doing	Stress #
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

1 means 'No Stress' and 5 means 'Extremely Stressed'

## **Step 2 – Taking Action to Cope with Stress**

1. Try to resolve stressful situations if you can – consider family problem-solving sessions and using negotiation skills at home and at work to reduce stressors
2. Change your point of view – some stressors cannot be changed, but you can change how you view them, and how much you allow them to be a focus, or impact on your mood
3. Ask for help – don't be afraid to ask for help from your spouse, friends or family. If stress and anxiety are still an issue, talk to your healthcare provider

## **Step 3 – Ways to Relax**

1. Get things off your chest – open up to people you trust about how you are feeling
2. Be active – physical activity keeps you fit and clears your mind by helping you focus your energy on something else
3. Take a break – if you can, even a short break away from your routine or your stress can help you relax
4. Spiritual practices – meditation or prayer can help relax your mind
5. Deep Breathing – can help your body relax
6. Laugh – laughter is a stress fighter, it helps release tension and can take your mind off troubles

## Step 4 – Make a Plan

My Plan to better manage my stress

Ways I will try to cope with my stress:

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

Ways I will try to relax:

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

## Other resources that can help:

[www.StressStrategies.ca](http://www.StressStrategies.ca) - Stress Strategies is a problem-solving approach to learn helpful ways to respond to life's stresses

[www.participACTION.com](http://www.participACTION.com) – many ideas for adding activity to your day

This video from “Dr. Mike Evans, Stress, YouTube” describes stress and approaches to manage it in a fun visual way (search using the quoted text)

Canadian Mental Health Association – [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)  
click ‘mental health’ to see resources like “my stress score” and “my mental health”